

DOES A CLASSROOM WEBSITE INCREASE
POSITIVE COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTS AND
TEACHERS?

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	4
Classroom Website.....	4
Back to the Beginning.....	5
My Teaching Experiences.....	6
Area of Focus.....	8
Research Question.....	9
Conclusion.....	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Smartphones in Today’s Society.....	11
Internet in Schools.....	13
Student Cell Phone Use.....	13
Parent Engagement.....	15
One-Way Communication.....	17
Newsletters.....	17
Traveling Notebooks.....	18
Report Cards.....	18
Two-Way Communication.....	18
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	19
Communication via Telephone.....	20
Communication via Radio & Video.....	20

Communication via the Internet.....	21
Communication & Barriers.....	22
School & Classroom Website Design.....	24
Comparing School Website Designs.....	24
Comparing Classroom Website Designs.....	26
Benefits of a Classroom Website.....	28
21st Century Skills.....	28
Tips for Classroom Website Building.....	29
Conclusion.....	31
CHAPTER 3: METHODS.....	33
Introduction.....	33
Audience & Setting.....	33
The Research Paradigm.....	34
Research Theory.....	35
Website Program.....	36
Research Tools.....	36
Data Analysis Technique.....	38
Conclusion.....	38
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	40
Introduction.....	40
Project Characteristics.....	41
Implementation Plan.....	43

Implications & Research.....	43
Limitations of Project.....	44
Next Step.....	45
Personal Growth.....	46
Final Thoughts.....	46
APPENDICES.....	48
Figure A.....	48
Figure B.....	49
Figure C.....	49
Figure D.....	50
Figure E.....	50
REFERENCES.....	51

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Classroom Webpage

When teachers and parents are working together in a positive way, the child wins. They create a team or partnership that is focused on one thing: the child. With this focus in mind the team can help the student grow into a successful young adult who develops questions about the world around them and is excited about learning. The school system has several different strategies that can be used to communicate. I have tried several different ways and have yet to find a positive and effective consistent line of communication. With my capstone project, I will develop a working website that will be able to increase my positive communication, and be effective with my parents and students. My research question is: Does a classroom website increase positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers?

As you read through my first chapter, I will describe how I reached my research question which will bring you back to my childhood experiences with my teachers, my undergraduate career, and then my first few teaching experiences. The chapter will end with me walking you through how I am currently working in a fourth grade classroom and how I reached the decision to create a classroom website for my parents. To finalize the chapter, I will introduce you to the next three chapters of my capstone project which will dig deeper into the literature on my topic, my research methods, and my final reflection on what I learned throughout my project.

Back to the Beginning

Since I was a young child, I aspired to be a teacher. I remember observing my teachers and admiring what they did everyday. They stood up in front of a full classroom of students everyday teaching math, spelling, reading, science, and social studies. While teaching the curriculum, they took their time to develop a personal relationship with each student, so we all knew how much they cared for each of us. I found that they were dedicated to their profession, so much so that as students, we were never aware of “bad” days the teachers might be having. And if they were having a bad day, it never showed. Every teacher encouraged me to be who I wanted to be. Never give up on my dreams, so I never gave up. Therefore, when I started college, it was with the intentions of becoming a teacher.

I began my college career at Winona State University. Throughout my undergraduate path, I grew as a young person and eventually made my way into the Education Program. I was beyond excited to start learning and developing as a teacher.

At first, my classes were filled with different theorists, the history about education, and curriculum. Within a few semesters, lesson planning and teaching with classmates consumed my life, but also helped me build my teaching skills. When I walked into a classroom, I knew I would be ready! My first experience of working in the classroom was overwhelming and challenging, but I did not give up. I reflected on each lesson I taught so I could keep improving and growing as a teacher. The years flew by, and I graduated with a teaching degree.

My Teaching Experiences

After graduating, I was hired as a preschool and pre-kindergarten teacher. At first, it was difficult because I was responsible for their learning and I was not sure I could do it. The reality of being a real teacher in a real educational environment hit me. However, I did not want to let anyone down, so I worked as hard as I could. As time went on, things got easier. After 3 years, I eventually started to burn out. I knew I needed a change, and that's when a friend asked me to join her school as a teaching assistant. I was ready for a change, so I jumped on it!

In 2010, I started working as a teaching assistant with kindergarteners at a small charter school in the Upper Midwest. According to www.crcs-school.org, the charter school opened in 1993 and educates students from Kindergarten to Eighth grade. As the fifth charter school to be created in the United States and the World, the school has one classroom per grade, and each classroom is capped at 22 students. In 2014, the pre-kindergarten program was added and at the end of the 2016-2017 school year, the school population was at 223 students. Currently the students enrolled are mainly Somali-American, with a small population of Oromo, Latino, and Vietnamese. Most of the students are from immigrant families where English is a second language and the families typically qualify for free and reduced lunch.

During my first two years at this unique charter school, I taught students how to tie shoes, zip coats, read, count, and the expectation of being a student. I taught in the 21st Century after school program. Both jobs definitely had its successes and challenges, but, I was learning and building my teaching skills. During this time, I started going back

to school to pursue my Master's Degree. I really enjoyed my education classes where I spent a few years exploring the education world. I applied this knowledge to my classroom and collaborating with my colleagues. Within a few years, I started using my after school experience to write my capstone thesis. Soon however, in the Fall of 2012, I was hired at this charter school as the fourth grade teacher, and my focus had to switched gears. I decided to put my capstone thesis on hold.

I was responsible for 20 students who relied on me for their educational and behavioral growth. I worked hard at developing my curriculum in all the subjects and building relationships with my students. I worked with parents and other teachers to build a positive classroom. I made phone calls, had parent meetings when needed, and sent emails to communicate with parents. With some struggle, I made it through my first year, and I continued to work hard throughout the last four years as the fourth grade teacher. I have changed so much as a person and as a teacher. With this growth both personally and professionally, I feel I am better equipped to continue and complete my capstone project.

I am now into my sixth year of teaching. I look back at my past classrooms and my teachings, and reflect on the one thing I have always wanted to improve on is my relationship with my students' parents. I want my parents to be able to access basic classroom information like daily schedules, monthly schedules, field trip announcements and information, and our curriculum in one place. During my fourth year of teaching, we started working on creating our own classroom page, but there was a lack of leadership and school-wide follow through, so the project was dropped. At the end of my fifth year

of teaching, I received a letter from Hamline about the new changes to their graduate program. The program had now added a capstone project. Hamline offering the capstone project idea, I thought this would be a great educational opportunity to focus on my Master's Degree. I signed up and debated my many options of focus. I eventually came to the decision of creating a classroom webpage because I wanted to create something that could not only benefit me, but also my parents.

