

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING LOSS FOLLOWING TRAUMATIC MULTI-  
EVENT SCHOOL CLOSURES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Robert Todd Mitchell

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University

2023

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING LOSS FOLLOWING TRAUMATIC MULTI-  
EVENT SCHOOL CLOSURES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by Robert Todd Mitchell

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2023

APPROVED BY:

James Eller, Ed.D., Committee Chair

James Swezey, Ed.D., Committee Member

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss due to multiple school closures during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years while attending Bay District Schools (BDS) in Bay County, Florida. The theoretical framework utilized in this study was Weiner's Attribution Theory (AT). Weiner (1974) posited that the pursuit of understanding the motivation of an individual's behavior requires attributing one or more causes to the behavior. Using attribution, I engaged participants in their personal narratives in order to understand and interpret their experience, motivation, and dimension of behavior regarding the learning loss they may have endured during multiple school closures within the phenomenon. To address the research problem, I identified a purposive criteria sampling of 12 participants who attended BDS schools during the academic years of the phenomenon. The participants were interviewed using a semi-structured, open-ended questions that allow for supplemental questions by the interviewer or elaboration from the participant. Participants also completed a journal guided by qualitative prompts to expound on their experience. Finally, the facilitation of a focus group was conducted using semi-structured question to discuss the emerging themes from the interviews and the journals. The data was transcribed, compiled, and analyzed using Moustakas' seven step model. The central research question focused on understanding the students' metaphorical descriptions of learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon.

*Keywords:* attribution, learning loss, orientations, locus of control, stability, controllability

**Copyright Page**

Copyright 2023, Robert Todd Mitchell

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my immediate family; my wife, Tricia, and my children, Hallie Kate, Jake, Caleb, Caroline, Livi, and Gini Leigh, for whom all effort is a joy to expend and who I hope will see the blessings and benefits of life-long learning to the glory of God.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Copyright Page.....	4
Dedication.....	5
Table of Contents.....	6
List of Figures.....	12
List of Abbreviations.....	13
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	14
Overview.....	14
Background.....	15
Historical Context.....	15
Social Context.....	18
Theoretical Context.....	19
Problem Statement.....	20
Purpose Statement.....	21
Significance of the Study.....	21
Research Questions.....	23
Central Research Question.....	23
Subordinate Question One.....	23
Subordinate Question Two.....	23
Subordinate Question Three.....	24
Subordinate Question Four.....	24
Subordinate Question Five.....	24

Definitions.....	24
Summary.....	25
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	26
Overview.....	26
Theoretical Framework.....	27
Related Literature.....	29
Utilization of Attribution Theory.....	29
A Framework for Lived Experiences.....	32
Bay District Schools.....	35
Learning Loss.....	43
Community Recovery from Unplanned School Closures.....	50
Unintended Consequences of School Closure.....	51
Metaphorical Descriptions of Educational Environments.....	54
Summary.....	55
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS.....	57
Overview.....	57
Research Design.....	57
Research Questions.....	59
Central Research Question.....	59
Subordinate Question One.....	59
Subordinate Question Two.....	60
Subordinate Question Three.....	60
Subordinate Question Four.....	60

Subordinate Question Five.....	60
Setting and Participants.....	60
Setting .....	60
Participants.....	62
Researcher Positionality.....	63
Interpretive Framework .....	64
Philosophical Assumptions.....	64
Researcher’s Role .....	66
Procedures.....	67
Permissions .....	68
Recruitment Plan.....	68
Data Collection Plan .....	69
Individual Interviews .....	69
Individual Journaling .....	77
Focus Group Interview .....	81
Data Synthesis.....	84
Trustworthiness.....	88
Credibility .....	88
Transferability.....	89
Dependability and Confirmability .....	89
Ethical Considerations .....	90
Summary.....	91
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS .....	92



Overview.....	92
Participants.....	92
Caleb – Jefferson Davis High School .....	97
Ella – Pike Road High School .....	100
Hallie – Lee High School.....	104
Irvin – Jefferson Davis High School.....	107
Jacob - Lee High School.....	110
Tricia – Palm Beach High School.....	114
Olivia – Pike Road High School.....	117
Randy – Palm Beach High School.....	121
Thomas – Sidney Lanier High School .....	126
Virginia – Sidney Lanier High School.....	129
Results.....	133
Theme 1: Missed Opportunity .....	135
Theme 2: Trauma Induced Apathy .....	135
Theme 3: Challenges of School Closures .....	138
Theme 4: Student Adaptation to the Unexpected .....	139
Theme 5: Waiving Expectations & Lowering the Bar.....	139
Outlier Data.....	140
Findings: Textural Descriptions.....	141
Findings: Imaginative Variation .....	141
Findings: Textural-Structural Descriptions.....	141
Findings: Composite Descriptions .....	142

Narrative Responses to the Research Questions .....	144
Central Research Question.....	145
Subordinate Question One .....	146
Subordinate Question Two .....	147
Subordinate Question Three .....	147
Subordinate Question Four .....	148
Subordinate Question Five.....	149
Summary .....	150
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	152
Overview.....	152
Discussion.....	152
Interpretation of Findings .....	153
Implications for Policy or Practice .....	156
Theoretical and Empirical Implications.....	160
Limitations and Delimitations.....	162
Recommendations for Future Research .....	164
Conclusion .....	165
References.....	166
Appendix A.....	187
Appendix B .....	188
Appendix C .....	189
Appendix D.....	191
Appendix E .....	194

Appendix F.....	197
Appendix G.....	198
Appendix H.....	199
Appendix I .....	202
Appendix J .....	203
Appendix K.....	205

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Student Participants.....	93
Figure 2: Participant Household Income .....	94
Figure 3: BDS High School .....	94
Figure 4: 2018-19 Grade Level.....	95
Figure 5: Race or Ethnicity .....	95
Figure 6: Gender .....	96
Figure 7: Consenter.....	96
Figure 8: Horizeded Themes .....	134
Figure 9: Comparative Graduation Rates .....	136
Figure 10: Subgroup Graduation Rates.....	137
Figure 11: Metaphors.....	142

### **List of Abbreviations**

Attribution Theory (AT)

Bay County School Board (BCSB)

Bay District Schools (BDS)

Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Florida Department of Education (FLDOE)

Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE)

Hurricane Michael (HM)

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP)

International Review Board (IRB)

Jeff Davis High School (JDHS)

Lee High School (LHS)

Palm Beach High School (PBHS)

Pike Road High School (PRHS)

Sidney Lanier High School (SLHS)

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Overview

Learning loss has historically been associated with the instructional decay that occurs for K-12 students over the summer break within a given academic year. The National Summer Learning Association has even stated that the summer break accounts for two-thirds of the achievement gap in reading by the ninth grade for low and middle-income students (von Hippel, 2019). Regardless of the historical association, learning loss can occur anytime instruction is not ongoing with application and regular review (Dills et al., 2016). Anderson and Walker (2015) even studied the impact of the weekend on learning, although their study finds positive results in learning with extended breaks over a short period of time like a four-day week or long weekend. To date, the analysis of learning loss has been limited to scheduled breaks in the academic calendar or isolated school closures in K-12 schools brought on by unexpected tragedy. In this study I considered the possibility of learning loss in an unexamined subsection of K-12 students who endured traumatic, multi-event school closures in subsequent academic years. The phenomena of events studied that resulted in the closures were a category five hurricane and a global pandemic resulting from the community spread of COVID-19.

Educational stakeholders would do well to understand how school closures affect student perceptions of learning; especially as the closures are related to traumatic, community-altering events. Chapter One surveyed the historical, social, and theoretical context of specific closures in a particular community. Additionally, the chapter includes a discussion on the researcher's philosophical assumption, worldview, and paradigm followed by my motivation to perform this inquiry. Chapter One also includes a discussion of the problem to be addressed, the purpose and significance of the study, and the research questions that guide the investigation. Chapter One

concluded with a discussion on the common language, definitions, and key terms and a chapter summary.

### **Background**

The backdrop of this study included the historical, social, and theoretical contexts in which the phenomenon of multi-event school closures and learning loss occurred. This is of particular interest to stakeholders who seek to mitigate the effect of trauma and prevent the learning decay associated with school closures, be they planned or unplanned. When learning loss occurs, the entire community is affected. Most unfortunate is the fact that these effects are not seen until much later as they are realized in standardized assessment scores, college applications, or graduation rates after the fact. A plethora of research has been performed to determine the effect of learning loss on students (Anderson & Walker, 2015; Dills et al., 2016; von Hippel, 2019). Moreover, research exist in support of mitigating learning loss from groups like The Aspen Institute (2019), the Council of the Great City Schools (2020), and The University of Chicago (2018). The proposed research extends beyond these studies and addressed student perspectives of learning loss within the phenomenon of these subsequent school closures.

### **Historical Context**

In October of 2018, Hurricane Michael (HM) ravaged the coastline of Bay County Florida. Howard (2019) asserted that Michael was the costliest storm of 2018 and the second costliest global natural disaster in the same year. Michael made landfall over the U.S. mainland on October 10 near the northwest coast of the Florida panhandle with wind speeds exceeding 250 kilometers per hour (155mph). Howard (2019) stated that Michael is now the fourth-strongest storm recorded to have ever hit a US coastline and the storm caused overall economic losses

estimated at 16 billion US dollars and insured losses of 10 billion US dollars.

Under a state of emergency issued by the state and federal government, local school district officials canceled classes for approximately thirty days in order to initiate a recovery. This cancellation of classes left district students with no instruction and a cancellation of all annual standardized assessments. According to Bay District School (BDS) officials (2021), 3,679 students were displaced and did not return to classes within the district following the storm and schools reopening. BDS (2021) reported \$12.4 million in lost revenue during the 2018-2019 academic year as a result of the decreased enrollment and anticipated an additional \$24.8 million in lost revenue for 2019-2020 academic year. Furthermore, BDS (2021) reported \$303,705,417 in facility damages, to include temporary portables, remediation, and permanent repairs.

Along with the substantial financial impact to BDS facilities, students also suffered substantial time away from instruction, leading to learning loss yet to be fully understood or studied. Students were dismissed from classes on Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and were scheduled to return on Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> due to the Columbus Day holiday (BDS, 2021). Out of an abundance of caution, and in order to provide families with an opportunity to evacuate or prepare for the storm's impact, BDS (2021) canceled classes on Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018. HM made land fall in Bay County, Florida on Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (Howard, 2019). According to BDS officials (2021), students did not resume classes and full-time instruction until Monday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and this in many cases was with alternative placements and shared campus locations not in place prior to the storm. At a minimum, BDS students missed 25 days of planned instruction, and the schools were closed for a minimum of 37 days as a result of the storm. Many students who endured a more traumatic experience with HM, such as loss of life or shelter, also experienced a prolonged return to classes and full-time instruction or did not return to school in



Bay County during the 2018-2019 academic year (BDS, 2021). These especially impacted students experienced compounded learning loss that is also yet to be studied.

In the following academic school year, 2019-2020, BDS campuses were closed along with the entire state of Florida and most of the United States in March of 2020 because of the community spread of COVID-19. While school officials attempted to divert the daily instruction to virtual platforms, instructional progress was interrupted, annual standardized assessments were again canceled, and learning loss occurred for the second year in a row. According to district officials (2020), on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) decreed that all BDS schools will continue distance learning for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. The Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP) (2020) implemented by the district included a compilation of approved online content, digital resources, and appropriate guidance. The ICP promoted the least complicated path in providing students with instruction and was achieved through providing resources that were easy to use and access to meet the needs of students. According to the ICP (2020), families were given the options of digital and/or paper-based resources.

The announcement from FLDOE stated schools would be temporarily closed through Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for cleaning and disinfecting due to the global pandemic (BDS, 2021). The following academic week of March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 was previously scheduled as BDS's Spring Break (BDS, 2021). According to BDS officials (2021), the ICP was to go into effect on Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 as instruction was scheduled to resume either virtually or through the paper-based option extended to select families without internet access. The missed instruction resulting from the pandemic closure was at least 10 days; five of which were previously planned for in the academic calendar. The total number of days that district schools were closed for the

pandemic was 16, before the ICP went into effect. However, when considering the anticipated or planned 180 face-to-face instructional days during the 2019-2020 academic year, students did not receive a total of 50 (28%) days, and the district school buildings were closed for a total of 75 days at the conclusion of the academic year. When considering the planned summer closure, BDS students did not receive face-to-face instruction for a combined total of 158 days, which is equivalent to 88% of a regular academic year. Suffice it to say, while instruction did continue by diverting to a virtual or remote platform, learning loss did occur; the extent of which is yet to be determined.

### **Social Context**

The social context of the participants who experienced the phenomenon is unique and multi-layered (BDS, 2021). This research studied the perceptions of students who attended district schools in Bay County, Florida during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years. Bay County, Florida is in the northwest panhandle of the state and is also known as a part of the Emerald Coast in the Gulf of Mexico (Bay County, 2020). During subsequent academic school years, academic operations ceased for the devastation brought on by HM in 2018 and the global pandemic resulting from the community spread of COVID-19 in 2020. Public school closures occur regularly for various reasons throughout any academic year. Yet, the phenomenon investigated is the back-to-back closures resulting from HM and the COVID-19 pandemic in Bay County, Florida.

Moreover, I sought to understand how student participants described their experience with learning loss as a result of the phenomenon in question. The results of this study could be of particular interest to school administrators and teachers who seek to be sensitive to how unplanned closures affect student learning and what can be done to mitigate learning loss in

these situations. Unplanned school closures affect every learning institution at some time or another; be it natural disasters, tragedy, or community spread of disease. The findings of this study provide insight into how stakeholders can improve learning environments and address the unexpected when those times of closure come upon a community.

### **Theoretical Context**

The most important variables to be addressed in this study from a theoretical perspective were the matters of learning loss and attribution of the loss from K-12 student perspectives. Summer learning loss was studied in many conditions and contexts (Anderson & Walker, 2015; Dills et al., 2016; von Hippel, 2019). Yet, little emphasis has been given to learning loss during unplanned school closures; especially from the student perspective as a phenomenon or the attribution of cause for the loss. Several theories are prominent with regard to learning loss. First, research shows students' achievement scores decline, on average, the equivalent of one month's worth of school-year learning (Cooper et al., 1996). Second, the average declines are sharper in math than in reading (Polikoff, 2012). Third, the loss is generally believed to be larger at higher grade levels (Atteberry & McEachin, 2016). Finally, it is generally believed that income-based reading gaps exists; namely that middle class students tend to show improvement in reading skills while lower-income students suffer loss or achievement decline (Kim & Quinn, 2013).

This study has the potential to significantly add to the field of study regarding student perspectives on learning environments. But, from a theoretical context, will student perspectives of this particular phenomenon support research theories as they relate to learning loss? Will students report learning loss at similar rates to that of summer? Will students report decline greater in math than in reading? Will older students report more loss than the younger? Will students of lower-income report higher levels of loss than their higher-income counterparts?

Finally, will students attribute cause to their learning loss as researchers predict?

### **Problem Statement**

The problem to be addressed by this research was how learning loss was described, from the student perspective, following unexpected and subsequent year school closures. (BDS, 2021; CGCS, 2020; Doumas, 2012; von Hippel, 2019). In phenomenology, Creswell and Poth (2018) defined a research problem as the matter uncovered within the literature creating the rationale for further study. Research currently only addresses single isolated unplanned closures or scheduled summer breaks, and the learning decay that may come as a result (Anderson & Walker, 2015; Dills et al., 2016; von Hippel, 2019). Furthermore, no research was found where learning loss was studied from the student perspective; nor were any phenomenology's found to specifically address student learning loss.

After an exhaustive search, no empirical research was discovered that describes the lived experience of students who have suffered subsequent annual school closures, regardless of rationale (BDS, 2021; CGCS, 2020; Doumas, 2012; von Hippel, 2019). Events such as hurricanes, tornadoes, student tragedies, major illness, or global pandemics have occurred during the history of public education. These events have even occurred in subsequent years within specific regions of the United States leading to school closure prior to the end of an academic year. Yet, empirical research has never been performed to determine subsequent closures' self-proclaimed effect on student learning or the lack thereof. This empirical research gave voice to the students who have endured traumatic events leading to extended periods of missed instruction and the learning decay that may have come as a result.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenology was to describe the lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss due to multiple school closures during the subsequent 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years while attending BDS in Bay County, Florida. Learning loss was generally defined as the lack of academic progress resulting from an absence or interruption of standards-based instruction to include little or no opportunity for practice, application, or regular review of skills and content (Dills et al., 2016). The theory that guided this study is Attribution Theory (AT), which sought to attribute cause for actions that occur (Wiener, 1974). The attribution of cause was the framework used to structure the participant descriptions of their experience.

### **Significance of the Study**

Understanding the findings of this study will benefit the diverse stakeholders who are concerned for student perceptions of learning. Below, the significance will be addressed empirically, theoretically, and practically. Moreover, this research gave voice to students as they described how multiple, subsequent school closures impacted their educational experience with learning loss in a way that adult stakeholders can make significant improvements to instructional and delivery models for future generations of students.

This research contributed empirically to the literature as it filled a void in the educational literature (Anderson & Walker, 2015; Dills et al., 2016; von Hippel, 2019). This absence of literature speaks to an absence of concern for how students perceive their learning environments and the potential learning loss that may come as a result of the many closures that inundate districts all over the country for various and sundry reasons. By exploring these perspectives,

researchers will have a better understanding of how students viewed learning and how they viewed a lack of learning in the absence of quality instruction or a virtual substitute.

This research contributed theoretically as it added to the educational application of the theoretical framework (Daly, 1996; Heider, 1958; Harvey & Weary, 1985; Lewis & Daltroy, 1990). As previously stated in the Background section above, the framework has been applied to psychological, legal, medical, and educational research projects. Moreover, AT has been utilized in countless phenomenological analyses within the social sciences (Bacon et al., 2018; Baker & Bishop, 2015; Whitehead, 2014). Yet, no research was found where AT was used to study student perceptions of learning loss. This research has the potential to further unlock the framework's applications within phenomenological studies, providing theorist and researchers alike with further investigative tools. By seeing AT applied to student perspectives on their learning environments, researchers and theorist alike can further use AT to understand motivational factors as they relate to students' academic reactions to circumstances, stimuli, or traumatic experiences. The novelty of applying AT to student perceptions in phenomenology provides for various potentialities around future educational qualitative inquiries.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this study contributed practically to stakeholders—teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community members—as we learned from the perspective of the students (Anderson & Walker, 2015; Dills et al., 2016; von Hippel, 2019). Only they can give firsthand knowledge and perspectives for their learning environments. Only their voice is unadulterated and pure in its analysis of the phenomenon. Furthermore, by investigating in this lane, additional concern is shown for the student perspective as current studies for student perceptions are limited (Mitchell, 2019). Students were

given the opportunity to describe what they experienced when they missed important standards-based instruction over extended periods of time (von Hippel, 2019).

### **Research Questions**

The central and subordinate questions were derived from the problem studied, the purpose behind the research, and the theoretical framework or lens through which the inquiry took place. The questions were grounded in the literature found in Chapter Two and were focused on developing the richest description possible for the phenomenon being studied. A major component of the participant descriptions was the process of attributing cause according to the constraints of AT, or the theoretical framework guiding the investigation. Subordinate question One identified the perceived causation of each participant and subordinate questions Two through Five were guided by the constructs of AT: ability, effort, difficulty, and luck or chance (aka circumstance). Prior to the study, students did not have a voice with an empirical description for learning loss following multi-event, subsequent school closures. The purpose of this study was to provide that voice for students.

#### **Central Research Question**

How did participants metaphorically describe learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon?

#### **Subordinate Question One**

How did participants attribute cause to their learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon?

#### **Subordinate Question Two**

How did participants attribute their ability (learning characteristics or preferred modalities) to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

**Subordinate Question Three**

How did participants attribute their effort to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

**Subordinate Question Four**

How did participants attribute the level of difficulty to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

**Subordinate Question Five**

How did participants attribute luck or chance (circumstance) to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

**Definitions**

1. *Attribution* – The perceived causes of successes or failures that occur in an achievement context (Weiner, 1985).
2. *Controllability* – refers to the extent to which the cause was controllable by the participant within AT (Maymon et al., 2018; Weiner, 1974).
3. *Learning loss* – The lack of academic progress resulting from an absence or interruption of standards-based instruction to include little or no opportunity for practice, application, or regular review of skills and content (Dills et al., 2016).
4. *Locus of control* – refers to the internal or external location of the cause within AT (Maymon et al., 2018; Weiner, 1974).
5. *Orientations* – The perspectives toward goals and aims students tend to hold when approaching a new task (Kassin et al., 2017).
6. *Stability* – refers to the endurance of a cause over time within AT (Maymon et al., 2018; Weiner, 1974).



## **Summary**

Student learning is of prime importance as educational policy and instructional methods continue to develop in this era of public education. With that, their perspectives as learners are vastly important to the field of the educational research. Chapter One served as an introduction to the background, problem, and purpose of this study. The problem addressed by this research was the lack of understanding for the student experience with regards to learning loss following subsequent, unexpected school closures (BDS, 2021; CGCS, 2020; Dumas, 2012; von Hippel, 2019). The purpose of this research was to describe those lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss as a result of subsequent annual school closures brought on by a natural disaster and a global pandemic. Moreover, important terms were defined and the assumptions and approach to research were described. Finally, Chapter One concluded with the questions to guide the research and the overall significance of the study and the stakeholders who will benefit from the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this research was to describe the lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss due to multiple school closures during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years while attending BDS in Bay County, Florida. I sought to understand how students perceived and therefore explained their own learning loss or knowledge decay as a result of the closures. Given this intent, Chapter Two detailed the relevant literature associated with learning loss induced by unplanned school closures on record in subsequent academic school years. Chapter Two was organized into four major sections: (a) the Overview, (b) the Theoretical Framework guiding the study, (c) the Related Literature signifying the need for the study, and (d) a Summary analysis of all the literature related to the study.

An extensive search for literature on the research problem was performed. An academic library containing 1,989 peer reviewed journals and beyond, from topics related to the history of education, special topics in education, educational institutions, student fraternities and U.S. societies, and theory and practice of education were scoured to research the problem of learning loss in subsequent year school closures. This search yielded extensive results related to school closures and or the learning loss that came as a result of the summer learning decay (Dahl & Millora, 2016; Dills et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2016; Zheteyeva et al., 2017). In addition, learning loss is found to not be limited to the summer break. Rather, academic loss can occur in a variety of settings or circumstances and all must be considered (Christmann, 2018 & Ya Ni, 2013). Furthermore, the search also yielded numerous studies on the impact of student learning in the aftermath of natural disasters (Esnard et al., 2017; Lai et al., 2019; Leiber, 2017; Khalili et al., 2018; Remley, 2015). However, no results were found to speak to student perspectives of

learning loss following subsequent year school closures. Chapter Two presented the empirical literature related to the theoretical framework and its application to various studies and the relevant literature associated with learning loss resulting from natural disasters and unplanned school closures. Finally, the results of the search were synthesized to provide an overview of relevant research, concluding with a rationale for study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This proposed research was grounded in AT, which means the experiential descriptions of the participants were viewed through the lens of attribution, namely, Weiner's (1974) attribution of behavior model. Learning loss has been studied in many different theoretical contexts (Anderson & Walker, 2015; Dills et al., 2016; von Hippel, 2019). However, this study utilized AT as a framework to guide the research and to assist in the framing of the participant descriptions.

According to Weiner (1974), AT focuses on how individuals interpret events and the theory assumes that all individuals contemplate, at some level, motivation or attribute a cause for behavior. Individuals naturally pursue understanding of the motivation of a particular action and generally attribute one or more causes to a person's behavior (Weiner, 1974). McLeod (2012) stated, "Attribution theory deals with how the social perceiver uses information to arrive at causal explanations for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment" (p. 23). It is important to note that there are various views surrounding AT (Jones & Harris, 1967; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967; Miller, 1984; Ross, 1977).

