

# *No Student Left Behind?* Technological Interventions during the COVID School Shut Down

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# COVID-19 School Shut Down



- March 20th- 104,000 school closures affected 47.9 million students
  - 3.1 million households (14.1%) with school aged children do not have internet nationally
- In California,  $\frac{1}{5}$  students lack connectivity or the appropriate device (~1.2 million students)
- Survey from Gavin Newsom, 50% of low income families and 42% of families of color are worried about distance learning for their children because they lack proper devices
- 15,000 LA High Schoolers failed to log onto classes

# Digital Divide



- Providing meals for low income students, finding child care for essential workers, relying on remote learning and online classes exposes the country's digital divide
- One research study shows that schools with high concentrations of students from low income households have been less likely to expect teachers to provide real time, lessons, track student's attendance or grade their assignments

# Interview Methods

- 30 teachers or educators (principals, special education, STEM, english, foreign language, and history)
- Not discriminatory against age/race/subject matter/private vs. public schools/school district
- Basic qualification- teaching or working in a school district during the COVID school shut down
- Most are from Northern or Southern California. One from New York.
- Occidental Allum or through personal relations

# Central Questions



- Informal, conversational interviews- open ended questions
- 1. How has your school managed inequalities while students are learning from home? (e.g access to proper technologies, wifi, and a “proper” learning environment)
- 2. How does your online teaching compare to your live teaching? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each?
- 3. In addressing the entire pedagogy of an online curriculum, what are the most urgent and critical demands?

# The Reliance on Homelife and Parents

- Language Barriers
  - “I do not speak spanish and my spanish speaking students did not connect. I could not reach the families.”
- Students with supportive parents excelled
  - “If a child has parents who are not involved, they have truly suffered through this even and I am afraid they will never recover
  - Access to technology/materials/resources- some parents don't have cars to pick up devices
- Pandemic Stress and Anxiety
  - “I had a student whose parents both came down with COVID and when the father recovered, he had a massive heart attack. So here was a great student we were not getting work from”

# The Loss of Communities



- Community in the Classroom
  - “If we don’t have the community to be open about our own intersectionalities at the start of the year- then we are kind of screwed going forward because that is the foundational unit..How can we build community across screen?”
- Exposes our reluctance in Investing in our community
  - “How do you guarantee students can access class sessions and materials when they’re scattered to the four winds? This is *the* foundational problem of teaching during a pandemic, and our decades- long reluctance/unwillingness to invest in communities means that the most vulnerable among us are the most likely to be left behind in online teaching”

# Learning Accommodations



- Pre-recorded video lessons through asynchronous learning
  - “Being remote made it more difficult to provide real time accommodations for my mainstreamed learners on the spectrum.”
- English language learners
  - “A whole bunch of them, second language learners lost critical development and immersion time”
  - “Normally, I provide information in multiple mediums in order to increase comprehension for my english language learning students?”



# Mental Health of Students during Lockdown

- Strict isolation measures, stress/anxiety around covid/inability to reach out to students and check in
  - “I had another student and both of their parents were working during the day and the other one was sleeping because they were pulling night shifts as an EMT. The kid was an A student before schools closed and then all of a sudden we were not getting assignments from him.”
  - “They were so lonely. They didn’t really know how to reach out to new people; their old friendships started to feel stale when nobody could go anywhere and their conversations began to feel repetitive.”

# What does it mean to hold students accountable during this time period?

- Lack of motivation or “lazy” students, low attendance in class, and students should have more structure/guidance in their home lives
- Accountability can take form in focus on core standards, strict measures, and mass testing- No Child Left Behind Act
- Teaching and the relationships with students is more than accountability
  - Building community
  - Personal relationships
  - Understanding/support during the pandemic

# Suggestions Moving Forward



- Arundati Roy [*The Pandemic is a Portal*]- “Nothing could be worse than a return to normality”
  - Continued racism and capitalism that limits students from resources they need and deserve
- Covid revelled new expectation of teachers to be creative, react to the needs of students/families basked by the district, institute teacher pedagogy instead of testing

# Suggestions Moving Forward



- Teachers making socio-emotional learning a top priority
- Building a community around them/learning about prominent social justice issues that affect the communities around them
- Finding student interest which create personal connections
  - List of movies/tv shows/ documentaries
- Using the internet as an open platform to inspire students