Area of Focus

Why a classroom webpage? Throughout my years of teaching and being a member of our Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) committee, we have worked at building a positive relationship with our parents. With the start of PBIS, teachers were sending home weekly communication sheets for each child that showed the students rating from a SOAR (a great today) to a level 5 (office referral). It seemed like a great way to document our students behavior, but many parents were not receiving them each week for various reasons from their child. Eventually, the PBIS sheets turned into a negative way of communicating with parents, because it was reflecting the inappropriate behaviors happening with their child. Reflectively, we have not successfully reached our parents on a consistent positive, and effective communicational level. The partnership between school and home continues to unravel.

I have worked hard to develop to a partnership with my parents, and I have been more successful than many of my colleagues: inviting my parents in the classroom for writing celebrations and poetry cafes on a regular basis. Here parents are invited into the classroom to listen to the students present their writing pieces at the end of each unit.

The feedback has always been very positive! Parents, students, and I have really enjoyed the time together, but it makes me strive for even greater interactions. I needed a place that parents can go to be more educated about what was going on in their child's classroom on a regular basis, learn about me, about the classroom, see what their child is learning, and where the parents can get contact information. In our digital world, many parents, no matter the ethnic, economic, or language, communicate with a smartphone. A classroom website! Here the parents would be able to access my classroom webpage 24/7. I can show my classroom in a positive way, letting parents see first hand the work their students are doing. It would be a place parents can go for extra resources to help their child learn at home, and a place of communication with teachers. In our digital world, a classroom webpage felt like a positive way to increase communication with parents.

Research Question

After thinking about the relationship I wanted with parents, I decided on: does a classroom website increase positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers? Parents put their trust into their child's teacher on a daily basis, and they want concrete examples of what and how their students are doing in class, resources to help at home, and photographs of the activities taking place in the classroom. As teachers, it continues to get harder and harder to find ways and the time to effectively increase communication with parents - spending precious spare minutes on the telephone or typing emails. My research question will let me explore whether or not a classroom web page will help increase communication to all parents. Many parents have the

technology at the touch of their fingertips, so if I can create a page where they can see their students learning and working with their classmates, and where they can communicate with me. Well, why not try it? If I have a consistent and effective tool to help parents become involved in their students' education, then I am fulfilling my part of the partnership. It is now the parents' responsibility to utilize this tool.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research question I proposed to you is: Does a classroom website increase positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers? I believe by the end of this process, I will be able to determine the answer to this question. I hope to show, that in this digital age, a classroom web page is a useful communication tool between parents and teachers. Robert John Meehan (as cited by Ethereal Theme) said, "Everything we do as parents and teachers must ensure that the child's inherent desire to learn is kept alive." If I am providing parents with a way to encourage their child to keep learning, then I'm doing what I need to do as a teacher.

Following my introduction, I will move into Chapter 2 where I will be presenting you with research that connects to my research question. The research presented will be looking at the history of internet in public schools, how smartphones have changed the way we communicate, parent engagement with teachers, the barriers teachers face while communicating with parents, and five different webpage designs. Finally, I will discuss through the research I have done, the benefits of a classroom website and which design would be most beneficial for my classroom communication.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter will take a look at the literature that has been presented so far about my research question: Does a classroom website increase positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers? Creswell (2104) suggests that literature reviews “provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing results with other findings” (p. 28). With the digital age changing and moving faster and faster, schools, parents, and society in general are always trying to play catch up. The digital age also has changed even the basic way we have learned to communicate with each other.

Through my literature review, I will present data on smartphone and internet use for personal use, how the internet has evolved in schools, and the timeline of how communication has evolved throughout the years between schools, teachers, and parents. The review will also show the benefits of a classroom website and the different designs and research on classroom websites. And finally, help determine the right program for me that will keep parents and teachers involved.

Smartphones in Today’s Society

Communicating with other people use to mean picking up a pen and piece of paper, sitting down to write out the message in form of a letter, putting it in an envelope,

and mailing it. Then you would wait for a response to come back in the mail a week later. When was the last time you picked up a pen and wrote a letter to communicate with someone? Instead, we are picking up our smartphone to send a text message or calling someone to have a conversation. We expect an instant response to our instant message. According to Time.com “More than 3 billion people worldwide now use the internet” (as cited in Steinberg, 2016, p. 1). That is almost half of the world population that is communicating using a smartphone with immediate internet connection. With that many people having a smartphone, App Annie (2016) explain that on average people check their smartphone 46 times a day, and just in the United States, alone, people check their phone a total of 8 billion times a day (as cited in Steinberg, 2016, p. 2). With our fingers moving that fast on our smartphones, it seems like incorporating internet and smartphones into the classroom for teachers, students, and parents as a way of communicating could be a good option. Could one of those 46 clicks a day be devoted to a teacher’s website to check-in on their child’s involvement?

Looking into the future. Ericsson published that “By 2020, globally there will be 6.1 billion smartphone users,” (as cited by Lunder, 2015, p. 1). Even the future is suggesting that most of our communication will be through our smartphones, so why not change the way we are communicating with our parents? Why not create a classroom website to help increase positive communication between parents and teachers?

Internet and smartphones are leading the way on how we communicate with each other. As a teacher, I want parents to click on my classroom website, write an e-mail, or browse throughout the different pages on the website. I want them to learn about their

child's educational experiences, so they can build and strengthen their potential relationships. This relationship between the child and parent is imperative to building ownership for the child's academic success in school.

Internet in Schools

According to Lewis and Wells (2006) in the 1990's the internet was just making its way into schools. Only 35 percent of public schools could claim they had internet in their building. And "smartphone" was not even a compound word! Ten years later, in the fall of 2005, 94 percent of public schools had some sort of internet connection within their building. In just those ten years, the nearly 70 percent jump has shown how much the digital age has evolved and been indoctrinated into the classrooms (p.3-4). Why is this a big deal? Well, with the improved connection with technology, teachers can improve their communication and teaching styles to incorporate this improvement. Now, jump ten more years to 2014, according to EducationSuperHighway (2016), four million students had access to internet speeds of 100 kbps. Within a few years, that number has increased to 34.9 million students meeting the 100 kbps goal set by the Federal Communications Commission. Instant information at instant time! With the improved internet connections, we can provide and expect faster methods of communication between parents, students, and teachers.