According to Heider (1958), the seminal theorist of attribution thought, there are two main ideas posited: dispositional (internal cause) attribution and situational (external cause)

attribution (McLeod, 2012). These two thoughts were later developed by Weiner (1974) in his understanding of AT as it relates to student achievement. The most important contribution of Heider (1958) to the modern understanding of AT was the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE), also known as correspondence bias or the over-attribution effect, which states that the only explanation of behavior is rooted internally in individual attributes or personality traits. FAE refers to the tendency of individuals to over-emphasize a person's disposition for behaviors while under-emphasizing the situation surrounding the behavior (McLeod, 2018).

According to Weiner's (1974) theory of attribution, a person looks for cause following a successful venture or the failure of an attempt; and failure elicits more causal search than success (Maymon et al., 2018). Moreover, unplanned or unexpected outcomes elicit even more search for cause, resulting in an attribution that can be classified according to three properties: locus, controllability, and stability. Locus refers to the location or the internal or external nature of the cause. Was the cause internal or external to themselves? Controllability refers to the extent to which the cause was controllable. Was the cause volitional in nature? Did the participant have a choice in the matter? Stability refers to the endurance of a cause over time. How likely is the cause to change over a specific period or circumstance (Maymon et al., 2018)? Weiner (1974) further hypothesized that causal explanations ultimately influence individual behavior.

School achievement is the most natural and organic context for AT to be applied (van der Putten, 2017). Research in support of AT where the processes are conducted and explained comes generally from the field of education; particularly student achievement (Frey, 2018). When students understand the cause of their achievement or failure, this understanding contributes to or is the rationale for student response or reaction. While AT is commonly used to study student achievement (Weiner, 1974), this investigation is the first to use AT to describe or

communicate student perspectives of a learning environment within phenomenology. So, not only will the theory advance the topic of the investigation, but the topic will serve to advance the framework in its application and use.

### **Related Literature**

The following relevant, related literature was the current, existing knowledge base on the topic of learning loss experienced by students who endured subsequent year school closures resulting from natural disaster and a global pandemic, prior to the investigation. The purpose in synthesizing this literature was to build a case for and argue the significance of the study to be conducted in Chapters' Three, Four, and Five. What immediately follows is what has been examined, researched, and analyzed on the problem of learning loss and how understanding for knowledge decay is still developing. Ultimately, the knowledge base described below emphasizes the gap in or lack of current academic literature and justifies the need for further study and understanding in the field of education.

### **Utilization of Attribution Theory**

Vaughn et al., (2019) established AT as a framework to investigate the prevalence and relationship between Imposter Phenomenon, academic women, and motivation and found that Imposter Phenomenon exist within all women at all academic levels, from new graduate students to senior administrators. Similarly, Fishman and Husman (2017) used AT to explore how students' attribution-related beliefs influenced their causal thought processes and found that these beliefs enhanced the quality of students' causal thinking and helped to sustain a sense of autonomy and well-being. Furthermore, Woodcock and Moore (2018) deployed AT to study the stigmas and stereotypes of teachers who serviced students with specific learning disabilities. They found from an attributional perspective that teachers placed more importance on effort as a

controllable cause of student failure, compared to low ability as an uncontrollable cause of failure. In each investigation mentioned above, AT was the critical framework used to determine the educational outcome or the cause or motivation behind students' actions or inactions with regard to their achievement.

For the purpose of this study, the constructs of AT were the means to interpret and understand participant descriptions of their experience within the phenomenon of subsequent year school closures. Once each participants' cause was determined as internal or external, achievement or failure was attributed to either effort, ability, level of difficulty, or chance. Each participant's success or failure was categorized within a dimension of behavior: (a) locus of control, (b) stability, and (c) controllability (Weiner, 1974). It was this process of attribution where I participants were engaged in order to understand and interpret the experience, motivation, and dimension of behavior regarding the learning loss they may have endured during the subsequent school closures. As in any investigation with AT serving as the framework, the three dimensions of behavior should be addressed (Maymon et al., 2018).

### ***Locus***

Was the cause internal or external to themselves? Locus, in this sense did not refer to the events surrounding the closures, for those are obviously external to the participant. Rather, locus referred to the learning loss that came as a result of each closure. What choices or decisions did each participant make relative to their own learning within the constraints of the circumstances surrounding the closures?

### ***Controllability***

Was the cause volitional in nature or did the participant have a choice in the matter? Controllability should be understood, not in the sense that the participants were able to control

the events that led up to each respective closure, but what choices were made under their control with regards to their academic successes or failures.

### *Stability*

How likely was the cause to change over a specific period or circumstance? Once a cause is determined, relative to learning loss not the circumstances of the closures, would participants make similar decisions if additional closures occurred or if circumstances necessitated a sudden shift in pedagogies or learning platforms?

As mentioned above, Weiner (1974) identified ability, effort, difficulty, and luck or chance as the attributions for achievement. AT has been applied to studies in the field of education, law, clinical psychology, and mental health (Daly, 1996; Heider, 1958; Harvey & Weary, 1985; Lewis & Daltroy, 1990). Weiner (1974) developed the current understanding of AT from Heider (1958) who believed that people were naïve psychologist attempting to make sense of the social world. According to Weiner (1974), attributing cause is a three-stage process: (a) behavior is observed, (b) behavior is determined deliberate or accidental, (c) behavior is attributed to an internal or external cause; for example—an internal cause would be the choice of the individual, and an external cause would be the individual was forced into action by another person or circumstance.

As cause was determined as internal or external, achievement or failure was attributed to either effort, ability, level of difficulty, or chance. And finally, the success or failure is categorized within a dimension of behavior: (a) locus of control, (b) stability, and (c) controllability (Weiner, 1974). As an example, Weiner (1980) asserted,

One is not likely to experience pride in success, or feelings of competence, when receiving an ‘A’ from a teacher who gives only that grade, or when defeating a tennis

player who always loses. On the other hand, an ‘A’ from a teacher who gives few high grades or a victory over a highly rated tennis player following a great deal of practice generates great positive affect. Similarly, students with learning disabilities seem less likely than non-disabled peers to attribute failure to effort, an unstable, controllable factor, and more likely to attribute failure to ability, a stable, uncontrollable factor. (p. 362)

It is this process of attribution where participants engage in their experience in order to understand and interpret the experience, motivation, and dimension of behavior regarding the phenomenon.

### **A Framework for Lived Experiences**

It is important to understand how a particular investigation, in this case a phenomenology, framed participants lived experiences. Not only does this assist in the final communication of the findings, but more so, it gives the investigator a clean perspective for analysis. Mitchell (2019) used Albert Bandura’s (1986) four constructs of Academic Self-Efficacy (ASE) as a framework to interpret and describe the lived experiences of Christian, trivium-based graduates. Moreover, Van Dinther et al. (2014) agreed that the same four constructs were influential in a student’s development of self-efficacy. Hoi et al. (2017) also used the same four sources as a framework to study teacher self-efficacy and used those constructs as a framework to communicate the findings of the phenomenology.

During this investigation, what was the framework for participant descriptions? This study sought to communicate student perceptions of learning loss as they relate to the specific school closures endured by BDS students during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years (BDS, 2021; Frey, 2018). Participant experiences were observed and their descriptions were



organized through the theoretical framework of AT (Weiner, 1974). Their perceptions, once acquired through the data collection process, were analyzed and determined to be deliberate and volitional or accidental and incidental. The researcher sought to determine if the cause was internal or external; was the cause from within the individual or circumstantial. Was the participant experience and outcome a result of their will? From there, achievement or failure was attributed to: (a) the amount of effort, (b) the level of student ability, (c) the level of difficulty, or (d) a mere matter of chance. Lastly, the participant perceptions, be they success or failure, were categorized into dimensions of behavior: (a) locus of control, (b) stability, or (c) controllability (Maymon et al., 2018; Weiner, 1974).

Van der Putten (2017) criticized motivational theories as being too general to be applied in K-12 educational settings and asserted the following about motivation and AT:

If motivation is the desire to act or move toward a particular activity, task or goal, just what influences one's desire to do so remains complex? The impact of social context, or even just the perception of social context, can greatly influence what one attributes to their sense of self, as conveyed in attribution theory (AT), their perception of self-worth, as conveyed in self-worth theories (SWT) and subsequently their mindset and their behavior to act, as conveyed in self-determination theory (SDT). (p. 1)

Determining cause for action, as AT posits to do, can be a powerful tool used to predict behavior and allow for personal reflection and growth; especially for students in the educational setting.

Van der Putten (2017) also stated that the role of education in fostering or hindering the motivation to learn is yet to be determined although motivation has been studied on countless occasions in the educational setting (Bandura, 1993; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Graham & Williams, 2009).

Yet, one must acknowledge humans behave according to certain norms or rules with some exception. These norms transcend certain differences that exist between us; experience, culture, setting, etc. Notwithstanding all the modern attempts of motivational theories at developing students who value effort and enjoy learning in spite of adversity (Schunk et al., 2013), AT is more causal acquisition in its approach, rather than motivation for future progress or success. That being the case, motivation for future learning is not in question. Rather, this inquiry sought to understand the why and how of a past phenomenon. Therefore, the following line of questioning was an example of how Weiner's (1974) theory would be applied to the participants of this study:

1. From my perspective as a student, did I experience learning loss during the subsequent year school closures?
2. If so, in what sense was my learning loss experienced?
3. Ultimately, was the cause of my learning loss based on my personality and attributes as a student or was the cause more situational and consequential as persistence was not possible given the nature of the school closures?
4. Was the loss of learning an act of my will (volitional) or a result of my school being unable to provide the normal educational services (incidental or situational) (Fishman & Husman, 2017)?
5. Finally, if the cause of my learning loss was internal or external, what is the potential for this cause to change over time (Maymon et al., 2018)? For example:
  - a. The cause of my learning loss is internal because I am a poor student who chooses not to attend to the lessons, be they virtual or in person. Therefore, this cause is relatively stable and may not change over time.

- b. The cause of my learning loss is external because the situation dictated that I not attend my school in person due to unforeseen and eminently changing events.

Therefore, this cause is unstable and may very well change over time.

Empirical research has consistently found that external, unstable causes for academic difficulties are more beneficial for motivating students and bringing about persistent actions for achievement (Maymon et al., 2018). The rationale was that when students believed the problem is within them, there was little they could do to prevent or affect failure. However, when the lack of achievement was outside of them, they were more likely to search for cause or seek out a cure or remedy to their failure, or in this case loss of learning (Henry et al., 2019).

### **Bay District Schools**

As is described in detail in Chapter Three's section entitled Setting, this investigation was performed in Bay County, Florida. However, it is important to note, related literature and detailed reports are now a part of the knowledge base and field of literature as a result of research and response to HM and the global pandemic brought on by COVID-19 in the subsequent 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years in Bay County, Florida. BDS (2021) published their reports entitled *Hurricane Michael Post Recovery Plans for Schools, Academic Updates for Elementary and Secondary Instruction Post Hurricane Michael, Facilities Updates Post Hurricane Michael, and Estimated Financial Impacts from Hurricane Michael* on their website in order to communicate to their more than 3,000 district employees and 22,000 students about the impact of the natural disaster from October, 2018. Finally, BDS (2021) also published their *ICP* in response to the school closure surrounding the global pandemic that resulted from the community spread of COVID-19 in the spring of 2020. Each piece of the non-peer reviewed

literature listed above is the district articulation of their response to these school closures and or transition to distance learning (BDS, 2021).

*The Academic Updates for Elementary and Secondary Instruction Post Hurricane Michael* was developed by the superintendent and other district leaders and published and presented to the BDS School Board on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (BDS, 2021). This document was used to inform the board on the status of the advanced academic programs and the deadlines or extension of deadlines for students regarding program assessments, university admissions, scholarship applications, and teacher evaluations and content delivery timeframes. The document also updated the board on the progress of mothballing school sites and the combining of campuses for the purpose of maximizing facilities and effective scheduling (BDS, 2021).

*The Hurricane Michael Post Recovery Plans for Schools* was developed by the superintendent and other district leaders and published and presented as recommendations to the school board as a recovery plan on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019 (BDS, 2021). The plan included a synopsis of where the district currently stood regarding current enrollment and employment figures, homelessness, academic progress, facility repair, and the financial challenges and recommended timelines of project completions (BDS, 2021).

Each of these documents, including the ICP, were relevant to the knowledge base and were important to communicate the state of affairs within the local school district following the traumatic events of HM and the closure brought on by COVID-19. BDSs' reaction and response to each closure would have significant impact on the students' internal response and ultimately the internal attribution of cause regarding their own learning or lack thereof. These documents were considered as the semi-structured interview questions were deployed during the physical

investigative process; specifically, as I sought to understand the student perspectives of the phenomenon in question.

### *Hurricane Michael*

The first school closure referenced in this study resulted from the devastation brought on by HM. Senkbiel et al., (2020) explained that HM, which made landfall on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, was only the third Saffir Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale (SSHWS) category five storm in the United States in the modern era and was anomalous for its strength and rapid intensification. The recurrence intervals for a category five storm near the Panama City or Panama City Beach area is approximately 105 years compared to the South Florida intervals of 13-18 years (Senkbiel et al., 2020). Malmstadt et al., (2010) defines a major hurricane as a category three or higher and they found similar interval results of 12 years for Miami, 24 years for Pensacola, but a much lower 40 years for Panama City for a wind threshold of  $50 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  (SSHWS category 3). Additional modeling research from Eglin Air Force Base, just west of Panama City, found a 100-year peak wind gust of  $58 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ , corresponding to a SSHWS category four storm (Scheitlin et al., 2011). Because of these expected patterns and intervals between extreme events, HM should be viewed as an anomaly that far surpassed what many weather predictors thought was plausible for this stretch of coastline.

HM was the strongest storm to ever make landfall in Florida's Northwest Panhandle and the strongest storm to hit the US coastline in the last 25 years (Reeves & Lush, 2018). Not only was the storm stronger than anticipated but Senkbeil et al., (2020) reported that only 61% of those sampled for study evacuated, and 80% either underestimated the intensity or misinterpreted the forecast from officials. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that 75 deaths were either directly or indirectly recorded as a result of HM (NOAA,

2018). Moreover, the damage caused by the high wind speeds and the demoralizing flooding totaled approximately \$53 billion USD (Perryman, 2018). The Perryman Group (2018) anticipated that the state of Florida would expend approximately \$39 billion USD in their recovery and rebuild.

HM was second only to Hurricane Camille of 1969 in scope and size, which made landfall in Waveland, Mississippi (Callaghan, 2020). In terms of air pressure at landfall, Michael registered at 919 millibars. The wind speed was the third highest speed at landfall in the modern, named era at 161 miles per hour (mph) only bested by Camille of 1969 at 173 mph and Andrew of 1992 at 173 mph. HM's intensification was examined using radar wind data from aircraft reconnaissance missions, which showed the eye pass through a dominant warm air advection configuration (anticyclonic fashion) and a deep layer trough system (Callaghan, 2020). This pass through led to the rapid and unexpected intensification just prior to landfall. Senkbiel et al., (2020) also reported that HM was abnormal in size when compared to other category 4 and 5 storms. Storms with extremely high wind speeds categorized as 4 or 5 storms were generally smaller with a radial distance to the outermost closed isobar (ROCI) in kilometers of 232 to 259. Michael reached to 389 kilometers, which added to the confounding perception of gulf coast residents and negatively impacted the communication of emergency managers (Senkbiel et al., 2020). The exceptional size of HM uniquely impacted Bay County, Florida as it enveloped every square inch of the county's coastline (BDS, 2021). Every BDS (2021) student was impacted in some significant way by the destruction, devastation, and aftermath of the storm.

Superville (2018) recounted the experience of a local superintendent, Jim Norton, of Gulf County, who surveyed one campus following HM. Superville (2018) described Norton's overwhelming experience as he picked his way through the damp floor at Wewahitchka High

School following HM's devastation. The imagery was presented as one would describe seeing a building for the first time. The school's roof was in shambles on the floor and the ceiling was nothing more than a clear view of the sky above. Similarly, other school districts across the Panhandle and Big Bend area of Florida were devastated by HM. Major structural loss occurred throughout, causing districts to shift campuses around and host classes in the surviving buildings (Superville, 2018; Howard, 2019; Senkbiel et al., 2020). Briggs (2019) determined that over 700 buildings were classified as considerably damaged or destroyed by the hurricane winds or the storm surge that measured between 2.7 and 4.3 meters high (9 to 14 feet). BDS (2021) reported extensive destruction to the community's multi-family housing units as well. The five municipalities that service BDS saw widespread damage to a respective to 95% of Callaway's apartment buildings, 60% of Cedar Grove's, 67% of Lynn Haven's, 72% of Panama City's, 71% of Parker's, and 72% of Springfield's, creating an immediate housing crisis during the aftermath and recovery (BDS, 2021).

In addition to the structural damage, HM caused widespread power outages for extended periods and the destruction of cellular towers, which had a critical impact on communications services in the Florida Panhandle and parts of Georgia and Alabama (FCC, 2019). The Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) (2018) reported that 95% of all accounts in 10 counties were without power as soon as the storm made landfall. Superville (2018) described how school leaders were forced to pick up the pieces and lean on experts to re-open schools following HM. Superintendent Norton was asked to describe the scale and complexity of the HM recovery experience from the leader's perspective. He responded metaphorically by asking, "How do you eat a whale? One bite at a time" (p. 2).

The full extent of the academic impact that HM has had on K-12 BDS students is still to be determined. However, literature that investigates the academic impact of previous storm events is readily available (Ward & Shelley, 2008). Yet, BDS (2021) literature provides statistics and outcomes resulting from the recovery in the months immediately following the storm. Particularly, BDS (2021) enrollment dropped by 14% when classes resumed and 181 employees relocated or left the field; to include 7 administrators, 72 teachers, 102 support employees and approximately 100 substitute teachers. BDS (2021) reported 738 students as homeless prior to the storm. Following the storm, an additional 4,219 students were reported as homeless or in transitional living situations. Furthermore, three elementary schools and one middle school was lost in the district resource restructuring as campuses were combined or mothballed to gain financial stability and maximize building capacities (BDS, 2021). At one time during the recovery, BDS (2021) leadership was faced with the harsh reality of having to cut an additional 267 instructional positions as a result of the 15% displaced student population.

### ***Coronavirus Pandemic***

The second and subsequent school closure referenced in this study was the closure enacted by Governor Ron Desantis on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 following a vast community spread of COVID-19 (FLDOE, 2020; and BDS, 2021). Per the academic calendar, BDS schools were set to close on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 through Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for Spring Break (BDS, 2021). Yet, an order from FLDOE and the Governor required that all Florida schools close the following week of March 23-27 to undergo additional disinfecting and sanitizing in preparation for the return of students and staff (FLDOE, 2020). However, on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020, BDS staff was notified that Governor Desantis had extended the K-12 school closures in Florida until at least April 15<sup>th</sup> and he also announced the cancellation of all statewide testing for the



2019-2020 school year (BDS, 2021). On Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 BDS staff was informed that FLDOE (2020) had extended the school closure through at least May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, but the reality was that student would not return to their campuses in person for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year (BDS, 2021). BDS transitioned to remote instruction and finished the school year under the guidance of the ICP (BDS, 2021).

By April of 2020, over 1.5 billion students globally, 91.3% of all students from 192 countries, had experienced a significant school closure because of the spread of Coronavirus (Bao et al., 2020). In the United States alone, over 55 million students in 124,000 public and private schools were affected by the closures at district and state levels; bringing a historic upheaval to the K-12 academic environment (Education Week, 2020). All fifty states closed schools for at least three weeks during the spring of 2020 with 49 states closing for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year in March of 2020 (Bao et al., 2020). While stakeholders are yet to fully understand the impact that the Coronavirus closure had on students' perspective of learning loss or the effectiveness of school closures in mitigating the spread of the virus, the adverse academic consequences on children's growth and development appeared soon after the closures began (Armitage & Nellums, 2020; Rundle et al., 2020; & Wang et al., 2020).

Kuhfeld et al., (2020) used past data to predict learning rates in reading and math during COVID-19 school closures in 3rd–7th grade children in the U.S.; finding that students only gained 63%–68% of grade-specific reading skills during the 2019–2020 spring semester because of the interruption of the semester. Marstaller (2020) surveyed the overall experience of two high school students during the COVID-19 lockdown. After two weeks of quarantine, Jorisi and Elizabeth reflected on their experience through a journal written to their English class. Elizabeth is one of many students living under the same roof and her and her siblings are sharing the same

computer as their instruction has all been moved online with the soft closure of her Utah school (Marstaller, 2020). Elizabeth and her family expressed great fear for contracting COVID-19. She explained that her once busy street is desolate as she waits at home for the quarantine to be lifted. Jorisi described how even the outdoor activities where students could typically escape to were not available during the quarantine. She discussed how the fear of contraction has caused academics to be a lower priority for the family, but it has also made everyone in the home mindful of “how special and meaningful we are to each other” (Mastaller, 2020, p. 234).

This research hypothesized that BDS students were greatly impacted academically by the confines brought on by the unplanned closures surrounding COVID-19. Specifically, this investigation sought to determine how students were impacted academically. Lovric´ et al., (2020) claimed that the closures brought on by COVID-19 harmed the academic functioning and psychophysical health of students. Previous planned school closures, related to summer, are believed to cause achievement scores to decline, on average, the equivalent of one month’s worth of school-year learning (Cooper et al., 1996). Other studies showed the average declines are sharper in math than in reading (Polikoff, 2012). While some studies showed the loss was generally believed to be larger at higher grade levels (Atteberry & McEachin, 2016). Most alarming, was that there seemed to be a connection to socio-economic status and reading gaps. Kim and Quinn (2013) determined that middle class students tend to show improvement in reading skills while lower-income students suffer loss or achievement decline over the summer break.

Moreover, it is theorized that the physiological responses of BDS students were negatively impacted by the pandemic, quarantining, and economic shut down that came as a result of COVID-19. Lovric´ et al., (2020) did report that “students’ perceptions and experiences

were significantly conditioned by their physiological reactions, emotions, and fears, which further confirms the dominant influence of cognitive theories of emotions, fear, and stress” (p. 14). Student participants admitted to a lack of motivation, poor concentration toward academic work, and learning challenges that stem from the complexities of learning during the pandemic (Lovric´ et al., 2020). These challenges speak to the potential for immediate negative academic impact, leading to learning loss during such a closure. It would not be unreasonable to expect these challenges to be exponentially impactful during subsequent year closures in a K-12 setting. This research sought to determine what learning loss occurred from the participant perspective and how students might describe their experience about the academic decay during COVID-19 (BDS, 2021).

### **Learning Loss**

A range of studies, findings, and results from K-12 schools exist regarding learning loss or summer learning decay and show that children lose the equivalent of one month of reading abilities during the average summer (Burkham et al., 2004; Christodoulou et al., 2016; Cooper et al., 1996; Dills et al., 2015; Johnston et al., 2014; Kim & White, 2008). Deslauriers and Wieman (2011) claimed that most of the instruction in K-12 schools is lost within one year, unless there is constant relearning or review, and most of the loss happens within the first three months. Many K-12 schools have begun to shorten breaks between terms in order to decrease the impact of summer learning decay, yet this has come with mixed results (Cooper et al., 1996; Cooper et al., 2003). More recent evidence suggested that year-round schooling without any significant breaks indicated that test scores fell (Graves et al., 2013). McMullen and Rouse (2012) found zero impact with year-round schooling.

