WELCOME TO A WORLD OF WORKING—AND SCHOOLING—FROM HOME
In this issue:

1. Major Grant Awards Funded in Fiscal Year, 2019-20
2. Diving into COVID-19 Research
4. Healing Coronavirus-Caused Trauma
6. Putting Pen to the Pandemic

Be sure to keep up with all the School’s news with our quarterly e-letter, *From Ocean & El Colegio*.

Sign up here: https://bit.ly/3h9Ck8A

And if you’re an alumnus, be sure to send us all your news so we can share it!

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**How to Home and School: A GGSE Webinar Series**

This spring, the Gevirtz School launched a webinar series sharing expertise from world-class faculty with parents and caregivers. Each of the three episodes provided theory-based practical tips to make this challenging period of distance education not just possible but effective.

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On the RE:Launch cover: Christina Wilburn, the GGSE Academic Personnel Coordinator, is also a mother of three-year-old Benny (pictured). Her voice is just one of the diverse group that shared written journals through the COVID crisis. Learn more on pp. 6-7.
## MAJOR GRANT AWARDS FUNDED
### IN FISCAL YEAR, 2019-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PI/Co-PI(s)</th>
<th>Projects &amp; Sponsors</th>
<th>Total Amounts</th>
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| Ty Vernon (PI)  
Andrew Maul (Co-PI) | Clinician-less Training in Autism Treatment: An Adaptive Online Parent Education Program | $738,769 |
| Erika Felix (PI)  
Antoniya Terzieva (Co-PI) | Evaluation of Proposition 10-Funded Activities for Santa Barbara County First 5 Santa Barbara County | $215,097 |
| Jeffrey Milem (PI)  
Tim Dewar (Co-PI) | California Writing Project  
UC California Writing Project | $171,009 |
| Danielle Harlow (PI) | Practice-driven Research: Developing Constructivism-informed Tools for Supporting Learning in Informal Contexts  
National Science Foundation | $159,949 |
| Shane Jimerson (PI) | Supporting Social Emotional Development at School  
Goleta Union School District | $151,810 |
| Julie Bianchini (PI) | Science and Mathematics Teacher Research Initiative (SMTRI)  
UC Santa Cruz | $130,633 |
| Jill Sharkey (PI) | Facilitating Comprehensive Support and Improvement to Increase Graduation Rates of a Continuation High School  
Santa Barbara Unified School District | $116,102 |
| Carolyn Sattin-Bajaj (PI) | Evaluation of Just Communities Central Coast (JCCC) Services to SB Unified  
Santa Barbara Unified School District | $107,970 |
| Tarek Azzam (PI) | NRT: Plants-3D (Discover, Design and Deploy): Enhancing Minority Graduate Training in Plant Synthetic Biology  
UC Riverside (part of grant from National Science Foundation) | $99,996 |
| Sarah Hough Pattison (PI)  
Julie Bianchini (Co-PI) | External Evaluation for Catalyzing IDEAs for the San Joaquin Valley: Innovating Math and Chemistry Curriculum (MG2)  
California State University, Fresno (part of grant from National Science Foundation) | $97,358 |

For more information about external funding at the Gevirtz School, see the Contracts & Grants pages: https://education.ucsb.edu/contracts-grants
As soon as the wide-ranging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent to the students of the Gevirtz School, they recognized they had the training and knowledge to help society through perilous times. So many questions about mental health arose. These areas of study matched the number of questions about how to keep education working long distance in an equitable way.

One student, Meg Boyer in CCSP, even re-focused her dissertation topic. Her primary motivation for the shift, she says, was realizing “that COVID-19 is a widely experienced, potentially traumatic, and hopefully rare event. As an emotion researcher and psychotherapist in training, I could choose to see it as a disruption to my planned agenda or as an opportunity to learn something valuable about how individuals respond to a collective, extended crisis.”

After her preliminary research, she reported to UCSB’s The Current, “So if I had to kind of sum up all of [my work] in a sentence, it would be, ‘Don’t give up; disengaging is understandable, but not particularly helpful.’ Reach out to others for emotional support, not just advice or venting. When good things happen, notice those good things and really start to practice being compassionate to yourself. That last part specifically can be really difficult, but it’s also really powerful. We have a lot of research that shows self-compassion is really crucial in these crises.”

Meanwhile, 14 other Gevirtz students received Summer Minigrants for Multidisciplinary Research on COVID-19 and its Impacts from UCSB Graduate Division. Those students and their research are:

**From the Department of Counseling, Clinical and School Psychology**

Sepideh Alavi, “Parenting During a Global Pandemic: Health Care Providers and Their Families at the Frontline of COVID-19”

This study underscores the public health need to consider health care providers and their families’ mental health and well-being, given the singularity of their experiences and the vast amount of physical and psychological risks they are challenged with during COVID-19.

Maggie Chan, “Teacher Stress and Well-being Amid the COVID-19 Crisis”

The purpose of the project is to understand the stress experienced by teachers in the face of school closures due to the pandemic and identify effective strategies to support teachers from teachers’ perspectives.