Student Cell Phone Use

Our students are also gaining from this boost of technology in our society. Majority of students have access to parents' or their own phones. And like the rest of society, these students do not leave home without these devices. Many schools and

teachers are concerned about this trend for various reasons and are not equipped or properly educated on how to handle the smartphone in the classroom. To many, it seems to be more of a distraction than a possible educational tool. But could the smartphone be an educational tool? Instead of being wary of cell phones in the classroom, turn it into something that can be used as a learning tool. Neilsen and Webb (2015) stated that cell phone can be used to help increase memory, support cooperative learning, facilitate learning on the go, provide recognition, and help move time forward (p. 71-73).

Teachers can work with students and parents through the digital world to help students get their homework or projects done by sending text messages. It creates a line of communication between the teacher, student, and parent. It could possibly lead to a link to a website that parents and students can check out together. It could lead to a more open communication. According to Project Tomorrow survey (2013),

“78 percent of middle school students say they use their cell phone to check grades; 69 percent credit it with helping them take class notes; 64 percent enjoy its aid in accessing online textbooks; 56 percent say it helps them write papers and do homework; and 47 percent say it helps them learn about school activities,” (as cited by Neilson & Webb, 2015, p. 1).

Those percentages show that many students are already using their phones for much of their school work, so letting them use their phones in the classroom, could now create a new way of communicating that is immediate and effective. Would those numbers increase if we let students use their phones on a regular basis? Could we all be able to connect through a classroom website?

Communication lines have been enhanced throughout the last several decades. From pen and paper, to phone calls, to quick text messages, our world is changing. Our children are growing up in a digital world, so we as teachers and schools in general also need to move into this digital world. The digital world continues to grow and the world of education needs to grow with it. The future holds endless possibilities of learning and communicating.

My next section will go more in depth on the different ways parents and teachers communicate with each other, and how we can be more effective in our communication. Our communication is the building blocks on developing a positive, working relationship between home and school.

Parent Engagement

Throughout this next section, I will be discussing the research about the different ways of providing engaging communication between parents, teachers, and schools. Parent engagement has always been one of the main priorities for schools and teachers, but finding the right method can be tricky. I will discuss several different types of communication paths that teachers and parents have developed, and I will move into the technological ways of communicating with parents. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002) stated,

“However, the right kinds of school-family connections-those built on relationships, listening, welcoming, and shared decision making-*can* produce multiple benefits for students, including higher grade point averages and test scores, better attendance, enrollment in more challenging courses, better social

skills, and improved behavior and home and school,” (as cited in Ferlazzo, 2011, p. 10).

No matter the communication method between teachers and parents, if they are communicating with each other, then they are helping the student in many different ways. Both are helping the students develop greater self-esteem and increasing their overall willingness to be at school. A healthy self-esteem and the desire for education are huge parts of a child’s development, so building that teacher-parent relationship is essential. When we create open lines of communication, that is when we will learn and grow the most together. Ramirez (2001) stated that, “Students tend to place greater importance on their education when they see their parents actively involved in it. Also, students have suggested that they want to see their parents involved in their education at the school level” (p.30).

According to Lai & Ishiyama (2004), The first avenue of communication is as simple as posting a welcome sign that is inviting parents into the building, a smile of acknowledgment from office staff, clean buildings, student artwork on the walls, and sounds in the hallway, (as cited in Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 118). After getting past the first step, Berger (1991), stated that we need to have communication that involves “one-way or two-way exchanges” (as cited by Graham, 2005, p. 118). Graham (2005) stated,

“One-way communication occurs when teachers seek to inform parents of events, activities, or student progress through a variety of sources, such as introductory letter at the beginning of the school year, classroom or school

newsletters, report cards, communication books, radio announcements, school websites, and so-on. Two-way communication involves interactive dialogue between teachers and parents. Conversations may occur during telephone calls, home visits, parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and various school-based community activities,” (p.118).

Throughout a teacher’s school day, school week, or even school year, we are working on building the one and two way communication lines with parents.

One-Way Communication

Williams & Cartledge (1997) stated, written communication is probably the most effective and efficient way we can correspond between school and home, (as cited on Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 118). We use this form of communication on a daily basis. There are a few different written ways we communicate: newsletters, school-to-home notebooks, and report cards. When these forms of communication are used, teachers and schools need to focus on making sure the information is concise and accurate, so parents will read and understand the meaning of it.

Newsletters: Teachers use newsletters as a community parent letter, so everyone is informed of the same classroom information. When creating a newsletter classroom teachers should, as suggested by Aronson (1995), “incorporate the same color, quality, and paper size for all newsletters to create a communication ‘set;’ use everyday language, and grammar, spell checks, and proofing of the information,” (as cited on Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 119).

Traveling Notebooks: Another method of written one-way communication is the use of school-home notebooks. These notebooks are used for daily communication to share with parents, especially students of special needs. When writing in these types of notebooks, Graham-Clay (2005) suggested that, “Teachers should be sensitive to a balance of good and bad news contained in the message and educational “jargon” should be avoided. The use of titles establishes respect in the relationship. To maximize efficiency, alternate day or twice weekly notes to be adequate,” (p. 119).

Report Cards: Last method teachers use are report cards. Record cards should be clear with easy understanding. Aronson (1995) stated that reports cards should, “provide an analysis of academic development across content areas, information about student strengths and learning style, an assessment of the child’s social development, specific goals for the student to work on and associated suggestions for the parent,” (as cited on Graham-Clay, 2005, p.119).

Report cards, school-to-home notebooks, and newsletters are all great one-way written communication paths. Face-to-face is always another positive way to communicate with parents, especially if there is a concern.

Two-way Communication

Lawrence-Lightfoot (2004) stated that “effective dialogue ‘develops out of a growing trust, a mutuality of concern, and an appreciation of contrasting perspectives,’” (as cited by Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 120). One way to start effective conversation is to make productive phone calls to their students’ parents. Gustafson (1998) stated that these conversations can discuss concerns about their child, but it also can provide teachers with

information about the child's life, including extracurricular activities, bullying experiences, and family issues. He also concluded that the positive communication with parents led to those students having a stronger academic performance (as cited by Graham-Clay, 2005, p.120).

Parent-Teacher Conferences: The traditional way of communicating with parents about students' academics has always been through parent-teacher conferences. This method can be a productive method, but it also comes with its anxieties for both parent and teachers. Metcalf (2001) suggests that "instead of viewing the conference as a reporting session for what is not working in school, teachers can construct an opportunity to discuss what is working with the student,"(as cited by Graham-Clay, 2005, 121). In order for parent-teacher conferences to be successful teachers need to be thoughtful and purposeful with what happens during this time with the parents. Quiroz, Greenfeld, & Altchech (1999) suggests that parent-teacher conferences can also be a 'prime situation for cross-cultural miscommunication' to occur. An example of this would be in communicating with Latino families. Teachers should follow a group conference model, so that it is received in a positive manner (Graham-Clay, 2005, p.122).