Von Hippel (2019) asked the question, “Is summer learning loss real?” In a 2019 study, he historically traced the question of summer learning loss starting with the Beginning School Study of 1982 in Baltimore, Maryland. To the contrary, Bowers and Schwarz (2018) assumed summer learning loss occurred and sought to study its prevention in summer literacy programs. Meanwhile, Gershenon and Hayes (2018), studied the implications of summer learning loss on teacher effectiveness with the goal of prevention by higher value-added model (VAM) assignment. Von Hippel (2019) reviewed the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) study from Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) from 2008. Ultimately, Von Hippel (2019) determined that we know a great deal less about summer learning loss and the deeper we investigate the more mixed the result become. Von Hippel’s question later developed into, “Can summers offer trailing students a chance to catch up? To which von Hippel (2019) ultimately answered,

The potential effectiveness of summer learning programs and extended-year schools may have little to do with summer learning loss. It may be that these interventions don’t prevent gaps from opening during the summer. Instead, they help to shrink achievement gaps that were already there on the first day of kindergarten. (p. 5)

Results from all three studies were inconclusive. Gershenon and Hayes (2018) determined that conditioning on student characteristics or summer activities had no bearing on the classroom effect or academic achievement the next school year. Bowers and Schwarz (2018) did find some success in potentially preventing summer learning loss in reading fluency and comprehension. However, they also determined further study was needed with a control group to rule out that their results were not the effects of natural maturation or regression to the mean. The problem of summer learning loss could be serious or remain trivial. The purpose of this study however, is to

determine student perspectives of learning loss. How do students describe their experience with learning loss; particularly with two subsequent year school closures with relative equal time away from direct instruction?

Learning loss was not described or projected quantitatively as in the form of charts or tables, but rather as a qualitative narrative that gave voice to the students who endured the closures and suffered the missed face time from their teacher and the typical engaging instruction that comes as a result of that face time. Rasinski et al., (2017) and Wanzek et al., (2018) studied the immediate effectiveness of in-person, intensive, small group reading instruction. Wanzek et al., (2018) asserted that students in grades K-3 receiving targeted, intensive, face-to-face interventions may improve in reading as much as four-tenths of a standard deviation; without identifying the specific effect sizes of each intervention. Moreover, Rasinski et al., (2017) asserted that below grade level third grade students receiving specific, targeted, face-to-face instruction made significant gains in word recognition, accuracy, and fluency using second grade leveled text and significant gains in fluency and comprehension using third grade leveled text. In both studies, one could only imagine the boost in confidence and approach to grade level text these interventions provided to students. Unfortunately, we do not have an account from students who have experienced these outcomes and then had them stripped away as a result of school closures.

Dills et al., (2015) considered the summer period between semesters as learning decay. Where most studies of learning loss address K-12 education, their study showed evidence of summer learning loss in higher education. This study is significant to the current research as many BDS students, at the high school level, are enrolled in dual-enrolled classes where they participate asynchronously with local college courses (BDS, 2021). Dills et al., (2015) analyzed

college level students in sequential courses with some students beginning the sequence in the fall semester and others in the spring. Fall students experienced a shorter break between the sequences. The study sought to understand and tested whether the length of the break was a factor in student performance in the second course in the series. Preliminary findings suggested that the longer break between courses was associated with lower results on assessments and grade point averages. However, the conclusions also confirmed that observed knowledge decay was content dependent (Dills et al., 2015). Dills et al., (2015) asserted that knowledge decay remained prominent in language courses, Math courses where students had below-median SAT Math scores, and for students with majors outside of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields of study.

Kuhfeld et al., (2020) performed research in K-8 content areas, specifically through the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth assessment developed and managed by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). NWEA is a research-based, not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by creating assessment solutions that precisely measures growth and proficiency (NWEA, 2020). MAP Growth is a progress-monitoring assessment with a vertical scale that is typically administered in the fall, winter, and spring to over 9 million students annually (NWEA, 2020). Kuhfeld et al., (2020) as recent as December, 2020, has determined that “NWEA findings show that, compared to last year, students scored an average of five to 10 percentile points lower in math, with students in grades three, four and five experiencing the largest drops” (p. 1). The report also shows that English Language Arts results are largely the same as 2019 results (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). BDS (2021) students were also assessed using the MAP growth and proficiency assessment and were

negatively impacted between the 2019 and 2020 assessments as well as the 2018 and 2019 assessments because of the subsequent year closures.

Moreover, Kuhfeld and Soland (2021) revisited and challenged the assumption that students enjoy linear growth during a given school year. While many stakeholders work from the premise or assumption that student growth is linear within the school year, Malmberg et al., (2010) asserted that teaching practices evolve nonlinearly over the course of a given school year. Kuhfeld and Soland (2021) determined that assuming linear within-year growth is often not justified, especially in reading. This determination was made after examining NWEA math and reading test scores for over seven million students in kindergarten through eighth grade during the fall, winter, and spring of the 2017-18 school year. The NWEA fit a within-year polynomial for a significant portion of the United States K-8 students and compare fitted between models that did and did not assume within-year growth as linear (NWEA, 2021). If learning loss does occur over the summer or in times of unplanned school closures and within-year growth is not linear at all times in all content areas, then adding to instructional seat time would surely mitigate the problem. Patall et al., (2010) deduced from 15 empirical studies that extended seat time can be an effective means of supporting student learning, especially for at risk students, when a deliberate strategy is used to maximize the utility of the seat time. However, Kuhfeld and Soland (2021) recently dismissed Patall's findings on the basis that each empirical study assumed learning and growth to be linear.

Kuhfeld and Soland (2021) ultimately found that the linear growth assumption is not justifiable with intermediate elementary and middle school students with regard to reading and all learning tends to plateau towards the end of each school year for reasons not yet determined as organic or contrived. Thus, from a policy perspective, extending the school year would not be

warranted because much of the research base is assuming that students will continue to learn at the same rate during any added or extended time; and that assumption is faulty or unsubstantiated at best (Kuhfeld & Soland, 2021). Baird & Pane (2019) asserted that it is unreasonable to translate the effects of the lack of summertime instruction into months/years of missed instruction and Kuhfeld and Soland (2021) support the conclusion that the “months of learning” metric is weak and has limited utility as a means for understanding summer learning loss. Finally, Kuhfeld and Soland (2021) concluded that the rate of decelerated learning is closely associated with race and gender as achievement gaps increased for non-White minorities as they near middle school and annual learning decelerated more quickly for males than females as the conclusion of each school year approaches.

The relevance for the study in question was the timing of the closures as they relate to linearity. The first unplanned school closure for BDS (2021) occurred in October of 2018 during the heart of the second quarter of instruction. The subsequent closure occurred in March, at the conclusion of the third quarter of instruction, just prior to Spring Break for students. Upon review of the BDS (2021) Academic Calendar, very little instructional time remained in 2020 and end-of-course (EOC) exams, state-wide assessments, and other high-stakes testing confiscated the remainder of the seat time. When considering the implications of the Kuhfeld and Soland (2021) study on linearity, one could conclude that the seat time during the first closure was more valuable due to its proximity within the instructional season. The later closure may be less valuable in terms of learning loss due to its proximity to the testing season (BDS, 2021). However, the later closure came on the heels of the first, which one could argue, made its consequences even more severe. Each of these quantitative studies are relevant to the current research as they draw into question the impact of learning loss during planned closures, which



are the best of circumstances. Furthermore, the current study sought to understand student perspectives of learning loss over subsequent, unplanned school closures where additional factors such as disease, trauma, and homelessness may have been additional mitigating factors.

Finally, the literature is thorough and conclusive on the significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students in traditional face-to-face settings versus the online or remote platform; which speaks to the potential for learning loss to occur as a result of not only school closures, but also an unplanned shift in platform or pedagogy (Carr, 2000; Christmann, 2017; McLaren, 2004; & Ya Ni, 2013). Thus, learning loss is not limited to planned academic breaks or even unplanned school closures resulting from catastrophe. Rather, learning loss extends to drastic shifts in pedagogy or alterations to the learning platforms. Christmann (2017) studied statistic students and saw that students in the traditional setting achieved at much higher rates than their online counterparts. This confirmed the same findings determined in Ya Ni's (2013) study where online students lacked the persistence necessary to achieve at the same level as traditional face-to-face students; given all other factors were equal. Most importantly, Carr (2000) and McLaren (2004) determined that online learning environments experience higher dropout rates as compared to traditional face-to-face learning.

As public education continues to embark on the continuous advancement brought on by technology, stakeholders must be cautioned against the reality that there is little documented evidence to suggest or verify the perceived effectiveness of online learning (Christmann, 2018). The evidence is minimal and contradictory at best as few studies show support for equal or higher achievement through online platforms (Enriquez, 2010; Plumb & Lamere, 2011). Smith et al., (2015) verified through their findings that some content areas were just not conducive to online platforms. Allen and Seamen (2014) asserted that access to the internet has increased

accessibility dramatically for digital learners. And sure, the Allen and Seamen (2010) study shows that online enrollment shows no signs of slowing in the United States as enrollment rates at the university level have increased exponentially. However, this increase only speaks to a rise in courses taken or degrees earned, not content or standards mastered.

### **Community Recovery from Unplanned School Closures**

Esnard et al., (2017) studied school vulnerability to the disaster known as Hurricane Ike. The research team stated,

The severity of the impact of disasters on schools and their curriculum and educational programs depends on a host of factors: physical vulnerability, school structural integrity, socioeconomic vulnerabilities of students and their families, household displacement, and recovery timeframes of households and communities (p. 515).

Preston et al., (2015) performed a comparative case study to examine catastrophes and major disasters from five countries. The goal of the research was to develop a learning framework and to understand how adaptation occurs. Preston et al., (2015) determined that no one single framework of learning was perfectly fitted for all catastrophes or disasters but results did range from small adaptations to monumental paradigm shifts.

The reality is that school closures resulting from disasters and or pandemics can significantly impact educational programs within a given community or school district. And, in many cases, those districts are an integral part of the community and a critical public infrastructure (BDS, 2021). Lai et al., (2019) studied school recovery trajectories following a natural disaster. In researching the problem, Lai et al., (2019) determined that “there is no body of literature that has examined school academic recovery trajectories in disaster-affected areas. Instead, focus has been placed on what happens to children who are displaced” (p. 34). The same

data shows that there are no typical harmful effects for students who are relocated or who enter new schools. In fact, Imberman et al., (2012) found that more than 75,000 school-aged evacuees transferring from Louisiana to Texas in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina showed no negative affect in academic achievement following their displacement. But what of those who remain in the disaster-affected areas? Or, what of those who have nowhere to transfer to as the disaster is of global proportions?

Lai et al., (2019) ultimately determined that, “high functioning schools generally maintain their performance trajectory, while lower functioning schools experience a larger detrimental disruption brought about by a natural disaster” (p. 46). Students in low socio-economic settings suffer hardship in housing recovery and educational outcomes. Moreover, absenteeism exacerbates matters in low socio-economic settings as it is a major factor in student performance (Lai et al., 2019). Public policy should therefore dictate that these low socio-economic settings receive the necessary additional resources in order to enjoy the recovery consistent with the high functioning schools. Moreover, research concludes that schools more vulnerable to disaster due to location, specifically proximity to the Gulf Coast within the continental United States, are more prone to school closures, and this in turn may correlate to slower overall community recovery (Esnard et al., 2017).

### **Unintended Consequences of School Closure**

Tsai et al., (2017), Zheteyeva et al., (2012), and Esnard et al., (2018) have studied historical school closures for various reasons. However, Judge (2021), Kaden (2020), Kuhfeld et al., (2020), and Richards et al., (2020) have revisited the concept of school closures following the national shutdown brought about by the COVID-19 restrictions and found there to be many unintended and troublesome consequences. Tsai et al., (2017) researched and evaluated the

unintended social and economic consequences of a single unplanned school closure in rural Illinois. They reported that closing schools was a means of mitigating the community spread of influenza pandemics and other health related emergencies in this particular region of the United States. This is especially true during the cold winter months for these particular regions. The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) even recommends coordinated closures to reduce the spread of infection in communities where a viable vaccine is not available. However, Tsai et al., (2017) highlighted adverse consequences to these recommended closures. Specifically, families with at least one adult losing pay during the closure, resulted in the incurrence of greater financial hardship due to additional childcare expenses (Tsai et al., 2017).

Similarly, Zheteyeva et al., (2012) evaluated the unintended cost and consequences following a four-day closure in Harrison County School District (HCSD) of Mississippi. The researchers collected information using a survey to determine interruption of employment and pay, loss of access to subsidized school meals and arrangement of alternative childcare. Almost 50 % of the survey respondents reports some type of difficulty during the closure. Respondent's greatest concerns stemmed from uncertainty about the length of closure, lost income, and the inability to acquire proper childcare. Zheteyeva et al., (2012) concluded, "To prevent undue financial hardship for families, public health authorities and school administrators should provide recommendations for childcare alternatives and paid leave or remote work options during prolonged school closures" (p. 2).

In each of these instances the period of closure was much shorter than the setting in question. This research proposes to investigate closures that were much more extensive in terms of time and recovery or that involved a complete transition to a novel platform of online, remote instruction. The literature mentioned above provides a baseline for reference to the unintended

consequences of unplanned school closures (Tsai et al., 2017; Zheteyeva et al., 2012). However, the proposed research should show these same consequences and more given the additional time lengths of closure and the additional recovery needed from the natural disaster (Bliza et al., 2020; Howard, 2019; Marstaller, 2020; Senkbiel et al., 2020; Superville, 2018).

Judge (2021), Kaden (2020), Kuhfeld et al., (2020), and Richards et al., (2020) all saw unintended and negative consequences beyond the former researchers. Judge (2021) observed an uptick in digital assessments during Ireland's lockdown but revealed the lack of teacher interaction on digital platforms and highlighted the increased disengagement of dependent students when face time was unavailable. Kaden (2020) observed sudden shifts in teacher workloads and responsibilities that created a lack of identity for the veteran professional educator. Not only did the case study reveal a shift in responsibilities, but the perspective communicated an increased workload in terms of hours required to engage students and assess learning. Kuhfeld (2020) was merely projecting outcomes as they relate to student achievement and her observations were grim. Under her full absenteeism modeled projections, students in sixth and seventh grade were projected to have ended the disrupted 2019-2020 school year with only 30% of their typical learning gains in both math and reading. Finally, Richards et al., (2020) observed that not only were students displaced during school closures but teachers also suffered disruption and displacement. In 700 Texas school districts examined, over 15,000 teachers were displaced from their labor markets between 2003 and 2015; leading to an increased likelihood that teachers would leave the field of education all together and veterans and the already substantially underrepresented group of African American teachers were specifically affected in a greater capacity (Richards et al., 2020). It is important to note that these trends in Texas do not include the closures brought on by the COVID-19 lockdowns.

## **Metaphorical Descriptions of Educational Environments**

Mitchell (2019) identified several research inquiries where students described their learning environments and educational settings through phenomenology. Descriptions through metaphor was a common method of choice as the metaphor allowed for participants to describe their experience through illustrative and comparative forms (Akturk et al., 2015; Nurettin, 2015; Yildirim & Simsek, 2006; Yilmaz et al., 2017). Metaphorical likeness allowed participants to visualize human life, environments, and events and consequently, participants were able to communicate those experiences to an audience by way of comparison, imaginative and figurative language, and the use of imagery (Mitchell, 2019). Moreover, Mitchell (2019) asserted that the metaphor allowed for the creation of qualitative narratives that transformed the complex task of describing into a simple, highly useful descriptors that also served as frames for categorical formation.

Aligned to Moustakas' (1994) analysis methods, Mitchell (2019) used the metaphors taken from each participant and treated them initially like horizons as his study transitioned from data collection into the analysis phase. Likewise, Bezen et al. (2017), Sezer (2018), Karabay (2016) used metaphors to describe teacher perceptions within a respective phenomenology. In each case, metaphors were arranged according to coding method (alphabetical, numerical, etc.) and then regrouped into categories according to their similarities (Bezen et al., 2017; Karabay, 2016; Mitchell, 2019; Sezer, 2018). Mitchell (2019) used the groupings, or horizons, that naturally developed from the transcripts of the participants and created representative metaphors that were used identify categories. Based on the effectiveness of the metaphor used in previous phenomenological studies, eliciting the use of metaphorical descriptions will be a priority during the data collection. In this investigation, metaphorical descriptions were used capture the essence

of the phenomenon. Moreover, journal prompts, interview and focus group interview questions targeted metaphorical responses.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a detailed record of the existing literature related to learning loss resulting from planned school closures. The motivation of this study was to give voice to students who are yet to have the opportunity to tell their story and discuss their experience with learning loss during unplanned school closures. Yet, how will learning loss be communicated through this research? Presuming it occurred at all, students were given the opportunity to quantify it qualitatively; through their stories and experiences. Students were allowed to explain their dependence on their teachers and their reliance on the instruction that prepared them for success. They were allowed to speak to their absolute need for social interaction alongside academic instruction to support learning. Or, perhaps, they explain that their learning was not impacted by the closures or the shift to an online platform and they were able to show proficiency or mastery of the standards without the busy work assigned by the day-to-day teacher. Either way, their voice is meaningful and stakeholders should seek to understand their voice to determine how to proceed in the digital age.

Following an extensive search of the academic libraries at my disposal, there was currently no literature that discussed learning loss in subsequent year unplanned school closures from the perspective of the learner in K-12 educational settings. In fact, there were no empirical studies identified that investigated subsequent year school closures, much more the impending academic effect, or student perspective thereof. What is known, according to the literature, was that learning loss does minimally occur during planned closures; the extent of which remains undetermined and debatable. For BDS students, HM in the fall of 2018 and the global pandemic

of COVID-19 in the spring of 2020 were neither planned nor neutral to other factors surrounding their academic progress. What is not known is the depth of impact these unplanned, subsequent year school closures had on students' experience about their learning or lack thereof. We also know critical instructional seat time was lost and the value of each of those periods may differ due to their location within the BDS Academic Calendar (2021). This investigation, despite potential limitations to be discussed in Chapter Five, added to the literature and academic field and provided needed insight into student perspectives of learning loss during traumatic, unplanned school closures. These findings also have the potential to guide future instructional methods and the platforms from which they are delivered in their various settings. Stakeholders will be better prepared to make informed decisions as we move into the digital age with advanced technological apparatuses at our disposal. All the while, stakeholders have a better understanding of when or if these apparatuses are appropriate to deploy for the learner's sake.



## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenology was to describe the lived experiences of student who suffered learning loss during due to multiple school closures during the subsequent 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years while attending BDS in Bay County, Florida. Chapter Three presented the overall design of the research plan, the questions used to guide the study, the procedures to be followed during the investigation, and the analysis to be performed following the collection of data. Chapter Three also presented the settings, participants, and criteria for sampling. I discussed my role as the researcher and the procedures I used to collect and analyze data. Finally, Chapter Three concludes with a discussion on the trustworthiness of the investigation and the ethical considerations that may impact the processes that follow. Ultimately, the goal of Chapter Three was to ensure unhindered replication of this study by delivering an explicit description of the procedures used to investigate the problem.

### Research Design

The design of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological investigation gave voice to students to describe their experience within the phenomenon of learning loss through multi-year school closures. Each component of the design was prudently selected to address the identified problem. The design was modeled after Moustakas' (1994) *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Moustakas is considered to have a leading influence in the field of phenomenology. Each of his thoroughly designed steps provide judicious consideration to the problems presented in research and the purpose of phenomenological research. In the section that follows, you will find a rationale for each decision made and a rationale for each component implemented.

The first decision point for this design was that it would be a qualitative study. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that a flexible, literary style of writing is best suited for qualitative research. The goal of this investigation was to produce descriptive narratives that tell the story of students by way of their voice. It was determined that these narratives can best be developed using a qualitative approach. This story-telling allows the audience to experience what the participants endured, all the while minimizing the relationship between the researcher and the co-researching participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, it was my desire as the researching author to live without the formal, academic structures typically associated with quantitative works. Finally, I argue that the first-person narrative account most aptly empowers participants to share their voice and to explain the details of their involvement in what transpired (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A second choice in the design of this investigation was the brand of qualitative study. Phenomenology is essentially the study of the life world, as experienced by the individual (van Manen, 1997). Polkinghorne (1983) described phenomenology as the understanding or comprehension of the human experience, as lived. Phenomenology was defined by Hegel (1910) as “the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one’s immediate awareness and experience” (p. 26). This study sought to capture a description of students’ immediate awareness or experience related to learning loss during multiple, subsequent school closures. What was the essence of their experience? In what sense did they feel they had lost out on learning? How did they become aware of this loss or did they? Essence is easily known, yet strangely difficult to transfer from one individual to another.

Within phenomenology, several veins of analysis exist. Two prominent veins being (a) hermeneutic and (b) transcendental, each with their own champion of sorts. Max van Manen

(1997) developed interpretive phenomenology into what has come to be known as hermeneutic phenomenology. Properly named, this vein is focused on the interpretive process in terms of data analysis. The researcher is free to use all the means available to interpret the essence of the experience. In hermeneutic phenomenology, the requirement is to examine data and to reflect on the content in order to discover something telling, meaningful, or thematic (van Manen, 1997). Clark Moustakas (1994), on the other hand, developed the concept of descriptive phenomenology from the original writings of Edmund Husserl (1977) into what is now known as transcendental phenomenology. The term transcendental, as used by Moustakas (1994) refers to the concept of perceiving an experience “freshly, as if for the first time” (p. 34). Moustakas (1994) came to believe that the work of phenomenology could not occur unless the description of the co-researchers was free from presuppositions of the lead researcher. For the purpose of this study, I engaged in epoché and approached the analysis phase from a transcendental perspective, led by Moustakas (1994), seeking to set aside presuppositions in order to rightly deliver the voice, meaning, and experience of the student.

### **Research Questions**

Transcendental phenomenology requires specific inquiries guided by questions designed to elicit narratives from the participants of the individual experience.

#### **Central Research Question**

How did participants metaphorically describe learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon?

#### **Subordinate Question One**

How did participants attribute cause to their learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon?

**Subordinate Question Two**

How did participants attribute their ability (learning characteristics or preferred modalities) to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

**Subordinate Question Three**

How did participants attribute their effort to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

**Subordinate Question Four**

How did participants attribute the level of difficulty to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

**Subordinate Question Five**

How did participants attribute luck or chance (circumstance) to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

**Setting and Participants**

The setting for this study was various school sites within the same local school district. I recruited as many participating schools as possible that fell under the jurisdiction of the school board of Bay County, Florida. The secondary schools varied in type, between traditional and multi-level academies (9-12, K-12, and 6-12). The objective of the study's design was to use a purposeful selection in order to identify sites from a variety of grade levels within BDS (2021), providing maximum variation from among the potential student participants. Each site represented a public school within Bay County, Florida that was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

**Setting**

BDS identified as a Title I district as 74% of the non-charter schools receive Title I

funding (BDS, 2021; Snyder et al., 2019). Most of the students attending BDS schools came from homes where income levels are at or below the national poverty level (Snyder et al., 2019). The district employed just over 3,000 full-time employees and has over 24, 600 students enrolled in 42 schools (BDS, 2021). Of those approximate 25,000 students, 67.78 % were Caucasian, 13.2% were African-American, 10.14% were Hispanic, and 8.88% were other minority groups (BDS, 2021). Of the 34 non-charter schools, 27 received Title I funding intended to build equity among students striving to meet rigorous grade-level state standards (BDS, 2021).

Bay County, Florida covers 1,033 square miles located in the Florida panhandle off the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico. The district serviced students residing in seven different local municipalities and is home to two federal military installations (BDS, 2021). The district maintained one of the county's largest annual budgets, at just over \$568 million dollars, and was also the chief employer in the county (BDS, 2021). Because the schools in question were publicly funded institutions, they were bound by law to deliver educational services governed by local, state, and federal initiatives (FLDOE, 2020). Each school was required to deliver curriculum aligned to Florida's Sunshine State Standards and modifications or alterations cannot be made to instruction without proper consent and documentation in a student's individual education plan (IEP).

Although convenient to me as the researcher, convenience was not the rationale for selecting this setting. Bay County, Florida was the epicenter of damage for HM in 2018 (Senkbiel et al., 2020). The rarity of this extreme event was additionally supported by the fact that the storm's original categorization as a level four storm at landfall was updated ex post facto, following the inclusion and review of more accurate wind speed data acquired from surrounding inland areas (Senkbiel et al., 2020). It is the combination of the school closure

resulting from Michael and the closure resulting from COVID-19, which could have been any district in the State of Florida, that make Bay County, Florida the ideal setting for this phenomenon.

