THE JOURNAL
OF JUVENILE COURT, COMMUNITY, AND ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF CALIFORNIA

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CALIFORNIA COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENTS

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VISION

Under the direction of the County Superintendents, and as a sub-committee of the Student Programs and Services Steering Committee (SPSSC), JCCASAC is a professional educational organization dedicated to preparing students who are enrolled in county alternative education programs to become self-sufficient adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are competent, caring, and academically prepared for their futures.

MISSION

The mission of JCCASAC is to support student success by creating a collegial network of County Office administrators who:

- Research and share best practices regarding new and innovative program options for at-risk students
- Provide training, support and assistance to new administrators
- Endorse and support legislation that advocates for the learning needs of all students
- Give input and guidance to the superintendents relative to the diverse needs of our student population

GOALS

- Improve student achievement through research and sharing best practices
- Support special projects that enhance instructional programs
- Provide regular training for new county office administrators
- Conduct successful conferences with statewide representation
- Publish the JCCASAC Journal that informs superintendents, administrators, teachers, and affiliated agencies of the latest research, effective teaching practices and methodologies, and that showcases successful programs
- Provide scholarships to eligible graduating seniors in order to encourage life long learning
- Represent JCCASAC through participation in statewide committees
- Monitor legislation affecting County Office alternative education programs
- Advocate for legislation and policies that support the unique needs of our student population

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

John Rice
Executive Director

Santa Cruz County Office of Education

On behalf of the JCCASAC Board, I would like to thank you for participating in the 53rd Annual JCCASAC Conference here in San Diego. Each of you are part of a long lasting organization of teachers, administrators and support staff dedicated to the success and well-being of our at-promise youth. For over five decades, JCCASAC has led the way in innovating and advocating for the students of California's Court and Community Schools.

I am grateful for the JCCASAC organization, its history, and the collective knowledge of all its members that allows us to network and share best practices in serving our students. While each county office program is unique, we share a common mission. As a professional organization, JCCASAC is committed to forming partnerships, reviewing legislation, creating policies and procedures to advocate for support of our students and programs. We want JCCASAC to continue to be your best resource. We encourage you to stay connected and become involved by frequently visiting our website and by attending Regional and General Membership meetings in addition to this fantastic conference.

It has been an honor serving as the JCCASAC chair this year. I am grateful for having had the privilege of being on this team for the support of my colleagues. There is no other organization like this! It is my hope that as new members, you too will get involved and network with peers from all over California. Here you will find creativity, passion and commitment to excellence, and you will make long lasting friends along the way. We are excited that you are here and looking forward to seeing you throughout the conference.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT

Joanne Finney
Principal, SOAR Academy
San Diego County Office of Education

I currently serve as the Principal for the SOAR (Success Opportunity Achievement Results) Academy at the Youth Transition Campus for the San Diego County Office of Education. I began my career with detained students at the Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex in Brownwood, Texas, Texas Juvenile Justice Department, where I served our students as Assistant Principal and Principal. Upon my return to California, I became the Principal at SDCOE for students in detention and in our community schools. I then moved to being a Principal supporting both our pre and post adjudicated students. From the first day of my teaching career over 20 years ago, students At Promise have held a special place in my heart. I have had the privilege of supporting students to explore their potential in grades, K, 1, 2, 4, 7th, 8th, Algebra 1, English, Special Education (Full inclusion, Resource and SDC) and US History in traditional schools. I truly believe next to the quest for peace, our nation's most important goal is the development of high-quality educational experiences that will prepare our students for life in a fast-changing and complex world. Finally, I believe our court and community schools are a sanctuary where students may maximize their academic, behavior, and social abilities, and know that they matter.

On behalf of the JCCASAC Executive Board, I would like to welcome you to the 53rd Annual JCCASAC Conference. JCCASAC is dedicated to preparing students who are enrolled in our county alternative education programs to become self-sufficient adults who live healthy lifestyles, and are knowledgeable, compassionate, and academically prepared for their future. For over 50 years the JCCASAC community has shared evidence-based practices and has advocated for the most marginalized students in our counties. The work we do is highly specialized and JCCASAC aims to support each county in providing the best educational experiences to their students. I am truly humbled and appreciative of our members who have gone above and beyond to share their knowledge and experiences by submitting an article to our journal, participating in our Regional and Statewide meetings, or presenting at our conferences. Through our shared experiences we can impact our students, our staff, and our communities, by letting them know that they matter.

I am quite enthusiastic about our theme #YOUMATTER! There is a very old story about a little boy who continues to question his granddaddy about all the sights and sounds of the farm. One evening about dusk, the little boy asked about the fireflies as they began to dance among the trees. He asked, "Why do they light up? Where does the light come from?" His granddaddy was not sure of the how and the why, so his response was simple, "It's the stuff inside of it."

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT

There is a great connection we can make from the firefly story for our students, families, staff members, and education partners. We all have great potential, possibility, and purpose inside of us that needs to come to light. As our keynote speaker, Angela Maiers states that #YOUMATTER is our call to action to empower ourselves, our students, and others to acknowledge and put to use the gifts entrusted to each of us, as well as realize the importance of contributing to the world by living our genius. This simple message has the power to change the lives of our students, their families, our staff members, and our collaborative partners as we recognize each person's significance, relevance, and importance.

Our keynote speakers have been intentionally selected to inspire and motivate you to expand your thinking on how our actions define our impact. Our first speaker will be Chef Jeff Henderson who started his culinary career in the unlikeliest of places: federal prison. While serving nearly ten years, he discovered an untapped passion for cooking, which led to executive chef positions at The Bellagio and Caesars Palace Hotels. His story will be a message of commitment, redemption, and change. Our speaker on Wednesday will be Dr. Amy Lopez, former Deputy Director of Education for the Washington DC Department of Education and Superintendent of the Lone Star School District for the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. Her topic will be From Burned Out to Fired Up! How to use instructional methods that are common in traditional school settings in innovative ways to maximize learning in secure or alternative settings, igniting a flame of excitement in students, teachers, and administrators. Our final speaker will be Angela Maiers. Ms. Maiers is a world-renowned author, entrepreneur, international keynote speaker, and educator, whose transformative message of the importance of mattering has the power to unleash the genius in us all, who will speak to Liberating Genius. Liberating Genius is a framework and system that fuels innovation, creativity, and the ability to impact our learning and the world.

Our conference this year has over 20 breakout session from which you may choose. These sessions include presentations on school leadership, integrating the visual and performing arts into the core academic instruction, high-interest strategies to support all learners, CTE programming, and so much more. Our industry partners have an integral part of our conference as they join us in sharing their engaging curriculum and services. We encourage you to visit them and hear how they may support your students.

Please join us on Wednesday between 11:30 am and 3:30 pm in the Vendor's foyer for our SDCOE CTE students' Marketplace. They will have items to sell, as well as explain what they have experienced and learned in our CTE programs. On Thursday we will honor the outstanding court and community school educators at the Teacher of the Year Awards and luncheon. In addition, we will honor former JCCASAC Chair, Wendy Frink, of San Joaquin County with the Peshkoff Award for her service and dedication to JCCASAC. On Thursday evening, at 5:00 pm, please join us on the beach as we celebrate and honor our JCCASAC Chair, Johnny Rice, who has provided leadership to the Board for the past two years.

The Board is excited that you have chosen to participate and collaborate with your friends and colleagues throughout the state who share your passion to see our students thrive regardless of the barriers they have had to overcome. Remember your story matters. Your hopes, dreams, and fears matter. All that you are matters. You make a difference. #YOUMATTER!

Thank you for attending the conference, and we hope to see you next year.

Dr. Paul Gothold
San Diego County
Superintendent of Schools

Thank you for joining us at the 2023 JCCASAC Conference. The San Diego County Office of Education is excited to welcome you to our wonderful city and to this important event.

This conference is an opportunity for county offices of education to celebrate innovative instruction and dynamic teachers, share best practices, and network with one another, as the positions you hold are as unique as the students you serve.

This year's theme is "#YOUMATTER!"

Let those words sink in. You matter. How often do you think your students have heard those words?

Our students have seen and experienced unimaginable trauma, faced immense challenges in life and in school, and likely been told time and again they're insignificant. As educators, we're uniquely positioned to provide academic guidance, social and emotional support, and also be that trusted adult in their lives who can tell them that they matter and hold significance. Each one of us has the ability to use the words "you matter" and potentially change someone's world.

In addition to these powerful words, the programs and supports in place in our juvenile facilities are also helping to transform lives. Career technical education programs provide students with practical and soft skills, connecting them with internships, apprenticeship programs, and jobs upon release. They have access to college courses through dual and concurrent enrollment, and opportunities to explore visual and performing arts and other extended learning options. We provide assistance to families with food, housing, education, and training to ensure our students' support networks are as strong as they can be. We are showing all of them that they matter.

Our keynote speakers this year include an award-winning chef from San Diego who began his culinary career in prison and two educators who've spent their careers developing educational programs for incarcerated youth. We hope their experiences will inspire you and ignite some ideas you may have not considered.

I know this work can be both challenging and rewarding, and you may feel overwhelmed at times. It can be difficult to see how what you do makes a difference in the lives you touch, but it does matter to your students and families, your colleagues, and the greater community. We appreciate you, your hard work, and your dedication to improving the lives of our students. Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Gothold
San Diego County Superintendent of Schools

THE HISTORY OF JCCASAC

BY BOB MICHELS, PAST PRESIDENT

WITH THANKS TO KEN TAYLOR AND JEANNE HUGHES

Before we can discuss JCCASAC, it is important to discuss the history of Court and Community Schools in California. Fifty years ago the responsibility for operating court schools in county operated detention facilities was that of the California Youth Authority, today known as the California Division of Juvenile Justice, a division of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Generally, CYA would assign the responsibility to the probation department, who generally contracted with the local district or districts. The educational services that would result were often fragmented, lacked a focus on the unique needs of the Court School student population, and often became a simple extension of a nearby K-12 school program. A common result was an educational program that was generally substandard and often forgotten. At best, students received a satisfactory education. At worst, students received little or no education and the education they did receive was unsatisfactory.

There were a number of counties that had developed strong working relationships between the county probation department and county office of education relative the education of incarcerated youth. As early as 1971 and 1972, legislation was introduced to shift the educational responsibility of students housed in county operated detention facilities from the California Youth Authority to the County Board of Education. These early efforts by the Santa Clara County Office of Education failed. In 1976, a bill was introduced and passed that shifted the responsibility from CYA to the County Board of Education. Court Schools were the first mandated instructional programs that were the responsibility of the County Board of Education.

County Offices of Education (COE) were now able to hire their own teachers for Court Schools and provide appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the students. The COE operated programs were in juvenile halls and ranches and group homes and day centers.

The creation of Community Schools was much easier. Fifty years ago, the status offender (W&I Code 601) who was a runaway, a truant, or out of control was commonly locked up and served through the educational programs within the juvenile detention facilities. Assembly Bill 3121 (1975) decriminalized these status offenses for juveniles and changed the entire structure of the juvenile justice system. When the law was changed to eliminate the use of detention as a tool for dealing with the status offender, there was an immediate need to serve this population. One answer was the requirement that each county establish nonsecure crisis resolution centers for these students. Another answer appeared in the form of legislation that Los Angeles and Santa Clara Counties were instrumental in getting introduced in 1976 that was known as the Community Schools Bill.

The organization that is now known as JCCASAC (Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California) was founded in 1969 as JCSAC (Juvenile Court School Administrators of California). The organization began as a group of professionals with a common interest that was instrumental in the development of the early court school programs. Its first major success as an organization was seen in 1976-1977 when it supported the efforts of key Northern and Southern California counties in the passage of legislation establishing Court and Community Schools. With each passing year, the organization matured and took on new dimensions. It was not until the late 1980s that the organization changed its name to JCCASAC and included "Community" schools in its title.

What was once a stand-alone organization operated by JCCASAC administrators now works as a sub-committee of the California County Superintendents.

Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California

Self Esteem And Self Concept: Flipping The Locus Of Control For Alternative Education Students

By Jeff McCormick, Santa Cruz County Office of Education

Our students' "Locus of Control" (perceptions of where the individual's control comes from) is the catalyst of student empowerment. Students can believe power/energy/sense of control either originates internally or externally. Additionally, traditional comprehensive schools don't want all children to have an internal sense of control, as students are expected to sit and wait for (external) instruction. This model was designed and implemented as it was seen as the best method to "educate" mass groups of children within American society. The world has certainly changed a great deal since the establishment of an American public education system, so should we be continuing to educate our children through the same traditional methods?

Increasing a struggling student's self-esteem involves much more than simply saying words of encouragement before a formal assessment. This is at best, a "band-aid" approach and can actually undermine the goal of encouraging the learner's positive self-esteem needed for success. Words of encouragement this late in the process leave the child with not wanting to let anyone down as his/her main goal for doing well. Thus, their external locus of control is reinforced ("I am here to please authority – I hope I don't disappoint others"). It is essential to communicate to students that the shared (caring) relationship is unconditional.

For many Alternative Education students, low self-esteem was created in school and must be corrected in school. The school must reshape the self-concept of the child. I think in large part, this is what our alternative education programs accomplish, evidenced by the fact that we typically find helping struggling students reframe their change in placement as the initial challenge. ("I'm bad, so I got sent to the 'bad' school). We change self-concept by highlighting an individual's characteristics that are positive and healthy; we don't fixate on the ones that are negative and self-destructive. A major issue plaguing America's public education system is that schools unconsciously increase students' non-productive behaviors by bringing a lot of attention to what students "shouldn't do," rather than focusing on what students "should do." Schools operate mostly on the deficit model, selecting mostly what is wrong. I feel incredibly fortunate to

lead a program that has agency to modify instructional practices as needed to better meet the needs of struggling learners. This is the first step in increasing student self-esteem and reinforcing a positive self-concept. What we don't feed withers, what we do choose to feed grows. In our classrooms, our work centers around the philosophy of reinforcing a positive self-concept for all students. Many times, when students enroll in our program, their self-esteem is at an all-time low. There is no better place to recalibrate the learner's self concept than in a student-centered, asset-based program for youth where the student can have a "fresh start." This is the precise purpose of our program!