Two-way communication is a very beneficial method of communication with parents. Parent-teacher conferences and phone calls have been an essential part of building a relationship between the teachers and parents. However, both need to be deliberately and effectively planned out, so everyone involved is being supported in a positive manner.

Over the last several years, educators have started experimenting with different technologies to increase communication with parents. Ramirez (2001) stated “that integrating technology can help schools communicate quickly to a broad parent community,” (as cited by Graham-Clay, 2005, p.122). Graham-Clay (2005) listed several examples: Classroom phones and voicemail, video technology, radio announcements, and school websites.

Communication via telephone: Classroom phones and voicemail help teachers contact parents on an individual level when needed. Graham-Clay (2005) suggested that phone calls and voicemail give teachers the opportunity to call parents to report on behavior, homework assignments, classroom announcements (p.122). Lunts (2003) stated, “Because VMS(voice messaging system) are easy to operate, and because telephones are available in at least 94 percent of households, four to five thousand schools nationwide use the capabilities of VMS.” Bauch (2000) talked about schools who applied VMS have an increase of interactions between teachers and parents by 500 to 800 (as cited by Lunts, 2003, p.3). Cameron & Lee (1997) “conducted two studies to explore satisfaction by teachers and parents regarding the use of voice-mail technology. Findings demonstrated enhanced communication in both quality and quantity for upper-elementary-aged students,” (as cited by Graham-Clay, 2005, p.122).

Communication via video & radio: Two more ways of using technology in schools are the use of video technology and radio announcements. Graham-Clay (2005) states: video technology is a great tool to use for parents that have students with severe disabilities (p.122). Graham-Clay (2005) mentioned that “videos can also be used for

summer home-programming activities, to demonstrate successful integration activities, and to assist with transition planning. Parents reported the videos enhanced communication with teachers and understanding of their child's school program”(p.123). Radio announcements provide parents with weather and school activities (Graham-Clay, 2005, p.123). Winger (1995) stated that one school district invited 4th to 6th grade students to use the radio station for them to present “book reports” to the community, (as cited by Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 123). Both ways are useful communication techniques. Video technology seems like a great tool for families that need it, and radio announcements are more community-based so messages are not personalized.

Communication via the Internet: The real focus is using internet technology as a new use of two-way communication for teachers and parents. Graham-Clay (2005) stated that “The capacity to link homes and schools with new technologies provides many novel opportunities to enhance communication with parents beyond the traditional formats” (p.123). So with a growing technological world, teachers are finding easier and quicker ways to communicate with parents. The two ways of communicating through the internet are using an email account and creating a classroom website. Ramirez (2001) stated that “by integrating technology into communication strategies, schools can quickly reach as many parents as possible” (p.30).

Teacher email can be a faster method than a phone call when trying to address a concern or a positive moment. When email is used correctly, messages sent by a school or teacher can reach a bigger number of parents. It also gives parents an opportunity to respond at their convenience. Ramirez (2001) said that, “teachers often indicate that they

do not have enough time to effectively communicate with all parents, but by creating a distribution list of parents with e-mail addresses, for example, teachers can easily notify them of upcoming events” (p.30). Lunts (2003) suggest that when email is used in a timely manner, parents choose to use email as their primary contact method with teachers (p. 4-5).

A classroom website is another example of how teachers and parents can develop and maintain a consistent working line of communication. Lunts (2003) stated that “Literature suggests that the structure and content of a website should be carefully planned in order to reach the particular audience it targets” (p.6). Teachers should be preparing their websites for parental access to school work, projects, informational tips, digital videos of classroom lessons, and links for students’ grades (Lunts, 2003, p.7). They also give teachers opportunities to communicate outside of school hours or school location giving teachers the freedom when to respond to parent’s concerns. Teachers can now communicate with parents while sitting on their couches at home or doing school work in a neighborhood coffee shop.

Communication and Barriers

One-way and two-way positive communication between parents and teachers comes with a variety of barriers. One major barrier by Taffel (2001) said that, “many parents today feel unsupported, misunderstood, and overwhelmed by the demands placed on them” (as cited by Graham-Clay, 2005, p.124). Some parents do not know how to or do not feel comfortable with communicating with their child’s teacher, so with that being said, educators should be working on creating and building strong relationships with

parents and the community. Schools should host workshops for parents to learn about new ways to help their children and build the teacher-parent relationship.

Cultural differences can also challenge the communication between teachers and parents, so teachers need to research and learn about the cultural diversity presented in their classroom. Inviting parents into the classroom, planning cultural days, reading diverse books, and bringing in speakers are all great ways to help develop a stronger communication relationship with parents and even students (Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 124). “On a parental level, a parent’s own negative school experiences may impact positive relationships with teachers” (Graham-Clay, 2005, p.125).

Schools should be working on providing guidelines and checklists to help parents communicate in a respectful manner with teachers. Finders & Lewis (1994) stated that “economic and time constraints can be obstacles to keep productive communication going between teachers and parents” (as cited by Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 125). The resolution to these barriers is to survey your parents about schedules, availability, and technology access. The last barrier that schools and teachers might face is the lack of technology at home, so once again, teachers should be surveying families about their access and always have the “paperless” methods still available (Graham-Clay, 2005, p. 125).

In conclusion, effective communication is crucial to building lasting relationships between teachers and parents. Teachers may use written form or digital form of communication depending on what the preferred method is based on the survey responses from parents. Graham-Clay (2005) states that “every communication exchange,

regardless of format, should reflect a thoughtful, planned approach and should be viewed as an opportunity for teachers to promote parent partnerships and, ultimately, to support student learning” (p.126-127). In the next section, I will focusing on the benefits of school and classroom websites. What are the essential parts of an effective classroom website based on what other teachers have seen and what parents have suggested to their child’s teacher?

School & Classroom Website Designs

Schools are using school websites to advertise their programming. Piper (2012) stated, “a recent survey showed that 87 percent of our families have Internet via a home computer or smart phone” (p. 36). Teachers are creating classroom websites because they have been proven to help them provide effective communication with parents. I will be providing you with the suggested research on what school websites and classroom websites should include and why. I will then discuss what other teachers have recommended be included based on what what parents are looking for when viewing their child’s classroom website.