Finally, the organization and leadership structure of the setting was an important factor in how students perceived their experience. As a public-school district for Bay County, Florida the district was ultimately led by the constituent-elected Bay County School Board (BCSB) and their authority is vested in the constituent-elected Superintendent of Schools (BDS, 2021). The BCSB created policy and procedures for the everyday functioning of the schools within the district and the superintendent executed, maintained, and carried out the policies of the school board (BDS, 2021). Each school within the district was led by a principal, approved by the BCSB, appointed by the superintendent and the human resource department of the district based on a formal application process (BDS, 2021). Each principal executed the mission and vision of the BCSB and performed the duties established by the human resource department of the district (BDS, 2021). The design goal was to recruit student participants from every school with high school students enrolled, which resulted in a total of five sites.

### **Participants**

The target sample ranged in ages 14 to 20, or participants who were in at least the sixth grade during the first school closure. All participants must have been enrolled in a BDS during both the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic school years and, at minimum, enrolled in at least the sixth grade during the first closure of 2018-2019 due to the complexity of some of the research questions or written prompts. Participants were not limited by ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status. However, as I narrowed the sample, I sought to obtain maximum variation. I piloted my interview questions and journaling with an unrelated sample who did not

participate in the investigation, yet met the criteria.

After recruiting the initial pool of participants, a demographic screener was given to each member of the pool. This screener elicited data that was used to ensure participants met the criterion of the study and assisted in the narrowing of the sample while ensuring maximum variation among the sample. I narrowed my sampling to 10 participants with the goal of maximum variation in terms of age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender. The use of 10 participants was based on the recommended sample size of three to 10 participants for phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) consider 10 participants as sufficient in phenomenology in order to support data saturation (Guest et al., 2006). It was determined that saturation was reached when participant responses repeated or participants described a shared experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) defined purposeful sampling as “the intentional sampling of a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem” (p. 148). Moreover, Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted, “Criterion sampling works well when the individuals studied represent the people who have experienced the phenomenon” (p. 157). Each participant had attended their respective BDS for the entirety of the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years. Formal permissions were attained from the district superintendent. No participants were contacted or selected, nor requested for parental consent, until Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), found in Appendix A, sanctioned the study and approved the data collection procedures.

### **Researcher Positionality**

I intended to give voice to students who had experienced learning loss as a result of multiple, traumatic school closures in subsequent years within Bay County, Florida. I used qualitative research methods to articulate the experience of my participants. I chose to employ

phenomenology as the design of the study as I was particularly motivated by understanding the phenomenon in question from the learners' perspective. Creswell and Poth (2018) inferred that qualitative research developed from the worldview of the researcher and transpired through a framework, a set of questions, and certain philosophical assumptions. The research questions were addressed previously and the framework, assumptions, and researcher's role, are detailed below.

### **Interpretive Framework**

The lens, or interpretive framework, through which this study was conducted was the conservative approach of social constructivism. This was a transcendental phenomenology where I, the researcher, used inductive logic in the context of the phenomenon to capture emerging themes from the experience of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a social constructivist, I viewed learning as a constructive routine that occurred as learners constructed new meaning based on previously known concepts and experiences. I also viewed the learning process as a social activity where construction occurs experientially among other learners. My Christian, constructivist foundation, through the lens of my chosen theoretical framework, was the interpretive measures accounted for as I sought to describe student perspectives of learning loss following the unplanned, multi-event school closures.

### **Philosophical Assumptions**

Following the interpretive lens and worldview, it was most important to identify the philosophical assumptions that were used to understand and describe the phenomenon in question. In addition to methodology, there were three assumptions that must be addressed as a research plan unfolded, as these beliefs and assumptions guided the actions of the researcher. Creswell and Poth (2018) identified ontology, epistemology, axiology, as the assumptions to be



clarified.

### ***Ontological Assumption***

Ontology asks the question of the nature of reality. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that the common characteristic of the ontological assumption is to view reality through multiple lenses resulting in various perspectives being developed through the process of research.

Ontologically, it was my assumption that each participant viewed their own experience in novel ways, which inevitably showed evidence of multiple realities. Moustakas (1994) emphasized that these multiple realities are commonplace in phenomenology. My goal as the research was to not only understand the different realities visualized by the participants, but also to recognize the various themes that emerged from those realities.

### ***Epistemological Assumption***

Epistemology ask the question of the nature of knowledge. It seeks to determine what counts as knowledge and what is the relationship between myself and the knowledge I sought to obtain during my investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By performing a phenomenology, I was not in the field with participants, nor did I live among them to experience their perspective. Rather, I relied on subjective evidence obtained from participants to build a narrative of their experience. I lessened the distance between myself and the phenomenon through questioning and observation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While I never lived among the participants as a contemporary, I did experience the phenomenon in the same setting as a teacher and administrator.

### ***Axiological Assumption***

Axiology asks the question of the role of values. Creswell and Poth (2018) asserted that investigators must acknowledge that the process of research is value-laden and that biases will

always be present in relation to our role in the research. Axiologically, I approached this research from a theological, political, and social conservative position where I admitted my inquiry would be impacted by my Christian worldview. My individual values influenced the proposed research, yet my duty as the researcher was to limit the impact where possible and as necessary.

### **Researcher's Role**

As a student myself, I never experienced a significant school closure that interrupted my educational experience. I was fortunate to graduate unimpeded from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. Yet, as a parent, my own biological children experienced both closures. As the human instrument of this investigation, I was particularly curious as to how these closures may have impacted the learning of not only my own children as a parent, but also the students I serviced daily as an administrator with BDS. I am interested to record their perspectives and learn what impact these extended periods may have had on their academic progress as well as the economic impact of the community at large.

As the human instrument, my duties included: develop the most appropriate design for research, create a research proposal to submit for approval, secure IRB approval, which sanctioned and governed the research, collect data using the three previously identified methods, analyze data collected using the protocols of transcendental phenomenology, and report the findings in a narrative format consistent with qualitative research (Brown, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the human instrument, it was my objective to add to the base of literature relevant to student perceptions of lived educational experiences.

Furthermore, as the human instrument it was my duty to report or reveal personal connections that I may have had to participants and the settings of investigation. This is necessary as personal connections can create derogatory bias that could result in skewed or

misleading findings. In full disclosure, I was employed as an administrator of BDS's during data collection. In addition, I previously served as a teacher and administrator in BDS since 2016. I also served as a teacher, department head, and headmaster of a local private school in Bay County, Florida from 2009 to 2015. Lastly, I lived in Bay County, Florida during HM, the COVID-19 pandemic, and both school closure events with all six of my biological children who were enrolled in BDS.

Moreover, the chosen design of a qualitative, transcendental phenomenology also had bearing on my role as the researcher or human instrument. Qualitative research is much more suited to my strengths as a researcher and the transcendental phenomenology allowed me to communicate my findings in a less rigid and formal narrative, whereby the expression and articulation of the experience of the participant is the objective. However, it is important to disclose a potential conflict of interest regarding the chosen design. In transcendental phenomenology, Moustakas (1994) advocated for the process of epoché whereby presuppositions are set aside in order to view the phenomenon afresh. I espoused a Christian, reformed orthodox worldview with a presuppositional view of apologetics. This could be viewed as contradictory with what is required in the analysis phase of a transcendental phenomenological study. However, while I believed everyone holds certain presuppositions that affect their beliefs, judgments, and view of behavior, this does not mean that I could not set presuppositions aside in order to understand another's experience anew.

### **Procedures**

In what follows is a detailed description of the steps and procedures utilized throughout the course of this investigation. I detailed the procedures used and documentation required to acquire permission from individuals and school sites. I also explained the recruitment plan

utilized to fill the participant pool and finally the sample of co-researchers. Finally, I detailed the data collection procedures and the analysis that followed, resulting in the findings of the phenomenology.

### **Permissions**

Before any component of this investigation can begin, I secured proper permissions to conduct the study. These permissions consisted of the sanctioning of Liberty University's Institutional Review Board, the Superintendent for BDS, the student assent and parental consent for any minor child serving as a research participant, and the individual consent of any participant over the age of 18.

### **Recruitment Plan**

After securing IRB approval through the IRB Approval Letter, found in Appendix A, I formally contacted site gatekeepers to recruit a contingency of participants who satisfied the purposive, criteria sampling. I offered all sample members the opportunity to be entered into drawings for gift cards of nominal value as incentives to participate at each of the levels of data collection should they be selected to participate. Once recruited, I worked to secure written consent from participants 18 years of age or older and student assent and parental consent from minors in order to be considered for participation in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As participants were identified and permission were granted, I issued a demographic screener to participants and the parents of minor participants. The screener served to narrow the sample pool down to 10 co-researchers or participants who provided maximum variation, adding to the validity of the research.

### **Data Collection Plan**

After securing the sampling, data collection began immediately. Data collection consisted of three phases described in depth below. The three phases were individual interviews, reflective digital journals with specific structured prompts, and a focus group interview. Each of the interviews, including the focus group, were completed using recorded sessions of Google Meet. Those sessions were transcribed and stored on a secured, password protected storage device. Notations from the classroom observations were completely transcribed and converted into a narrative format, also stored on a secured, password protected storage device. At the completion of all data collection, coding and analysis began immediately.

Any respectable research investigation requires rigorous, thorough data collection using a variety of approaches and methods. While variety is key, the most critical piece of data in phenomenology is the interview transcript (Anderson & Spencer, 2002; Creswell & Poth, 2018; McCracken, 1988). This investigation used three methods of collection, including the interview, which resulted in a plethora of information that was used to answer the research questions. The following subsections detail each of the methods used: interviews, observations, and a focus group interview. Creswell & Poth (2018) quoted Wolcott when he stated, “qualitative studies have no endings, only questions” (p. 53). The goal of this investigation, and any phenomenology, is to accurately record the narrative to reflect what and how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

#### **Individual Interviews**

Moustakas (1994) claimed that the interview can be summarized by two components: (1) *what* the participant experienced and (2) *how* the participant experienced the phenomenon. The *what* of the experience is the basic description of feelings, thoughts, smells, and memory of the

event. Generally, this information is gathered through basic questioning techniques (Moustakas, 1994). On the contrary, the *how* of the experience is much more difficult to ascertain. Not being a part of the conscious experience, the *how* refers to the act of becoming aware of the various parts of the event (Moustakas, 1994). This delineation between the *what* and *how* of the experience was referred to as the “phenomenological conversion” by Husserl (1970). Husserl (1970) believed the interviewer, using developed skills, would have to intentionally redirect the participant’s attention from the *what* of the event to the *how* of the experience.

McCracken (1988) believed that qualitative methods, especially the interview, were most effective when being used to discover how co-researchers saw the world around them. Since the work of phenomenology is grounded in the study of the individual, the interview is the primary source of data, as the interview is a study of the individual’s perspective (McCracken, 1988). Interviews conducted for the purpose of this investigation used pre-determined, semi-structured, open-ended questions designed to elicit the essence of the participants’ experience; answering the *what* and *how* of the phenomenon. Interviews were digitally recorded using audio and video technology. Questions were designed to find emerging themes (horizons) and clusters of meaning from among the participants (Moustakas, 1994). While the interview was a required component to participate in the study, I sought maximum participation for the interviews by entry into a drawing for a gift card of nominal value.

Each interview question was intended to elicit specific components of the overall narrative for each participant. To hone the questions to achieve their intended end, questions were piloted by an unrelated sample who was not a participant in the investigation. Semi-structured questions were adjusted, revised, improved, or deleted based on the response of the pilot sample. A similar pilot sample was used to examine each method of data reflective of the

potential participants with a representative range of age, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds.

***Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions***

1. Please introduce yourself to me, and explain how you came to be a part of this study.  
CRQ
2. Describe the nature of your relationship with BDS, the school grade you were in during the 2018-2019 school year, and please share your HM story. CRQ
3. So, to clarify, what kind of loss did you or your family experience during and after HM?  
CRQ
4. What was it like to be displaced from your normal routine? CRQ
5. Considering the various types of learners (auditory, visual/spatial, physical/kinesthetic, social/interpersonal, solitary/intrapersonal, etc...) what kind of learner would you say that you are; and how did the school closure affect your ability to learn? SQ2
6. What was it like to return to campus after being at home for that period of time; and did you continue to work from home to maintain your academic progress? SQ3
7. What was it like returning to the classroom and sitting through academic lessons covering new material with your teacher? SQ4
8. How did the time off from school during the storm recovery affect your outlook toward goal setting and aspirations for when you are older? SQ4
9. How did the time off from school during the storm recovery affect your outlook toward failure or hardship? SQ4

10. How much of your learning, or lack of learning, during the 2018-2019 school year would you attribute to luck, chance, fate, or providence; please elaborate or explain in depth?  
SQ5
11. In what ways, if any, do you believe you missed out on a quality education during the 2018-2019 academic year with the storm's closure? CRQ
12. To clarify, do you believe you suffered from learning loss during the school closure of 2018-2019; and if so, do you attribute this loss to your abilities as a learner, your effort or lack of effort, the situational difficulties, or do you simply chalk it up to luck or chance?  
Please elaborate on your response. SQ1
13. Let's talk about the pandemic and the closure in the spring of 2020. Please explain in detail, how you and your family were directly affected by COVID-19? CRQ
14. What was it like to have school canceled again for the second year in a row? CRQ
15. How did the move to distance learning affect you as a \_\_\_\_\_ learner, please explain with as much detail as possible? SQ2
16. Describe how your level of effort was impacted with the move to distance learning. SQ3
17. What was it like to have to adapt to distance learning in the middle of a school year? SQ4
18. What was it like not being able to see your classmates in a brick and mortar setting that you were accustomed to? SQ4
19. How much of your learning, or lack of learning, during the 2019-2020 school year would you attribute to luck, chance, fate, or providence; please elaborate or explain in depth?  
SQ5
20. Describe or elaborate on what you missed out on academically during the school closure of 2019-2020. CRQ



21. On a scale from one to five, with one being completely unprepared and five being completely prepared, how prepared were you to face the academic challenges the following years after each respective school closure? Please elaborate on your rating.  
CRQ
22. How did each school closure affect your mindset toward learning? CRQ
23. How did each school closure affect your mindset towards your future goals and aspirations? CRQ
24. I'd like to ask you a question that will prompt you to put everything together, so to speak. Reflecting on your lifetime of academic progress, what advice would you give to a student who you know is about to go through a traumatic school closure and a global pandemic, so you can ensure they are more successful than you may have been? CRQ
25. Describe your experience of learning loss during the combination of both school closures metaphorically. What would you liken, associate, or compare each separate closure to and what would you liken, associate, or compare the overall all experience to? CRQ
26. We have covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you have given to this. One final question... What else do you think would be important for me to know about your experiences during the school closures, as it relates to your learning or loss of learning? CRQ

The interview questions are easily divided into three major sections and can be found in Appendix F. Questions one through 12 are related to the first school closure of the phenomenon. Questions 13 through 20 are related to the second closure of the phenomenon. Finally, questions 21 through 26 are summary questions related to the overall phenomenon. The questions are non-threatening inquiries but do have the potential to raise traumatic memories, especially for young

students; strict caution should be taken (BDS, 2021). These questions were adjusted as necessary for each participant, based on responses and follow-up questions that come from the semi-structured design.

The first section of questions was related to the closure surrounding HM in 2018-2019 (Anderson & Walker, 2015; Dills et al., 2016; Henry et al., 2019; Weiner, 1974; von Hippel, 2019). Questions one and two were intended to build rapport and elicit specific details surrounding their experience with the HM and the first school closure (BDS, 2021; Senkbeil et al., 2020). Questions three through 10 were designed to elicit participant responses to questions of attribution of learning loss as it relates to ability, effort, difficulty, and chance (BDS, 2021; Weiner, 1974). Finally, questions 11 and 12 were designed as follow up descriptors of the HM closure. They were also intended to elicit an overall summarization of the closure experience from the participants' perspective (BDS, 2021; Bliza et al., 2020; Howard, 2019; Kuhfeld et al. 2020; Marstaller, 2020; Senkbiel et al., 2020; Superville, 2018; von Hippel, 2019).

The second section of questions were related to the closure surrounding COVID-19 and the pandemic of 2019-2020 (Anderson & Walker, 2015; Dills et al., 2016; Henry et al., 2019; Weiner, 1974; von Hippel, 2019). Questions 13 and 14 were intended to mimic questions one and two, yet they also highlight the details surrounding their experience with the pandemic and the second school closure (BDS, 2021). Questions 15 through 19 were designed to elicit participant responses to questions of attribution of learning loss as it relates to ability, effort, difficulty, and chance (BDS, 2021; Weiner, 1974). Finally, questions 20 and 21 were designed as follow up descriptors of the COVID-19 closure. They were intended to elicit an overall summarization of the COVID-19 closure experience from the participants' perspective (Armitage and Nellums, 2020; BDS, 2021; Babinčáková and Bernard, 2020; Bao et al., 2020;

Berthold et al., 2020; Blizak et al., 2020; Council of the Great City Schools, 2020; Judge, 2021; Kaden, 2020; Kuhfeld et al., 2020; Lovrić et al., 2020; Marstaller, 2020; Rundle et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020).

Finally, questions 22 through 26 served as wrap-up questions and were designed to summarize and assimilate the separate areas of the phenomenon into a coherent thematic narrative. Questions 21 through 24 were designed to be a summary of the phenomenon (BDS, 2021). Question 25 were designed specifically to provoke metaphorical comparisons by the participants for both closures and the overall experience of the phenomenon (Akturk et al., 2015; Bezen et al., 2017; Karabay, 2016; Mitchell, 2019; Nurettin, 2015; Sezer, 2018; Yildirim & Simsek, 2006; Yilmaz et al., 2017). Question 26 was merely a last opportunity for all participants to provide any final information they deemed relevant, having been exposed to the entire question set of the interview.

In response to these questions, each participant was given the opportunity to become an evaluator and an expert as they gave closing remarks for the transcript; each of which is recommended by research design experts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). When the participant was given the role of an evaluator, the investigator used more presuppositional style questions, rather than the dichotomous probing questions (Patton, 2015). These questions continued to be anchored in the literature throughout the development of the research plan and continued to be reviewed, honed, and piloted prior to use (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The individual interview was a requirement to participate in the study so incentivizing this component of participation was unnecessary, but helpful toward recruitment.

### ***Interview Data Analysis Plan***

Following the collection of all data, each source of evidence was securely stored and synthesized into a coherent singular body of evidence that allows for efficient and effective coding, resulting in deep analysis. Saldana (2015) asserted that there are times that coding is essential and times where coding must not occur because of the particular context of the investigation. Each collection was analyzed to identify themes and/or horizons that may or may not provide answers to the research questions. Each piece of evidence gathered from the three collection methods was integrated into one body of data from which all themes and horizons were generated. During the analysis phase, a Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) known as Nvivo was used to assist in the organization and data management tool for the full data set. While the analysis of the data was performed by myself, as the human instrument for research, the QDAS will be a resource to assist in the coding and categorization of the relevant data components.

This study ultimately utilized the guidance of Moustakas (1994) during the analysis phase of the inquiry. The objective of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the learning loss of students who attended BDS schools during the phenomenon in question. The data collected during the interviews from each co-researcher was analyzed using epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). The mindset necessary is epoché. Epoché, a word derived from the Greek, means to abstain. In transcendental phenomenology, epoché is “the setting aside prejudgments and approaching the research with an unbiased, receptive presence” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 180). My task, as the researcher during the interview analysis, was to abstain from making prejudgments about the participant or their narratives by “reaching a transcendental state of freshness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 41).

Ortlipp (2008) asserted that the problem of bias in qualitative research is still debated. How much researcher influence is acceptable and how it should be accounted for? In an effort to dispel the problem of bias and to assist in the process of epoché, Ortlipp (2008) studied the use of reflective journals in the qualitative process. Mruck and Breuer (2003) determined that reflective journaling allowed researchers to pen their thoughts, presuppositions, choices, and actions throughout the process of the investigation. The reflective journal is a method for bracketing assumptions and keeping bias at bay by acknowledging those values exist in written form. Ultimately, researchers determined that maintaining a reflective journal, during the inquiry, is an accepted practice to not only achieve rigor and consistency, but also to make the messiness of research visible to novice researchers who can then make those assumptions or judgments visible to readers (Denzin, 1994; Lather, 1991; MacNaughton, 2001; Ortlipp, 2008). During each phase of the collection and analysis, I maintained a reflective journal (sample found in Appendix K) to provide transparency and to achieve what Moustakas (1994) identified as a “state of freshness” without adulteration (p. 41). I set my presuppositions aside, in written form, in the journal that I maintained.

### **Individual Journaling**

Polkinghorne (1989) showed, in addition to the interview, that self-reflection and the gathering of information from depictions of the experience externally were effective means of data collection that led to rich descriptions of phenomena. One means of this type of collection was reflective journaling by participants. Following the formal long interviews, I assigned the selected members of the pool to complete qualitative journals documenting their experience in their own words. While some of the questions may be similar in nature to the interview questions, the ability to have ample time to think and respond in writing may provide different

and altogether richer responses with substantially more detail. Bauer and Gaskell (2007) and Mitchell (2011) supported the emergence of digital media journaling as a means of data collection and documenting the self-experience of phenomena.

In this study, each participant completed a weblog and the data from the journal was analyzed as a part of the data set. Individual participants responded qualitatively to open-ended prompts concerning their experience with learning loss during each of the closures. This tool was used to add to the depth and richness of the participant experience. The weblog required each participant, at their own ability level and with any necessary accommodations, to elaborate with in-depth written responses to questions related to their experience during the closures. Participants agreed to complete the journaling as a condition of their participation in the study and were entered into a drawing for a gift card of nominal value upon completion.

Each prompt was intended to elicit specific components of the overall narrative for each participant. To hone the prompts and achieve their intended end, prompts were piloted by an unrelated sample who did not participate in the investigation. Semi-structured, qualitative prompts were adjusted, revised, improved, or deleted based on the response of the pilot sample. A similar pilot sample was used to examine each method of data reflective of the potential participants with a representative range of age, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds.

### ***Semi-structured Journal Prompts***

1. Using at least 200 words, recount your experience as a BDS student during the months of October and November during 2018; include any transitional accounts that occurred with your school and specific challenges you may have faced academically during the aftermath of the storm recovery. CRQ

2. Using at least 200 words, recount your perception of how the local school district made accommodations to your situation with regards to grading and/or statewide high-stakes testing during the closure resulting from HM during the 2018-2019 school year. CRQ
3. Using at least 200 words, recount your experience as a BDS student during the months of March, April, and May at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year; include any transitional accounts that occurred with your instructional methods or platforms and describe any specific challenges you may have faced academically during the closure brought on by the pandemic. CRQ
4. Using at least 200 words, recount your perception of how the state and local school district made accommodations to your situation with regards to grading and/or statewide high-stakes testing during the closure resulting from the pandemic during the 2019-2020 school year. CRQ
5. Using at least 200 words and reflecting on your experience of learning loss during the combination of both school closures, what metaphorical comparison would you use to describe or give voice to your individual experience with each closure (HM and COVID-19) and the overall subsequent year school closure phenomenon; elaborate and explain why you choose the metaphorical description? CRQ

Each journal prompt was grounded in the literature gathered in Chapter Two and was designed to promote experiential responses that describe the phenomenon. The student's unadulterated voice was the goal. Prompt one and two was designed to allow for participants to show how they came to be related to the school(s) in the district and to allow the student to discuss their experience with HM (BDS, 2021; Senkbiel et al., 2020). Prompt three and four were designed to allow students to express the academic impact of participants experience with

COVID-19 (BDS, 2021; Dills et al., 2016; Kuhfeld, 2020; Lewis & Daltroy, 1990; von Hippel, 2019). Finally, prompt five was designed to allow for the deeper cognitive thoughts used to develop a proper metaphorical description and comparison to each of the closures and the overall phenomenon and for those thoughts to be recorded in writing (Akturk et al., 2015; Bezen et al., 2017; Karabay, 2016; Mitchell, 2019; Nurettin, 2015; Sezer, 2018; Yildirim & Simsek, 2006; Yilmaz et al., 2017).