> MANY TIMES, WHEN STUDENTS ENROLL IN OUR PROGRAM, THEIR SELF-ESTEEM IS AT AN ALL-TIME LOW. THERE IS NO BETTER PLACE TO RECALIBRATE THE LEARNER'S SELF CONCEPT THAN IN A STUDENT-CENTERED, ASSET-BASED PROGRAM FOR YOUTH WHERE THE STUDENT CAN HAVE A "FRESH START." THIS IS THE PRECISE PURPOSE OF OUR PROGRAM!

The traditional model of schooling encourages individuals' external locus which leads to issues such as: generations of people not owning their energy, blaming others, and showing unwillingness to make positive reforms because this system "is the way it is." The public school system reinforces the concept that responsibility has a negative connotation. There is a great need to create youth who acknowledge that accepting responsibility for one's action does not have to be associated with guilt, blame, or punishment. When conflict arises, students should be able to communicate and own their "part" in the conflict.

Should all students demonstrate an internal locus of control? This depends on the social context. Students need to learn how to "flip the switch." When at school, students should be expected to give up control to certified professionals (school staff). Students must learn to surrender control at times to internalize values and thus, increase the likelihood of success when they must control themselves in a larger social world. An internal locus of control is rewarded by positive feelings. This is why it is so crucial that we "manage" students and not "control" them. Furthermore, this is why we should teach students "how" to think, not "what" to think. Through our strategies, assessments, and learning goals we must strive to educate students on the importance of valuing self-discipline and independent critical thought.

Bringing meaningful career and technical education to youth enrolled in court and community schools is often curtailed by a myriad of challenges. CTE programs historically are expensive to keep up and running, county office managed schools may be too small to warrant full-time CTE teachers, school schedules may not offer the blocked time needed for CTE activities, students attend for such a short time that complete CTE pathway programs are not possible, and the list goes on. Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) Alternative Education Division faced all of these challenges and more when beginning to reimagine bringing additional career-focused training to their campuses. The Trades Workshop Model was born out of KCSOS's commitment to find workable solutions to all of these issues. These workshops are just one element of the broader career and technical offerings in our schools, however they demonstrate a model that has been successful over time and could be easily replicated in other residential court school settings.

The primary needs addressed in developing the trades workshops were 1) funding, 2) securing qualified instructors, 3) scheduling, and 4) probation partnerships. The first need, funding, was met by applying for grants through K-12 Strong Workforce in partnership with our local junior college, through CTEIG (California's Career & Technical Education Incentive Grant), and by leveraging the instructors already in place through LCAP funds. By writing the grant narratives ourselves, alt ed insured that the promised outcomes could be realistically met. Grant funding put equipment, supplies, and infrastructure in place to begin offering trades workshops. Also included in the grant budgets were funds to cover extra-duty costs for certificated and classified employees, as well as industry expert instructors to lead these varied workshops.

The next need, securing qualified instructors, required some creativity and was key to making the trades workshop model work, grow, and become sustainable. One strategy was to poll our current teaching staff to determine if anyone had significant work experience in another industry prior to entering teaching or if they had a side hustle that they contributed significant time to that would allow them to apply for an additional credential in the complementary CTE pathway. KCSOS paid any costs associated with applying for the preliminary credential. KCSOS's CTE construction teacher had substantial experience in the restaurant industry. He was able to secure a CTE Food Service & Hospitality credential. This allowed our office to apply for funds and develop programs in this trade area as well. Additionally, retired community members with trade experience often welcomed a part-time work opportunity and didn't require benefits. Temporary positions could be written into the grants to pay an hourly wage and the cost/benefit of the employees in these positions has been tremendous. A former city maintenance supervisor brought a wealth of knowledge that elevated the skills taught and projects attempted in our

construction program. Furthermore, as a county office, KCSOS houses departments that employ experts in a variety of trades and industries. So far, we have partnered with employees from transportation, maintenance and operations, food services, and a graphic artist from communications to offer trades workshop instruction. They are paid an hourly rate based on what a local adjunct professor would make at the junior college per hour. The group pictured below recently completed

a week-long training to learn to build the electric vehicle pictured above via trades workshops. Four probation officers, two CTE teachers from KCSOS, along with the lead mechanic and the fleet manager for KCSOS's transportation division all took part in the training in order to impact more students with this project. This is a great example of shared vision in bringing these skill-building opportunities to students.

The next need was scheduling flexibility. At KCSOS non-residential schools, CTE classes, like construction, could be incorporated into the regular school day by developing a block schedule that allows for longer periods. Some days are devoted to academic blocks and other days to elective blocks that include CTE. In the residential facilities, however, the academic schedule is short and rigid with no room for longer CTE classes. This is where the last need came into play: a collaborative working relationship with the probation leadership at these sites.

Through meetings and discussions KCSOS discovered that probation was charged with offering skills training on the weekends for the youth in the facility. Since probation's role is primarily supervision and not education it had been a challenge to create meaningful experiences that were ongoing and might lead to employment in the future. If KCSOS could think out of the traditional school work week box, then huge blocks of time opened up to offer classes at the facility. With one core CTE teacher willing to work extra duty on weekends and probation's commitment to provide students and additional supervision for the classes,

the Weekend Trades Workshops were born. Guest instructors from various county office departments take turns conducting workshops in their key trade area to add to the culinary and construction workshops offered by KCSOS's CTE teacher. To date workshops have included welding basics, solar concepts, logistics, furniture building, cell tower technician skills, electric vehicle concepts, forklift safety, electrical wiring, and culinary arts with embedded ServSafe certification. The Culinary Trades Workshop is about to host its fourth cohort. The classes span three weeks of 4-hour classes on both Saturdays and Sundays. The students learn culinary and customer service skills and the culminating event is a working restaurant activity where students cook for and serve probation and education staff. Coming soon are drone building workshops and a Saturday auto detailing class to be taught and funded by the local junior college. Longer term students, who were formerly with the Youth Authority, participate in a student-run construction enterprise on Saturday afternoons they named APEX Wood Works. After winning the "Best of Show" and "Committee's Choice" awards at the Kern County Fair this year, the students were able to use the $1,100 in prize money as seed funds for what hopes to become a self-sustaining business enterprise. Students are assigned roles in the company and track purchasing, sales and inventory, plan new designs, etcetera.

In conclusion, the Trades Workshop Model is a flexible and adaptable way to offer real-world, hands-on skills experiences in a variety of trades, provide students with information regarding career options in each field, and provide guidance for where to access employment or further training upon release.
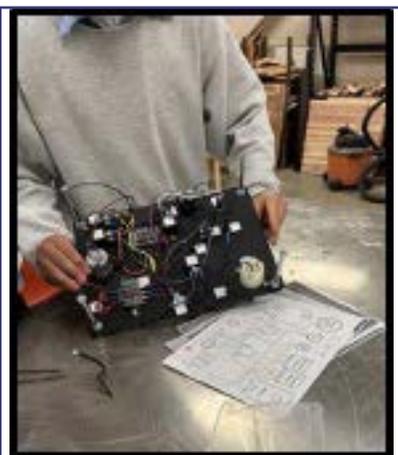
Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY?

THE PURPOSE OF A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY (PLC) IN SCHOOLS IS TO ESTABLISH, SUPPORT, AND STRENGTHEN HIGH-PERFORMING COLLABORATIVE TEAMS THAT WORK INTERDEPENDENTLY TOWARD COMMON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GOALS.

The science project Grace Sandoval assigned her students was about more than just chemistry.

It was about presentation, too -- before the students started mixing together everyday household items to see what would happen, they needed to make posters to go along with the experiments.

There would also be a showcase in Sandoval's classroom at one. Discover for students to present dramatic displays of chemistry, like when baking soda meets vinegar or a Mento's candy is dropped in a bottle of Coke. As a bonus, the showcase was an opportunity to invite student families to come and see the show, get involved in their child's education, and build a stronger connection with the school.

In addition to teaching academics, building relationships is a top priority for Sandoval and her colleagues at the one.Program, the alternative education program at the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE).

"If you have relationships with these students, they will work for you, and they will reach out to you," she said.

Purpose of a PLC
To establish, support, and strengthen high-performing, collaborative teams that work interdependently toward common student achievement goals

Fundamental Assumptions
- We can make a difference: Our schools can be more effective.
- Improving our people is the key to improving our schools.
- Significant school improvement will impact teaching and learning.

Relationship-building is at the core of one. Discover -- and this philosophy of making connections to learn and grow applies to the staff, too. From the campus security technician who first greets the students at the door to the teachers in the classrooms and all the other staff who work with students -- they keep each other informed about how students are doing and what to do to better reach them at the school.
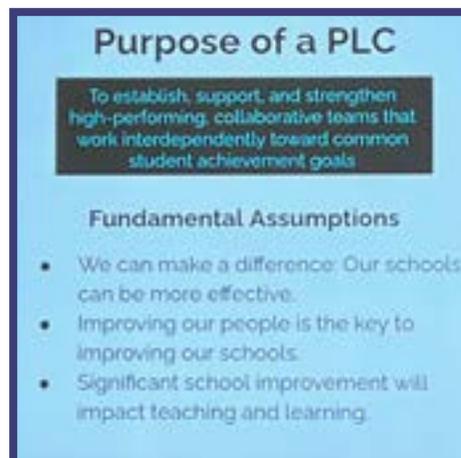
This happens at the program level, too. And that program-wide coordination ramped up this school year with the creation of the one.Program professional learning communities -- commonly known as PLCs.

"I like picking the brains of other teachers. There's never a time for a teacher to stop learning," Sandoval said.

The PLC meetings at the central SJCOE campus in Stockton brings teachers, campus safety technicians, clinicians, counselors, and administrators all together in one place to learn together and grow, said Brandy Thurman, the one. Program director organizing the PLCs. "It's a time to step back, exchange ideas, and find new ways to engage students."

The PLCs are divided into groups focusing on

different schools in the program: court schools, intervention sites, elementary sites, daily teachers, and independent study.

The program has sites from Tracy to Lodi in order to reach students across the county, so the PLCs bring teachers together -- especially those sharing subject areas -- and help build a stronger connection for all staff, said Melanie Greene, County Operated Schools and Programs division director who initiated the PLCs.

"There's no better professional development than just giving teachers time to think about how they want to improve and build off their successes," she said. "So, what better way to empower them than to give them time to think about what their students need, reflect on their instructions, and make changes?"

Empowerment is important, she said. "It's just like with our students. We want our students to be driving their education, and we want our staff to be driving their learning."

At one of the meetings of the PLCs this year, Sandoval was at the head of a classroom filled with her work colleagues. Along with fellow one.Discover teacher Gabriela Galindo, she led the group for teachers and other staff from daily community schools.

The pair kicked off a discussion looking at data that came from a group of schools. Then the members of the group jumped in, talking about their students and sharing what they were doing

that was helping move the data in a positive direction.

The discussion was conversational. They shared stories and photos and moved from the numbers to how they were building relationships with students.

And they inspired each other. They shared things to celebrate.

One teacher told the story about a student who seemed distant and untrusting of her teacher at the start of the year, but later turned in a writing assignment that showed she had felt connected to the teacher and to the school.

Another teacher shared how one of her students started off the school year by declaring that he planned to miss at least one day of school per week. But something changed as the year progressed. He came to class every day and told the teacher the reason why: "I like going to school."

This led the PLC discussion back to the data.

The educators dove back into the attendance numbers and started asking questions about incentive programs, in-home visits, and other ways to improve attendance at their schools.

The PLC session ended, and the educators left with new ideas in their minds and stronger connections with their colleagues.

Utilizing Trauma-Informed Visual Arts Strategies to Support the Social-Emotional Competencies of Stanislaus County Youth in Alternative School and Juvenile Justice Settings

By Amy Bultena

Stanislaus County Office of Education
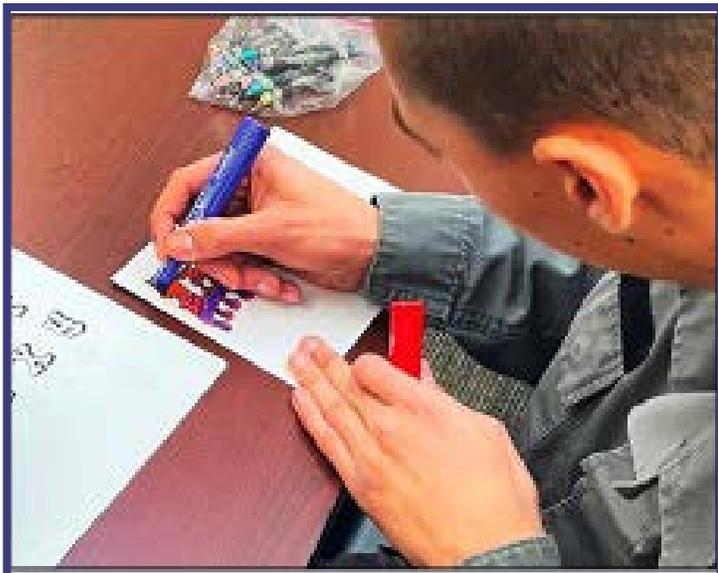
"Self-expression is a powerful tool, but it's hard to convince people that it's important" (Hannum, 2014). Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) is taking a huge step forward in exploring the profound benefits of self-expression for students in alternative school and juvenile justice settings. Through the implementation of regular visual arts experiences, SCOE is utilizing trauma-informed arts strategies to support the social-emotional competencies of youth in alternative school and juvenile justice settings.

Trauma is an important factor to recognize when providing social-emotional support and learning to students. Trauma is defined by the three E's: A negative event or series of events that is a harmful experience for an individual that has lasting negative effects (Huang, Flatlow, Biggs, et al., 2014). More than two-thirds of U.S. students report experiencing a traumatic event before age 16 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2022). Students who experience trauma exhibit increased learning problems, have more suspensions and expulsions, have increased involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and have long term health problems (Huang, Flatlow, Biggs, et al., 2014). Children living in poverty are more likely to suffer traumatic events. In California, 60.3% of students are socioeconomically disadvantaged; this number is higher in Stanislaus County where 71.5% of students are socioeconomically disadvantaged (California Department of Education, 2022). Often, students enrolled in alternative school and/or juvenile justice settings "have had traumatic experiences that affect their ability to learn and function in social settings" (Kay, 2008). This data is vital because it strongly indicates that most students in Stanislaus County in alternative school and juvenile justice settings have had at least one traumatic experience in their lives. In short, trauma may be a primary driver of the actions and behaviors that have resulted in students' enrollment in alternative school and/or juvenile justice settings.

