

Participant Information Statement – Parents and Caregivers

COVID-19 pandemic's disruption of primary school
mathematics and science education: challenges and successes

- Invitation to participate in an interview about your experiences and reflections

Researchers:

Associate Professor Lena Danaia – School of Teacher Education, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst

Associate Professor Amy MacDonald – School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Albury

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Mr. Steve Murphy – School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga

Invitation

You are invited to participate in an interview as part of the research study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on primary school mathematics and science education that you are currently participating in. Please note, the information presented here repeats some of the information you have previously received when you consented to join the original study. The study is being conducted by the above named researchers from Charles Sturt University. Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this interview, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

1. What is the purpose of this study?

COVID-19 has disrupted the education of an estimated 1 billion children world-wide. School closures have required the adoption of unfamiliar at-home learning practices to continue children's education.

Mathematics and science education are particularly at risk of impact at this time, given that previous research demonstrates that effective education in these learning areas require hands-on activities, and some primary teachers and parents/caregivers can have relatively low confidence in these disciplines. At the same time, some teachers and parents/caregivers are responding to the current conditions in new and creative ways, with some authorities believing the COVID-19 crisis will lead to improvements in education. So, while COVID-19 poses a threat to students' mathematics and science education, it has the potential to generate innovative approaches to teaching these challenging disciplines.

This project aims to understand how at-home learning of mathematics and science is facilitated, and to identify new practices believed to be effective. The findings from this study will be used to inform parents/caregivers and teachers using at-home learning, and to inform future improvements in mathematics and science education.

2. Why have I been invited to participate in an interview?

We are inviting those parents and caregivers currently participating in the COVID-19 and primary school maths and science Facebook groups to participate in an interview about their experiences of facilitating at-home science and mathematics education.

3. What does the interview involve?

If you agree to participate, you will need to complete the consent form and return it to Steve Murphy via email at smurphy@csu.edu.au. A researcher will then contact you to arrange a time and a mode of interview that best suits you. Interviews will be conducted between August to October 2020. You may choose to be interviewed via a range of electronic mediums including telephone, email, Zoom meeting, or others. The interview is expected to take 30 – 60 minutes and the researcher would ask you to share your experiences of, and reflections about, facilitating at-home primary mathematics and science education. During the interview you can choose if, how, and the sequence in which, you share your experiences and reflections. If you like, the researcher can ask questions to facilitate the discussion. The researcher may also ask other questions during the interview for further information or clarification. An audio recording will

be made of this interview. Two weeks after the interview this audio recording will be transcribed and the transcript made non-identifiable.

Please note, your participation in any, or all, of the interview is entirely optional. During the interview you may choose to decline to answer any questions. You may also choose to end the interview whenever you see fit. You can also withdraw yourself and your data from the research with no penalty to yourself.

4. Are there risks and benefits to me in taking part in this interview?

We cannot promise you any benefit from participating in this interview.

Every effort will be taken to minimise the risk of harm to participants. You will be asked to choose a time and mode for the interview that best suits you. You will also be invited to share your experiences and reflections in a way that you feel best allows you to share your story. The researcher can support this with questions, and may ask additional questions, that you can choose to answer or not to answer with no penalty to yourself. Your participation in the interview will be kept confidential. The interview will be transcribed, and then made non-identifiable by replacing your name with a pseudonym and altering any other potentially identifying details.

The interview is focused upon your experience of facilitating at-home mathematics and science education. This subject area may cause anxiety for some participants.

5. What should I do if I need support or if I am not managing during the research?

If you are finding participation in this research stressful or you are not coping in any way you can cease your participation in the interview at any time and without any explanation. Ceasing participation can be done by informing the researcher of your desire to finish the interview and/or by ending electronic communication. Further, please seek support if you need it. Beyond Blue (1300 224636) can support with counselling and support for any issues that may arise during this research, and Lifeline (13 11 14) can provide crisis counselling if required.

6. How is this study being paid for?

This research is being funded by the Charles Sturt COVID-19 Research Grant Program.

7. Will taking part in this interview (or travelling to) cost me anything, and will I be paid?

There will be no cost to you for participating in this study. You will not be paid.

8. What if I don't want to take part in this interview?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be interviewed. Whether or not you decide to participate, is your decision and will not disadvantage you.

9. What if I participate and want to withdraw later?

If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the interview at any time without giving a reason and you have the option of withdrawing any interview data you contribute. You will not however be able to withdraw your data once it has been transcribed and made non-identifiable. No data will be kept to allow re-identification. This will be done two weeks after the conclusion of the interview. Given this, withdrawal of your interview data after this time will not be possible.

10. How will my confidentiality be protected?

Your interview will be transcribed and your name will be replaced with a pseudonym. Any potentially identifiable data will be altered and no data will be kept to allow re-identification. Given this, you will not be able to be identified from the transcript or from any segments of your transcript that are used in the dissemination of the findings of this study. Data will be secured for a period of five years after the last publication about the study and, after that time, the computer file deleted, in line with Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research guidelines. All information will be password protected on a university computer with only the researchers having access to the information. Any publications and presentations resulting from this research will include no identifying information. Participants' details and consent agreements collected prior to the interview will be securely stored separately from the interview data collected and coding used during data analysis. The research team will be the only people with access to this password protected information, and the only people able to share non-identifiable information with other researchers. Any use of your information will be limited to the use of your non-identifiable information by researchers who agree to preserve your confidentiality and accessed through the agreement of the original research group.

11. What will happen to the information that I give you?

The results of the analysis of these interviews will be contribute to a summative report of the larger study for Charles Sturt University. This report will be made publicly available by 31 January 2021, including through the Facebook newsfeeds of the researchers. Participants will be able to access the report through the Facebook pages of the researchers. The findings will also be used in papers for publication in academic journals, professional magazines, and conferences. Individual participants will not be identified in any of these publications. Pseudonyms will be used in reporting any findings and potentially identifying information will have been altered.

The information you contribute, in non-identifiable form may also be used in future education research projects that extend on, or are related to, this project.

12. What should I do if I want to discuss this study further before I decide?

If you would like further information please contact Steve Murphy at the School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag 588, Wagga Wagga, NSW 2678. Phone: (02) 693 32491. Email: smurphy@csu.edu.au

13. Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?

Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Ethics and Compliance Unit via the following contact details:

The Governance Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Ethics and Compliance Unit
Locked Bag 588
Wagga Wagga NSW 2678
(02) 6933 4213
Email: ethics@csu.edu.au

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.

**Thank you for considering this
invitation. This information sheet is for
you to keep.**