### ***Journaling Analysis Plan***

Journal responses were securely stored and synthesized into a coherent singular data set to allow for coding and organization. Saldana (2015) believed that the material chosen to be coded depends on the researchers chosen value, attitude, and belief systems about the inquiry. Responses were analyzed to identify themes and/or horizons that may or may not be present in other data sets and the responses will be considered as a part of the larger data set which includes all three collection methods. Saldana (2015) also believed that coding is a way to organize data, not necessarily the only way to categorize or classify themes or horizons. However, coding as defined by Saldana (2015) is precisely what will occur following the data collection. “A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language based or visual data” (Saldana, 2015, p. 4).

Like the analysis plan for the interviews, this study utilized the guidance of Moustakas (1994). The data collected during the journaling was analyzed as a full data set along with the interview transcripts and the focus group interview transcripts using epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). Similarly, my task as the researcher during the journaling analysis, was to abstain from making prejudgments about the participant or



their narratives by “reaching a transcendental state of freshness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 41). A thorough synopsis of the full synthesis can be found below in the section entitled Data Synthesis.

### **Focus Group Interview**

With the onset of COVID-19, virtual meetings have become the norm for how many American companies are conducting their daily business. Virtual formats of the focus group also facilitate participation for hard-to-reach groups who may be further marginalized by qualitative research (Garcia et al., 2009; James & Busher, 2009; Nicholas et al., 2010). The focus group was designed as a summarization piece of data. The Focus Group Questions were derived from the literature and designed to discuss the emerging themes from the interviews and the journaling. Participants agreed to complete the focus group interview as a condition of their participation in the study. As I sought maximum participation, each participant was entered into a drawing for a gift card of nominal value upon completion.

I began the facilitation with an introduction to describe the purpose and goals of the group (Drake, 2018). Namely, the focus group interview was used to confirm and expand on forms and themes discovered in the initial analysis of data from the in interviews and journaling (Patton, 2015). Due to this objective, additional focus group questions organically develop following the initial collection and analysis of the individual interviews and the journaling. Yet, a semi-structured format was used to initiate the dialogue between the participants (Drake, 2018). Participants were instructed on the group norms and follow-up procedures to comment on the answers provided by others in the group. Before questions were posed, I identified which participant should initially answer, prior to opening the question up to follow-up comments. After the norms were established, the focus group commenced.

Each focus group interview question was intended to elicit specific components of the

overall narrative for group with regards to the phenomenon. To hone the questions and achieve their intended end, questions were piloted by an unrelated sample who did not participate in the investigation. Focus group questions were adjusted, revised, improved, or deleted based on the response of the pilot sample. A similar pilot sample was used to examine each method of data reflective of the potential participants with a representative range of age, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds.

### ***Semi-structured Focus Group Questions***

1. Will each member of the group introduce themselves by sharing your first names only, your grade level, and the school that you currently or most recently attend and the school you attended in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020? CRQ
2. Tom, please identify which of the two closures caused the greatest challenge to your academic goals and progress as a student. SQ1
3. As a follow up to John's response, which of the closures seemed to impact your mindset towards school most negatively? Please elaborate on why you think this is so. SQ1
4. Suzy, how did transitioning to a new remote or virtual delivery model, outside of the traditional brick and mortar classroom, add to the challenges of the closure of the pandemic; please explain how? CRQ
5. In what ways did the trauma related to the hurricane contribute more to potential learning loss than the closure of the pandemic alone? CRQ
6. Sarah, which closure seemed longer, despite the actual length; and why? SQ4
7. Mark, what do you think about Sarah's response? SQ4
8. Sally, how do you think the closures impacted the quality of your work and the effort you put forth? SQ3

9. Research indicates that most K-12 students never suffer an extended school closure. You all have suffered two in subsequent years. How do you believe this, if at all, will impact your futures? Feel free to respond negatively or positively. CRQ
10. What would you compare suffering two school closures in subsequent years to, and why? Elaborate on the connections to what you have experienced? CRQ
11. Brooke, please elaborate on the challenge of the metaphorical description you were asked to give in either the interview or journals. Why do you believe this was a struggle? CRQ
12. How did your teachers attempt to make up for lost time upon your return to school after each closure? Share a specific example that you remember. SQ4
13. When considering the four possibilities of ability, effort, difficulty, or chance; please elaborate on how you attributed cause for your learning loss? Shawn, please follow-up in agreement or disagreement. SQ5

Each focus group interview question was grounded in the literature gathered in Chapter Two and was designed to elicit experiential responses that may elaborate on the responses from the journaling and the individual interviews that describe the phenomenon. The participants' convergence or divergence of the sampling's unadulterated voice was the goal of the focus group. The group interview was designed to find commonality in the overall experience within the phenomenon. Questions one through three were introductory and designed to show how participants came to be related to the school(s) in the district where the closures occurred and the impact of the changing delivery system (BDS, 2021; Council of the Great City Schools, 2020; Dills et al., 2016). Questions four through six were designed to show the physical, emotional, and social impact of the closures affecting the district schools and their students (BDS, 2021; Kuhfeld et al., 2020; Senkbeil et al., 2020). Finally, questions seven through 13 were designed to

illicit descriptions of learning loss and to determine at which levels the experiences may be similar or dissimilar (Akturk et al., 2015; Bezen et al., 2017; Karabay, 2016; Mitchell, 2019; Nurettin, 2015; Sezer, 2018; Yildirim & Simsek, 2006; Yilmaz et al., 2017).

### ***Focus Group Data Analysis Plan***

The focus group interviews, as a data set, were organized and coded similarly to the individual interviews. The QDAS assisted in the management process. Patterns were identified through an extensive search for similarities, differences, frequency, sequence, correspondence, or causation in phrases and single words found within the transcripts (Hatch, 2002). Following the procedures described by Saldana (2015), I coded the complete set with the writing of analytic notes or memos to reflect on the coding process, and then completed a first and second cycle through the data. Saldana (2015) divided the first cycle task into seven subcategories or profiles: “grammatical, elemental, affective, literary and language, exploratory, procedural, and themeing the data” (p. 45). The second cycle methods were analytic skills such as classifying, prioritizing, integrating, synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing, and theory building (Saldana, 2015).

Again, the analysis plan for all collection methods was guided by Moustakas (1994) and ultimately synthesized the procedures inherent with transcendental phenomenological research. The full data set underwent analysis using epoché, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). While each subset of data (interviews, journals, and focus group interviews) was reviewed separately with analytic memos, the procedures typically used with phenomenology is to treat all data as one set of evidence and themes shall emerge from the full set, not individual elements. A thorough synopsis of the full synthesis phase can be found below in the section entitled Data Synthesis.

### **Data Synthesis**

Using interview transcripts, journal responses, and the focus group transcript as a data set, coding was performed using QDAS NVivo. Originally modified by Moustakas (1994), the Van Kaam (1959, 1966) analysis model to be followed in this investigation included the creation of lists and preliminary groupings of relevant expressions. Those expressions were reduced through the elimination of unnecessary, overlapping, repetitive, or vague phrases that did not contribute to the invariant constituents (Moustakas, 1994). After the constituents were developed, they were clustered, thematized, and arranged in order to identify the major themes that describe and validate the essence of the phenomenon. Once these themes were validated, the construction of a textual description from the experience of each participant was performed using verbatim examples from the transcribed data (Moustakas, 1994). These textural descriptions were developed into structural descriptions, which is also known as imaginative variation. The construction of a textural-structural description for participants ultimately dictated what was the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

As these analysis steps were followed, below is a brief explanation of the major component steps that Moustakas (1994) emphasized. The goal of these procedures was to identify common themes or the definitive essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

### ***Bracketing***

The building of a formal data base allows for the steps of phenomenological reduction to begin (Moustakas, 1994). The first step, which is a mental function rather than physical action, is bracketing. Bracketing is the process of placing the focus of the research [*focus statements*] in brackets, setting everything else aside, to ensure the research is rooted solely on the topic and research questions (Moustakas, 1994).

### ***Horizontalizing***

The next step in the reduction process, also a mental function, will be the horizontalizing of the data. All data is seen as the same and given equal weight (i.e., interview transcripts, observation notes, and focus group transcripts). However, once equal weight is given to all collection methods, horizons begin to emerge as repetitive or overlapping, and irrelevant statements to the topic and research questions are withdrawn or deleted. Moustakas (1994) defined the horizons as “the textual meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon” (p. 97). These constituents are also called the meaning units or horizons. These themes emerge or horizon as the raw data is cleaned and prepared for construction of the essence (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). It is important to note that even though the collection methods are valued equally, the focus group data is unique in that it is created through the participants’ collaboration as they seek to identify shared meanings of their experiences together as a group.

### *Clustering Horizons*

Once the prized statements have been horizontalized, or identified as the invariant constituents of the phenomenon, I clustered the meaning units into common classifications or themes. Simultaneously, I removed or withdrew redundant, overlapping, or irrelevant statements. While this clustering process can be brief and simple, it is also profound. Ultimately, the horizoned themes were used to create or develop the textural descriptions of the phenomenon’s experience (Moustakas, 1994).

### *Composite Textural Descriptions*

The textural descriptions are the final steps in phenomenological reduction. Textural descriptions are ultimately the finer points of meaning regarding the experience, or the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) asserted that this process begins with epoché and the investigator ultimately returns to the thing itself, through a state of openness and

freshness, facilitates clear seeing from the participants perspective, making clear their identity, and relives and reflects on the experience again and again to add deeper layers of meaning and ultimately getting to the “what” of the experience. These descriptions were developed by distinguishing the essence of the phenomenon from the isolated parts of the participants’ experiences. A “self-knowledge of the phenomenon” is the pinnacle for the written textural description (Moustakas, 1994, p.96).

### ***Imaginative Variation & Structural Descriptions***

According to Moustakas (1994), the steps required for imaginative variation are to: (a) consider the possible structural meanings derived from textural meanings, (b) recognize underlying themes that bring the phenomenon about, (c) consider the structures that bring about the feelings and thoughts of the phenomenon, and (d) search for ways to illustrate the structural themes and develop their descriptions. Imaginative variation is the process by which the textural descriptions are developed into structural descriptions. This process served to communicate the essence of the phenomenology being investigated (Moustakas, 1994). If the textural descriptions are the “what” of the phenomenon, then the structural descriptions are the “how” of the phenomenon (Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). Yet, the essence of the experience is the synthesis of the “what” and “how” as the phenomenon is communicated to the world (Moustakas, 1994). This will be the culminating task of the data analysis; and ultimately the phenomenology. At the conclusion of this process, I determined the essence of the experience and how participants described their own experience with learning loss following subsequent year school closures while attending K-12 schools in Bay County, Florida.

## **Trustworthiness**

Validity and reliability are complex to establish for qualitative studies. Devault (2018) shared that qualitative research has a public relations (PR) problem. Because instruments, which have quantifiable metrics to gauge and establish reliability, are not commonly used with qualitative research, a four-fold criterion should be used to establish trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba (1985) determined that qualitative studies must establish credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability in order to be considered as an empirical study with valid results.

### **Credibility**

Credibility is determined by showing the findings of any study accurately describe or demonstrate reality (Polit & Beck, 2014). This can be achieved through the quality of work, and the depth, and richness of the descriptions provided by the researcher. Devault (2018) stated, “credibility contributes to a belief in the trustworthiness of data through the following attributes: (a) prolonged engagement; (b) persistent observations; (c) triangulation; (d) referential adequacy; (e) peer debriefing; and (f) member checks (p. 1). Prolonged engagement refers to the time in which the researcher engages participants in the collection process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation refers to the need for the conglomeration of data, from at least three sources, to lead to one conclusion. A triangulation of data is often sought or needed when making changes or decisions that affect educational outcomes for students (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Referential adequacy refers to the archiving of certain portions of data originally deemed as repeated, irrelevant, or unnecessary during the analysis phase of research (Devault, 2018). Each of the above attributes were satisfied with the three methods of data collection mentioned above. Finally, peer debriefings and member checks satisfied the validity of the data collected as



members review and assess transcripts, providing ultimate credibility towards an empirical status (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the potential for what was determined through research in one context and setting would be repeatedly determined in another context and setting. A solid discussion of the setting and sampling can be found above in Chapter Three. This discussion adds greatly to the transferability of the study, allowing other researchers in similar settings to determine similar findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ultimately, the findings would not change if the same exact study was performed in another context. Absolute transferability is difficult to achieve in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To increase the likelihood of transferability, I will continuously develop the narrative and add depth and richness to the participant descriptions wherever possible. Moreover, I hope to assist future researchers with similar investigations by establishing a protocol to follow that can be transferred to their context and setting. In so doing, this study provided transferability toward empirical status (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Dependability and Confirmability**

The historical, social, and theoretical contexts of this study have been thoroughly addressed. Moreover, the setting has been defined and discussed in detail, providing a richness to the participant descriptions and a consistency to the participant narratives. It is consistency and the richness of the narrative that defines a qualitative study as dependable and confirmable (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, dependability and confirmability were also achieved through the rich, thick descriptions of the horizoned themes, member-checks, and interpretations provided by the investigator. As can be sampled in Appendix K, I maintained a reflective journal

during the data collection and analysis to assist with dependability and confirmability. I also kept a thorough record of all documentation throughout the collection process and this record was continuously, securely stored so there was a quality audit trail to review. To ensure the confirmability of the investigation, I used a third-party auditor to survey the study for consistency. Having ensured consistency in the contexts and settings and having the provision of the rich narratives, this study provided dependability and confirmability toward empirical status (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Ethical Considerations**

With any qualitative study, the ethical considerations are great; especially when working with students who are minors. In the case of this research, an ethical consideration of great consequence was the potential to exacerbate the trauma caused by the natural disaster and pandemic of the phenomenon which brought about the school closures. A careful approach was taken during the data collection process with all participants, but especially each minor child. Furthermore, following the guidance of IRB, proper parental consent and student assent was secured prior to any interaction with participants under the age of 18 years old.

A second concern, and common to all research projects, was confidentiality. I used pseudonyms for each site and participant to protect the identity of all organizations and individuals involved (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I also maintained a secure storage protocol with documentation and the security of all records on a digital, password-protected storage device (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, I performed continuous member checks to ensure that no participant felt mischaracterized during the data collection process.

### **Summary**

The design and methods employed in a research project such as this are important and the plan should be executed as designed, without exception. Chapter Three discussed the step-by-step procedures used throughout the entirety of the research. Again, this research is a qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study focused on the lived experiences of students experiencing learning loss due to multiple school closures. The 10 student participants from various schools within the district setting participated in individual interviews, journaling, and participated in a focus group interview to discuss emerging themes of learning loss and the impact of the phenomenon. The data collected was transcribed and coded to allow for phenomenological analysis. Horizons were organized into textural descriptions and later into structural descriptions of the student experience. These structural descriptions gave voice to students as they described, from their perspective, the learning loss that came as a result of multiple, subsequent year school closures.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenology was to describe the lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss due to multiple school closures during subsequent academic years while attending BDS in Bay County, Florida. Attribution of cause was the framework used to structure the participant descriptions of their experience (Weiner, 1974). The intent of Chapter Four was to present the overall results of this investigation. Each participant communicated their experience and Chapter Four is compilation of the rich portraits of their experience, which contributed to the composite essence of the phenomenon under investigation. These portraits have been organized thematically from the data and are grounded in the central and subordinate research questions. Chapter Four concludes with a summary of the participant descriptions of the phenomenon.

### **Participants**

This investigation compiled data from 10 students who are still or were enrolled in five different BDS High Schools. Each school site is located in Bay County, Florida and each student participant was enrolled in their respective BDS school for the entirety of the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years. The district secondary schools were given pseudonyms and represented accordingly: Palm Beach High School (PBHS) had two participants, Lee High School (LHS) had two participants, Pike Road High School (PRHS) had two participants, Jeff Davis High School (JDHS) had two participants, and Sidney Lanier High School (SLHS) had two participants. The participant sampling was comprised of five females and five males and ranged in age from 15 to 20 years old. Participants were required to have been enrolled in at least the sixth grade during the 2018-2019 school year and provided signed written consent or assent

with adult consent for participants under the age of 18 years of age at the time of their participation.

Below are tables that describe the participants and their demographic breakdown. The school site identities were also concealed even though district permission was granted (BDS, 2021). In some cases, the relationship of the participant and the school was altered in order to protect the identity of the individual students. The following narrative accounts are the “individual textural-structural descriptions that were developed into a composite description of the meanings and essence of the experience, representing the group as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994, p.121). See participant demographics below:

Figure 1: Student Participants

*Student Participants*

Student Participant	BDS Years Enrolled	Grade Level 2018-2019	BDS High School	Current Secondary Grade (Entering)
Caleb (M)	12	8	JDHS	Senior
Ella (F)	11	7	PRHS	Junior
Hallie (F)	13	Junior	LHS	Graduate
Irvin (M)	12	8	JDHS	Senior
Jacob (M)	13	Freshman	LHS	Graduate
Tricia (F)	13	Junior	PBHS	Graduate
Olivia (F)	12	8	PRHS	Senior
Randy (M)	10	6	PBHS	Sophomore
Thomas (M)	5	Freshman	SLHS	Graduate
Virginia (F)	13	Freshman	SLHS	Graduate

Again, each BDS High School was given a pseudonym to protect the identity of each participant within the district. The tables below provide a range of information about the participants and their schools.