Prior to the world impact of COVID-19, research showed that "despite their importance to education the K-12 system has not focused sufficiently on the socio-emotional factors that are crucial to learning" (Aber, Butler, Danziger, et al., 2015). And now, as the world lives in a new landscape, current research shows while 94% of teachers report students increasingly need more social and emotional support, only 7% of teachers feel prepared to address the social-emotional needs of students (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Educator Confidence Report, 2020). This data carries through to teachers working in alternative education. "While it may be presumed that [alternative school educators] would be well-versed in trauma-informed care, due to the high numbers of students who have encountered trauma, researchers have suggested that personnel often express confusion about what specific trauma-informed attitudes are needed to effectively implement trauma-informed care due

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making increases blood flow to the brain, increases the alpha wave brain patterns found in meditation and prayer, increases serotonin, enhances brain function, reduces pain, fatigue, and stress, strengthens empathy and impulse control, and reconnects parts of the brain that are damaged due to trauma (Caddes, 2012, Kay & Losel, 2018, Malchiodi 2006). All of this is to say that art is an incredibly powerful tool when it comes to social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care.

Stanislaus County Office of Education has designed a monthly program for students in alternative school and juvenile justice settings that allows for social-emotional learning through the use of trauma-informed arts strategies. Once a month, a credentialed visual arts teacher with trauma-informed arts certification visits each of the alternative and juvenile justice sites. Working in small groups, each student has the opportunity to engage in an art experience designed to help process trauma and increase social-emotional competency. Students in alternative school and juvenile justice settings are often sophisticated, and as such the projects offered are designed to be of interest to the students. It would be easy to present

to teacher training having a focus on disruptive behavior management, rather than understanding the underlying causes" (Quinn, 2021, pg. 9). The program implemented by SCOE seeks to help and support students in alternative school and juvenile justice settings through the provision of arts programming presented through a trauma-informed lens.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) impacts learners in profound ways. Students who participate in SEL programs see an 11 percentile increase in their overall grades, have better attendance, display strong prosocial skills such as kindness, sharing, and empathy, have improved attitudes toward school, have less depression, and have less stress (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, et al., 2011). Students who engage in social-emotional learning are better equipped to manage problems and trauma (Durlak, Domitrovich, Weissberg, et al., 2016). But, for SEL to be most effective, it must be intentional, purposeful, and embedded in the learning experience.

"Art-making provides opportunities for students to express themselves in nonverbal ways that may be hard for them to understand" (Kay & Losel, 2018, pg. 156). Art is such a powerful driver for emotional and creative health that research shows that it's not if an art practice will affect a social-emotional competency, but how it will happen (Farrington, Maurer, McBride, et al., 2019, pg. 28). Scientifically speaking, art

only projects with a positive and/or neutral effect. An example of this would be a "project" where students follow steps presented by the teacher to create a painting of a sunset. While such an experience may be pleasant for some, and interesting to a few, the overall experience would not address the student in any personal capacity; it would not be trauma-informed

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care. Addressing the personal is vital to trauma-informed care, and SCOE's program heavily emphasizes the personal experiences of students. Each art visit builds on the next with each project requiring more emotional input and labor from the students.

The program begins with a low-stake project wherein the students create a logo for themselves using a graffiti font; the culminating project is an abstract, visual journey of the five most important things and/or events in the students' lives. These projects give students time to not only express themselves and make the repetitive marks that are so key to repairing trauma, but the time spent working on the projects allows students to focus on themselves, their goals, and their needs.

The Stanislaus County Office of Education trauma-informed arts program focuses on the following trauma-informed care and trauma-informed arts strategies:

1. Trauma-informed care does not assume that students feel safe in educational settings. Instead, the instructor makes a concentrated effort to make students feel safe, fully explains the why, and explains and places emphasis on routine and consistency.

2. Trauma-informed care views resistance or acting out differently. The instructor addresses students calmly and considers the losses and/or possible benefits from a student deviating from instructions. For example, if working on a self-portrait and the students chooses to make their portrait look like someone else – ask why and explore if the reasoning makes sense before administering redirection.

3. Trauma-informed care considers how rules that might seem reasonable could actually be triggering.

4. Trauma-informed arts experiences recognize that art making may be new, and possibly intimidating to students. Students may not be excited about or instantly want to make art. They may wish to "test" the instructor to see if they will receive negative consequences for noncompliance. The arts instructor gives students time to ease into projects, and encourages students to begin when they feel "safe" and "good." The first project presented is designed to be easily accessible to all students so that students can build confidence by being successful at a skill they value.

5. Trauma-informed arts experiences normalize distress about art making. It is okay to feel nervous at first; it is a normal and natural part of the art making experience.

6. Trauma-informed arts experiences emphasize the here and now. Instead of reliving events earlier in the day, or worrying about what is to come, trauma-informed arts experiences encourage students to simply be present and open to the experience of art making.

7. Trauma-informed arts experiences are open-ended and avoid being too directive. Instead of giving students a product-based project that has a "right" or "wrong" way to proceed, the instructor provides process-based projects with multiple right answers and opportunities for success.

8. Trauma-informed arts experiences focus on a strength based approach. This means the projects presented connect to the students' realities, use materials that are familiar to them, and engages students in growth practices that are reasonable.

9. Trauma-informed arts practices give the students flexibility to practice making choices. Often, traumatized people feel a lack of control, autonomy, and choice in their lives. By providing opportunities for safe choice making, students are able to express agency, feel in control, safe, and empowered.

10. Trauma-informed arts facilitators believe every student is an artist and seek to encourage students to normalize art making as a regular part of their creative and emotional health.

The program is being implemented across four alternative education sites, including one juvenile justice site. While the program is still new, it is already showing great success. Students were understandably nervous at first, especially since most had limited access to arts learning experiences previously. However, after getting settled and reassured through the use of trauma-informed care strategies, the students eagerly participated in the arts experiences. It is affirming to see students enter a learning space with distrust and unease, and leave feeling empowered and excited. Lynn Groenveld, a SCOE Alternative Education teacher, shares that after participating in a social-emotional art experience her "students were transformed. Their attention to their studies, quiet work and pure joy of the day they had was an experience to behold. Paraprofessional, staff, clinicians and nurses, commented on the WOW moment that lasted all day." Moving forward, Stanislaus County Office of Education is eager to examine the short and long term positive effects of the program on the students, their observing teachers, and the culture of their academic communities.

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An abstract from a dissertation proposal presented to the Faculty of the School of Education, Loyola Marymount University, in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education, 2023

Introduction

As the diversity in the United States grows, the need to invest in the education of students of color, particularly indigenous students, is ever-present. Throughout the history of the United States, we can identify forms of erasure through narratives describing the United States as being a nation of immigrants, thereby disappearing indigenous creation stories which affirm indigenous peoples are not immigrants (Calderón & Urrieta, 2019). Some have referred to this as ignorance of colonialism, colonial amnesia, or colonial blindness (Behdad, 2005; Bourdieu, 2018; Calderón, 2016). This negligence has led to the erasure of ancestral wisdom and has resulted in some indigenous communities losing the sustainability of their cultural identity. Ceremonial practices, language development, decolonization of food preparation, and storytelling are a few sources of indigenous wisdom that have been eradicated over time, including within most mainstream school curricula.

Understanding these erasures' ripple effects and impact on indigenous students across the United States is important. To do so, expanding our lens and acknowledging communities that may not be readily identified as indigenous is significant when seeking to better understand and support students inside and outside of the classroom. To gain better insight into the number of indigenous peoples in the United States, we turn to the most recent data reflected in the census. In the 2020 Census, the American Indian and Alaska Native populations grew by 27.1% when counted as a single identity, and the American Indian and Alaska Native populations grew by 160% since 2010 when counted in combination with another category. Additionally, the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations grew by 27.8% between the years 2010 and 2020. Furthermore, when the Native Hawaiian population was combined with the Other Pacific Islander category, the percentage of the population grew to 30.8% (Jones et al., 2021). As of 2020, 62.1 million individuals identified as Hispanic or Latino. While the growing population of indigenous communities has continued to grow nationally, it is important to acknowledge that these communities continue to suffer disproportionate educational inequalities.

Unique to the indigenous cultures is a wealth of relevant knowledge applicable to student learning from elementary through graduate levels of education. Although underrepresented in mainstream curricula, indigenous knowledge can be applied in the arts, mathematics, sciences, language acquisition, and physical education. Research findings have urged educators to "look beyond schools and classrooms as sites of deep learning and powerfully reject binaries that devalue 'out of school' or non-academic knowledge" (Paris & Alim, 2017, p. 221). In New Zealand, educators have found that to encourage culturally sustaining pedagogical practices, they must draw from their learners' and community's cultural experiences and values. They have done this by looking beyond classrooms for richness in ancestral knowledge and mastery of mathematics demonstrated through Pasifika dance, where families and community members have opportunities to draw from the cultural capital and funds of the knowledge (Taeao & Averill, 2019, p. 133). Through mastery of musical rhythms, symmetry, and patterns, their students develop neural

pathways of emotional connection and develop creative storytelling to represent a mathematical expression that is represented through dance. Creating what can be identified as sacred spaces for children and youth to develop critical consciousness aligns with Paris & Alim's (2017) emphasis on reframing indigenous knowledge as something living and a fountain for the culturally sustaining, revitalizing, and humanizing pedagogies that can be used in education (p.104). In alignment with prior research, valuing indigenous knowledge helps foster authentic spaces of equity and create environments deeply responsive to student needs and strengths and rooted in a critical, historical analysis of educational and social inequity (Vossoughi et al., 2013).

Furthermore, to meet the needs of indigenous students, scholar-practitioners are called to design educational programs rooted in asset-oriented perspectives. They should include the voices from the communities where teachings are being delivered. This compels educators to 'build on [the] funds of knowledge' of diverse students and incorporate a strengths-based model to promote existing youth capital, persistence, and success (Rahm, 2016, p.73). Of similar importance, investing focus on Indigenous youth lies in their potential for organizing, and activism is linked to relational ways of being through comunalidad (Sanchez, 2018).

Statement of the Problem
Presently and especially in spaces where indigenous populations are concentrated, it is common for schools to exclude indigenous languages, peoples, or concerns in the formal curriculum. This invisibility exacerbates the steady and powerful settler/colonial project contributing to the erasure of indigenous communities in different sectors of society. An example of this includes the Federal Allotment

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Act (1887), proposed as the solution to the "Indian problem," permitting the federal government to break up communally held reservation land into individual parcels or allotments. In accordance with the act, individual tribal members would each receive a parcel of land to farm, with "surplus" lands opened for sale to White settlers. Though primarily viewed as the central mechanism for land dispossession, the Dawes Act also broadly affected tribal organization, family and kinship structures, gender relations, spiritual practices, and the legal status of individual Indians (Koslow & Salett, 2015). Such elimination strategies were codified through federal policies organized around the perceived humanitarian principle of "kill the Indian, save the man" (Pratt, 1973, p. 261). Native American communities are also tied to forms of injustice within the education system. Ladson-Billings (1995) reminds us that "the history of American Indian education began with mission schools to convert and use Indian labor to further the cause of the church. Boarding schools were developed as General George Pratt asserted the need 'to kill the Indian in order to save the man'" (p.5). Generations of Native American communities were subject to forced assimilation, loss of language and culture, and loss of life. Cited in Ladson-Billings (2005), Native American educator Cornel Pewewardy asserts that one of the reasons Indian children have trouble in schools is that educators traditionally have attempted to insert culture into education instead of inserting education into the culture (p.159).

In addition to Native American communities being targeted, historically, Latina/o youth have been excluded from free and equal opportunities for learning, which led to court cases of discrimination beginning as early as 1946. With further detail,

Ladson-Billings (2006) writes, "Latina/o students also experienced huge disparities in their education. Mendez v. Westminster (1946) details the ways that Brown children were (and continue to be) excluded from equitable and high-quality education" (p.6). Subsequent studies identify similar patterns of existing inequities, including one from Paris (2012) that suggests,

> Deficit approaches to teaching and learning, firmly in place prior to and during the 1960s and 1970s, viewed languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being of many students and communities of color as deficiencies to be overcome in learning the demanded and legitimized dominant language, literacy, and cultural ways of schooling (p. 93).

The work from Paris (2012) enhances the findings from prior research and delves deeper into an understanding of the root of erasures from history: "this climate and the policies and teaching practices resulting from it has the explicit goal of creating a monolingual society based on White, middle-class norms of language and cultural being" (p. 96). As such, students find themselves losing their heritage through language loss, cultural practices, and literacy in their native language. Scholars have outlined the origins and evolution of what has come to be known as deficit thinking as foundational to the project of racism and colonialism (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997). In sum, indigenous languages, history, and people have been excluded from the formal education curriculum throughout decades of history.

> To maintain a safe learning environment for all students, we must also acknowledge the relational dynamics between educator and student as being reciprocal. This requires educators to evolve curriculum choice and teaching practices to foster an inclusive and diverse classroom open to representing indigenous wisdom, languages, teachings, and ceremonial practices.

Relationship to Social Justice

Guided and inspired by the mission of Loyola Marymount University (LMU), the study is rooted in a commitment to be inclusive of faith traditions and aims at the advancement of justice in surrounding communities. Influenced by the Jesuit teachings of the university, the primary researcher felt the need to stay rooted in acts of social justice and foster a study in reconciliation and intervening in ongoing and historical systems of injustice. In alignment with the university's gestures to support internal services for indigenous students, decolonize elements of the core curriculum, and foster external partnerships which support healthy outcomes for indigenous students/families, this study extends the work to move from the LMU bluff into the margins of communities most in need of support.

As leaders in education, we are called to address the removal of barriers to education and should be held as a standard to continuously improve teaching practices to meet the needs of our students. To maintain a safe learning environment for all students, we must also acknowledge the relational dynamics between educator and student as being reciprocal. This requires educators to evolve curriculum choice and teaching practices to foster an inclusive and diverse classroom open to representing indigenous wisdom, languages, teachings, and ceremonial practices. In doing so, scholar-practitioners utilize the community's strengths to create culturally responsive ways of educating their youth.