Comparing School Website Designs: After researching the different types of website design, I found that many experts have the same criteria but different styles on how school and classroom websites should be designed. I am going to present the different designs and how they compare to each other. The website designs range from very simple to very complex. In the end, I will decide which style I plan on using for my classroom website.

Throughout my research, I found 2 different school website designs and 3 classroom websites. They all begin with an introductory page. Epstein's framework (2012) names the first type of involvement when creating a school website. It is called "Parenting" which is making school information available to all parents (as cited by Piper, 2012, p.36-38). Whereas Lunts (2003) suggested that the first component should be a welcoming message for parents-especially from the principal to greet them and introduce the school and it's mission (p. 5).

Both website designs contained a communication page or area that includes what's new within the school, a calendar, field trip information, and extra curricular activities schedules. Epstein and Lunts both share the idea that there should be hyperlinks that gives parents the opportunity to access their child's teacher's contact information and classroom website. Another similarity is having a page that contains school/parent committees. Piper (2012) states that, "all school parent committees, including School Site Council, English Learners Advisory Committee, and the Teacher Group, have dedicated links on the website" (p. 37-38).

The final idea they share is a page that focuses on the community. Lunts (2003) says that a community page should be very informative for new families that come into the school because it will a location for them to look up important information about the community (p. 5). Epstein's Framework's last page should be a page that involves collaborating with the community. Piper (2006) states to "identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development" (p. 38).

When Piper (2012) posted Epstein's Framework it was suggested that there be materials to help translate documents into different languages. The school staff needs to provide training on how to use the school website and provide ongoing training throughout the school year (p. 36-37). As a teacher, with many non-native English speaking families, these two ideas are very important to me as I work with English language learners. It is important that I try to incorporate them into my classroom website design.

Comparing Classroom Website Designs: Moving from a school website to a classroom website is not all that different. Through my research I found three different classroom designs: Donovi's design (2016), Unal research (2008), and Dunn's Taxonomy (2011). All three also range in different levels of complexity and design, and have many things in common, along with differences. All three layouts suggested starting with a welcome page. Dunn (2011) stated that "the purpose of a static website is to disseminate information that doesn't change, the kind of information a teacher might send home on the first day of school" (p. 2). Donovic (2016) suggested that the website contain some personal information about the teacher and his/her personality (para. 1-3). Unal's research (2008) suggested that it include an email address, telephone number, schedule, and a picture of the teacher (p. 48).

Donovic's design continues to add a few simple pages that includes announcements, events, a calendar, and a syllabus page. Unlike Unal (2008) who suggests that not only have these pages, but also include lecture notes or PowerPoints, homework help links, and student work. Dunn (2010) calls this level the "Semi-static"

level because “the purpose of level 2 site is the dissemination of information that changes periodically” (p.25). This might include school events, extracurricular activities, photos, awards, and student work.

The next page or level should be the resource page for parents. Dunn (2011) calls his third level the “Supplemental Resource” page and it “ includes links to teacher-created resources (study guides and outlines) and outside resources related to the curriculum. This site should be updated every 2-6 weeks” (p.2). Whereas Ural’s (2008) third page layout contains resources for parents. Within this page, teachers should include a school calendar, parent teacher conference information, field trip information, spelling words or vocabulary, tips for parents, and forms for parents and students (p.48).

Ural (2008) suggests that the last page should be a password protected page. The layout should include links to student attendance, student grades, parent contact information, and discussion boards (p.48). However, Dunn has two more levels added to the website layout. Dunn’s (2011) fourth level is called the “Integral Curricular” and this level should “focus on curriculum and student learning. Two-way communication related to the curriculum gives these sites their value. Because the information on these sites are integral to the curriculum, student interaction is expected and required” (p.3). Finally the last page in Dunn’s taxonomy is called “Pedagogical Memory”. Dunn (2013) states that “level 5 website uses input from the students to inform and change the curriculum” (p.26). The purpose of this page is to be very interactive with the students in the classroom.

Research has shown many suggested ways of creating a website. Websites can range from very basic to very complex. When creating a website, Dunn (2013) suggested that a teacher must “decide what is needed to make an effective site so valuable teacher time is not wasted. Effective sites are not defined so much by their components, but as to whether the components are being used effectively to meet the educational needs of the students” (p.26).

Benefits of a Classroom Website

With the technology teachers have available to them in their classroom, why wouldn't a teacher create a website?

Janicki (2012) found in his study with secondary teachers that teachers reported five main reasons for creating their classroom websites. It was discovered that teachers created their website to conform with school or district expectations, to communicate with parents, to help students catch up on in-class information and assignments, to position students for postsecondary success and to respond to external pressure from colleagues, parents, and/or students (p.19).

21st Century Skills: Also with the development of the 21st Century Skills, teachers would benefit from aligning their websites with their skills. Tingen, Philbeck, & Holcomb (2011) recommended following the standards for learning the 21st century. First, use and integrate Web 2.0 tools that incorporate collaboration and interaction in and out of school. The 21st Century Skills that they are learning are “Learning and Innovation Skills: Communication and Collaboration”. The second recommendation is to provide a way to display students classroom work and projects which develops “Life and Career

Skills”. The third suggestion is to “support creativity and active learning through authentic academic experiences” which develops “Learning and Innovation Skills: Creativity and Innovation Skills.” The fourth recommendation is to, “engage students with real world data, tools, and experts they will encounter in college, on the job, and in life.” This develops “Learning and Innovation Skills: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.” The last suggestion is to, “model ethical practices, especially as they relate to digital literacy” which works on “Information, Media, and Technology Skills” (p. 90). These additions to a classroom website is not only going to benefit teachers, but it would provide more opportunities for parents to see and take ownership in what their students are learning, and it also gives students the opportunity to build skills for the future.

Tips for classroom website building: Moulton (2008) said “Every American educator needs to build and maintain his or her own teacher webpage.” With their webpage, teachers will gain back teaching time. If materials and resources are linked to their webpage, then students can quickly access the materials needed for class. Teachers are also able to hyperlink more resources to their classroom website. It gives students the ability to access higher quality materials that support their content. Since students use the internet outside of school for personal and recreational purpose, when teachers are using a classroom website in class for educational use, students will come to see the importance of using internet in school, and it will become more relevant as an educational tool for academics and communicating with educators. Teachers will be more connected to their students even outside the classroom setting. Families and teachers will gain greater access to each other because of the communication tools a classroom website can offer.

Finally, teachers will build students' 21st century life skills by effectively using the internet as an educational tool to build academics and relationships with their educators (para. 1-6).

