

## **ABSTRACT**

THESIS: Impact of Calling Home on Student Engagement During Covid-19

STUDENT: Tina Ahmadi

COLLEGE: Science and Humanities

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This thesis presents an overview of research on best practices for virtual and hybrid learning. The study focuses on the impact of communicating with families on student achievement and describes methods of instruction and communication that a 9th grade science teacher at a metropolitan high school found efficacious. An analysis of existing literature was conducted and combined with quantitative and qualitative data collected from an integrated chemistry/physics classroom during spring 2020.

Collected data includes outcomes and survey responses for 121 students following four weeks calling families of students at different rates. Families for half of students were called twice a week for two weeks, while the other half of students did not receive any calls. At the end of the first two-week period, the students who did not receive calls received a weekly call for a period of two weeks. The students who received phone calls the first two weeks did not receive phone calls over the second two-week period.

Student assignment completion and self-ratings for engagement were compared. There was no significant difference between the number of assignments completed, number of assignment attempts, or grades between the two groups. There was no significant difference

between the grades assigned to the teacher by members of each group. The two groups were equally likely to rate the class as interesting, and equally likely to report that they had learned over the course of the semester.

Teachers have limited time and resources. Therefore, identifying the teaching practices that have the greatest impact on student engagement can help them determine how to spend their time and resources, and help guide school policies and procedures. This paper provides suggestions for improving engagement in a virtual classroom setting based on the action research and literature reviews conducted.