Leaders from indigenous communities, alongside educators and researchers in the field of education, have attempted to place policy concerns and the

integration of cultural practices at the forefront by collaborating with U.S. government organizations, such as the Office of Indian Education and the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators. These efforts have highlighted the responsibility to meet indigenous students' unique educational and cultural academic needs to ensure they gain knowledge and understanding of their communities, languages, Tribal histories, and cultures. While legislation differs state by state, their efforts aim to ensure that school leaders who serve this population can provide culturally appropriate and effective instruction. As such, this allows an entry point for socially just scholar-practitioners to be in a unique position in which they can work alongside indigenous youth and their home communities to ensure culturally related academic needs are met.

Purpose of Study

Despite institutionalized ethnocide, resilient language and cultural teachings and traditions persist within pockets of native communities. These serve as sources of strength and healing. Progressive educators—and sometimes whole schools—heed a call to integrate the voices and realities of indigenous youth into formal schooling towards restorative acts of faith, social justice, and a representative curriculum. By doing so, educators manifest equity and inclusionary practices for marginalized communities. A central purpose of this study is to identify cultural wisdom and practices that indigenous youth bring into school and to explore how this contributes to creating a culturally sustaining and revitalizing learning environment. Another focus is to examine how educators can learn from indigenous youth, their cultural practices, and their teachings to decolonize school curricula further.

Arenas of impact from the results of the study will include teacher preparation, curriculum development, ethnic studies, maternal language instruction, federal civil rights entitlement programs, charter school law, and tribal education sovereignty programs.

Research Questions

To achieve insight into indigenous youth cultural assets, the following research questions guide this qualitative study:

1. What wisdom and cultural practices do indigenous youth carry that contribute to culturally sustaining and revitalizing learning environments?
2. How can educators learn from the indigenous youth to decolonize curricula?

> **REASEARCH QUESTIONS**
> 1. WHAT WISDOM AND CULTURAL PRACTICES DO INDIGENOUS YOUTH CARRY THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CULTURALLY SUSTAINING AND REVITALIZING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS?
>
> 2. HOW CAN EDUCATORS LEARN FROM THE INDIGENOUS YOUTH TO DECOLONIZE CURRICULA?

Theoretical Frameworks

Two conceptual frameworks guide this study and upset deficit views of indigenous students and families. These concepts are Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) and Culturally Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogy (CSRP).

The Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) framework emphasizes identifying and utilizing assets, or capital, as a catalyst to success in education. This framework challenges common perceptions of wealth and success with a movement away from a materialistic emphasis and shifting the focus through a strength-based approach. Through an inventory of

personal cultural wealth, students and educators can lean on each student's skills, past experiences, and acquired knowledge to maximize the positive impact of the richness they hold within rather than focusing on deficits (Yosso, 2006). CCW identifies these assets through six tenets: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance.

Culturally Sustaining and Revitalizing Pedagogy (CSRP) developed from the foundation of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy that values and affirms communities of color and furthered these concepts with the inclusion of education systems sharing in the responsibility of maintaining the cultural identity. CSRP is grounded in recognizing and revitalizing the negative impacts of settler colonization on the education of Indigenous communities. Disparities in the educational achievement for indigenous students are evident, and CSRP integrates Native culture to influence these known disparities positively. CSRP challenges pedagogies to encompass cultural and linguistic competence for students in their communities of origin while ensuring equal access to mastery of the dominant culture (Paris, 2012, p.93). With this model of sustainment, language and culture must be integrated into all levels of education, including curriculum, classroom culture, and any other learning environment a student interfaces with (Paris & Alim, 2017). The more students deeply connect to their language and cultural identity, the more positive educational outcomes there are. CSRP affords another asset-based framework emphasizing equality for all racial and ethnic communities, equal access to opportunity, and challenging dominant power structures.

Research Design
The study will utilize a qualitative methodology, specifically a narrative design with a thematic pattern analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Riessman, 2008).

Narrative research is a strategy that seeks to analyze and understand the stories lived through reported individual experiences (Creswell, 2009, p. 70). Often used in anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics, and education, this form of research collects data through documents, group conversations, and individual experiences. Unique to this research approach is that data collection is not limited to only interviews but can also be gathered through observations, documents, and pictures (Creswell, 2009, p. 71). This research strategy focuses on understanding the unique individual experiences of those participating in the study where there is an interactive participation between researcher and participant.

While the focus on highlighting indigenous knowledge from youth is the center of the study, this approach would also include using the youth's own words & their lived experiences. A qualitative approach would be most fitting to gather this information as this method helps to "unpack the meanings people ascribe to activities, situations, events, or artifacts" (Leavy, 2017). Observations of cultural traditions or ceremonial practices can be captured through immersion and community engagement versus any quantitative approach to data collection. To honor and protect indigenous knowledge, the researcher will utilize youth storytelling and observation of cultural practices that are integrated as educational techniques as a primary method to gather data. As Lainson et al. (2020) explain, "using people's own words, not only to illustrate themes but to build and develop the analysis by examining the very specific features of how people talk about things is integral to the validity of qualitative inquiry" (p.89). In support, Denzin & Salvo (2020) describe the importance and the art of storytelling, where collaboration and cross-cultural learning skills can exchange (p.72). In addition, these scholars find that traditional storytelling allows for

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inclusion, trust, respect, collaboration, understanding, and acceptance of the strengths in both Western and indigenous worldviews (Denzin & Salvo, 2020, p.73). Storytelling can be inclusive of oral tradition and may also be represented through the art of dance, song, music, ceremony, and so on.

Overview of the Education Settings

The units of study for this research project are primarily secondary program levels within a comprehensive public high school and three charter schools. Specifically, these secondary education programs are unique in design as their focus of studies is based on Indigenous-rooted pedagogy and cultural education practices. The values taught to students are rooted in ancestral knowledge and practices. Unique to this research study, these academies are inclusive of teaching practices from multiple Indigenous communities, including those from the Pacific Islands, Native territories in the United States, and Mexico. The academies of interest include Anahuacalmecac [IndigeNations Scholars Diploma Program] (Los Angeles, California), Hālau Kū Māna (Oahu, Hawaii), Lapwai High School (Lapwai, Idaho), and Mana Academy (West Valley City, Utah). The IndigeNations Scholars Diploma Program is designed for students who are in 11th and 12th grade that provides college preparatory courses (Chicana and Chicano Studies, Indigenous Studies and American Indian Law classes, Nahuatl, and Spanish language) and a culturally immersive curriculum. These high school students engage in the Survivance Project, which is intentionally designed to encourage their critical thinking development and planning for their future roles in their communities and nations. Hālau Kū Māna is a public charter school providing students with an education rooted in Hawaiian culture and practices. Their unique education model focuses on community, culture, and kaina (land/ocean)-based education for middle and high school students, providing learning spaces outside the traditional classroom setting and bringing learning outdoors. By integrating traditional Hawaiian values and practices, students learn traditional ways of fostering agriculture, botany, astronomy, and their Native language. Lapwai High School is built within a school district whose intent is to provide all Native American students equal access to programs, services, and activities offered through the school district. To do so, the school district consults with local Tribal officials and parents of Native children to develop culturally relevant educational programs and activities. In partnership with the Lapwai Indian Education Department, school officials work together to meet the unique cultural and academic needs of Native American Students. The Lapwai Indian Parent Committee (IPC), the culture-responsive team of teachers, the Nez Perce Tribe Education Department, and the school administration/staff are vital to Lapwai's collaborative planning of educational programs. Mana Academy was founded in 2013 and is an accredited non-profit public charter school whose focus is on creating a diverse community from several ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Central to Mana Academy's mission is to create educational excellence and cultural sustainability by using cultural-based education models.

Timeline

The primary researcher plans to adhere to the following timeline to complete this study. After successfully defending the proposal defense in March 2023, she will submit an application to the IRB by the end of the same month. Doing so will allow for initial contact with participants and the data collection process from April through May 2023. Notes will be gathered after interviews with each participant, and additional data will be collected and analyzed between June and July 2023. Following

the analysis, the findings, implications, and future research recommendations will be written between August and September 2023. The primary researcher plans to defend her final dissertation in November 2023.

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John Peshkoff Award

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2023

PESHKOFF AWARD RECIPIENT
WENDY FRINK
SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
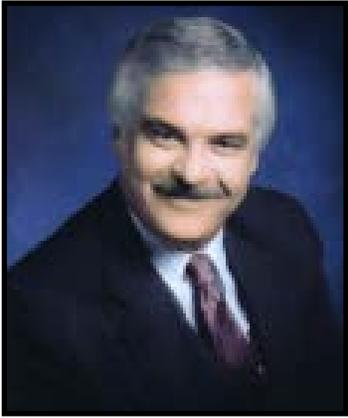
John Peshkoff (1935-2006) was one of the founding fathers of JCCASAC (then known as Juvenile Court School Administrators of California). John served as the JCCASAC president in 1977-78 and again in 1990-91.

He advocated for legislation and practices which support quality educational services for students in alternative education programs. He also served as a mentor, friend, and cheerleader to his peers and colleagues in the field.

The John Peshkoff Award is presented annually for memorable vision, service, leadership and commitment to JCCASAC students and programs.

When I received the call that I had been selected to be the recipient of the John Peshkoff Award, I was stunned. Past award winners I knew have been people I have considered friends, mentors and were exceptional leaders who exemplify the mission of JCCASAC. To be included with such a group of people is quite an honor and I appreciate the JCCASAC board for considering me worthy of this recognition.

I was hired right out of college to teach in a new school program with the San Joaquin County Office of Education. Little did I know I had been introduced to something that sparked a passion to serve the underserved in our school system and that I would still be in the one. program 30 years later. Early on, my school administrators spoke highly of an organization they pronounced J-Sack which gave them information and influence at the state level and so many resources and ideas for reaching our students. A few teachers were

encouraged to attend the annual conferences, though I was not one of them, I knew the JCCASAC organization was one which would be significant in my career in the future.

A few years later my colleague, friend and future JCCASAC Chair, Janine Kaeslin, was elected to the north region member-at-large position and invited me to join her at the JCCASAC board meetings in the north because at the time, the conversation was focused on lawsuits being filed up and down the state regarding special education services in court schools. At that time I was our program's special education administrator in our court school so that invitation made a world of difference as San Joaquin waded into those waters. Don Nute with San Bernardino was the JCCASAC board member who held everyone's attention as his COE experienced the first of the lawsuits and as the rest of the COEs were brought in, we worked together to navigate the process while improving programs for our students.

After those sometimes painful changes for the better in our programs, the influence of JCCASAC took a significant place in my world and the organization led the way in encouraging juvenile court and community schools to earn their WASC accreditation, introducing online curriculum and Web 2.0 tools in our classrooms. Our programs were evolving quickly in the new century while making sure the reasons our students found their way to us were addressed. Creativity, insight and care were necessary in every program developed as Social Emotional Learning and Trauma Informed Instruction were integrated into everything we do. JCCASAC provided platforms for sharing the innovative programs created by exceptional educators all over the state.

I am proud to have served JCCASAC in several roles from 2012-2019 including Northern Member at Large, Northern Chair, Secretary, Chair-elect, Chair and Past Chair. When I consider the over 20 years I spent as a member of JCCASAC, I cannot help but think of

how much everyone I have had the pleasure of knowing has enriched my life and career. There is no other organization that has been more impactful on my career and my heart, than JCCASAC.

one.®

1970-71
Don Purdy
Santa Clara

1971-72
Chuck Lee
San Diego

1972-73
Doug Booth
San Mateo

1973-74
Joe De Mello
Contra Costa

1974-75
Marshall Lomax
Los Angeles

1975-76
John Hull
Sacramento

1976-77
Rocco Nobile
San Diego

1977-78
John Peshkoff
Santa Clara

1978-79
Jerry Matney
Orange

1979-80
Miltie Couteur
Butte

1980-81
Marty Familletti
Riverside

1981-82
Joe De Mello
Contra Costa

1982-83
Roy Savage
Riverside
1983-84
Ken Kammuller
Marin

1984-85
Wayne Toscas
Santa Barbara

1985-86
Greg Almand
Contra Costa

1986-87
Hedy Kirsh
Orange

1987-88
Shirl Schmidt
Shasta

1988-89
Chuck Lee
San Diego

1989-90
William Burns
San Mateo

1990-91
John Peshkoff
Orange

1991-92
Orene Hopkins
Contra Costa

1992-93
John Stankovich
Kings

1993-94
Bob Michels
Santa Clara

1994-95
Larry Springer
Los Angeles

1995-96
Claudette Inge
Alameda

1996-97
Ken Taylor
Kern

1997-98
Mick Founts
San Joaquin

1998-99
Dolores Redwine
San Diego

1999-00
Vic Trucco
Sonoma

2000-01
Janet Addo
Los Angeles

2001-02
Michael Watkins
Santa Cruz

2002-03
Jeanne Hughes
Kern

2003-04
Jacqueline Flowers
San Joaquin

2004-05
Jeanne Dukes
San Luis Obispo

2005-06
Paula Mitchell
Santa Clara

2006-07
Maruta Gardner
San Diego

2007-08
Peter Kostas
Mendocino

2008-09
Mary Lou Vachet
Orange

2009-10
Mary Bell
Sacramento

2010-11
Sean Morrill
San Diego

2011-12
Janine Cuaresma
San Joaquin

2012-13
Deni Baughn
Orange

2013-14
Gary Vincent
Monterey

2014-15
Monalisa Vitela
Imperial

2015-16
Telka Walser
Stanislaus

2016-17
Christian Shannon
Kern

2017-18
Wendy Frink
San Joaquin

2018-219
Katy Ramenzani
Orange

2019-20
Pam Coronado
Fresno

2020-21
Pam Coronado
Fresno

2021-22
Jason Hasty
Los Angeles and
Johnny Rice
Santa Cruz

2022-2023
Johnny Rice
Santa Cruz

Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California

ABOUT THE JCCASAC SCHOLARSHIP:

Twice a year, the Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative Schools Administrators of California (JCCASAC) offers scholarships to Court and Community School graduates who will be attending college or have passed the GED within the 2022-23 school year. The scholarship is intended to pay for tuition and/or books up to $500. Two scholarships are awarded in the southern section and two in the northern section each January and June. Each county may submit two applications per semester (for a total of four in a year).

