Teachers and Parents as Primary Sources of Support for Children During Remote and Online Instruction

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At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools all over the world closed their buildings and those children that were able to continue having a learning experience, did so under the immediate supervision of parents or other caregivers (UNESCO, 2020). As an alternative to traditional schooling, some children began receiving instruction using online devices, applications, tools, and/or programs (Bond, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). These sudden remote learners included students with special educational needs and other populations that have endured historical exclusion from, and even at school.

As schools shut their buildings during the pandemic, accessing instruction and social interactions with classmates meant logging onto the internet, entering a learning management system (LMS) and/or video conferencing platform, and participating from a space outside of the school. This presented additional difficulties for all involved. After all, teacher education had not deigned to help teachers learn to teach in online settings (Archambault et al., 2016; Kennedy & Archambault, 2012). In the research that existed about online learning, parent roles were often relegated to doing the bidding of the school, rather than participating as legitimate partners (Rice & Ortiz, 2021; Stevens & Borup, 2015). While there were likely some exceptions,

meeting the needs of students by providing real opportunities for inclusive educational experiences has been difficult, especially for children who already struggled to access instruction (Wheatley, 2021).

Unfortunately, as schools realized the potential difficulties of providing remote instruction, there were attempts to pressure families to sign waivers of services for their children with disabilities (Cohen & Richards, 2020; Education Law Review, 2020). New federal guidance was issued in 2020 curbing this practice (United States Department of Education, 2020). In some schools, leaders leveraged their local strengths to meet challenges. Such was the case in a report from Tremmel et al. (2020) who documented a small school's focus on communication, collaboration, professional development, resource distribution, compliance, and effective translation of state and federal guidelines allowed the school to meet student needs.

In short, teachers and families faced many challenges during this time, and the potential for mutual frustration and animosity was great (Rice & Deschaine, 2021). First and foremost, not all families had access to consistent internet service and devices for going online (Flores & Clancy, 2020). While some traditional classroom management concerns abated (e.g., leaving chewing gum on seats in class), engagement with the instructional materials emerged as a pressing problem (Xun et al., 2021). Social and emotional support for teachers, families, and children was also lacking (Miller, 2021). During remote learning, everyone was adjusting to new working norms for jobs, dealing with illness and death, and caring for additional children who may or may not have been in school (Alon, et. al., 2020; Özkazanç- Pan, & Pullen, 2020).

In dialogue with these challenges, the *Journal of Online Learning Research* is publishing four articles in this issue. The first two address teacher readiness for remote learning and adjustments made by physical education teachers. The second two focus on parent work during remote learning and in online learning.

In the first article, C. Lorraine Webb, Karen Kohler, and Rebekah Piper report on a survey of 679 K-12 educators across one southernmost part of a south-central state who shared their levels of preparedness during the transition to virtual learning in the spring of 2020/amid the COVID pandemic. These researchers found that educators continued to focus on professional development during the Summer of 2020 in preparation for the new academic year. Additional analysis showed that participants' self-efficacy of using technology to teach online remained high.

In the second article, Brandon Foye and Michelle Grenier document the lessons learned of K-12 physical educators as they shifted from in-person to remote learning in Spring 2020, because of the coronavirus pandemic. Fifteen K-12 physical educators participated in semi-structured interviews, utilizing online virtual meeting software. Questions in the interviews centered on their processes of, and experiences with remote teaching.

Then, a constructivist lens was utilized to analyze participant responses. Findings from this study indicated a need for lesson simplicity and student autonomy were common themes among the participants, as were challenges related to student accountability. Participants also agreed that opportunities for student socialization were difficult to replicate in the online environment.

In the third article, Kiran Budhrani, Florence Martin, Oliver Malabanan, and Jose Lloyd Espiritu report on the transitional lived experiences of work-from-home parents, uncovering their roles and activities while balancing duties of working, parenting, and assisting children with remote learning. Using a phenomenological approach, a three-step coding process was applied to understand parent engagement with parents from the Philippines. Parents demonstrated a positive mindset amidst balancing five academic roles including organizing learning, facilitating learning, monitoring learning, motivating learning, nurturing learning, and a sixth role in supporting learning. The role of "supporting learning" was deemed most important and central to the success of other roles. Parents assumed a primary instructor role as teachers were less prepared and performed activities distinctive to student needs. Parents served as digital classroom managers who organized schedules, assisted with assignments/projects, and participated in online chat groups. Parents repurposed living spaces and furniture for makeshift study and work areas. They helped their children develop an online learning mindset but faced challenges motivating them to focus and balance the right mix of screen time. Parents valued children's well-being, bonding time, socialization, and life skills.

In the final article, Gina Ricker, Daniel Belenky, and Mathew Koziarski examined parent involvement in online learning as a single behavior: logging into the child's LMS. The researchers used data from three virtual schools' LMS to measure the impact of parent involvement on mathematics achievement, across grade bands where parent involvement is known to decrease over time. After controlling for factors known to impact education outcomes, parental involvement, as measured by LMS logins, had a small, but positive, impact on student performance in mathematics across elementary, middle, and high school.

When school buildings closed in the spring of 2020 and as they have slowly tried to find various ways to open, educators and families have had to step into new roles. In considering these new roles, we encourage the use of the findings from the studies in this issue.

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