Daniel Del Cid and Melissa Janson, “COVID-19’s Impact on Essential Workers’ Distress, Perceptions of Parenting, and Child Mental Health Symptoms”

We are interested in understanding the relationships between the well-being of grocery store workers in particular, their ability to parent, and mental health symptoms of their children.


The study hopes to inform future efforts to effectively deliver and implement evidence-based children’s mental health care remotely, and to understand how a global crisis impacts mental health service provision.
Isabel Lopez, partnering with Chantel Haughton (Department of Communication), “Family Discussions about Mental Health in Black and Latinx Communities in the Context of COVID-19 and Civil Unrest”

The study seeks to understand what supportive conversations regarding mental health look like among Black and Latinx parent/adult child dyads, especially given COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black and Latinx physical and mental health, and current news coverage of racial violence against Black Americans has exacerbated stressors experienced by minorities.

Chava Nerenberg, “Resilient in the Face of Lockdown: Application of Best Practices from Mental Health Professionals Serving Aid Workers to the COVID-19 Pandemic”

International aid workers often live in isolated locations far from friends and family and face restrictive living conditions that are remarkably similar to those now challenging populations around the world due to COVID-19. This research explores how therapeutic approaches for international aid workers can be applied to build the wellbeing and resilience of populations affected by COVID-19.


This project examines Asian-American experiences of discrimination and stereotyping as a result of COVID-19 in order to design interventions that will help mitigate the effects of this discrimination in Asian-American populations.

From the Department of Education

John Cano Barrios, “Understanding Faculty’s Experiences in Transitioning from Face-to-Face to Online Instruction in an R1 University During the Coronavirus Pandemic”

An ethnographic study that aims to understand and explore motivations, challenges, choices, and actions of a university educator and scholar, during the process of leading multiple youth-based programs and designing and implementing a related practitioner online course offered to education minors in an R1 university (UCSB).

Rachel Schuck, “Special Education Teachers’ Perspectives on Parental Involvement During the COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place”

With schools closed and learning moved online, teachers have needed to rely on parents more than ever before. This is particularly true for special education teachers. This study investigates elementary special education teachers’ experiences teaching during the pandemic, with particular emphasis on their relationships and communication with parents.

Jing Yu, “Lost in Lockdown? The Impact of COVID-19 on International Student Mobility”

This research study will offer a detailed understanding of Chinese international students’ ambitions and anxieties in the age of Trump’s America and COVID-19.
HEALING CORONAVIRUS-CAUSED TRAUMA

Traumatic times

Although COVID-19 is a collectively experienced stressor, the pandemic is not necessarily an equally shared experience, says Kia-Keating, given racial and socioeconomic inequalities. For some, the pandemic may be traumatic because it threatens their life and wellbeing, says Felix, who studies acute events, such as natural disasters, terrorism, and mass violence. How directly people are affected by the pandemic predicts their mental health and coping abilities, as does the number of pre-existing stressors. People who experience death, unemployment, relocation, or limited social support are particularly vulnerable, says Jimerson.

Unique uncertainty

“We are having to learn how to cope and assess the impact on mental health in an environment where the stressor is continuing to evolve,” says Felix, who presented a GGSE-hosted webinar about coping with pandemic-related emotional distress.

After a natural disaster, people deal with the stress of recovering, but it is clear when the danger has passed. The pandemic is different: The threat of danger persists indefinitely, causing us to be constantly hyper-vigilant, which is psychologically and physically exhausting, says Jimerson. Extreme global anxiety and living in constant crisis mode make us reactive instead of proactive, says Kia-Keating.

The professors offer research-based tips for combating the consequences of the pandemic.

Relationship and routine maintenance

“Social support is a critical variable that has a profound influence on people’s mental health,” says Kia-Keating, who suggests regularly scheduling virtual gatherings to nurture relationships. Jimerson advises both seeking out and offering support.
Healthy habits are also key. The professors recommend sleep, physical activity, healthy eating, and limiting alcohol or other substance use.

“What you do each day matters, even if it’s small, especially if it becomes your routine,” says Kia-Keating. “Routines provide a sense of normalcy, control, and expectations,” says Jimerson.

Helping kids cope

Stressors affect children’s learning, emotions, and behaviors, says Kia-Keating. “One of the most important predictors of children’s mental health and health is their parents’ mental health,” she says. Felix also emphasizes “how important it is for some trusted adult to keep the communication open about what’s going on in the pandemic in a developmentally appropriate way.”

School is another important topic related to kids coping. Jimerson describes that limited academic enrichment and engagement may cause students to fall behind, especially students from families with limited resources and students needing special education support. Thus, it is important for school professionals to make extra efforts to engage and educate all children during these challenging times.