Congratulations to Our Scholarship Winners!

Alize Dominguez
San Joaquin County

Jamie Vega
Riverside County

Angelica Alora
Kern County

Briseis Humanes
Imperial County

Julius Williams
San Francisco County

Roberto Vasquez
Imperial County

Sabrina Kailey Amador
San Diego County

Nathan Oliveras
Santa Clara County

CALIFORNIA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS
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WHERE EDUCATING MODERN LEARNERS IS OUR MAIN GOAL

We offer Customizable K-12 online curriculum to schools and districts across the country. We serve these schools with a range of solutions which include remote learning, blended learning, credit recovery, CTE, Special Education and intervention. We do this with an individualized, self-paced and tightly aligned curriculum.

JCCASAC board members are excited to announce the sixth annual JCCASAC Teacher of the Year award recipinet and nominees. County operated school administrators from across California were encouraged to nominate one of their outstanding court, community or alternative school teachers for this extraordinary recognition. JCCASAC seeks to celebrate excellence and honor teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and inspire students of all backgrounds and learning abilities while carrying out the mission and vision of JCCASAC. These teachers are passionate, collaborative professionals dedicated to empowering students to become competent, creative thinking and caring adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are academically prepared for an ever changing and global economy.

CONGRATULATIONS TO
JUDY LINNE
VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

When thinking about the heart of Gateway Community School, you think of Judy Linne.

Students attending Gateway Community School often do not have good experiences with school or in life. Judy provides a safe place for at promise youth to learn academically and grow social emotionally. This can help to better prepare them for a return to a district program or life after high school. She has been in her current role as the Resource Specialist for Gateway School for the past 11 years. But her journey did not start here. She has been working with Ventura County Office of Education since 2002 and started as a paraeducator. She quickly loved the students we serve in our court and community schools and programs that she went on to earn her credential and accepted a teaching position at Gateway School. The commitment, dedication, and
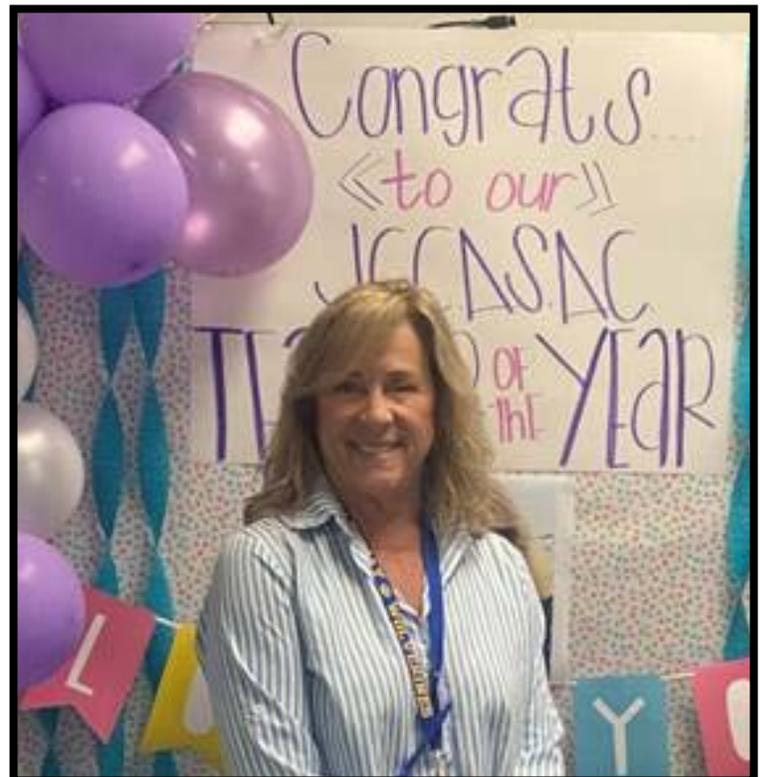
care she has for students in the alternative setting is evident in her day-to-day interactions and instruction.

Judy has been instrumental in the transition for students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) to Gateway program. Her communication and collaboration with a student's district of residence is integral in the success of the students she serves. During placement meetings, is where she begins to build rapport with students and families. She gives constructive feedback, is her students' biggest cheerleader and strives to connect with our at-promise youth. Judy uses evidenced based assessments to provide current information to inform teams during IEP's. She has participated in Gateway's School Site Council providing input on LCAP goals and reviewing Gateway's Single Plan of Student Achievement with parents and students. Judy truly believes in the program Gateway provides students and devotes all her time to go above and beyond for her students.

Judy supports students in 6th through 12 grades. She treats students who are in the 6th grade with just as much care as her 12th grade students getting closer to graduation. She works alongside fellow teachers, specialists, counselors, and administrators to ensure every student receives the support needed. As students transition from Gateway, she ensures that the student and district have strategies, progress, and any important information to ensure students are successful. Judy Linne embodies the "Commitment to Quality Education" VCOE stands for.

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees

Congratulations to all of our Teacher of the Year nominees!

Brenda Adams, San Bernardino

Brenda Adams is a native Californian, born in Long Beach. She has been involved in educational services for the past 36 years, with 22 of those years serving as an alternative education/special education teacher at Burton Thrall High School, at Central Valley Juvenile Detention & Assessment Center (Home of the Bobcats). Ms. Adams has dedicated her career to providing a positive learning atmosphere for her students and believes that student success is created through building meaningful relationships, while teaching academics and valuable life skills. She also believes that respect, patience, and tough love are important components to successful teaching.

Jack Bensusen, Kern

Jack has been a CTE Construction teacher for Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) since 2018. He has also served as a CTE Culinary/Hospitality teacher since 2021. Jack is always willing to go the extra mile to improve his programs and provide additional learning opportunities for his students. I think the words of one of his students says it best when he describes Mr. Bensusen as a teacher who "listens, really listens, to all of his students…he has an amazing ability to discover what each of us are good at and helps us to improve on those natural abilities in his classes." Mr. Bensusen represents the best of alternative education in Kern County and we are grateful for his commitment to our programs and our students.

Lynn Groenveld, Stanislaus

Lynn Groenveld is a multi-subject teacher in the Maximum Security Unit 5 (AKA the Nickel) at West Campus Juvenile Hall in Modesto, California. She has worked at Juvenile Hall for the last seven years. Lynn feels that students should believe that everything they do is a choice. She continuously reminds them to make positive choices for their social and emotional health. And, that even the smallest seemingly insignificant thoughts and actions can create positive results. She has only one rule, Be Kind.

Phillip Kimble, San Joaquin

Phillip is currently the lead teacher at one.Dream Academy, a three-teacher school site that serves over ninety of the most marginalized and at promise youth in Stockton. In this role, Phillip works hard to establish and maintain a positive school site culture. Phillip is an extremely valuable member of the San Joaquin County Office of Education who has always put the needs of his students and families first. Phillip understands his "why" and is the strongest JCCASAC Teacher of the Year candidate San Joaquin County Office of Education's County Operated Schools and Programs has to offer.

JCCASAC Teacher of the Year-Nominees

Kara Madrid, San Diego

Kara is an Education Specialist at the new Youth Transition Campus with the Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS) at the San Diego County Office of Education. At the Youth Transition Campus, Kara partners with the Probation Department to build programs to expand learning for all students through and help them to find their true passion. Kara strives to advocate for inclusion and equity for all students. She believes in building partnership with families, community partners and other allies in effort to lead students to see their capabilities, strengths, and dreams.

Jill North, Shasta

Jill has been teaching in Alt Ed for the last four years at Shasta County Office of Education. She works as an independent study teacher, dual enrollment English instructor and the college & career coordinator. Prior to working at Shasta County Office of Education Jill worked for the local Community College as an English Instructor. She is currently finishing an Administrator Credential program and will be done in June of this year. Next year she hopes to move into a position in Educational Leadership to continue to support Alt Ed students in the county. In all aspects, Jill is a life changing teacher, a producer of high-qulaity instruction, and an innovative leader.

Jeffrey Scott, Napa

Jeffrey Scott was born and raised in the Napa Valley and attended college at Santa Clara University. After teaching internationally in South Korea and and also in Saratoga, California, Jeffrey found his home at Camille Creek Community School back in his hometown. Jeffrey can't imagine teaching anywhere else, because he leaves school every day knowing that he is making a true difference in the lives of his students. In Jeffrey's free time, he enjoys playing golf and traveling the world. Most importantly, he loves spending time with his wife Natalie, and their six-month-old son, Henry.

Rodney Wooten, Los Angeles

Rodney Wooten has worked for the Los Angeles County Office of Education in the classroom for 25 years, including 19 years as a community day school teacher. Mr. Wooten has earned the admiration of his colleagues and the confidence of his administrators to transform the lives of students who come into his classroom. Most importantly, he has earned the respect, the attention and the eagerness to learn from his students. Mr. Wooten's caring and persistent disposition motivates students' interest to learn and to perform to the best of their abilities.

Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California

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EXTERNAL VALIDATION

Certified by CASEL for Exemplary SEL & Literacy Outcomes

Approved by CDE for Meeting the Social Content Framework

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CHECK OUT OUR SAMPLE LESSON PLANS!

Studentnest is honored to have worked with County of Educations and Probation Departments for over 10 years in California.

Populations Served:

- Predelinquent Youth
- At-Promise Students
- Students of Color
- Homeless Students
- Historically Marginalized Students
- Low-income Students
- English Language Learners (ELL)
- Migrant Students
- Students with Disabilities (SWD)
- Foster and Group Home Youth

Services Offered:

- K-12 Math/ELA/Science Tutoring
- K-12 Mentoring & Counseling
- Homework Help
- K-12 LOTUS (Digital Intervention)
- Robotics
- Computer Literacy Program
- College and Career Readiness
- Coding
- Test Prep
- Other

WestEd.org review of Studentnest services to Riverside Probation. This 3rd party review identifies outcomes achieved by the youth receiving services. On average each youth improved at least 17% based on pre/post assessments. SN has active contracts with LACOE, OCDE, & SMCOE. We would be honored to work with you.

Exhibit 103. StudentNest Youth Outcomes

Outcome	Count	Met	Did not meet
Graduated from middle school	90	100% (90)	
Improved attitude about school	90	100% (90)	
Improved home behavior	90	100% (90)	
Improved monitoring skills	90	100% (90)	
Improved prosocial school behavior	90	100% (90)	
Improved regulation skills	90	100% (90)	
Improved school monitoring skills	90	100% (90)	
Increased prosocial peers	52	100% (52)	
Increased school attendance	90	100% (90)	
Participating in school activities	42	100% (42)	
Provides positive reinforcement	90	100% (90)	
Substance use	84	100% (84)	
Tobacco use	90	97% (87)	3% (3)

www.studentnest.com   Chander Joshi cjoshi@studentnest.com   (916) 505-3508

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR STRUGGLING READERS

BY ELLEN SMITH DE LA CRUZ
SAN DIEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

"To succeed, you will soon learn, as I did, the importance of a solid foundation in the basics of education - literacy, both verbal and numerical, and communication skills." -Alan Greenspan *("Alan Greenspan wants the US to go back on the gold standard" by Bill Bonner, www.businessinsider.com. July 10, 2016)*

San Diego County Office of Education's SOAR Academy <u>Youth Transition Campus</u> (YTC) reading program is celebrating its one year anniversary. During the last year, adjudicated youth in the Urban Camp (UC), Youthful Offenders Unit (Girls), and Healing Opportunities for Personal Empowerment (HOPE) program have benefited from data-driven, trauma-responsive, direct instruction in reading and the result is schoolwide, substantial growth in reading as measured by the Renaissance Star Reading assessment.

Data-Driven
Data, when used with fidelity, can be a great equalizer that fleshes out hidden bias and brings forth students with the greatest need for reading intervention. During the first few days after arrival into YTC, student Star Reading scores are entered into a whole school data profile by the reading teacher. Also, multiple student data and information sites (Renaissance, Synergy, and Illuminate) are scoured to analyze each student's literacy related data. If a student's highest score is below the fifth grade instructional reading level, more information is gathered.

First, the Burke Reading Interview is conducted wherein students self-report about their experiences with reading instruction and they rate themselves as readers. This is a one-on-one interview with the reading teacher to find out if students are truly in need of urgent intervention; note that the youngest students are 14 years old, so students that are below fifth grade reading level are approximately 3-7 years below grade level. At this time, they often request books from the extensive, culturally-responsive library on campus; titles such as *We Were Here* by Matt De La Pena, *Concrete Rose* byAngie Thomas and *The Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds are popular (there's a lot to choose from including graphic novels). This interview can also be an additional MTSS tool wherein students that need glasses or don't have their hearing aides are discovered.

Next, the reading teacher administers the San Diego (SD) Quick Reading Assessment. This measurement is extremely important because it cross checks students' Star Reading scores. Did they try? Were they distracted? Do they know that teachers will use this assessment

for instructional planning? The SD Quick is a word identification assessment. When there are stark irregularities between the SD Quick and the Renaissance Star Reading assessment, it becomes evident that the student needs to retake the Star Reading test because their ability was not measured accurately and the literacy supports they need are not as intensive. Conversely, if students are at the same level or below on the SD Quick, it is clear that students need urgent remediation.

Ultimately, the most rewarding data is the post-test data for Star Reading assessment. Numerous YTC students have made measurable progress towards reading at the level needed for their future workplace or academic settings. Students earn certificates and other incentives for growth. We track schoolwide reading data and have professional learning for all staff around our school-wide, reading data portfolio. Reading is a cross-content area pursuit at YTC.

Trauma-Responsive
Trauma is a bi-product of life, but the layers and layers of chronic trauma that YTC students have experienced is often incomprehensible: abuse, neglect, housing and food insecurity for example. Trauma is not just a buzz-word, it is something that impacts adolescent brain development and it needs to be considered when creating the most effective environment for students to grow and progress towards their

reading goals.