A high school teacher, who is a technology specialist and the author of Cleanapple.com (2010) created a top ten list of why teachers should want a classroom website. She suggested that once a teacher creates a site, it instantly helps the teacher focus on transforming the classroom. A classroom website is one of the best ways to start providing technology in the classroom as it immediately engages students in their own learning. It creates a two-way communication street for teachers, parents, and students. It also gives a teacher a way to show off her classroom every day. Teachers can share pictures, projects, and major successes with parents, grandparents, and the world. The classroom can have a global impact which means teachers can make connections with other teachers. A classroom website gives those "helicopter" parents a way to communicate with their student's teacher about everything they have questions about. Most of those answers are posted on the classroom website. It creates a great place for students and parents to find missing assignments and/or plan ahead for a future absence. It will save teachers time, stay organized, and be on track, creating the accountability needed as it is all published on the website. The website will save time with educational planning as class material previously used throughout the school year will be saved on the website, ready for easy access. Finally, having a classroom website meets the needs of many students who have an IEP or 504 plan (paras. 3-10).

Haines (n.d.) discussed the huge benefit of creating a classroom website: keeping parents in the loop. After surveying her students' parents, she wrote about "the many tools that can help you design a website to keep parents in the loop" (para 1). She said to give parents what they want - the basics. They want nightly homework assignments, calendars, a way to provide feedback to the teacher, and educational links. They want a classroom website to be easy to use and updated (para. 2-3). Olmstead (2013) stated that "keeping parents involved in their children's schooling is just as much a responsibility of the school as it is of the parent" (p.37).

Teachers, students, and parents can all benefit in the use of a classroom website. Everyone involved is benefiting in different ways, but in the end, everyone is building a stronger relationship because they are more connected. Teachers and parents are now able to communicate outside of school hours, and parents can feel more involved when they can click on the website to check-in on in their child's classroom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, research has suggested that communication between parents and teachers comes in many different ways. With the advancements of the internet and technology with smartphones, schools and parents are finding easier ways to communicate and keep more updated with what is happening in their child's classroom. While creating a classroom website, teachers should be pre-planning and being specific with what they want to present in order to be an effective communicator with parents, students, and the community. Huseth (2001) suggested that "when schools work with

families to support learning, children succeed not just in school, but throughout life”
(p.17).

Now that I have presented the research on the history of technology, the effectiveness of parent engagement, classroom/school websites, and the suggested benefits of a classroom website, I will be moving into chapter 3. Chapter 3 will be about the who, what, where, when, how, and why questions related to my research question: How does a classroom website increase a positive communication relationship between parents and teachers?

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain the methods I used to create my classroom website, the audience I worked with, and how I evaluated my students' parents after my project was complete in order to answer my research question: Does a classroom website increase positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers? This research question stemmed from wanting to create a way to increase my positive two-way communication with parents. I used many one-way communication methods with parents and had not really found successful ways that answered my research question. I wanted to create a two-way communication line with my parents, and I decided that a classroom website was a good option. My project helped me better understand whether a classroom website worked as a positive two-way communication line with parents. This chapter will discuss my audience and setting, research paradigm, my research tools, the theory I based my website on, and the program I used to create my website.

Audience & Setting

My intended audience were parents of students from my classroom. The charter school I work at is located in a large urban city in the Upper Midwest, consisting of about 223 students from pre-kindergarten to eighth grade. All students qualify for free and reduced lunch, and about 90% of the students are English Learners. Specifically, my

fourth grade classroom consists of students who are of Somali, Spanish, and Oromo descent. The classroom is made up of 9 female students and 9 male students. Of the 18 students in the class, 15 students are English Language Learners and 1 student is on an Individual Educational Plan. My class has 16 Somali students, 1 Oromo student, and 1 Spanish student.

With a completed project, the website was used to communicate with the parents of my 18 fourth grade students. Together, we have learned how to use a classroom website, and I used this qualitative research to decide on whether or not it created a positive two-way communication relationship.

The Research Paradigm

Throughout the last five years of teaching I have worked really hard at creating and mastering the curriculum, and I have worked with parents at creating functional lines of communication. Those lines of communication were at times strong, and at other times the lines of communication were broken. I have always believed that as a teacher, parents are an essential part of a child's learning. In order to develop better communication paths with my students' parents, I created a classroom website for my parents to learn about the classroom curriculum, events, schedules, and student work. There was also a link directly to my email so communication with me was one-on-one. Once my project was complete, I used a variety of qualitative methods such as: pre and post questionnaires, interviews, and observations with my parents to gain feedback from their experiences. I also documented the number of times parents asked about the website, communicated with me through the website, and how the parents reacted to

website training. The pre-questionnaires and post questionnaire were self-created with specific questions about their needs that related to my classroom website.

Research Theory

Throughout my research I found and learned about a few different ways of developing a classroom website. Eventually, I landed on Dunn and Peet's proposed taxonomy of a classroom website and decided that this was the most beneficial method to follow. Dunn and Peet (2013) created a taxonomy of a classroom website with the different levels of information. It started with the basic information needed for any website and moved into a more student/teacher interactive website (p. 24). I used levels 1 through 3 with my parents for my research, and in the future I will use the student pages with my students.

My first level or first page is the Static Level. According to Dunn (2011) "the purpose of a static website is to disseminate information that doesn't change, the kind of information a teacher might send home on the first day of school" (para. 5). Then my second level or second page is called the Semi-static level. Dunn (2013) states that "dissemination of information that changes periodically" (p.25). So, the content that I used on this page was information about classroom announcements, upcoming school events, extracurricular activities, class news, photos from class activities, awards and student work. The final level of information is what that Dunn calls the Supplemental Resource. Dunn (2011) states that "sites often contain information typical of Level 1 and 2 sites, but they also include links to teacher-created resources (study guides and outlines) and outside resources in relation to the curriculum (such as games, puzzles, videos, and

the course textbook site). This site is generally updated every 2-6 weeks” (para. 10). Dunn also included two more levels in his taxonomy of creating a classroom website involving interactive pages for the students. But since I was focused on building two-way communication with my parents, I built the first three levels first, and I added the interactive component once I established a working two-way communication line with the parents.

Website Program

After looking into the different teacher websites, I chose to use Weebly Education because they offered many different features that I wanted while I was researching Dunn and Peet’s taxonomy of creating a classroom website. Weebly offered public and private pages, so I could display classroom activities, pictures, and school events. It also has an area where I could post private information for parents and students. It also has a feature that will track people that visit the website, so I could use that information in my project as well. Weebly gave me the choice to get my students involved in blogging in a private setting, so eventually I could create a page for each of my students. My classroom website is the first in our school other than the school’s website.