Figure 2: Participant Household Income

*Average Participants' Household Income*

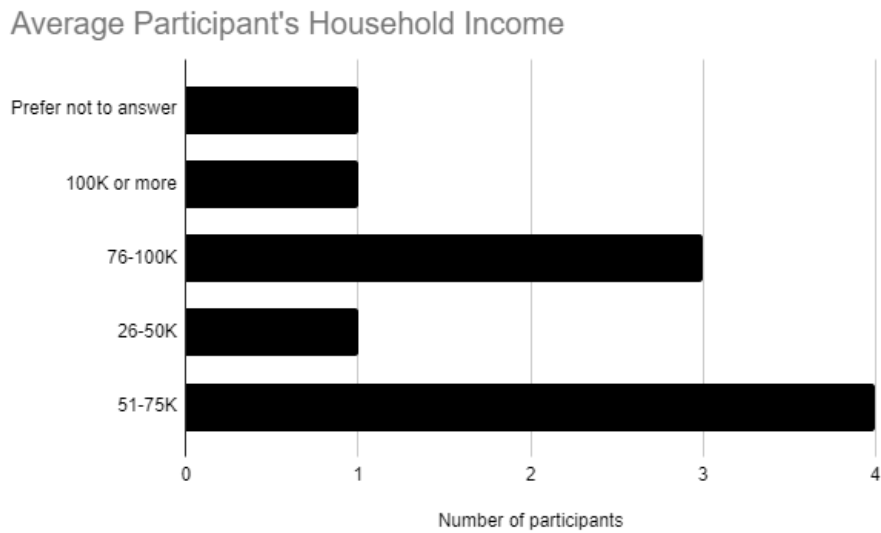


Figure 3: BDS High School

*BDS School Attended During High School Years*

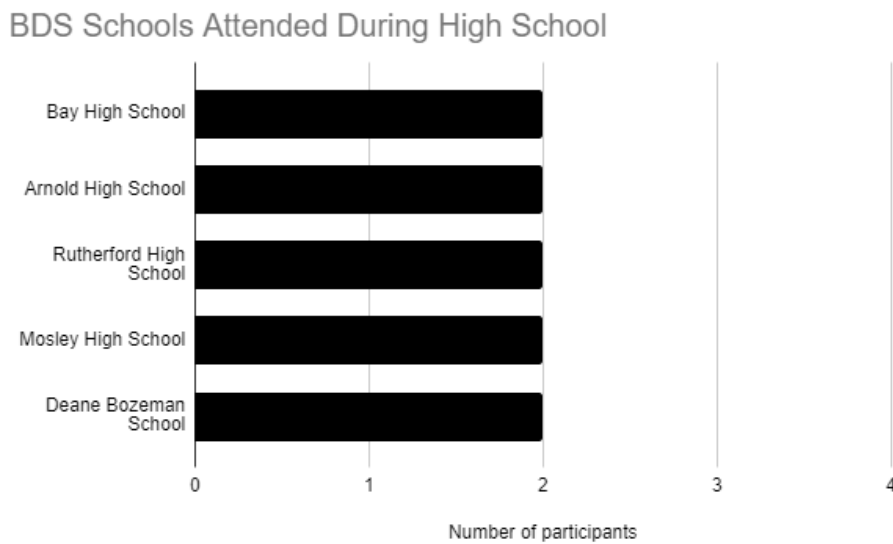


Figure 4: 2018-19 Grade Level  
*Participant Grade Level in 2018-2019*

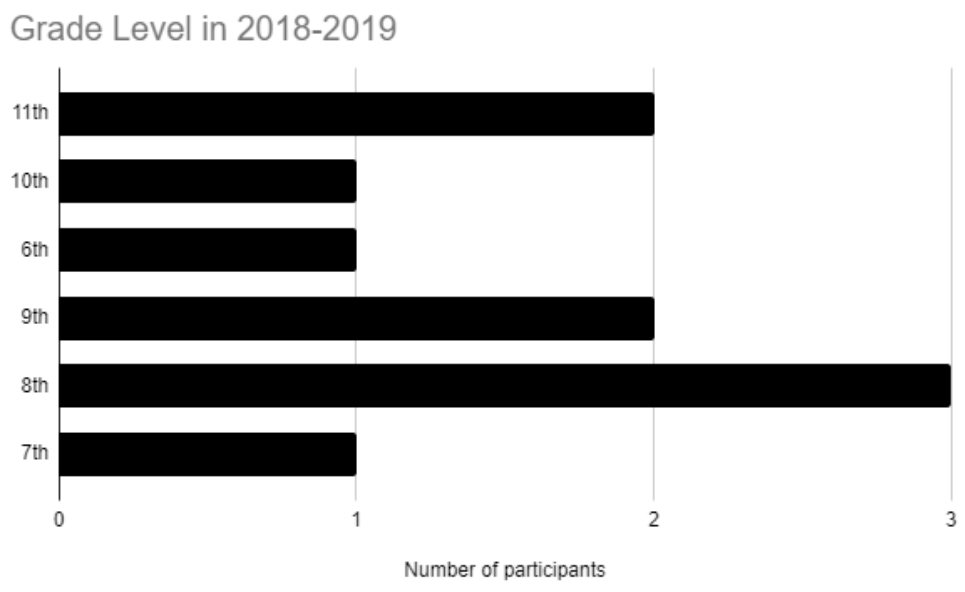


Figure 5: Race or Ethnicity  
*Participant's Race or Ethnicity*

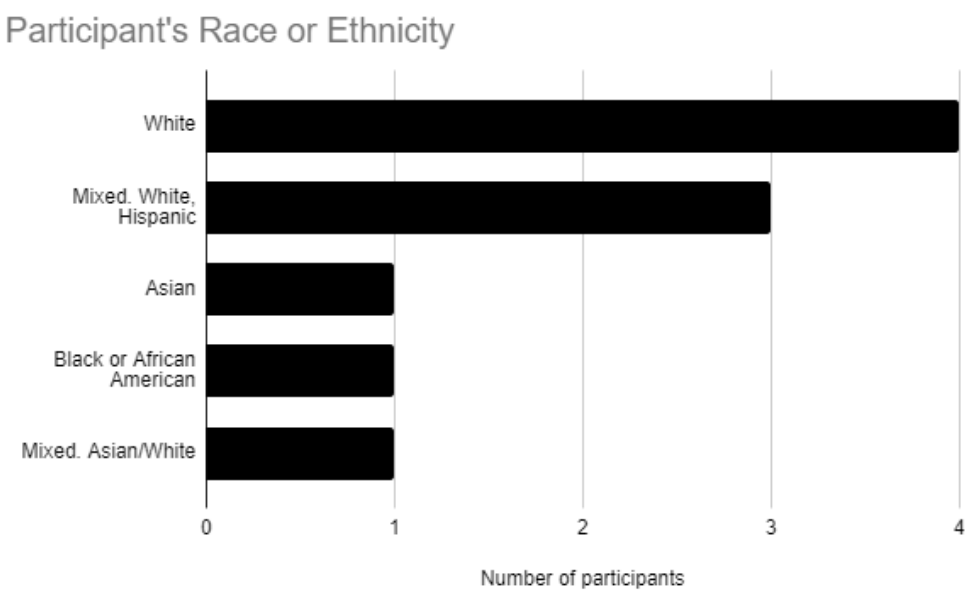


Figure 6: Gender

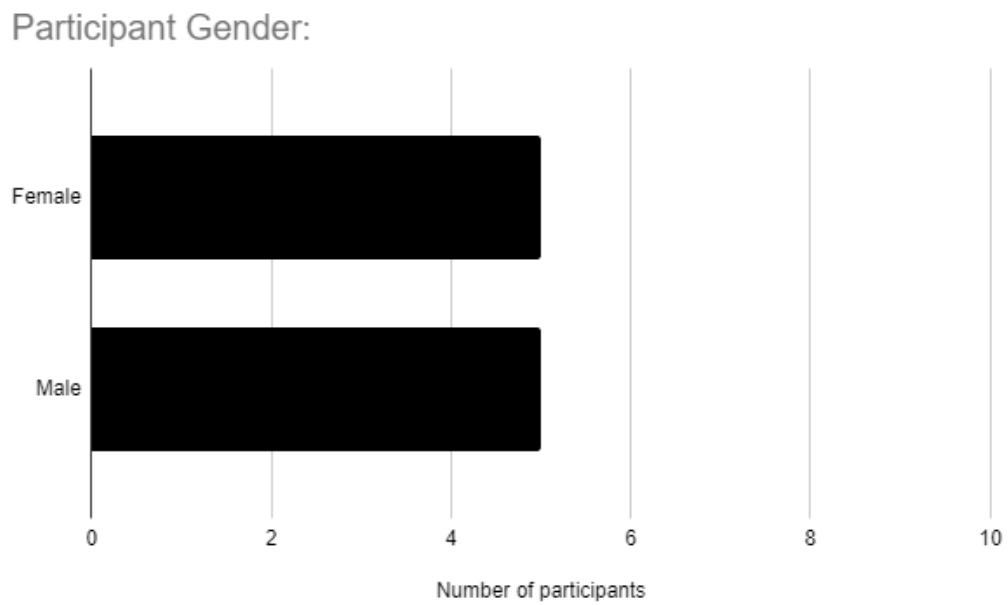
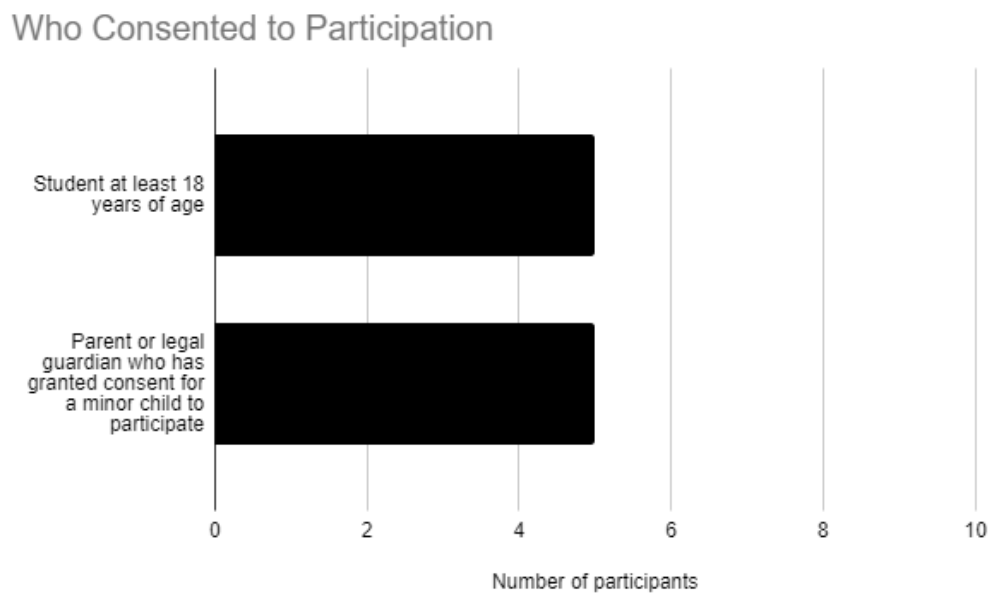
*Participant's Gender*

Figure 7: Consenter

*Consented to Participate*



### **Caleb – Jefferson Davis High School**

Caleb was interviewed in March of 2022 at the age of 15. Caleb was at home and I was in my home office. The interview took place using Google Meet and the audio and video portion of the interview was recorded for later transcription. Caleb attended a district chartered middle school in 2018-2019 and was currently attending JDHS. Caleb's middle school plant was destroyed and had the most significant damage of all the buildings in the district. Students were forced use an alternative location(s) until a full rebuild occurred. Caleb matriculated to JDHS for the 2019-2020 school year and entered JDHS advanced program as a freshman. However, all five district high schools followed the same protocol for closure in March of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During 2018-2019, Caleb lived on the east side of Panama City, which is where the greatest storm damage occurred. He and his family were forced from their home and have yet to return to the structure. For three years, post-storm, Caleb's family lived in a travel trailer parked in their backyard and finally moved in with other family members during his senior year. The families brick home on the east side of Panama City suffered a full blow out and had severe water damage to the interior. Fortunately, during Caleb's individual interview (2022) he did not describe the traumatic experience at his home during the storm, that others described.

When the reports came in about how bad the storm was expected to be, we quickly evacuated to the north. We were not at home during landfall but when we returned home, we found a total loss. We worked together to clear the damage quickly by cutting away the wet sheetrock and removing the carpet but the insurance and financial recovery was more challenging than my parents anticipated. We were not able to repair or replace the roof as quickly as was needed so the remaining interior of the home was damaged with

subsequent rainfall. We finally had to go back in and remove all the sheetrock and take the entire interior of the home down to the studs. (p. 2)

Caleb went on to describe how his family seemed to be the last of his peers to have any substantial repair to his home. While others were back in their homes soon after the return to school, he still has not returned to the normalcy he enjoyed prior to the storm.

Caleb believed both closures impacted his learning, while the 2018-2019 closure was more traumatic. During the Focus Group (2022), he described the combination of closures as being the most difficult to endure.

I was already not in my home and living in a travel trailer with cramped quarters. Then I was asked to transition to remote learning the next school year while I was learning the expectations of my new school's advanced program. (p. 1)

Caleb stated that upon entrance to JDHS, he was expecting to be in the normal brick and mortar classes with teachers trained in the instructional routines. When the district transitioned to the remote learning, the online delivery platform of *Edgenuity* did not align to the requirements designated by the advanced program. "We had to work in Google Classroom, while all the students on the general track were able to use *Edgenuity*" (Journal, 2022, p. 1). Because his peers were able to use a previously operational program, his challenges were greater because his teachers had to learn to implement a new learning platform on the go.

### ***Research Question Responses***

The research questions of the study asked, "How do participants describe learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon?" Caleb certainly believed learning loss occurred during both closures. Beyond the expectations Caleb perceived at the program level in both the chartered school and JDHS, his parents had high expectations that he struggled to meet.

In his journal Caleb (2022) wrote, “My parents want me to be successful and they hold me accountable with my grades. They expect A’s and B’s at a minimum” (p. 1) Caleb went on to explain that his parents’ high expectations took precedence over the requirements of the program or the circumstances. He asserted, “My mom coordinates a nursing program at the local college and so failure was not an option for me” (Interview, 2022, p. 2). Caleb did describe that he suffered from the instructional time missed during the first closure the most but felt like his parents’ intentional intervention led to his making up for lost time.

The subordinate research questions were more targeted toward the theoretical nature of the phenomenon. Caleb attributed the greatest cause of learning loss to the luck or chance (circumstance) surrounding the closures, followed by effort, level of difficulty, and ability. Although, Caleb admittedly put forth the effort his parents expected, he quickly learned that this would not be enough given the circumstances. He remembered, “I had to make decisions about my social life that prioritized my grades” (Interview, 2022, p. 3). He acknowledged that prioritizing his education over socialization led to some isolation that he did not enjoy. However, he believed this to be the reason for his success. He stated, “My mom and dad were the only real reason for my academic success. Had it not been for them I would be hanging out with friends and never would have gotten the work done” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 1). It could be argued that Caleb’s parents were a part of his circumstances and when attributing cause to learning loss, cause can be attributed negatively, or in Caleb’s case, positively. Perhaps Caleb’s parents are the reason he did not suffer learning loss to the same extent as others; given similar circumstances.

### ***Metaphorical Description***

Caleb described his experience of the phenomenon by stating that it was like a sacrificial period of life his parents had always warned him of. In Caleb’s interview (2022) he shared,

My parents always talked to us about seasons of life where we would have to be willing to give up certain things to be successful. I thought this was just one of those times. The closures were just like that. To me, in both my eight-grade year and my freshmen year at JDHS, I had to give up what I wanted to do to be able to have what I wanted and what they wanted for me later in life. (p. 3)

Caleb's mature metaphorical description richly elaborates on his perspective. He saw himself in a transitional period of life that had little bearing on the long-term ramifications of his life, unless he failed. Should he be successful, he would miss out on little. If he failed, he would lose greatly and his academic career may suffer a setback that could not be overcome.

### **Ella – Pike Road High School**

Ella was interviewed in April of 2022 at the age of 15. I interviewed her in person at her home at the family's kitchen table. The audio and video of the interview was recorded using Google Meet for later transcription. Ella attended a K-8 district charter academy in 2018-2019 and was currently attending PRHS at the time of the interview. She stated, "After the storm, I never entered my actual campus building again" (Journal, 2022, p.1). Ella explained that her charter school was located close to the center of Bay County. The charter school facility had been operational for less than five years prior to the storm. "We had a really nice building and I loved being a student there" (Journal, 2022, p. 1). Ella rated her educational experience prior to the storm as a 9 on a 10-point scale.

Ella described her school experience after the storm as "a year of several first days" (Interview, 2022, p. 1). Severe damage occurred at the campus. Entire buildings were destroyed and the county condemned the structures until significant repairs could be made. "We were moved to two locations on the beach during our initial return. The middle school students went

to school in a church building and the elementary students met at a hotel and convention center on the beach” (Journal, 2022, p. 1). described the time as confusing and a very slow to return to normalcy. “We had our actual first day in August. Then we had another first day after the storm when we returned in November. Then we moved back to our original location into modulars after the New Year” (Interview, 2022, p. 1). The next school year, August of 2019, she was supposed to return to the newly remodeled and repaired school buildings but her parents moved her to a new school in the northern part of the county, PRHS.

When asked about the learning loss or the impact to her learning during her Interview (2022), Ella did believe she missed out on several opportunities.

I am getting ready to finish my freshmen year in high school and I still haven’t ever participated in a history or science fair. I remember watching my older siblings fret and struggle through those projects every year, and I never had to. I’m good with it though. But I am kind of worried. I feel like it may be something I was supposed to do before I moved on to high school in preparation for something I’ll come to later. (p. 2)

She also explained that she was never forced to do any kind of public speaking, which she knew to be a rite of passage for most middle schoolers. “I just know that I’ve never really been asked to apply the scientific method and I know that’s going to come back to bite me” (Interview, 2022, p. 3). Moreover, Ella did not experience or was not successful on the End of Course (EOC) Exams typically associated with the traditional middle school experience. “I failed the Algebra 1 EOC on my first attempt and I think that was because it was my first high stakes test after the closures. I did not take the Civics EOC in seventh grade and I failed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science FSA” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 2). As Ella elaborated on her experience, there were certainly indications

of learning loss or missed opportunities that affected her educational experience and to hear her describe it, it was a significant impact to her progression.

During the second subsequent closure, as detailed above, Ella attended PRHS. From her perspective, “COVID-19 was worse for me because nothing seemed wrong and yet we weren’t allowed to go to school. In the previous closure there was obvious destruction that prevented us from attending. I did not understand” (Interview, 2022, p. 3). She explained that she remembers being disappointed. “We were finally back in school and here we go again” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 1). In addition to the disappointment, Ella recounts that she was a poor learner given the online or various remote platforms being used.

We used so many different programs. Every teacher did their own thing and it was hard to keep up with all that we were doing. Some teachers used *Canvas* and some used *Google Classroom* for their online homepages. Some teachers used *Edgenuity* or some used *Study Island* for their lessons and teaching. Some used *Zoom* for meetings or live instruction and some used *Google Meet*. I hated it and I did not really figure it all out until the end of the year, which was too late. (Interview, 2022, p. 3)

She went on to conclude that the teachers were ill-equipped to not only handle the technology themselves but to instruct the students in the use of the technology. She also describes the impact of the COVID-19 closure as worsened by the isolation felt by the city’s closure. “We had no peer accountability and I felt like this led to a *laissez faire* attitude about everything we were doing with school” (Journal, 2022, p. 2). Ella expressed an apparent apathy that developed out of the lack of socialization.

### ***Research Question Responses***

Ella's account was clear. She believed that learning loss did result from the subsequent closures. While the second closure related to COVID-19 was more impressive for her, she ranked her attribution for both closures similarly. Luck or chance (circumstance) was the largest contributing factor attributing to her learning loss, followed by her effort, then her ability, and finally the level of difficulty of the content. She was insightful to indicate that her effort and ability deteriorated over time. "Since I could not go to school, I saw no need to perform. And I am sure when I quit trying, I became a weaker student" (Focus Group, 2022, p. 2). She also expressed that she believed that peer interactions are just part of and add to the learning environment. "One thing I noticed was that when I did not have friends to talk to about the information the teachers were delivering, I had a harder time understanding it or remembering it. Maybe talking in class is not all that bad" (Journal, 2022, p. 2). This supports Banduras (1977) Social Learning Theory (SLT), which posits that much learning occurs during the observation, modeling, interacting and imitation of others. Ella asserts this interaction was missed during the closures that took her away from the traditional classroom experience.

### ***Metaphorical Description***

Ella likened the school years of 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 to a song by Olivia Rodrigo entitled One Step Forward, Three Steps Back. She explained,

The song is about a relationship between a girl and her boyfriend. They had an on and off again type of relationship. As soon as something good would happen they would go through another trial or fight. It was generally because of something he did wrong. The song lyric was clearly written from her perspective and seemed to always take her side of whatever argument they were having. HM and COVID were mistakes that life made for me and they both sent me three steps back. (Interview, 2022, p. 4)

In essence, Ella experienced learning loss. She was moved three steps back each time a closure occurred and she spent her subsequent school year making up the ground she had lost. So much so that she felt a special kindred connectedness with her colleagues who endured the same experience. “My memories are vivid when it comes to the friends I had during both closures. We went through the same tragic hard time together. We were able to talk about it but only by chat or FaceTime” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 3). What Ella may not have realized is that the distance or remoteness itself seemed to serve as a seal for those memories in her mind forever.

### **Hallie – Lee High School**

Hallie was interviewed in April of 2022 at the age of 20. She was at home and I was in my home office. The interview took place via Google Meet and the audio and video portion of the interview was recorded for later transcription. Hallie attended LHS in 2018-2019 and graduated from LHS in 2020. She was currently working full-time after dropping out of college. According to her, she “lacked direction and motivation for school” (Interview, 2022, p. 1). Hallie experienced a traditional freshmen and sophomore year at LHS; 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. On the contrary, her second semester of her junior year was greatly impacted by HM. LHS’s campus suffered severe damage and could not be used. After reopening in November, LHS was consolidated with a local middle school and students were forced to a split schedule on the middle school’s campus. The LHS students attended in the morning hours and the middle school students attended in the afternoon and into the early evening. Hallie stated, “The altered schedule was difficult to adjust to at first because of the earlier start time; we reported at seven o’clock in the morning” (Journal, 2022, p. 1). She further reported that it was strange having the whole afternoon off from school. Hallie reported, “Both school faculties worked well together and the middle school staff was extremely hospitable to the LHS students” (Interview, 2022, p. 2). Hallie



lived in the northern part of the county. Her home suffered little damage and her living conditions were not impacted. She was old enough to drive herself to school and so transportation was also never an issue.

The COVID-19 closure occurred during Hallie's senior year. She stated, "I was fortunate to earn my Assessment International Cambridge Education (AICE) diploma in my junior year so most of my academic requirements were met for graduation" (Interview, 2022, p. 1). The second closure had a much greater impact to Hallie's social life. "COVID-19 caused the closure of everything around us. We were no longer able to attend school we were working exclusively online; never getting to see any of our teachers or fellow students" (Focus Group, 2022, p. 4). She explained that despite her teachers' ability to make the transition smoothly, she became quite unmotivated. Immediately following the shutdown, Hallie became particularly disengaged with school. She felt like she had already accomplished what she needed to accomplish through her AICE program and so her apathy caused a dip in course grades. Hallie stated,

Not only was I unmotivated to work, but the teachers became slack in their expectations. I think this is because they felt bad, especially for us seniors. I felt like they wanted to give us some room to grieve all that we had lost that year. Because there was less expected of us, I seemed to be retaining far less information. Our senior class fared poorly on end of year testing. Advanced Placement (AP) exams were not cancelled despite the circumstances, and I failed both exams I was scheduled to take. (Focus Group, 2022, p. 5)

She further explained that she was able to pass the AICE exams, but still felt quite unprepared to face the next chapter of her adult life.

### ***Research Question Responses***

Hallie adamantly believed learning loss resulted from the subsequent closures she experienced. She ranked the causes of attribution accordingly: luck or chance (circumstances), ability, effort, and level of difficulty. As an advanced student enrolled in the AICE program at LHS, Hallie described her program was “rigorous, with a great deal of complex coursework and assessments” (Interview, 2022, p. 2). She explained, “It was important that AICE students did not let the circumstances of the closure affect their diligence in the classroom or their learned study habits” (Interview, 2022, p. 2). Hallie further reported,

Considering the high stakes, I will say that the students and staff did an exceptional job of staying on task and keeping their eye on the prize. I was very proud to be included in this small, tight-knit community within my school. The rigor of the program kept me more motivated than the students on a general track. I remember seeing many of my non-AICE peers give up and show very little concern for the grades or progress in general. (Focus Group, 2022, p. 5)

Hallie seemed more candid about the second closures impact on her learning. While the first closure did bring about some negative consequences, the subsequent COVID-19 closure yielded more progressive negative consequences, especially for students whose rigor was not maintained.

### ***Metaphorical Description***

Hallie compared the overall experience of the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 school years to a childhood board game. She explained,

As a child I remember playing the board game Chutes and Ladders. I enjoyed playing the game but I remember becoming so frustrated with the nature of the game. I would be winning and making so much progress against my competitor and then I would land on a

chute that would move me back to the start of the board. There were many times, when playing with my siblings, a chute would cost me the game and I would just quit. The hurricane and COVID felt like chutes and I felt like I landed on each one just as I was about to win the game. (Interview, 2022, p. 4)

The essence of this metaphor particularly describes how Hallie experienced the phenomenon. Each closure seemed to move her back to start and she would spend the subsequent school year making up the ground she had lost. Unfortunately, the next year also resulted in another restart and now she feels unprepared to face subsequent chapters of life.

### **Irvin – Jefferson Davis High School**

Irvin was interviewed in May of 2022 at the age of 16. Irvin was at home and I was in my home office. The interview took place via Google Meet and the audio and video portion of the interview was recorded for later transcription. Irvin attended a K-8 charter academy in 2018-2019 and was currently attending JDHS. 2018-19 was Irvin's 8<sup>th</sup> grade and final year in which he was able to attend the BDS sanctioned charter. The campus suffered major damage as a result of the storm and forced the students and faculty to use an alternative locations or structures until a full rebuild could take place. Irvin attended JDHS during the 2019-2020 school year as a freshman. All five district high schools followed the same protocol for closure in March of 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During 2018-2019, Irvin lived West of the Hathaway Bridge of Panama City Beach in a stilted, sided house. However, he explained that he and his family sheltered at his grandmother's brick home in Panama City due to the sturdiness of the structure. Moreover, they believed the reports that the storm was supposed to make landfall with greater impact further West in Panama City Beach. To the contrary, he described a traumatic experience at his grandmother's house.

The roof of the main structure was ripped right off the studs and immediately water poured in from the ceiling. The pool cover was blown over the house and on top of all the cars in the front of the house. The storage shed roof was ripped off and the windows were all shattered. The garage door was blown in and bent. When we heard that bending, we were afraid the garage door was critical to the security of the rest of the house so we ran out and tied it down to prevent further damage during the worst part of the storm. There were some very scary moments. The feeling of safety that we were used to our house providing was gone and we felt exposed and vulnerable; like anything could happen.

(Interview, 2022, p. 1)

Irvin went on to describe his own house's damage as substantial as well. "A tree fell on the office and destroyed part of the house. That caused the entire roof to be replaced. The water damage caused us to have to replace all the sheetrock to prevent mold" (Journal, 2022, p. 2). His family lived in a camper during the remodel, but unlike many in Panama City, they were able to return to their home in a matter of weeks due to the connections his family had with local contractors who prioritized their homes repair. At the time of the interview, Irvin described friends who were still living in the travel trailer they purchased after the storm as they waited on home repairs to be completed.

Irvin believed the 2019-2020 closure was more significant to his learning loss. He described the transition to remote learning and back to traditional "brick and mortar" instruction as the inherent challenge to his learning.

Initially it was not that bad. We were able to work on *Edgenuity* for the remainder of the year; from March until May. I was able to learn on that platform. I actually enjoyed that. I had more flexibility. I could finish a week's worth of classes in one day. I traveled a lot to

Alabama during the closure to see my family and the program allowed me to work at my own pace or at any time of day that I wanted. I was still able keep up with my school work, but when we went back to school the next year my school work seemed much harder. (Interview, 2022, p. 3)

Irvin admitted that the program did not offer in-depth instruction of the content and was nothing more than a tertiary glance or exposure to the standards. He stated that he made good grades using *Edgenuity*, but he is not sure of how much he really learned.

### ***Research Question Responses***

The research questions of the study asked, How do participants describe learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon? Irvin would concur that he most likely missed some instruction, but he was not overly concerned. He just wanted to get finished with what was expected of him and move on the next grade level. This feeling or belief was the same for both closures. Yet, it is more indicative of Irvin's lack of drive or motivation toward school. While he maintained high expectations for his own future, he lacked the motivation to go the extra mile in terms of his school work at the present. Irvin was certainly content with performing at the minimum level of student expectations.

The subordinate research questions focused on the application of the theoretical framework to the phenomenon. Irvin ultimately attributed cause for his learning loss to luck or chance (circumstance) as the highest rated attribution, followed by effort, then ability, and level of difficulty. Like some of the other participants, he felt like his effort level was unaffected by the closures. Although, Irvin admittedly put forth little effort in school. His self-evaluation of attribution would also indicate that the randomness of the storm and pandemic were more impactful to his learning than his own ability, which would indicate that much of what his

teachers were doing in terms of instruction and much of what he did as a student did not change during the phenomenon. The inference one could make from Irvin's rating would be that the learning environment and the circumstances that affect that environment have the greatest impact on one's ability to learn or not learn, over and above the complexity or rigor of certain content.

### ***Metaphorical Description***

Irvin connected his experience most organically to the idea of being a part of a losing team. He even elaborated on the metaphor by explaining how losing is cyclical.