In short, students must feel calm and safe in order to learn. There is a lot of embarrassment and shame surrounding reading difficulties and students have developed coping strategies to hide their reading struggles. Students report that they stopped attending school at a young age, therefore they may have missed some of the pillars of reading instruction. Other high school age students report that they were truant, "on the outs," because they can't read and they don't want to be bullied by classmates. Due to trauma and shame, the majority of students report only being able to work on their reading skills in small groups or individually. Therefore, at YTC, federal monies for reading remediation are accessed to allow for individualized instruction.

Increasing literacy levels and student confidence is a highly protective factor that leads students towards more educational gains and reduces the likelihood of more negative outcomes. YTC has opportunities for best practices research for graduate students.

Direct-Instruction
Unfortunately, it is very hard to teach yourself to read, and most youth in custody don't have unlimited access to YouTube phonics videos (understatement intended). Hence, more reading teachers and effective texts and resources are important. For example,

the *Rewards Secondary* [(https://www.voyagersopris.com/products/reading/rewards/overview)](https://www.voyagersopris.com/products/reading/rewards/overview) program is one of the tools that has catapulted student growth at YTC.

Ideally, *Rewards* is taught sequentially in a small setting where both formative and cumulative assessments occur during each lesson, there are multiple opportunities for student oracy, and the teacher can directly teach new concepts and correct errors. It consists of 20 lessons that build upon one another. The first activity is an oral activity wherein the teacher breaks words into syllables and the student says the whole word. Then, students read vowel combinations, vowel sounds (short and long vowels), and interact with text by underlining each vowel sound in multisyllabic words. Additionally, because students need immediate results, the direct instruction of affixes is taught beginning with common prefixes and expanding to valuable suffixes like -tial, -tion, and -cious. It is an amazing confidence builder when students that were originally "below grade level," and lacked confidence, correctly spell words like unconventionality or reconstruction. The highlight of the program is the visual display for the academic vocabulary instruction and the built in cumulative reviews. Students interact with word families and use sentence stems to build context around content-area words that matter. The program expands to include fluency and comprehension.

In summation, during the past year, YTC has seen growth that surpasses the traditional 12 months of expected growth. When faced with students that are feeling supported, safe, and seen, YTC has witnessed reluctant readers emerge as young adults ready to conquer the literacy tasks that are presented to them. This is not only anecdotal but evidenced with the Renaissance Star Reading grade-level growth that students are celebrating. Coupled with participation in reading contests such as Break-Free Education's Unbound and site-level contests that use Accelerated Reader, YTC is developing a culture of reading. Administrators make a difference when they continue to support intensive reading instruction and curriculum that directly meets the needs of students. Look closely at the data profile of schools to measure academic achievement and celebrate growth. It is never too late for adjudicated youth to learn to read and it will make a difference in their lives both academically and personally.

Ellen Smith De La Cruz has taught in San Diego's Juvenile Court & Community School for 26 years. She's also a mother, wife, and ocean swimmer.

College Career Readiness

"I moved to a new area and didn't know anyone. You helped me get a local job with a pro sports team."

-San Lorenzo Valley Student

The Big Picture

Job Preparation	Career Exploration	Post Secondary Preparation
Help students prepare for and apply to short-term work experience while in high school	Assess their skills and interests to explore long-term career opportunities	Explore and apply to college and / or trade schools

"We get job help here that you just don't get at big high schools."

-North County Student talking with another student

The Staff Team

Project Coordinator	Work Experience Specialist	Work Experience Specialist	College Counselor	Social Emotional Counselor
Jack Michael	Lori Davenport	Lucy Corrales	Elise Moir	Talia Rizzi

Specifically, Our Work Includes:

Job Preparation	Career Exploration	Post-Secondary Prep
Résumé Completion	Group Classes on Career Pathways	Applying to College
Starting a Cover Letter	Personalized Career Assessments	Applying to Trade Schools
Filling out Job Applications	Student Worker Internships	FAFSA/CADAA Assistance

"My counselor helped me get a job and apply to Cabrillo. I never thought I was capable of going to college before this."

-South County Student

Background

Our College Career Readiness Services in Alternative Education has a long history with its foundations coming from innovative educators including, but not limited to Carol Polhamus, Jana Merrill, Lori Davenport, and Leta VanDenHeuvel. The mission has always been to help prepare students with *tangible* skills to be productive citizens in our communities. Specifically, we help coach students with soft skills that help our students get hired by employers and then keep those jobs with appropriate behavior at the work place. This coaching comes through one-to-one services, internships, field trips, and coordinating guest speakers at our school sites.

GOALS FOR EACH STUDENT	DESCRIPTION	TIMELINE
☐ Complete a **Job Folder** in Google Drive	This folder includes: • Résumé • Cover Letter • Job Folder with community job and career opportunities • Certifications such as CA Food Handler	Within first school year of attending our Program
☐ Explore **Post-Secondary** Education	This exploration includes: • Creating a College Folder in Google Drive to save information and details • Completing a local community college application • Group tours of community colleges and trade schools • Assistance with FAFSA / CADAA	Completed by spring of final year in our program
☐ **Career** Exploration	This exploration includes: • Completion of a skills/interest inventory such as CA Career Zone • Guest Speaker Panels at our School Sites • Field Trips to various industry sectors	Several times each school year

one.Program's Got Talent
Students explore writing and their own stories in series of workshops
with Brandon Leake
San Joaquin County Office of Education

To kick off a series of writing workshops with students in the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) one.Program, poet Brandon Leake stopped by to meet the students to get to know them.

He did this by asking students to share their dreams.

"To travel."
"To get rich."
"To make a clothing line."
"To live a life without worry."

Listing dreams was the first step for the students to write their own poetry. There would be many more steps to come.

Leake's words have moved millions. His spoken word performance made him a champion on America's Got Talent television show in 2020. Over several weeks, Leake- who is also an educator from Stockton- worked with students from one.Lodi and one.Discover to craft their own words.

The workshops were about writing, but they covered a lot more territory. Students didn't just talk about their

dreams. They learned to process and express their emotions in writing. Leake told the students they have a story to tell, and that it was his goal for them to express, write, and speak it.

More than that, he asked them to think about how they would achieve their dreams through the process. "The dream is far more important than anything that they write here. Believing in themselves is the goal."

Students who participated in the workshops shared that they did feel more inspired to achieve their goals and began writing about ways to achieve them. One student, Kathleen, shared that she looked forward to coming to the workshops, which have helped her learn how valuable writing is. She has been able to take the writing skills she learned during the workshops and apply them in ways that have helped her process her own emotions.

"He's teaching us how to express ourselves better- writing it down and getting it off our chest in a different way," she said. "It's a great learning experience."

Designing home and school partnerships for better student outcomes is essential for school systems, as educators recognize the critical role that families play in advancing student academic achievement. Family engagement, as an essential component of a successful educational program, increases test scores, grades, graduation rates, positively impacts student behavior, and makes schools more accountable. In school systems serving justice-impacted youth, family engagement is particularly critical; yet best practices and research specific to this most vulnerable population are non-existent. Practitioners across the country find it unmanageable to prioritize family participation while operating within the limitations posed by the physical separation of youth from their home environment.

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) established the Parent/Family Education and Consultation Practice (PFECP) in 2016-2017 as a model of parental participation that transformed and humanized family engagement for justice-impacted youth. This structure meaningfully builds positive relationships with parents and caregivers, and other educational community partners in support of the students' school experience while in LACOE schools.

Using the **Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships** [1], PFECP has developed an asset-based, parent-led, and research-based approach to family engagement. This practice has yielded a significant, sustained increase in guardians' knowledge of the systems interacting with their youth, attendance to parent programming, and exercise of their parental rights as educational partners. Since the inception of the program in 2016-2017, parent participation has surged from about 500 parents participating in about 70 workshops in a year, to over 1,700 instances of attendance to at least one of the more than 140 learning opportunities available every year.

This article lists the **process conditions** in the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships, and describes the PFECP operational applications of that research in family engagement programming in alternative educational settings.

Change the Conditions to Change the System
Conditions refer to the propitious environment needed to exist in organizations to support efficacious partnerships with families. They include **process** (family engagement actions embedded into the educational program) and **organizational** (structures, resources and leadership that sustain family engagement) conditions. The next few paragraphs discuss each **process condition** (relational, linked to learning, asset-based, culturally responsive, and respectful, collaborative, and interactive) and how PFECP fosters them.

Relationships Matter
LACOE prioritizes relationship-building with families: Title I funds support stipends for school staff to dedicate a few hours a month to connect with them through a relational phone call. These calls intend to communicate to parents that staff think of them as human beings, honor them, and offer them the personal attention they deserve. In the last year, ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding has allowed central office staff to sustain those connections and advance them to partnership by strategically

increasing that outreach. PFECP invites families of African American students, English Learners, and families of Students in the Special Education program to participate in the learning opportunities relevant to the educational needs of their child. Social media, including an Instagram account and a website, serve as a third layer in these efforts to build and maintain relationships with families.

Family Engagement Linked to Learning

As PFECP works to position family engagement as an essential practice in a successful educational program, educators in juvenile-court schools in Los Angeles are increasingly having exposure to strong instances of parental engagement. PFECP is an active participant in faculty professional learning, where parents are learners and instructors, who highlight how they participate in the educational experience of their detained youth. In general, families impacted by judicial systems have not been in equal (free of hierarchical dynamics of power) and mutual relationships with schools. PFECP serves to change the mindset that schools are not welcoming, respectful environments for them.

Virtual town hall meetings are another instance where families learn more about the educational program for their youth. These open forums gather educators, administrators, mental health professionals, counselors, and other educational community partners; and parents ask questions and receive on-the-spot resolutions to their concerns.

Specialized events throughout the year add instances for focused learning. PFECP addresses African American families in focus groups and/ or a town hall meeting, where family engagement programing is presented, and families provide feedback and recommendations. These events have also included a Special Education overview, town hall meeting for African American families and Family Dream Boards. Other academic-focus learning opportunities include college and career information for families and the importance of school attendance.

Asset-Based Programming

Beliefs about families of incarcerated youth are at the center of how systems approach them. PFECP rejects prevalent, deficit-based normative assumptions of caregivers that focus on what they cannot do, do not know, or do not have; and works to maximize parents' funds of knowledge to set programming. A Needs and Interests Assessment sheds light onto topics of interest to parents, and PFECP finds the community resources that align to those expressed areas of focus. This consumer-led approach to programing contrasts with prescriptive measures and builds on parents' assets.

Culturally Responsive and Respectful

School staff supporting parent engagement participate in professional learning aimed at practicing behaviors that are respectful and responsive to parents and families; including training by role-play on how to place relational phone calls that honor parents as good caregivers, even when physically separated from their children. These conversations take place at the parents' convenience, and in the language of the parent. PFECP seeks the input of all families and listens to what all families have to say; not only of those who may have privilege or social capital. Data collection tools continue to be refined to ensure that the parents' input is captured through different avenues: A Workshop Evaluation Form,

completed by events' participants informs staff on the topics and speakers of the parents' preference. The California School Climate, Health and Learning Survey paints a picture of the parents' perceptions of school. Responses to the Needs and Interests Evaluation provides data of the learning interests of families.

Parents share about their culture and goals and provide comments on how their youth learn better. Parent corners and boards contain relevant resources for those visiting their minors at the facilities and aid in conveying the message that families are valued and their feedback is welcomed and important.

Collaborative and Interactive

Collaborative strategies to engage parents and families are more effective than programs in which a sole entity leads the work. PFECP works with local colleges and universities to bring expertise to their practice. For example, the partnership with California State University, Dominguez Hills, keeps staff updated with the research findings on family engagement, and serves as consultant for initiatives, ensuring that protocols maintain an asset-building approach.

PFECP has developed rapport with the Office of the Ombudsman from the Probation Department, to ensure that representatives are available to assist parents as they navigate their system while their youth is in their care.

The Practice of Equity

Traditional family engagement systems expect families to come to them to receive information, in a one-time event, at the school's convenience. Family engagement is equity work in schools, when it is reciprocal, meeting with parents when

and where they are, and when there are multiple opportunities and modalities for engagement to adjust to the families' preferences. A recent initiative illustrates the point: Caregivers were invited to meet virtually and create personal vision boards. Each participant needed a set of materials to design their project. Some came to the County office to pick up their supplies, but in most cases, staff delivered materials to the parents' residence; at their convenience. This meant a few 20+ mile trips for some staff. The last packet of supplies was delivered to the grandfather of one of the students, at 9 pm, in the heart of a housing project. This grandfather would not have been able to enjoy the workshop without the accommodation that staff made for him.

As LACOE continues to elevate family engagement as an essential practice in teaching and learning, **systems conditions** need to be refined to ensure that PFECP maintains this vibrant level of family engagement. This involves increasing networks and social capital to collaborate with this most vulnerable population of families, activate their power to partner with systems to improve outcomes for their families.

[1]Karen L. Mapp and Eyal Bergman, "Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships (Version 2)," 2019, https://www.dualcapacity.org.

Jael Ovalle, M.PA. led the restructuring of family engagement at LACOE by translating research into actions, policies, and practices for justice-impacted youth.

There has been a focus at Shasta County Independent Study to increase our students' college and career readiness rates by offering more opportunities for them to meet this indicator on the California Dashboard. In exploring this performance indicator, it became apparent that our students meet Prepared Status at a lower rate than their peers countywide and our A-G completers were close to zero. Another data point that was explored in connection to this was the students' stability rates. This number was again drastically different from the countywide rate. For Shasta County Independent Study the stability rate was 38.0% while the county rate was 87.3%. These numbers told a story of our population of students and the unique barriers that they experience on the path to becoming college and career ready in an alternative education system. That story showed that we need to restructure and reimagine how we support students in becoming college and career ready when they are working in a self paced system. Ultimately we knew we needed to acknowledge and honor the reason that students enroll in our program to begin with and then find ways to support how they engage in school and the limitations they have in that engagement.

Because our students are transient in nature they are not able to participate in programs and opportunities offered at school sites that require extended commitment that include time and transportation. Students enroll in our program for a variety of reasons, but the most common reason is that they are credit deficient and are in need of credit recovery. These students and their teachers have a focus on how to recoup credits as quickly as possible to meet the students' goal of either graduating on time or transferring back to their district of residence. Often this will pull students off of an A-G track if they were previously working toward that goal. Students who transfer mid semester are pulled out of any CTE pathways they were participating in and if they are in a dual enrollment course they will have to take a withdrawal grade instead of finishing with college credits. This disruption in participation decreases students' agency when they see that their efforts are not fruitful. Restructuring how students participate in college and career readiness opportunities in the alternative education system helps to increase students' agency when they find that there is something tangible attached to their efforts, such as college bearing credits or a certificate in job related skills.