“What we know following a natural disaster [is that] kids do better in communities when the schools can reopen safely as soon as possible,” says Felix. “Kids need that structure.” While children are out of school, she recommends that parents develop a flexible routine to prevent boredom and hopelessness. Jimerson advises “using technology to purposefully engage small groups of youth to explore topics of mutual interest…and build skills” such as problem-solving, emotion regulation, and communication.

Resources and real-time research

Felix urges people to notice if they’re having too many bad days in a row, reaching or nearing clinical levels of mental health problems that affect quality of life. “It’s understandable. If you’re starting to recognize a problem, be proactive,” she says. “Reach out to a clinician for treatment. We want to get through this together.”

Meanwhile, Felix and her doctoral students are using pre-pandemic data from a natural disaster study to understand the effects of the pandemic on young adults. Jimerson is investigating how parents of children receiving special education services perceive and experience remote learning. Kia-Keating and her team of graduate students are focusing on the additive impact of discrimination and hate crimes and frontline workers providing healthcare and humanitarian aid during the pandemic.

Kia-Keating neatly sums up the work of all three professors: “It’s an honor for me to continue to find ways to increase child, family, and community resilience in response to experiences of stress, uncertainty, and adversity.”
The U.S. National Archives refers to primary sources as “history in the raw.” Certainly the scope and misery of the Coronavirus pandemic is about as raw as recent history gets, so it seemed only appropriate that the Gevirtz School document the moment as it happened. A call went out in late March for writers willing to submit to “Education and Applied Psychology in a Time of COVID-19: A Gevirtz School Journaling Project.” Eight people answered the call, from a fourth-grader to associate professor Diana Arya, and 35 posts later in mid-July they have created a unique web of tales and thought. “I think it’s very important we keep track of what happens so we can learn from it,” wrote the School’s Director of Communications, George Yatchisin, in his initial call. “These posts should end up a great resource, not just for the School, but for anyone interested in how education and applied psychology deal with such enormous challenges on the fly.”

The posts turned out to be a kind of time-lapse photograph of the moment as it happened, an illuminating look at how education continued while schools shut down, how therapy and counseling continued without face-to-face sessions. “In addition to offering webinars to share expert advice from our faculty about education and mental wellness during this pandemic,” Gevirtz School Dean Jeffrey Milem says, “we wanted to provide some more informal, real-time accounts of our changing world. I think of this journal project like letters home from the front.”

The fight wasn’t always easy. Many entries admit to the struggle to recreate the bond teachers and students forge in the crucible of a classroom. “Everything that we did in the classroom and on campus in real time has been reduced to email interaction,” Camille Kavon, a lecturer in the Teacher Education Program and a remote learning instructor for 132 middle school students, wrote in mid-April. “And I don’t like it. It’s hard to gauge expression and to understand meaning in brief messages. I find myself drafting emails very carefully and purposefully. Thinking to myself, is this too much, too little, will they understand, will they show me grace? Have I shown them grace?”

We also offered the student’s perspective, thanks to the participation of fourth-grader Lila Kia-Keating. Kia-Keating joined the project, she says, “Because...”
I knew that it would be good to hear a kid’s point of view for a change.” Her seven entries run the gamut of emotions, from frustration to joy, and capture her learning not only how to bake, but also how to create movies on Brainpop and books on Book Creator. She also posed a fascinating existential COVID question: “I am starting to wonder what it will be like when the coronavirus is over and we all go back to school. Will we all immediately hug everyone? Or will we all stand in a corner not daring to touch because of how it used to be? It is pretty hard to get used to something and then switching back. Like growing up speaking a certain type of language, moving to a place that speaks a different language, learning and mastering it, speaking in that language at home, and then suddenly, you move back. What will you do? What will we do?”

Of course we had no idea that the death of George Floyd and others at the hands of police would spark protests in every state and a national call-to-consciousness about race when we started the journal project, either. But there were certainly hints of unrest: in one post, Department of Education graduate student Mary Franitza—who had gone home to ride out the pandemic—considered how she had to vote in a primary election in the middle of one. “In the last two weeks, Wisconsin has been in the national spotlight for its call for eligible Wisconsinites to still head to the polls and vote. Excuse me, but what? A gubernatorial executive order postponed state elections, but the Wisconsin Supreme Court quickly overturned it. I’m sorry, what?... And yet, people showed up, they voted, and Wisconsin has since moved out of the national spotlight. But even in the face of a pandemic, voter suppression is alive and well.”

Fortunately, the participants found the process itself nourishing. “Journal writing provided a way for me to consciously process my own experience with the pandemic,” says GGSE Assistant Director of Outreach Devon Azzam, “as well as to appreciate the hard work and dedication of my colleagues as they responded to the changes it brought upon us.”

And when asked to consider lessons to be learned from this journal project, Dr. Diana Arya from the Department of Education suggested this forward-looking plan, “Perhaps we should think of a way to create opportunities for people to come together to process everything that’s been happening—the pandemic, the socio-political revolution we are facing, the obvious war that we are waging against federal government policies, economic hardship, and the frightening changes in our climate.”