Once a team loses a couple of games in a row and gets on that downward skid, it is hard to get off. Even the most talented or motivated player can lose their desire to win when nothing good is happening around them. I remember seeing some of the best students in our class, and we had several high achievers, who just got to the point where they did not care. I think when everyone started making exceptions and pulling back on the normal requirements, that is when it got worse. It was like the football player that realizes you do not really have to get in the endzone to score a touchdown. You only have to make it past the fifty-yard line and we'll give you six points. The competitor in you just gives up.

Think about being on that defense. We have fifty less yards to defend, that is impossible.

(Interview, 2022, p. 4)

Irvin's metaphorical connection richly explained his perspective of the experience. Irvin saw himself as a competitor in this game of education and he was losing his will to win as the goals and objectives were constantly altered or changed due to the circumstances of the team.

### **Jacob - Lee High School**

Jacob was interviewed in March of 2022 after graduating early in May of 2021. The interview was completed at a public location using a private meeting room. The audio-video

portion was recorded using Goggle Meet for later transcription. Jacob had just graduated the previous May from LHS. He was placed on the 18-credit track, which the State of Florida created to allow students to graduate one year early. Jacob was a member of the 2019-2020 cohort of students for BDS. Jacob, like other participants interviewed, attended LHS during the HM closure and his freshman year of high school. The subsequent year of the COVID-19 closure he also attended LHS.

LHS was forced to share a campus with a local middle school in the immediate aftermath of HM. All students met on the middle school campus and the two schools split the day in two sessions. The high school students utilized the morning session and the middle school students reported for the early afternoon session. Jacob found the split schedule manageable and was content to complete the school day by 12 p.m. each day. However, he did find the altered schedule to be a change of pace he was not prepared for and he did report some negative impacts to the learning process. He asserted,

Our days were shorter because of the shared campus. Our teachers were forced to cram all our curriculum into a smaller period and I know there were concepts or materials we were unable to cover. I certainly believe we were not exposed to the content classes before us were and I knew that my sophomore year would be more of a challenge given the loss of time. (Interview, 2022, p. 1)

A similar loss of time was experienced in the subsequent year as the COVID-19 closure affected the Spring of the 2020-2021 school year. The second closure came during Jacob's sophomore year in high school and he was forced to move to remote learning.

Jacob stated, "My teachers were doing the best they could to keep us on pace but the challenges of the remote learning were more than most students were ready for" (Focus Group,

2022, p. 6). The COVID-19 closure seemed like much deeper, exponential loss to Jacob. “I felt like the requirements to graduate were piling up and I was a motivated student. I cannot imagine what the other students felt since they did not have the drive to get finished like I did” (Journal, 2022, p. 2). Jacob was working toward an early graduation so he could attend Basic Military Training. Prior to both closures he was preparing to graduate early and so he worked hard to not let the closures distract him from his previously planned objectives.

### ***Research Question Responses***

Jacob responded to the research questions with the same nonchalant attitude he responded to the closures with. He was not deterred and he did not report learning loss in either case. In response to the research questions, Jacob responded, “I was super motivated by the time I was a freshman in high school. I had a plan and I continued to execute the plan regardless of what came at me” (Interview, 2022, p. 2). Jacob had the added pressures of supporting his family. He was being raised by a single mother and his younger brother was also working his way through secondary school two years his junior.

We did not have the resources that other families in Bay County had. Our rental home was destroyed and we did not have the resources to rebuild or wait around on repairs. I had to graduate so I could work and help provide for my mother and brother. We were all working hard to get to a better place. (Journal, 2022, p. 2)

These added pressures certainly played a role in learning loss, even if Jacob was unwilling to admit it. Although Jacob continued his trek toward graduation, the learning of the expected standards was impacted during both closures. Fortunately for Jacob, he was additionally motivated and was able to satisfy the minimum requirements for graduation with fortitude and an innate effort instead of experiencing the depth of learning that was expected.



With regards to the subordinate research questions, Jacob believed he did not experience learning loss because of his intrinsic motivation. Had he attributed cause of any kind, he would attribute luck or chance (circumstance) to any lack of learning; followed by his ability, the level of difficulty, and lastly effort. Jacob stated,

I am not big on chance or fate. But there is no denying the circumstances of the hurricane and the virus impacted everyone in Bay County in some way or another. My ability to finish only seemed to improve with both closures as I had already learned to play the game. The second closure was especially easy for me because the teachers were preoccupied with all the students who were not doing their work. I just put forth average effort to satisfy their reduced expectations. (Interview, 2022, p. 3)

As Jacob addressed the subordinate questions, he seemed to allude to a watered-down deliverable expectation from his teachers. This, in and of itself, speaks to some form of learning loss; but a loss of a different variety than any shared by other research participants.

### ***Metaphorical Description***

When Jacob was asked to share a metaphorical description of the overall experience of the phenomenon, he stated, “It was just another day at the office” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 6). Due to the impoverished conditions already experienced by Jacob; his perspective was unique.

I do not think many students understand what it is like to have limited resources. My family was close and we all cared deeply for one another. But we did not have material things that were swept away in the storm. And when schools closed because of the virus, that allowed me to be in my element. I was able to work from home, which I preferred all along. It was just another day at the office for me. In fact, I was able to finish even sooner than I originally planned. (Interview, 2022, p. 3)

Jacob's perspective of the phenomenon is certainly unique. He did not find the separation from the social activities of high school as a challenge. The seclusion, due to his experience and personality, only seemed to expedite his coursework completion and enabled him to achieve his goal of graduation early.

### **Tricia – Palm Beach High School**

Tricia was interviewed in April of 2022 at the age of 20. She was at home and I was in my home office. The interview took place via Google Meet and the audio and video portion of the interview was recorded for later transcription. Tricia attended PBHS in 2018-2019 and had graduated from the same school in 2020. Tricia was currently attending a prominent state college having earned admission from her advanced program diploma and excellent high school credentials. Like Hallie, Tricia experienced a traditional freshman and sophomore year during 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. However, unlike Hallie, Tricia continued to excel in her own right despite the circumstances surrounding both closures following HM and during COVID-19.

Living on the beach side of town, Tricia suffered little damage to her home during HM. In fact, the only learning loss she reported in her junior year was the missed instruction during the closure. According to Tricia, she was able to make up for lost time and instruction with her own fidelity to study and effort in learning. She stated, "I am a driven individual and the same is true with the type of student that I am. I graduated in the top 10 percent of my class" (Journal, 2022, p. 1). Tricia reported that the first closure was an opportunity for her. She used the experience to serve. "I was able to earn a great deal of service hours during the first closure because several schools in the area hosted food drives and I was able to give back to my community in that way" (Journal, 2022, p. 2). Like Randy, PBHS merged with a local middle school to share its campus with the respective students attending in shifts. PBHS' campus was

being used as a Red Cross community shelter and Tricia and her family served those who were impacted by the storm damage in town. Tricia stated, “As soon as we returned, we used an alternating schedule and we were able to finish our day very early” (Interview, 2022, p. 2). Tricia reported that her return was easy and without trouble. She stated, “I just remember thinking that we were never going to start back. I did not see any reason why we couldn’t return to school on the beach” (Interview, 2022, p. 2).

During the subsequent closure, Tricia was in her senior year. She reported a greater impact to her experience with COVID-19 but not from an academic perspective. Tricia asserted, COVID-19 was hard for me because of the isolation. I am a social person and depended on the interaction of my friends. The only thing that kept me sane was being able to see my sister who had to move home from college. She is three years my senior and attended the other state school. I was accepted to college in the Fall of my senior year and so we were able to interact with one another about the rivalry of our state schools. (Focus Group, 2022, p. 5)

Tricia reported that the second closure also had a unique impact on her family. Her mother was a school nurse and she was busy with the new protocols. In terms of learning loss, Tricia maintained her academic focus through remote learning. All her graduation requirements had been satisfied in her junior year and she knew where she would attend college before the closure occurred. She stated, “The greatest challenge for me was all that we as a senior class missed out on. Prom was affected, graduation was impacted, and our senior trip was canceled. Everything was canceled. Nothing about my senior year was normal” (Interview, 2022, p. 3).

### ***Research Question Responses***

Tricia believed the learning loss that resulted from her experience in the phenomenon was minimal while the adverse effects were social. The essence of research questions posed to students were, how do participants describe learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon? Tricia believed that the structures and homelife that she had shielded her from the exposure experienced by others. “I believed our teachers transitioned effectively to remote instruction and I saw very little drop off in how well they taught us” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 6). She also described her parents as her accountability and her motivators to succeed. Like Randy, Tricia expressed concern for some of the decisions being made at the state level. She stated,

We just were not seeing the effects of COVID-19 like the rest of the country in people our age. The shutdown seemed like a waste of time. I understand that our teachers were concerned for their age group but students just seemed like the losers in the whole ordeal. We were not impacted by sickness; however, we were impacted by the isolation and the fact that everything seemed to be canceled. The decisions being made on our behalf seemed to be what brought about the most significant learning loss, not the disease itself. (Focus Group, 2022, p. 7)

Her perspective is certainly indicative of the frustration that was voiced by many of her peers in Bay County. She was also sure to voice her concern over how the same shutdown of her senior year continued to impact her freshmen year of college as certain restrictions were still in place during the Fall of 2020; even at the university level.

What little learning loss she reported, Tricia attributed cause to circumstances or luck or chance, followed by her effort that was vaguely impacted, then her ability, and the difficulty of the instructional content. According to Tricia, had the circumstances differed in anyway, she believed her path would have remained the same. She was accepted to the same school she had

always to intended to attend and she knew from a young age the requirements to see that outcome. It is important to note that Tricia stated, “While COVID-19 did not affect my own learning, I did see a difference in my peers. They seemed to care less about school in general and their drive was gone after another year of extended school closures” (Journal, 2022, p. 3).

### ***Metaphorical Description***

Tricia was thoughtful in her response to the metaphorical description of her experience. She explained,

During the shutdown, my parents shared one of their favorite childhood films with my sister and I, and I remember laughing with her about the title and how it seemed to fit well with our situation. The movie was called *The Neverending Story*. The film was a terrible, low-budget film with unfamiliar actors and a plot line that made little sense to any of us. Yet, the whole experience of Bastian, Atreyu and Falkor during their quest to save the world seemed eerily like the never-ending high school experience. (Interview, 2022, p. 3)

The essence of Tricia’s experience was the long-awaited graduation day and college entrance that would seemingly never arrive. Even when it finally did, nothing was changed. Nothing to Tricia was considered lost learning, but she did certainly express missed opportunities and alterations to the traditional experience of a secondary education.

### **Olivia – Pike Road High School**

Olivia was interviewed in May of 2022 at the age of 17. She was at home and I was in my home office for the interview. The digital interview occurred via Google Meet and was recorded using the audio and video components of the program for later transcription. Olivia attended a local middle school in 2018-2019 and is set to graduate from PRHS in May of 2023.

Olivia grew up in Bay County and has been a part of BDS's her entire educational career. She completed her middle school career the year of the first closure and storm. Olivia reported, "I remember there was a lot of uncertainty surrounding school and where I would attend high school at the time of the storm. My middle school and zoned high school were heavily damaged" (Interview, 2022, p. 1). While there was little damage to her family home, she reported a great deal of damage to her extended family's homes and to her middle school campus.

Her middle school, located in North Eastern Panama City, suffered significant damage. The school was one of several in the district that used temporary shelters to host classes. "The district delivered modulars and setup a "trailer park" on our campus to have class. Our administrative offices were condensed and we had many people sharing spaces" (Focus Group, 2022, p. 3). Daily operation was limited and school leaders were forced to consolidate buildings and schedules to function effectively. "The remainder of the year was difficult. Everything got turned on its head and we had a very abnormal eighth grade year" (Interview, 2022, p. 2). Not only did the first closure affect the end of her middle school tenure, but Olivia also stated that it affected her future schooling. The high school she was in zone for was one of the schools in the district that received the most damage. She suggested the closure had an extremely high impact on where she would attend the next school year as an incoming freshman. Olivia stated,

While academics were important to my family, I was a competitive athlete. My parents knew that I was working toward athletic scholarships for college attendance and so my participation in sports would be an important part of the decision on where I would go to high school. (Interview, 2022, p. 2)

According to Olivia, prior to the storm SLHS had a vibrant athletic department. However, the storm impacted enrollment across the district and she was concerned that some of those

programs were no longer going to be competitive or provide the exposure that other softball and volleyball programs in the district would offer. Her family made the decision to take advantage of the *School Choice Program* in BDS and she enrolled at PRHS. The decision to enroll at PRHS added a transportation hardship as district transportation was unavailable to out-of-zone students. “My parents had to drive me to PRHS until I was able to drive myself but we felt like it was worth it for me to reach my goal of earning athletic scholarships” (Interview, 2022, p. 3).

Olivia described the academic impact of both closures as severe as well. Not only were there displacement concerns with the first closure of HM but Olivia describes learning loss from the lack of assessment following the storm. Olivia stated,

I had watched the last two years of eighth graders struggle through the state assessments prior to moving on to high school and I was not required to do the same. Honestly, I was not sad, but deep down I knew I could do what was required. I felt like school leaders thought we were unprepared because of the storm but I knew I was capable just like all those who had gone on before me. (Focus Group, 2022, p. 4)

When asked about the second closure and the impact to her learning, Olivia felt similarly. “We missed the brick-and-mortar instruction but we were not incapable. But I do think I was better prepared in the eighth grade” (Journal, 2022, p. 2). Her description corresponds with that of other students who claimed the second closure related to COVID had the higher negative impact on their learning. Moreover, Olivia reiterated that the second closure was more impactful because it followed the first. “The COVID closure was more challenging. First, I was in a higher grade but we had already suffered a shutdown the year before” (Interview, 2022, p. 3). Regardless of why, Olivia was not alone in describing the second closure as more difficult from the student

perspective. Nor was she alone in describing learning loss at a greater rate during the remote learning.

### ***Research Question Responses***

The research questions of the study asked, How do participants describe learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon? Olivia would agree that some instruction was missed and she did experience learning loss in a general sense, however she was not as focused on the specifics of the content as she was the task of completion; learning was a means to an end. In her journal Olivia wrote,

The learning loss I experienced was the missed opportunities to meet the testing requirements in the year I was enrolled in the course. I was not required to take the Algebra 1 EOC in the ninth grade when I took Algebra 1. In my sophomore year I was enrolled in English 2 Honors and forced to assess on the English Language Arts (ELA) Florida Statewide Assessment (FSA) not having taken the English 1 assessment the prior year. (Journal, 2022, p. 2)

Olivia maintained high expectations for her own future, but she was motivated by finishing and moving on to college, not by performing well on assessments or maintaining a high GPA that may be competitive with other students seeking academic scholarships.

For each participant, the subordinate research questions focused on the application of the theoretical framework to the phenomenon. Olivia attributed her learning loss to luck or chance (circumstances) surrounding the storm closure and the pandemic closure. She also attributed learning loss to effort, then ability, and level of difficulty. Olivia saw her effort impacted by the constant exemptions she received from the state or federal mandates. She felt capable of achieving all that was traditionally asked of her, yet she was not given the same opportunity.



Over time, as her effort decreased, her ability was negatively impacted. While she rated circumstances with the highest attribution, in the Focus Group she stated, “I don’t place a lot of stock in chance as I believe we make our own successes and failures” (p. 5). The data collection produced evidence that Olivia measured her words and thought deeply about the experience. Her responses showed a logical progression from her perspective and overall experience of the phenomenon.

### ***Metaphorical Description***

Olivia winsomely compared the school years of 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 to a difficult message delivered by her coach. She explained,

I remember when I entered the ninth grade, my volleyball coach told me that I would never sign an athletic scholarship. He thought I was a weak setter with no drive for success. By saying this he was writing me off as though there was no reason for me to continue trying. However, the message fueled me instead. This is the same message I took from school leaders when we experienced the shutdowns. The message was “why try.” (Interview, 2022, p. 3)

Olivia’s metaphorical description was indicative of a motivated student who would not settle for a minimum expectation set by others. While she may not have been motivated by academics understanding or achievement, other motivating factors pushed her to excel and meet the requirements. Like other participants of the study, Oliva possessed extrinsic motivation and other support systems beyond the traditional high school career completion.

### **Randy – Palm Beach High School**

Randy was interviewed in May of 2022 at the age of 15. Randy was at home and I was in my home office. The interview took place via Google Meet and the audio and video portion of

the interview was recorded for later transcription. Randy attended a local middle school in 2018-2019 and was currently attending PBHS at the time of the interview. In his recounting, he described PBHS as being merged with the middle school to share its campus with the respective students attending in shifts. PBHS' campus was being used as a Red Cross community shelter to house storm refugees from town. Randy stated, "the two schools were on one campus during different times so it was not a regular school day by any means for us. We went to school in the afternoons and our day ended around six o'clock" (Focus Group, 2022, p. 7). PBHS attended the morning session and the middle school attended the afternoon, early evening session.

Despite the circumstance and conditions related to the merging campuses, Randy, who identifies as an advanced student in advanced coursework, believed he was able to still master his courses and go beyond the expected proficiency. However, he does recall not particularly liking the adjustments he had to make to his altered school day nor ending his school day in the dark. He claimed, "I was fortunate because the beach schools were not affected as badly as the town schools" (Journal, 2022, p. 1). However, he did express that "during the months of October and November, a lot changed for my school district and our area since the hurricane made landfall as far east as Mexico Beach and as far west as Panama City Beach" (Journal, 2022, p. 1). He was also sure to mention that his teachers did a phenomenal job adapting to the conditions and did their very best to provide a quality education to him and the other students.

During the second subsequent closure, Randy still attended the middle school. From his perspective, "Covid-19 shut our country down. Locally, this included canceling in-person school and going virtual. I did not like virtual school, even though my teacher did well again to transition to the new platforms" (Focus Group, 2022, p. 6). Randy was adamant that his in-person experience was and is now better than when he was forced to attend remotely. He inferred

that the expectation of delivering the standards or unpacking the deeper meaning of the standards was shifted from the teacher to the student and if a student was ill-prepared for that task, they suffered learning loss. He also expressed that this closure was different than the first because it was on a global scale and it also brought about remote education which changed everything for the worse. He stated,

During this time my class work just felt like busy work and didn't provide me with the necessary information to learn. For math, we used an online course called Algebra Nation. It taught us different lessons each week that ended in a test that was not helpful. I disliked this format as it seemed useless and not helpful to me learning Algebra. For Science and ELA, our teachers posted assignments on canvas which were to be completed at the end of the week. I was fine with this system and it provided decent material. My Civics EOC and the Algebra EOC were canceled. This meant that I had to pass the Geometry EOC in 8th grade to meet a graduation requirement. (Journal, 2022, p. 3)

Randy also expressed that he was confident in his ability to take the assessments in the years he was waived but said when he did have to take the following course's high-stakes test, he felt ill-prepared and believed he would have done better to have taken the Algebra EOC prior to the Geometry EOC. "I believed this was one of the few things that actually negatively impacted me academically following the pandemic" (Interview, 2022, p. 3).

### ***Research Question Responses***

Randy was emphatic with his responses to the research questions in general. The research questions of the study asked, How do participants describe learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon? While Randy did believe, since his parents were both

educators that he had more motivation than most, he was still negatively impacted from the closures, and as a result, experienced some learning loss. He asserted, “while I felt like they covered all the standards, I felt like the time limitations forced us to miss out on the depth we were used to” (Journal, 2022, p. 2). Randy expressed regret for the state’s decisions to extend grace and compassion to students in terms of assessment and retentions in the academic years following both closures.

While I understand that many students suffered way more than I did and needed extra compassion, compared to a regular school year, we were not challenged as much. I am sure that was helpful to those who had significant losses and were worried about life outside of school. (Interview, 2022, p. 2)

Randy seemed to demonstrate a maturity and an understanding of the far-reaching implications to waive testing and make exceptions to regular policies surrounding retentions. For him however, whose personal life was not disrupted by HM or COVID-19, the closures were an unnecessary burden that interrupted his educational process. The state’s intervention, in his opinion, did more harm than good.

Ultimately, Randy attributed cause for his learning loss to luck or chance (circumstances), then his ability and the level of difficulty for the school in general. According to Randy his effort was the last thing to be impacted since he felt like he gave his all continuously, but that may be attributed to his parents’ high expectations. Randy did make mention of his effort as it related to the closure of the pandemic. He stated, “the COVID-19 closure affected my own work ethic and many of my friends. I believe some students entered a state of apathy. We thought the learning lacked meaning and eventually became a waste of time; just busy work” (Journal 2022, p. 3).

### *Metaphorical Description*

Randy described the last few school years as a battle like what one faces in the harsh realities of life. Both closures and the combination of the two were difficult situations individually and more so collectively. Randy asserted,

The idea that life is a battle is exactly how I would describe the experience for myself and for our community. As a member of the community, and a young person, I saw and felt the impacts of both school closures. It affected everyone in some sort of way. The students, including myself, faced challenges that we have never faced before in our academic careers. The battle for me was the anxiety of the unknown and the disruption of my routines in life and at school. I was stressed about how my family and friends were surviving. I also had anxiety about how my grades would be affected. The unknown of when things would return to normal plagued me. The school closures kept me from socializing with others and seeing anyone except my immediate family. I felt isolated as I was not able to see my friends at school or any of the people that I was used to seeing day to day. (Interview, 2022, p. 4)

In essence, Randy was deeply concerned by the lack of socializing that was allowed as a result of the closures. He described himself as a visual and auditory learner, which by nature means that some form of social interaction was required. Randy said he is one who benefits from the discussions and interactions of the typical classroom banter. The remote learning was “instruction with no discussion and we missed the emotional connection” that was once shared with our teachers, Randy explained (Interview, 2022, p. 3). Despite Randy’s resilience and positive approach to learning, to be out of school for the extended period in the aftermath of HM and to be isolated during the pandemic closure was nothing short of a battle. While a surprising

resilience existed, the scars are no less than learning loss attributed to the circumstances surrounding subsequent year school closures.

### **Thomas – Sidney Lanier High School**

Thomas was interviewed in March of 2022 at the age of 18. He joined me in my professional office where I recorded the interview using Google Meet for later transcription. Thomas moved to Bay County just prior to the 2017-2018 school year from the State of Louisiana. His family experienced flood damage in Louisiana that led to instructional interruptions and physical damage to their home. In August of 2016, the State of Louisiana experienced historic flooding that produced three times the rainfall as Hurricane Katrina, which killed 13 people and destroyed more than 150,000 homes and businesses (CDC, 2020). Thomas joined SLHS as a freshman and experienced the first closure in his sophomore year. The COVID closure occurred in Thomas' junior year of high school. Finally, his senior year was interrupted with remote and/or blended models of classroom instruction. Thomas did not experience an uninterrupted school year from the eighth grade through his Senior year.

Thomas explained that HM brought new pressures to his family but his previous experience allowed them to adapt better than other families who endured storm damage. At the time of HM his family was still attempting to sell their home in Louisiana after significant repairs from the 2016 flooding event. In terms of schooling, Thomas suggested the closure had a familiar feel to his eighth-grade school year. When Thomas arrived in Bay County, he saw SLHS as a powerful academic program. "I was expecting to be challenged at a high level because of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program" (Journal, 2022, p. 1). He rated his expectation coming in as an 8 on a 10-point scale. From August to October of 2018, he learned about his teachers and saw they had high expectations. At the time of the interview, he rated his expectations for his

educational experience as a 4 on a 10-point scale during the immediate aftermath of the storm. While he believed his teachers were strong content area experts, they were displaced themselves and had recovery concerns of their own that impacted their instruction. He claimed, “I know the teachers were forced to take care of their own family needs and they couldn’t really teach to the best of their ability” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 6). Thomas presented a sensitivity beyond that of the other participants because he had experienced similar conditions as a storm refugee himself.