Students currently enrolled in our program have limited opportunities to participate in college and career readiness opportunities outside of dual enrollment and the local ROP program. Even these programs are difficult for students to attend because they require a commitment of time for in person instruction and transportation to get there. For students who have the luxury of time and transportation, they are rewarded with college credits or a certificate. We have structured our dual enrollment program to model the college course schedule. Our courses are offered two days a week for one and a half to two hours. This creates a more flexible schedule for our students who enroll in our program for those reasons. The ROP program is offered five days a week for a half a day. This is often a barrier for students to attend and many who begin interested will opt out in the end because of the schedule.

With the exploration of what our program

offers and the barriers that our students face in participating in college and career readiness opportunities, we have begun to plan for next year to ensure more students have access to these opportunities. Next year our dual enrollment program will be offering three courses during the school year. In the fall semester students will have access to a Public Speaking course and a College Success course. In the spring semester we will offer College Composition to students, a course that is often a barrier for even college students. All of our dual enrollment courses are taught by independent study teachers and staff. Having staff that the students know teaching the courses increases participation because students feel safe and confident to take the risk of enrolling in a college course. Another opportunity that will be added to our students' choice in opportunities will be the addition of a CTE pathway in Entrepreneurship. This pathway will be supported by the makerspace that includes equipment for hands-on creative production that was developed last year. Students will be able to earn a certificate in this pathway and begin to explore opportunities in careers they have an interest in. These classes will be offered in short term sessions with more flexible options for class meeting times. Because students often enter alternative education programs at various times of the year, they are not always enrolled at the start of a semester and often miss out on these opportunities that are traditionally a year or a semester long. Creating more entry points for students to participate will increase their college and career readiness rates.

Along with restructuring and developing the college and career readiness opportunities for students in alternative education, there needs to be a drastic change in the narrative that students have about themselves and that others hold of them. It is not rare for our staff to be asked by other educators if we work at the "bad kids" school. This is a stereotype that is prevalent in the community as well. The narrative that many of our students hold is that they are not the college going type. In our student programs this feeling reverberates through the halls. In an effort to help students see themselves as future successful adults, we plan to create a mentor program that will pair students with professionals in the community who either work in the field that the student shows some interest in or has shared a similar life path as the student. The goal is for students to see that the goals they set for themselves are within reach.

Alternative education students have more Grit and perseverance than any other students. Tapping into that Grit and helping them tie it to a growth mindset they know they have control over will increase their agency ten fold. We have seen students who have struggled at comprehensive high schools and then participated in our dual enrollment program thrive and grow. Some of those students have failed an entire year of high school. Those students would have never been recruited for a dual enrollment course at a comprehensive high school. To offer students these opportunities and show them that yes, these programs are for them as well, is the ultimate reward as an educator. Alternative education should not mean an education stripped from extra opportunities to participate in school. Alternative education means that students are met where they are at and the teachers see them as the individual they are in order to support their success.

The Community Schools model through the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) was launched in the Fall of 2019 and is in place across 16 different school sites. The Community Schools strategy meets the needs of students and families by bringing community agencies, partnerships, and resources into the school for convenient accessibility by the school community.

Renaissance County Community Schools is part of LACOE's Division of Student Programs. Students are referred to County Community Schools (CCS) or Independent Studies (IS) by their school districts through expulsion and/or SARB (School Attendance Review Board) hearing recommendations due to challenges with chronic absenteeism or other at-risk behaviors. The Probation Department also refers students recently released from the Juvenile Court Schools or Camps to CCS. Our school programs have a 300-minute instructional day, allowing for six class periods. The CCS programs operate a twelve-month program based on three 80-day semesters so to afford students the opportunity to earn up to 90 credits per year. Independent Studies students are enrolled in two courses every five weeks with the goal of completing a 5 credit course in that time. Student are only required to meet with teacher either in person or virtually for one hour a week. Renaissance community schools operate six community schools in the following areas: Monterey Park, Monrovia, Pico Rivera, Whittier, Compton and Hawthorne. We also have four independent studies programs in North Hollywood, Downtown Los Angeles, Pico Rivera and Hawthorne.

The goal of our CCS and IS programs is to provide additional support to students experiencing challenges to help them get back on track. We offer small classroom settings where students are with the same teacher and support staff for most or all of the day. Because of this, our staff is able to monitor students more closely and make frequent contact with parents/guardians regarding attendance, academic progress, or behavior.

The pandemic created a need for increased socio-emotional wellness counseling services for many students, parents and school staff. In 2021, Renaissance PAU joined LACOE's Community Schools Initiative and became a Community School. Renaissance PAU hired two Community Schools Specialists to help in supporting our students and families. The Community Schools Initiative is a strategy aimed at disrupting poverty and addressing longstanding inequities. The approach highlights areas of need and leverages community resources so students are healthy, prepared for college and ready to succeed in the workplace and in civic life.

The initiative is based around four pillars:

1. **Integrated Student Supports:** Addresses out-of-school barriers to learning by establishing partnerships with social and health services agencies. These services support social-emotional learning, conflict resolution and restorative justice practices to support mental health and decrease conflict, bullying and punitive disciplinary actions.

2. **Expanded Learning Time & Opportunities:** Include in-school, after school, weekend and summer programs to provide additional academic instruction and support, enrichment activities and opportunities for real-world learning.

3. **Active Parent/Guardian & Community Engagement:** the initiative bridges schools as educational partners and makes the school a neighborhood hub for learning.

4. **Collaborative Leadership & Practices:** Practices that provide a culture of professional learning, collective trust and shared responsibility.

Two Wellbeing Centers have been established at both the Mujeres y Hombres, Monterey Park and Jonas Salk, Hawthorne sites. At these locations, students and families have access to basic needs services such as clothing, hygiene products, and food items. These items also get distributed to our other sites on a-needs-basis and also through a monthly "trunk-showcase." In addition, Renaissance PAU has partnered with several local agencies including Los Angeles Metro to address transportation needs by providing students with yearly Metro Go Pass Cards. Renaissance PAU's partnership with SEE-LA has extended learning opportunities to students by bridging local and seasonal crops on campus through an instructional on-site cooking class experience. BirdieLight and Los Angeles Public Health (LAPH) substance abuse & mental health counselors provided whole-school fentanyl awareness and support.

In conjunction with other school support staff and through collaborative practices students and families have been provided additional individualized and targeted supports through the Community Schools Initiative. Once a month, VIP Tuesday's and Advisory Council meetings are held to address specific school and student needs and assets.

In addition to the four pillars the initiative is grounded on four cornerstone commitments through our Partnerships:

- A Commitment to Assets-Driven and Strength-Based Practice
- A Commitment to Racially Just and Restorative School Climates
- A Commitment to Powerful, Culturally Proficient and Relevant Instruction
- A Commitment to Shared Decision Making and Participatory Practices

Renaissance PAU's Advisory Council meetings play an important role in the school's shared commitment to needs-assessing and brainstorming the schools' activities, events and partnerships. The Advisory council coincides with monthly all-staff meetings that are held the first Thursday of the month, which allows for input from certificated, as well as classified, staff to have input on supporting all our at-promise students.

With the support of LACOE, Renaissance Community Schools Initiative is making a positive impact on our school communities by providing students and families with the resources needed to be successful in their educational journey.

DIGITAL BADGES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

By Luke L. Hibbard
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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the perceived effectiveness of earning a digital badge in relationship to the integration of classroom technology. A survey consisting of 10 statements was distributed to 33 educators who participated in a digital badge program. All surveys were returned and analyzed using a chi square goodness of fit along with descriptive techniques. The analysis showed a statistically significant difference in the distribution of educator responses to seven of the ten statements. A majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that earning a digital badge increased motivation to improve technology use for instruction, increased likelihood of earning additional badges, development of skills tied to district goals or initiatives, increased frequency of technology use for instruction, improved quality of instruction, and increased frequency of technology use by students after earning one or more digital badges.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Integrating best practices and the advanced technologies into classroom instruction is critical to developing 21st century learners and leaders. With a number of school districts making a considerable investment in classroom technology to prepare students to be career and college ready, there is an increased emphasis on how to best deploy devices and leverage them for student achievement. Frameworks have been developed to outline effective use of technology. "Students use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and enrich their learning by collaborating with others and working effectively in teams locally and globally" (International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Students, 2016). "Teaching is becoming one of the most challenging professions in our society where knowledge is expanding rapidly and modern technologies are demanding teachers learn how to use these technologies in their teaching" (Jung, 2005, p. 95). Ultimately, the goal of professional development for teachers where technology integration is concerned is to challenge teachers to "create new tasks that were previously inconceivable" or required "significant task redesign" (SAMR, 2017).

While there is tremendous potential in technology based tools to engage students, in many cases there is minimal evidence of professional development for effective classroom implementation. "Much of this research shows that teacher-education technology courses and programs have a limited impact on how teachers think about and implement technology supported teaching" (Egbert, Paulus & Nakamichi, 2002, p. 110). A possible alternative to traditional "sit and get" professional development for educators exists in the concept of "Digital Badges." This concept implies that the earners of the badge have completed a competency based task and provided evidence of acquiring a desired skill set. "Digital badges offer teachers opportunities to document their learning using work samples, videos, and other artifacts. Based on this evidence, teachers receive a micro-credential that they can share across social media platforms" (Berry, Airhart, & Byrd, 2016, p. 35).

Statement of the Problem

Professional development and implementation of instructional strategies that impact student learning will always be a high priority for school districts. Technology integration is a goal that many districts are targeting as a way to boost student engagement and achievement. Research related to traditional educator professional development is inconclusive. The idea that trainings offered by districts is an effective use

of time and resources is largely unfounded. Most districts view professional development as a crucial component of their plan for student success. However, "Little is known about whether PD can have a positive impact on achievement when a program is delivered across a range of typical settings and when its delivery depends on multiple trainers" (Wayne,Yoon, & Zhu, 2008, p. 471). As districts prepare students to compete in a technology rich global society, the need to equip teachers with tools to support learners has become extremely important. Proficiency based professional development and recognition of skill acquisition through digital badges may provide alternatives to traditional "sit-and-get" professional development and positively affect teacher aptitude with respect to technology and subsequently student performance.

Research Question
What are the opinions and perceptions of teachers regarding practitioner efficacy associated with earning a digital badge?

Null Hypothesis
There is no significant difference in the distribution of responses to survey statements regarding teachers' perceptions of practitioner efficacy associated with earning a digital badge.

Significance of the Study
The purpose of this study is to determine if earning a digital badge has a positive impact on practitioner efficacy related to the integration of classroom technology. The data generated from this study may provide school district administrators with new information regarding professional development programs that promote application of classroom technology.

Limitations and Delimitations
Fifty educators currently working in classrooms throughout the county will be selected for this study. The participants work in a K-12 setting and have earned at least one digital badge through a county office of education badge project. The participants will be selected through a random sampling and for the purpose of this study, there will be no demographic information collected or considered as a contributing factor.

Summary
Professional development and specifically targeted opportunities for the integration of technology into classroom instruction and learning are a priority for school districts. The standard method of seat-time based professional development has become antiquated. Alternatives include proficiency rewarded with a digital badge. The attitudes of educators related to developing applicable skills and being validated with a certification may provide administrators with additional insight about teacher preferences regarding professional development that positively impacts student learning and achievement.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
The purpose of this study is to determine if earning a digital badge has a positive impact on practitioner efficacy regarding the integration of classroom technology. In addition to this literature review, a brief history of professional development practices related to instructional technology will be provided along with a description of the emergence of digital badging in the area of professional learning. A number of questions related to professional growth and digital badging are answered through research and practitioner studies.

History of Professional Development in Instructional Technology
Technology has always been a component of classroom instruction. Consequently, there has always been a need to train educators on how to best

leverage these tools to maximize student achievement. Technology in the context of today's classroom refers to personal computers, tablets, smartphones and interactive displays. The beginning of the movement to train educators on the integration of these devices can be traced back to the Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow (ACOT) program that was launched in 1981. The ACOT lasted ten years and was aimed at understanding and promoting change in instructional beliefs and practices of elementary and secondary teachers and their students due to the infusion of technology. Sandholtz, Ringstaff, and Dwyer noted that the program ultimately produced what could be considered one of the first frameworks to guide technology based professional development. Apple's success also inspired other technology companies to create their own educator development projects, such as Intel's Teach to the Future and IBM's Reinventing Education.

As technology evolved and became more accessible in the years that followed, school districts began programs to get as much technology into classrooms as possible. Around 2001, school districts such as Irving Independent School District in Texas started implementing 1-to-1 laptop initiatives. The use of these devices by students caused disruptive change in the way teachers approach teaching and learning. Educators received intensive training on concepts such as facilitating discussions instead of directing lessons, and creating opportunities that integrated technology into curriculum. Owen, Farsaii, Knezak and Christensen (2005) noted as a result of professional development in instructional technology, students learn more and are reported to be more motivated and engaged (Raulston & Wright, 2010).

Seeing success in places such as the Irving Independent School District, educators began to organize professional development in the form of workshops, interchangeably called in-service,

teacher training, staff development, or professional development in the area of instructional technology. Despite training opportunities, Sparks (2006) reported that only 7% of schools have teachers who are technologically advanced enough to effectively integrate technology into their lessons. Lawless and Pellegrino (2007) noted that it is unclear whether students will "have access to teachers who know how to use that technology well to support 21st-century learning and teaching" (p. 578). To address this issue, districts currently employ instructional technology coaches or Teachers On Special Assignment (TOSA). These trainers are hired by districts to accomplish a number of objectives with respect to technology based professional development. TOSAs assist teachers in using technology for assessing student learning, differentiating instruction, and providing rigorous, relevant and engaging learning experiences for all students. Also, these specialists may develop technology-related professional learning programs, and evaluate the impact on instructional practice and student learning (International Society for Technology in Education Standards for Coaches, 2016).