Research Tools

Once my project was complete, I used qualitative research to help me gather information on whether or not I was able to create a lasting two-way communication relationship. Creswell (2014) stated that qualitative research “is an approach for exploring and understanding the meanings of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p.4). My tools focused on exploring the feelings my students’ parents

develop towards a classroom website. The qualitative research I used were pre and post questionnaires, interviews, and observations.

Now, after creating my classroom website and project, I wanted to hear what my parents' wanted and needed from me regarding building an effective relationship. I had the parents individually fill out the pre-questionnaire before I started interacting with my classroom website. It consisted of 'yes' or 'no' questions and some open ended questions, so I could gauge their feelings towards the idea of a classroom website. If a parent struggled with a questionnaire, our school's parent liaison helped translate the questions.

My next research step was the observations that took place while I was spending time with my parents at the website training sessions. The training sessions included myself, a translator, and the technology teacher. I noted the different reactions and questions parents were asking, as this decided on whether or not I answered my research question.

Throughout the first few months after my project was complete, and my website was being regularly used by parents, I set up personal interviews with willing parents. I heard what their feelings were towards the classroom website. What communication elements have been changed throughout the process? I wanted to be able to make changes along the way if needed. The parents were the reason I created my classroom website, so learning throughout this interview process things that need to be fixed or changed from the perspective of parents was vital. The interviews created opportunities to build relationships with my parents, and it showed the parents that I am invested in this

project. These interviews started taking place randomly after my project was complete and it will continue throughout the rest of the school year. I will finish them up by the start of 4th quarter.

The final research tool is a post-parent questionnaire. This post-questionnaire will take place towards the end of the school year. I want to have time for the parents to continue to visit my classroom website and become familiar with it, so I will survey them at the end of the school. By then, they should have been able to visit the website many times. The post-questionnaires will help me decide if I should keep working on updating my classroom website for years to come.

Data Analysis Technique

As this project comes to completion, I continue to compile my research tools, so I can start working with my students' parents. The pre- and post-questionnaires, the observations, and the interviews will be conducted, looked at, and evaluated at the end of the year. With the information collected, I am able to determine whether or not my research question: Does a classroom website increase a positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers? was answered. Whatever the answer(s) may be, I will make sure the results reflect what I learned throughout process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, having created a classroom website for my capstone project I continue to try and decide: did I create a positive communication relationship with parents? Next, in Chapter 4, I have reflected back on my research and the information I have gained throughout my capstone project. It will include a description and

explanation that are related to my conclusions I learned from completing my project. I will also discuss the answers to my question: Where I am going from here in regards to the future use of my capstone project based on my results and recommendations?

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

To conclude my capstone project on: Does a classroom website increase positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers, chapter 4 will include project characteristics, the implications from my research, the limitations I faced and the next steps. It will explain how my project benefited my teaching and my professional development as a teacher. My capstone project was to create a classroom website that included a home page welcoming people to my website, an introduction page that gave a brief overview of myself, a blog page with classroom topics and pictures, and, finally, a contact page.

Through my literature review, it was clear that communication between teachers and parents plays a huge role in developing relationships. One-way and two-way communication has been evolving throughout the years and now with the advancement of technology, teachers and parents can finally benefit from a quick form of two-way communication: a classroom website. A classroom website gives parents and teachers time outside of school to respond to each other, insight into what is happening in a parent's child's classroom, and teachers an opportunity to introduce themselves to their parents. Teachers can also go beyond the basics by adding pages for their students to blog.

With the different designs and research, I chose to use Dunn's Taxonomy of a classroom website. This design was simple to follow and when looking at different products on the internet, it worked the best with the templates I found on the websites. This taxonomy used four focuses: welcome page, a biography page, a blog page, and a contact page. It also suggested that teachers can enhance their website by including student pages for private blogging within the classroom, and a parental resource page for additional help in advancing students' academic progress.

Project Characteristics

I started creating my classroom website in September using the website builder, Weebly. My website, msceglasclassroom.com is designed with teachers and parents in mind. I wanted to create a website that encouraged parents to continually visit as it is updated regularly with information about what's happening in their child's classroom. When parents visit my website, they will be directed to the Homepage that gives links to a school calendar and the school website (Figure A). Parents can then look through the tabs at the top of the page to decide what page they want to read (Figure B).

At the top of the page, parents can click on the About Ms. Cegla page, Classroom Blog page, Monthly Newsletter, or the Contact page. The About Ms. Cegla page will introduce parents to their child's teacher and hopefully start building a relationship that will continue throughout the year (Figure B). Another tab, Monthly Newsletter, will inform parents about what is happening in the classroom for the month. This tab will be updated once a month (Figure C). The next tab, Classroom Blog, which has the information I feel will be the most beneficial to parents. It is where they are given up-to-

date details about what is happening in the classroom (Figure D). My final page is the Contact page (Figure E). When parents are visiting the classroom website, they will have the opportunity to contact me through this page. The comments and questions made by this page, once submitted, will be emailed directly to my school email account.

Additionally, in the future, as the parents become more engaged in visiting the website, I want to add pages that include classroom curriculum and resources that will help their child outside the classroom.

After I created the website, I took a trial run on visiting my website. (If a website isn't accessible for everyone then I didn't do my job.) I checked each tab and each link to make sure all was working well. Each link brought me to the correct destination and displayed the correct information depending on which page I was reading. When the website was completed, I had some peers review the website as a whole. I asked them to check out the functionality of the website where no errors were found. After some suggestions about font and color of titles, changes were made to enhance the visibility more to the viewer.

I learned that creating a website was easier than I thought it would be. The hardest part was getting started with the beginning steps of creating the website. With practice it became easier each time I opened up the program to add to the website. Using a website builder, after putting in the necessary research, created an easy building process to complete a professional and functional classroom website.

Implementation Plan

The implementation plan will start in January of 2018. My students will be introduced to the classroom website in December while in the classroom. They, in turn, will then be able to show their parents at home. I will also send home a newsletter that will update parents about the website. I will include a survey for my parents to fill out regarding their needs and wants in a classroom website. My final step, before officially launching my classroom website, will be to set up a viewing day where parents can come to the school, and with my lead, try out the website. Because of the possible language barriers and other factors, this will include the assistance of a parent liaison.