The Digital Badge Movement
The concept of digital badges is a relatively new concept on the professional development landscape. The Mozilla Foundation (2010) noted the first digital badge was an online record of achievements, tracking each recipient's communities of interaction that issued the badge and the work completed to get it. The primary goal of the work done by the Mozilla Foundation, Peer 2 Peer University, and the MacArthur Foundation was to extend learning beyond "seat time." The concept was to extend professional development for instructional technology across multiple contexts. This would create an environment where learners are offered a variety of pathways to gain competencies and refine skills through open, remixable and transparent tools, resources and processes. The concept is a shift in professional

learning in which the environment has become very different from the one upon which the current education system was developed and standardized. Since their inception, thousands of organizations including educational institutions, nonprofits and major employers have issued digital badges. The badges have become symbols of accomplishment connected to verifiable data or evidence that the owners can share across the web that highlights a skill or set of skills they have acquired as a lifelong learner (Mozilla Foundation and Peer 2 Peer University, 2010).

As school districts look to engage in this type of professional development, organizations such as Digital Promise have developed a system for educators to be recognized for developing meaningful learning opportunities for students. The contemporary view is that digital badges are designed to be earned for both formal and informal learning (Open Badges, 2017). Badges are awarded when a learner engages in learning that is competency-based. After learning a skill, a participant collects and submits evidence demonstrating the ability to apply that skill. Second, the learning should be on-demand. This implies that learners should be able to access clearly stated requirements for earning a badge on their own time. Third, the learning is personalized. Learners are afforded choice about what concepts they should explore as they look to gain skills aligned to student learning goals of a school or organization. Finally, a digital badge is sharable. Owners are able to post or share their accomplishments across a number of electronic platforms including social media (Open Badges, 2017).

Digital badges have become an alternative to traditional models of professional development in which learners are tied to a predetermined amount of time and content rather than the development of applicable, recognizable and impactful skills. Badges

are re-imagining ways to recognize learning beyond formal credentialing systems. Today, badges are an emergent technology and require further development for widespread market development and adoption (Open Badges, 2017).

Research Studies

Instefjord and Munthe (2017) conducted a study to determine how professional digital competence is integrated in initial teacher education. The research and findings for this study were conducted in cooperation with educators in Norway. Surveys were conducted among pre-service teachers, teacher educators, and mentor teachers to answer the following research questions:

1. How do teacher educators perceive their own digital competence, and how is this related to workplace support and their pedagogical efficacy?

2. How do mentor teachers perceive their own competence, what they emphasize for students, and how do they perceive the emphasis of digital competence in teacher education?

3. How do pre-service teachers perceive the emphasis on digital competence in teacher education?

Data collection for this study included three questionnaire surveys that were sent digitally to preservice teachers in 4-year concurrent Initial Teacher Education (ITE), teacher educators at all 17 Higher Education Institutions (HEI), and to participating partner schools and mentor teachers responsible for supervising pre-service teachers during their field practice. Questions were designed to determine the perceptions of digital competence for each group.

Results were compiled from of each of the three

groups. Analyses conducted for this study included descriptive analyses such as frequencies as well as explanatory analyses. All analyses were carried out using IBM SPSS Software.

Roughly 30% of teacher educators reported that they emphasize educating their students in the use of digital tools to a high degree; 35% of teacher educators also reported that they model their use to a high degree, and that they have a good understanding of how to use digital tools to promote learning in schools. The authors concluded there is a correlation between competence of mentor teachers and their ability to digitally assess students and promote learning. "I have good understanding for the use of digital tools to promote pupils' learning" and "I use digital tools for assessment of pupils" (p. 43) have the highest mean scores (M = 4.57). For both of these items, a majority (84.2% and 78.1%) of the scores were rated from 4 to 6. Pre-service teachers showed a favorable response with respect to their own competence. Sixty-one percent of pre-service teachers responded positively to identifying tools that promote student learning. The study helps illustrate that higher education can influence integration of digital competence for pre-service teachers.

Dyjur and Lindstrom (2017) conducted a study to determine the perceptions and uses of digital badges by instructors and graduate students who have completed professional development activities to advance their knowledge of teaching in higher education. The study was conducted at a Canadian higher education institution.

Participants who had enrolled in a professional learning session or workshop were contacted in person and online through email to provide insight into the following research questions:

1. How do participants perceive digital badges?

2. How do they intend to use digital badges?

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and an online survey with both Likert-scale and open-ended survey questions. Interview questions focused on participant perceptions about what digital badges are and their intended uses. Three in-depth interviews of workshop participants were conducted, and sixteen participants answered the survey.

A descriptive analysis was conducted to determine if the participants strongly agreed, agreed, were unsure, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the positive claims related to digital badges. A similar analysis of data was conducted on the intended uses of badges earned by the participants.

Through the analysis of data collected, the authors arrived at several conclusions. The first outcome showed that participants had positive perceptions of their digital badges. Eighty-eight percent of participants indicated there was perceived value in earning a digital badge after completing their program or workshop, and a large percentage (75%) were encouraged to earn a badge through their organization. Sixty-nine percent wanted to earn more badges from their current institution. Further analysis of the interview data revealed there were additional themes related to perceptions of earning a digital badge. Educators who earned a badge noted that certification increased motivation to develop and apply instructional technology skills. The final theme focused on a variety of intended uses. Earners intended to use their badges for display on social media and for professional advancement. Both quantitative and qualitative data suggested that participants had generally positive perceptions of the digital badges which may support the continued use of digital badges for professional learning opportunities in higher education. This is imilar to

findings of Glover and Latif (2013) who noted that the use of badges in higher education was motivational in that they offered alternative ways of recognizing learning achievements. Also, the authors found that digital badges are used in several different ways, including adding to a digital or physical portfolio, sharing through social media, and including them on a resume.

Gamrat, Zimmerman, Dudek, and Peck (2014) conducted a study to investigate the use of digital badging as a tool to support the needs of personalized professional learning and organizations with credentialing in a technologically enhanced workplace. The study was conducted in American primary and secondary school settings.

Participants were teachers at all levels of their careers. Teachers were recruited via email rosters from partnering educational organizations. The criterion for inclusion was status as an educator with science teaching responsibility. The study was designed to address two research questions:

1. How do teachers use a digital badging system to personalize their experience in Teacher Learning Journeys (TLJ) to meet their PD goals (decision making)?

2. How do teachers personalize their PD activities within Teacher Learning Journeys to support unique aspects of their workplace setting (customization)?

Data were collected on 36 teachers who were awarded a stamp or a badge. Data also included PD activity logs and interviews from eight teachers who participated in a case study (they completed a total of 61 activities).

Interviews and activity reflections were all coded with regard to personalized, professional learning. Case study data were evaluated with a theory-driven thematic analysis originally developed by Glesne (2011) to investigate how teachers personalized their use of teacher learning journeys to support their PD goals.

The study findings are organized into three sections. The first section included how all 36 teachers made decisions and customized their assessment and content using the digital badging system to support their PD goals. The second section highlighted how the eight case study teachers customized their PD goals to support unique and developing aspects of their workplace settings. The final section included a detailed description of the role played by a mentor teacher in providing feedback for the eight case study teachers as they progressed through individualized workplace learning. The primary advantage from the perspective of the teachers who earned a stamp or badge was the ability to collaborate with their mentor and make decisions about the level of diligence required to accomplish the learning objective. Regarding decisions about the level of assessment, teachers had two choices. First, stamps represented a lower level of achievement, while badges represented a higher level of achievement. Badges required teachers to complete additional reflection and work to connect PD activity content to their workplace. However, teachers typically made the decision to seek the stamp (the lower achievement) rather than a badge (the higher level). Across the 36 participants, teachers earned 133 stamps (86.4%) and 21 badges (13.6%). This was also true among the eight case studies teachers, all completing more stamps than badges. The case study teachers completed 61 PD activities with 49 stamps (80.3%) and 12 badges (19.7%).

The authors suggested that providing teachers the ability to make decisions about their assessment provided them the flexibility to personalize their PD to align with their existing and desired expertise needed for their workplace.

The authors found that teachers who did not include a specific topic in their learning goals explored at least two different topics in their plan. For example, one participant wrote:

> I want to expand my knowledge of weather and climate so I can assist my students in understanding of how the cycling of matter in and out of the atmosphere relates to the earth's atmosphere, weather, climate, and the effects of the atmosphere on humans and find new activities which will actively engage my students and promote mastery of the essential standard. As cited by Gamrat, Zimmerman, Dudek and Peck, 2014 (p. 1144).

As part of earning a badge, teachers received expert feedback on the completed activity logs from a regionally located mentor. Tynjälä and Häkkinen (2005) noted that thoughtful discussion with an expert practitioner is a key activity that builds toward collaborative personalized PD. The authors found that collaborative conversations with expert practitioners supported the participating teachers who customize their professional development.

Yıldırım (2016) conducted a study on the effects of digital badges on achievement, motivation and satisfaction of the learners. The study was conducted at a Turkish higher education institution.

For this purpose, the following research questions were asked:

1. What are the effects of digital badges on the academic achievement levels of the students in a computer science course?

2. What are the views of the computer science students regarding digital badges?

A total of 51 participants made up the study group. A semi-structured interview form including 7 questions was prepared to measure the perceptions about badges. Midterm and final exams prepared by researchers and faculty members within the subjects of the course were used to evaluate the effects of badges on achievement.

The data obtained through interviews with the participants were analyzed using content analysis method. By systematically evaluating texts, qualitative data can be converted into quantitative data. The Shapiro Wilk normality test, Mann-Whitney U test and t-test were used to analyze the data.

The authors noted a difference of 5 points between students who received beginner level badges and those who did not earn badges in terms of academic achievement. The difference between these two groups was statically insignificant (t (49) =1.432, p>.05). Also, there was a difference of 10 points between those who earned intermediate level badges and those who didn't earn badges in terms of academic achievement that were determined to be statistically significant (t (49) =2.258, p<.05).

The views of the participating students towards the advantages of digital badges were grouped under headings such as motivation, competition, self-assessment and participation in the class. They indicated digital badges improve motivation, interest in class activities and competition. Also, the students noted that digital badges have a role of encouraging them to reorganize their own learning processes. "Digital badges increase my motivation for the course. We have taken programming classes before, but I come to this class more willingly compared to previous classes" (Yıldırım, 2016, p.178).

METHODOLOGY
Sample Population
The sample population consisted of 50 educators who participated in a digital badging program in

Central California. The educators completed a survey asking them to share their perceptions and opinions of teachers regarding practitioner efficacy associated with earning a digital badge.

A non-probability sampling strategy was used to select educators that had earned at least one badge through an instructional technology professional development program in Central California. The group of educators was convenient because this researcher had access to contact information to recipients of digital badges. The results of this study may not generalize beyond the educators that participated in this particular badging program.

Instrumentation

For this study, data were collected through an electronic survey. The survey was composed of 10 statements soliciting opinions and perceptions about digital badges in instructional technology professional development. The survey was distributed electronically through a Google Form and results were compiled in a Google Sheets for analysis. Participants were asked to select a response that indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement using a 4-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, and 4= strongly agree). The survey was submitted to the California State University, Stanislaus Internal Review Board (IRB) and approved November 22, 2017, protocol number #1718-048.

Data Collection

An informed consent letter was provided to secure the permission of each participant in this study. Teacher involvement in this study was anonymous and voluntary. As an incentive to complete the survey, participants were entered in a drawing to win a prize from a badge program sponsor. Surveys were distributed to educators via email by this researcher.

Statistical Analysis

Survey responses were analyzed using a chi square goodness of fit to determine whether significant differences existed in the distribution of responses to each survey statement. The significance level of $p<.05$ was established for the statistical analysis.

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Summary

This study was conducted to determine the perceived effectiveness of earning a digital badge in relationship to the integration of classroom technology. A survey consisting of 10 statements was distributed to 33 educators who participated in a digital badge program. All surveys were returned and analyzed using a chi square goodness of fit along with descriptive techniques. The analysis showed a statistically significant difference in the distribution of educator responses to seven of the ten statements. A majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that earning a digital badge increased motivation to improve technology use for instruction, increased likelihood of earning additional badges and development of skills tied to district goals or initiatives, increased frequency of technology use for instruction, improved quality of instruction, and increased frequency of technology use by students after earning one or more digital badges.

The analysis showed no significant difference in the distribution of survey responses to three statements. Although there was not a significant difference in the distribution of responses to two of three statements, a descriptive analysis showed that a majority of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that digital badges increase the technology proficiency and academic achievement of students.

Participants were evenly divided as to whether or not publishing their accomplishments on social media or email signature lines contributed to their ability to further integrate technology into classroom learning.

Implications

This study suggests that there are several areas in which digital badging can improve the integration of classroom technology. The identified areas include frequency of use by both students and instructors, increased motivation to improve instruction, and development of skills tied to district goals.

Professional development is common practice in nearly every school district or educational organization. Many districts utilize the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model or employ a Teacher On Special Assignment (TOSA) to conduct these trainings or workshops. Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon & Birman (2002) stated "Although lists of characteristics such as these commonly appear in the literature on effective professional development, there is little direct evidence on the extent to which these characteristics are related to better teaching and increased student achievement" (p. 89).

The digital badge concept is an approach to professional development that school administrators and educational leaders may wish to consider. As this study suggests, there are a number of motivating factors associated with earning a digital badge that carry perceived benefits including higher quality instruction, continued professional growth and alignment with district goals. Professional development can be successful when:

The learning is personalized. Learners are afforded choice about what concepts they should explore as they look to gain skills aligned to student learning goals of a school or organization. In addition to these factors, in most cases badges require the participant to accomplish a clearly stated objective. Badges are awarded when a learner engages in learning that is competency-based. After learning a skill, a participant collects and submits evidence demonstrating the ability to apply that skill (Open Badges, 2017).

Further Research

This researcher recommends replication of this study with a larger sample of participants and inclusion of additional statements to ascertain if skills developed while earning a badge reach students. Additionally, this researcher recommends distribution of a survey to students of educators who have participated in a badge program for the purpose of determining the potential of badges to improve the quality of instruction. This researcher recommends that a case study be conducted with a number of school districts to determine if the implementation of a digital badging program can have a positive impact on student achievement across different grade levels, content areas and demographics.

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