Implications and Research

My philosophy in education has always included building relationships through positive communication with parents, which is why building my classroom website is so important to my career. Teaching has always been a two-way street that includes parents and teachers. In trying to facilitate this two-way communication, I have learned that there are many positive ideas about a classroom website.

According to Kasprovicz (2002), “The district survey indicated that parents and students want timely grade updates and a way other than traditional techniques to communicate this information; i.e. online (pg. 26).” Many parents have busy schedules, so providing them with a online opportunity to communicate with teachers is a huge benefit to a classroom website. Many of my student’s parents work outside school hours, so they cannot always meet with me after school, so providing them with an online way to communicate with me would create better relationships between home and school.

There are always concerns when creating a new communication tool as well. One big concern that may affect my teacher-parent relationship, I believe, is the language barrier. Many of my parents are not fluent English speakers, so I need to take this into consideration. However, Ramirez(2001) suggests,

“...plan a time when you or someone else may be willing to train parents to access the information you will put on the Internet. Having a training session based on your schedule based on your schedule, however, will not ensure parental involvement. Survey parents to find times when they are able to attend. Survey parents to find times when they are able to attend. If a majority of parents are available on Saturdays, then organize a Saturday session (p.30).”

When I open the website up to parents, I plan on surveying parents and providing trainings for parents, being hopeful that my website will gain popularity throughout the school year.

Limitations of Project

Throughout the process of designing this classroom website, I came to the conclusion that I am not as tech savvy as I thought I was. There are several useful websites design programs that can help people with setting up their own website. I had to research my options and decide which one was going to be the most useful. After researching a few different website design programs, I decided to use Weebly.com. I really liked how Weebly had the templates for each page set up for me. I read the reviews online about how friendly it was to use. So after the positive reviews I decided to buy a one-year membership fee to use the web creator, and to own the URL named

msceglasclassroom.com. Weebly.com taught me how to set up my website. I was able to use templates for each of my pages connected to my website, which were all created by me. I also spent some time browsing other teachers' websites, so I could get some ideas on what I wanted to incorporate into my website. I found that many websites I liked had a biography page, a blog page, and a contact page, so those pages were a definite must have. Later in the school year, I also hope to expand my classroom website by adding student pages, so that each student in the classroom can blog about different topics we are discussing in the classroom.

Next Steps

With my website published, msceglasclassroom.com, is a working website. As I work with the parents in my classroom, I hope to develop the classroom website into a functional communication piece that parents are visiting on a weekly basis. Once I know parents are using the website on a regular basis, I hope to continually add pages to my site. For this to happen, I will have to find a way to keep the website running on a yearly basis. I will be looking into different grants available to help with upkeep and the renewal of my website. When I started creating my website, I was given some information about putting advertising on my website. This could be another option for raising money to maintain the website. Finally, I will need to make sure I am documenting classroom activities and photographing students working throughout the school year in order to have pieces to add to my blog page.

Personal Growth

With the creation of my own website, I have developed a great tool for parents to visit the classroom at their convenience and communicate with their child's teacher. In hopes of developing strong, positive relationships through the website, students will want to learn more in the classroom.

The true test of success with this classroom website and my capstone project is my own ability to maintain the website on my own. If problems occur, I need to fix them. I need to keep up to date with the blogging, so parents are informed about their child's work and experiences in the classroom. I need to be responsible for responding to emails sent through the website on a timely manner. Finally, I want to be able to teach and encourage other colleagues to create their own classroom website. I hope to be given the opportunity to present to other teachers. If teachers are interested in designing their own websites, I want to provide them with help when needed.

Final Thoughts

In conclusion of chapter four and my capstone research project on *does a classroom website increase positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers*, I will review my main ideas on the benefits of using a classroom website to communicate with parents. The information I researched suggests that a classroom website, when used correctly, can promote a positive relationship between parents and teachers. A classroom website gives parents the opportunity for a quick glance into their child's learning, and giving them the chance to immediately communicate with questions or comments related to what's happening in the classroom. After a year of feedback and

contact received from parents, I will re-evaluate if the classroom website is indeed effective in building parent-teacher relationship and communication. Either way, I know that this Capstone website project has helped me with not only my professional growth, but in the educational world.

APPENDICES

Figure A

MS. CEGLA'S CLASSROOM WEBSITE

[HOME](#)

[ABOUT MS. CEGLA](#)

[CLASSROOM BLOG](#)

[MONTHLY NEWSLETTER](#)

[CONTACT](#)

Welcome to Fourth Grade!



Figure B



Family

My name is Cortney Cegla and I'm a fourth grade teacher at Cedar Riverside Community School. I currently live in Blaine, Minnesota. I have a twin brother and a younger sister. My brother, Tim is married and has a one year old and a little boy on the way. My sister works as a technician in an eye clinic. My dad is retired from being self-employed for 25 years and my mom works in the Twin Cities

Figure C

NOVEMBER NEWS FROM 4TH GRADE

Important Days:
 November 5th, Daylight Savings Ends-Turn you clock back!
 November 6th, 2nd quarter starts

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH....

- We start 2nd quarter Monday, November 6th!
- We will start learning about the Water Cycle in Science and we will be welcoming some Augsburg students in the classroom to teach about Electricity.
- Now that the students have finished up their multiplication unit, we will be diving into division.
- We will continuing working our way through our reading curriculum and spending time in small groups everyday! The students will spend time reading independently, but should also be working on reading at home.

Figure D

MS. CEGLA'S CLASSROOM WEBSITE

[HOME](#) [ABOUT MS. CEGLA](#) [CLASSROOM BLOG](#) [MONTHLY NEWSLETTER](#) [CONTACT](#)

End of the Quarter Field Trip

10/29/2017 0 Comments

Pumpkin Patch & Apple Orchard Field Trip

Last week, the third, fourth and fifth graders took their first field trip to the Afton Apple Orchard! The students went on a hayride throughout their orchard. They learned about the different types of apples, how they grow, how to pick them, and how they sort them. They also were given the chance to pick their apples from the trees and then their own pumpkin from the pumpkin patch! After we picked our pumpkins and apples, we enjoyed feeding the animals and playing on the build park!



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Archives

October 2017

Categories

All

Figure E

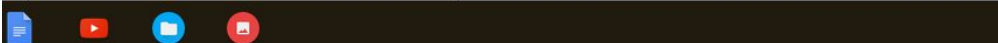
CLASSROOM WEBSITE

[HOME](#) [ABOUT MS. CEGLA](#) [CLASSROOM BLOG](#) [MONTHLY NEWSLETTER](#) [CONTACT](#)

Name *

Email *

Comment *



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