As the interview discussion turned to learning loss, Thomas agreed that he was missing instruction. He stated adamantly, “I know I had holes in my learning” (Interview, 2022, p. 1). Unlike his previous experience, he described the combined campus and alternate schedule was an adjustment he was not prepared for. He asserted, “I had a hard time sharing a campus with middle schoolers. I had finally made it out of middle school and now I had to be around sixth graders again” (Focus Group, p. 2). Thomas also discussed the alterations to their school campus was perceived as a demotion. “I remember many of my peers felt like we were being moved back down to middle school for something that wasn’t our fault” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 2). So, not only were there gaps in his learning from a previous closure, but Thomas communicated a perception of demotion in terms of his own academic progress.

As Thomas described his class around the time of the first closure, he noticed a growing sense of apathy or general lack of concern. Thomas stated,

The first closure of the storm seemed to cause a strange attitude about school. We were all so focused on other things. We were caught up in the surprise of what had happened. We were either busy repairing ours or our friends’ homes or just in disbelief of the power of the storm. When the second closure came about, the surprise or disbelief turned into a belief that there was no way we will be forced to do what other classes had to do. There

was such confusion about what our counselors and administrators were saying about school requirements and what we were excused from and what we still had to do to graduate. We eventually just stopped caring altogether. I know I just did what my parents told me to do, but that is all. (Interview, 2022, p. 3)

Thomas' perspective of his and his peers' thoughts about school in general seemed to progress from a prioritization of need to lack of concern for educational expectations. Thomas did graduate but admitted to having to test and re-test multiple times to earn concordant scores on high-stakes, state mandated assessments that were graduation requirements. Despite the earning of athletic scholarship offers, he graduated or earned his diploma through alternative assessments.

### ***Research Question Responses***

Thomas did not have the same connection to his community or school that his peer participants had. He did not attend primary or intermediate school in Bay County. Thomas was confident learning loss occurred. Furthermore, his previous experience with school closure prior to HM added to his belief that he had experienced significant learning loss. When evaluating the loss, Thomas asserted that the luck or chance (circumstance) were the greatest attributing factor. He also believed that his effort was drastically impacted, due to the subsequent nature of the closures. Following effort, Thomas rated his own ability as the next attribution cause to the learning loss experienced. Finally, he described the level of difficulty as the last attribution factor. Like other participants, Thomas spoke a great deal about the isolation with all the closures he experienced. He stated,

After the storm I made it a point to be around my friends as we helped each other out with repairs. But during COVID, it was everyone for themselves. Parents were protective



and so we did not get to hang out like normal; which made things even worse. I realized how much I depended on my peers for school success. (Journal, 2022, p. 3)

Isolation or the lack of social interaction impacted Thomas's academic progress during the closures and may be a cause of attribution for each of the participants.

### ***Metaphorical Description***

Thomas, as previously mentioned compared the school years of 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 to his previous experience. Thomas stated,

I had seen this movie before and it was just as bad the first time I watched it. I do not really know what it is like to have a normal school year that last the traditional nine-month period. I had a sense of humor about the whole thing because I felt like I was in the movie *Groundhog Day*. (Interview, 2022, p. 4)

Thomas and his family moved to Bay County to acquire a sense of normalcy. He described, through his metaphor, that the normalcy was not acquired and the description adds a sense of monotony that cannot be overcome. One could even make the case that Thomas is referencing the common torture tactics of locking one in a room with a repulsive sound on repeat with the goal of causing a psychotic breakdown. Given Thomas' years of experience with school closures, the metaphorical description is fitting.

### **Virginia – Sidney Lanier High School**

Virginia was interviewed in April of 2022 at the age of 18. She joined me in my professional office where I recorded the interview using Google Meet for later transcription.

Virginia attended SLHS in 2018-2019 and was set to graduate from SLHS in May of 2022.

Virginia grew up in Bay County and has been a part of BDS's her entire educational career. She

stated, “Lanier is my home and I couldn’t imagine going through all of these trials at any other school in the county” (Interview, 2022, p. 2).

Virginia explained that HM forced her entire family out of their home with severe structural damage and they were forced to live temporarily with her grandparents. In terms of schooling, she suggested the closure had an extremely high impact. Virginia stated,

It was a lot different because we were starting at six o’clock in the morning and leaving at twelve o’clock. I felt as though we were not getting what we needed. But I do think the community was able to really come back together in a unique way. (Interview, 2022, p. 2)

Prior to the storm she rated the education she was receiving from SLHS as a 9 on a 10-point scale. She claimed that her teachers were amazing and they had a much greater focus and commitment to students prior to the storm. Post storm, she rated her educational experience as a 7 on a 10-point scale. Her rationale was clearly related to the focus of the teachers. She claimed, “I know the teachers were really stressed out and that took the focus away from our studies and our learning. They were forced to think about distractions that came along with the storm or the pandemic” (Focus Group, 2022, p.5). She was also careful not to place blame on the teachers as she understood they were recovering from the same storm as every other Bay County resident.

When asked about the learning loss or the impact to her learning, Virginia does believe she missed out on some learning opportunities. She asserted, “It was hard to adjust to a new schedule. We were always tired. We were always working on the house. It was very different but I am not sure how to explain it” (Interview, 2022, p. 1). When discussing her interaction with her teachers after the storm closure, she was sure to state that her teachers were sacrificial. “They put our needs ahead of their own many times during the recovery” (Interview, 2022, p. 2). However,

Virginia did clarify, “academically there were some things we missed out on but socially and physically our teachers were always there for us” (Interview, 2022, p. 2). The storm did interrupt her plans of graduating high school with her associates degree and with an IB diploma. After the storm recovery, she found herself settling as an IB certificate graduate and with the pandemic closure that followed, she was credit deficient for the associates degree.

When speaking about her class, she believed there was an obvious lack of motivation that developed through their years of high school. Virginia stated,

The general perception was that we were given exceptions and so we did not work as hard as we should have. My class, in general, does not have the ambition to do much anymore. If you were to ask anyone of them in our freshmen year if they were ready for the challenge of high school, they would have answered quickly in the affirmative. If you ask most of them the same question today, they will tell you they would just rather go home and go to bed. They just do not care and they lost their drive for success. (Journal, 2022, p. 4)

She also explained that she believed previous classes received a better education overall because of their lack of interruptions.

Prior to the first closure, Virginia was a stellar student who had traditionally maintained an advanced academic track. The closures forced her to reassess her academic identity and she was sidelined by the impacts of HM. The additional COVID-19 closure added pressures that she was yet to face as a student. While she continued to thrive socially and acquire scholarship offerings for her community service and co-curricular activities, she found herself having to adjust her expectations. Virginia graduated from SLHS in May of 2022 and she went on to earn

admissions to a strongly ranked University in the State of Florida. However, her original aspirations were different than what she experienced at the time of her season of graduation.

### ***Research Question Responses***

Virginia's responses to the research questions were the most sympathetic to the plight of her school. She had a mature appreciation and understanding to the impact the closures had on those around her, especially here faculty and staff. "My teachers were sacrificial. They gave up precious time that could have been spent repairing their homes to teach us and gives they education we needed" (Interview, 2022, p. 2) "During COVID, they could have decided to retire or pause their work commitment, but instead they came and risked exposure to teach and be with us" (Interview, 2022, p. 2). Virginia recognized the growing apathy when some of my classmates were focused on finding ways not to come to school. Moreover, she saw the subsequent closure compounded the problems, even though the physical results may have been less than those of the storm. Like many, Virginia found the luck or chance (circumstance) to be the largest contributing factor attributing to her learning loss. She also determined that her effort was impacted by the closures, followed by her ability and level of difficulty. Virginia sought to discover ways to raise awareness among her peers and encourage them to engage in the academic process. "During both closures I was in constant communication with my friends, especially after power was restored and we had cell service again. I wanted to know my friends were okay and I wanted to see them" (Journal, 2022, p. 4).

Like Ella, Virginia found school and education in general to be a social activity that is increasingly difficult in isolation; which she found that both closures contributed to greatly. "I was concerned with the lack of concern I saw from my friends. They seemed to give up when they were not being held accountable or asked to complete assignments like we used to be"

(Interview, 2022, p. 4). While the end results for Virginia were still positive in that she was able to go to college and advance her academic career, the closures derailed her original plans. Thus, one must conclude that a different result would have been experienced had the circumstances been different for Virginia during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years.

### ***Metaphorical Description***

Virginia compared the school years of 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 to a bad dream that she struggled to wake up from. She explained,

After the first closure I was hopeful that we would soon return to some form of normal. We started the 2019-2020 school year with great hope that we would have the supports in place to get back on our feet. We were almost done and were about to enter the testing season. And then it was like we got knocked back down. I wanted someone to pinch me so I could just wake up and everything would be normal again, but no one ever did or could. (Focus Group, 2022, p. 8)

Her metaphor shows a high sense of meta-cognition in that she was self-aware of the impact the closures caused. She had a real sense of, “I’m not learning like I should be and this is going to cost me down the road” (Interview, 2022, p. 3). Fortunately for Virginia, she had other support systems at home that allowed her to persevere through the adversity.

## **Results**

As stated at the beginning of Chapter Four, the purpose of this transcendental phenomenology is to describe the lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss due to multiple school closures during subsequent academic years while attending BDS in Bay County, Florida. Attribution of cause was the framework used to structure the participant descriptions of their experience (Weiner, 1974). In this investigation, I sought to make meaning of student

experiences and describe the essence of their experiences compositely as they relate to AT. Combining the intent of Moustakas (1994) and Van Kaam (1959, 1966), I developed a composite description that accounts for each individual participant. These elemental portions of the data entries were integrated into a single essence. Van Kaam's (1959, 1966) seven step model was consolidated into the three activities that Moustakas (1994) articulated as transcendental phenomenology; namely epoché, reduction, and imaginative variation. A summary below shows how each individual description was integrated into a single composite description and what follows are the resulting horizoned themes.

From the data set, I created several top-tier nodes that would come to represent the essential and relevant expressions. Those expressions were further broken down into sub-themes to capture the less relevant concepts. Collectively, the 11 transcripts and 10 journals resulted in 28 node or sub-node folders that housed all relevant expressions. I reduced the expressions into the most prominent horizons as the repetitive or irrelevant constructs were eliminated as they did not contribute to the invariant constituents of the experiences; individually or otherwise. I spent significant time reflecting on the horizons and circling back through all relevant expressions. Finally, the 28 node or sub-node expressions were clustered into five major horizoned themes, which ultimately became invariant constituents of the investigation. The horizons are shown in Table 8 below along with the constructs they addressed from AT, and the research question from which they were derived.

Figure 8: Horizoned Themes

*Learning Loss Attribution Themes*

Horizon	AT Construct	Research Question
Missed Opportunity	Ability	CRQ, SQ1, SQ2,

Trauma Induced Apathy	Effort	CRQ, SQ1, SQ3
Challenges of School Closure	Level of Difficulty	CRQ, SQ1, SQ4
Student Adaptation to the Unexpected	Luck or Chance (Circumstance)	CRQ, SQ1, SQ5
Waiving Expectations and Lowering the Bar	Metaphor	CRQ, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3, SQ4, SQ5

### **Theme 1: Missed Opportunity**

Every participant discussed the traditional learning opportunities they did not have as a result of the closures. Students recalled special projects their peers or older siblings participated in that they were not privy to. Examples included: first attempts at EOCs, History Fair, Science Fair, and in person learning and preparation for regular standards-based assessments. In all cases, participants believed the closures negatively impacted their ability to capitalize on these experiences. Some participants were disgruntled by these misses as they were confident in their ability to perform well and achieve high levels of success. Others were happy to avoid them as they were either uninterested or they were not confident in their ability to score well in alternative assessment settings. In every case, participants described these missed opportunities as efficacious toward their own learning loss.

### **Theme 2: Trauma Induced Apathy**

Most mentioned in the participants description of the phenomenon was the growing sense of apathy or lack of concern among students. Individuals and collective grade levels grew weary of the changes in expectations from 2018 to 2020. This weariness led to an unbelief that graduation requirements and academic expectations would be upheld. As waivers were issued

and assessment expectations changed, students lost interest in performing at the traditional expected level. Students stopped caring. They became fatigued with the everchanging targets set before them. Because they were unconcerned with testing requirements, they quickly learned that test avoidance was easy to achieve through non-attendance. Non-attendance became a trend that carried over into subsequent school years even though the graduation requirements were reinstated prior to the 2021-2022 academic school year. District data shows the rise and fall of the district graduation rate during the years prior to and following the closures. See Tables 9 and 10 below.

Figure 9: Comparative Graduation Rates

*District and State Comparative Graduation Rates*

Academic School Year	BDS Graduation Rate	Florida Graduation Rate
2016-2017	78.0 %	82.3 %
2017-2018	81.1 %	86.1 %
2018-2019	82.5 %	86.9 %
2019-2020	88.5 %	90.0 %
2020-2021	90.2 %	90.1 %
2021-2022	85.3%	87.3%

As noted in Table 9, the year following the second closure, 2019-2020, the district achieved the highest recorded increase in graduation rate of six percent. This could be attributed to the lowered expectations and assessment waivers. Subsequently, the 2020-2021 rate surpassed the state average, which historically trailed by an average of 3.825 % since 2016. Moreover, the graduating class 2021-2022 suffered the largest decline in graduation rate in the districts



longstanding history (FLDOE, 2023). Due to an abundance of assessment waivers for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students and the exclusion of EOC requirements for students in specific grade levels during the closures, the district graduation rate following the 2020-2021 academic school year was 90.2 %, which was above the state average. The district graduation rate for the 2021-2022 academic school year was 85.3%, which is a -4.9% decline from the previous year (FLDOE, 2023). See Table 10 below for specific subgroup data.

Figure 10: Subgroup Graduation Rates

*District Graduation Rate by Subgroup*

Academic School Year	Students With Disabilities (SWD)	African American Students	English Language Learners (ELL)	Homeless or At Risk	Economically Disadvantaged
2016-2017	71.9 %	61.9 %	46.3 %	52.3 %	66.4 %
2017-2018	78.0 %	71.0 %	71.7 %	61.6 %	73.6 %
2018-2019	82.1 %	70.5 %	58.3 %	58.6 %	72.1 %
2019-2020	81.6 %	82.5 %	84.6 %	76.0 %	82.9 %
2020-2021	81.5 %	90.9 %	88.5 %	77.0 %	84.6 %
2021-2022	81.5 %	Not Available	52.9%	65.2 %	79.7 %

The quantitative data from Table 10 indicates a similar substantial increase in percentage across the various subgroups following the second closure. The average increase in graduation rate among the subgroups from 2018-2019 to 2019-2020 was 13.2 % with the greatest

improvement demonstrated by the ELL student population. The following year average increase, 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 was only 2.98 % with the most significant increase being among the Black or African American student population (BDS, 2022). Following the steady two-year climb, the 2021-2022 data plummeted by subgroup. The ELL population declined by -35.6 %, the At-Risk subgroup declined by -11.8 %, and the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup declined by -4.9% (FLDOE, 2023).

### **Theme 3: Challenges of School Closures**

A large contingency of participants discussed the unspoken or secondary challenges that were connected to each of the closures. Students described their return to class after HM as abnormal given their unstable living conditions. Adjusted schedules for many BDS campuses created less than ideal start and end times to the school day. Moreover, participants expressed new demolition or remodel duties added to their daily responsibilities at home prior to or after learning hours while on campus. If students were not able to live in their homes while renovations occurred, they depicted cramped alternate conditions in new settings like travel trailers or single-family dwellings shared by multiple families. In every case, participants described negative impacts to their learning. During the COVID-19 closure, students unenthusiastically portrayed the remote learning options made available to them. Only two of the participants reported positive experiences with the online learning platform, and they admitted that it was the lack of accountability and oversight that attracted them to the non-traditional learning. They also admitted there was a significant deficit in instruction but they were able to mask the lack of learning by unsupervised google searches and other unethical strategies to support their assessment results. While cheating occurred, in the traditional sense prior to the COVID-19 closure, the unplanned transition to remote learning brought about a new and

increasing pervasive norm. Participants collectively described the remote platforms as adverse to their learning.

#### **Theme 4: Student Adaptation to the Unexpected**

The AT construct of luck, chance, or providence, as determined by the participants philosophical worldview, were recategorized or retitled as circumstance. When considering the circumstances surrounding each closure and their impact on the attribution of cause for learning loss, participants commonly described little in the way of preparation for change. Flexibility and adaptation to change is not a skill that is heavily emphasized. Each student described feeling unprepared to handle the circumstances surrounding HM and COVID-19. While they were all able to recognize the unique nature of those circumstances, each admitted they lacked the tools or coping strategies required to flexibly navigate the static requirements of high school graduation.

#### **Theme 5: Waiving Expectations & Lowering the Bar**

Students collectively described a lower bar being set for them than their predecessors. They believed when previously rigorous expectations were waived, they were being told they were incapable of achieving success even if they possessed the capacity to do so on their own through their previous academic experience or individual upbringing. Students were granted waivers toward assessment and graduation requirements because of the assumed learning loss and/or missed instruction. Students believed educational leaders were convinced the closures would lead to inferior results. Yet, many of the participants felt slighted as they believed they had the tools to build on prior knowledge and find eventual success despite the missed instructional time.

The five horizon themes identified in Table 8 above were validated as invariant constituents via the validation test designed and implemented by Moustakas (1994). The test is comprised of the steps below:

1. Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription?
2. Are they compatible if not expressly explicit?
3. If they are not explicit, compatible, or the participants' description they are to be deleted without consideration.

Each of the horizons were expressly explicit in the composite transcript. While variations in how the horizons were expressed were found, the overall essence of the horizon remained consistent. Moreover, each of the horizons have an organic inter-related compatibility to one another that is expressed in the composite description below. What follows are the horizoned descriptions that were observed as the participants conveyed their experience within the phenomenon, also known as reduction (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Outlier Data**

The outlier data, in its totality, consist of the rare or unique responses from two participants to the generalizing questions. Contrary to all the other participants, Irvin and Jacob, stated they preferred the remote learning platforms brought about by the COVID-19 closure. In both instances they explained that they neither appreciated the social aspects of learning in the traditional brick-and-mortar classrooms. Irvin also admitted he preferred the digital platforms because of the lack of accountability they provided. Jacob preferred the digital platforms for the intended reasons they were offered: convenience, self-pacing, or lack of transportation. The final outlying piece of data, within the complete set, was that Jacob claimed no learning loss occurred in his description. This was based on his own strong individual motivational factors toward

learning and his preference to be excluded from the social learning environment. It is important to note that while Irvin agreed with Jacob on their preference for remote learning, Irving did not agree that he suffered no learning loss.

### **Findings: Textural Descriptions**

Each horizoned theme became the basis for the textural descriptions, which are integral to the process of imaginative variation. The goal for these descriptions is to develop images of the experience. Moustakas (1994) asked, what happened, what were the thoughts of the participants during the experience, or what were their feelings during the struggles related to the phenomenon? Verbatim portions of the interviews were used to reconstruct the vivid nature of the experience and present textural descriptions using metaphors. The purpose of recording the metaphorical descriptions from each participant was to capture these prepackaged descriptions, which were ready to deploy as the textural description. Each metaphor was then used to construct individual textural-structural descriptions of the meanings and essences of the experiences.

### **Findings: Imaginative Variation**

Following Epoché and Phenomenological Reduction, Imaginative Variation is the final stage in the development of the Composite Description. Essentially, meaning was determined for the phenomenon using imagination and observation during the data analysis. Moustakas believed it was incumbent upon the phenomenological researcher to seek meaning through the underlying precipitating factors that accounted for how the phenomenon occurred (1994). Again, in this case, participants' metaphorical descriptions were the structures for each individual experience, or as Moustakas (1994) says, the textural-structural descriptions.

### **Findings: Textural-Structural Descriptions**

Each research participant was asked to provide a metaphorical description of their experience within the phenomenon. Those descriptions can be found below in Table 11.

Figure 11: Metaphors

*Participant Metaphorical Descriptions*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Metaphorical Descriptions</b>
Caleb	A sacrificial period of life
Ella	A song by Olivia Rodrigo entitled <i>One Step Forward, Three Steps back</i>
Hallie	A prison for an innocent person
Irvin	A member of a losing athletic team
Jacob	Another day at the office
Tricia	The never-ending story
Olivia	A difficult message delivered by a coach
Randy	A battle of life
Thomas	A movie seen before – namely, <i>Groundhog Day</i>
Virginia	A bad dream

Each description was analyzed individually and then categorized into two major structures. In every case the participant description was either described as a repetitive failure or a significant stumbling block on the way to eventual organic success.

**Findings: Composite Descriptions**

Metaphorically, each participant connected the phenomenon to a relevant, meaningful experience that allowed them to richly describe the phenomenon from their perspective. As mentioned above, metaphorical likeness allows participants to visualize human life, environments, and events. Consequently, participants were able to communicate their experience

by way of comparison, imaginative and figurative language, or use of imagery (Mitchell, 2019). A song, dream, athletic event, or a battle provided each student the opportunity to communicate their experience where they otherwise could not. These metaphorical descriptions were crucial in the development of the textural descriptions and the composite description of the phenomenon.

While each participant provided their own individual metaphor to describe their experience, I developed a composite metaphor to describe the overall experience. Collectively, the participants communicated the subsequent year closures as an academic mulligan, that never came to positive fruition. Novice golfers rely on mulligans to provide a second or extra shot attempt, following a poor shot, that is not counted on the scorecard. The objective is to improve the outcome with the “second shot” where no penalty is assigned. In some instances, the mulligan results in a similar or worse outcomes. It is also important to note, the mulligan is not permitted in professional competition. In the case of this phenomenon, the mulligans were allowed during both closures and the subsequent years. However, the outcomes were the same or worse from the student perspectives. The students were just as unsatisfied with their second results as their first. Unfortunately, the comparison ends with the application of a penalty.

The principal essence of learning loss during subsequent year school closures is a mindset shift resulting from moving targets. Amid the chaos surrounding an unexpected school closure, everything is new and everything is changing. Change in such circumstances is inevitable; its organic. However, when it comes to learning environments for students from an experiential perspective, expectations must remain constant or static. What is expected of a student before a global pandemic must not be different after such a pandemic, even if those catastrophic events happen in subsequent years. The tools used to measure progress cannot be effective with changing or adapting learning targets. Moreover, the communication to students,

be they intended or not, results in a lack of confidence and/or motivation. Adapting targets for graduate candidates in this phenomenon resulted in learning loss and multiple years of lower graduation rates. This is not only seen in the microcosm of this investigation, but also in the macrocosm of BDS's district data.

### **Narrative Responses to the Research Questions**

Given this principal essence, the research objectives were to understand how the composite description addressed the pre-designed research questions. A secondary objective was to understand how metaphorical descriptors speak to learning loss and how participants attributed cause for their learning loss given the circumstances of the phenomenon. The research questions were framed around the theoretical framework of AT.

As stated in Chapter Two, AT focuses on how individuals interpret events. The theory assumes that all individuals contemplate, at some level, motivation or attribute a cause for behavior. Individuals naturally pursue understanding of the motivation of a particular action and generally attribute one or more causes to a person's behavior (Weiner, 1974). McLeod (2012) stated, "Attribution theory deals with how the social perceiver uses information to arrive at causal explanations for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment" (p. 23). Weiner (1974) identified ability, effort, difficulty, and luck or chance (circumstance) as the four attributions for achievement or failure. During this process of attribution, participants engage in their experience and seek to understand and interpret their motivation and dimensions of behavior. Finally, for the purpose of this study, a metaphorical description was requested and served as an added construct that allowed participants to express the essence of the experience with vivid clarity.



Participants' precise statements, which became horizoned constituents, were used to communicate the essence of the phenomenon. Epoché, Phenomenological Reduction, and Imaginative Variation resulted in the horizoned constituents of missed opportunities, trauma induced apathy, challenges of school closures, student adaptation to the unexpected, and waived expectations and the lowered bar. Below is a narrative response to each of the central and subordinate research questions.

### **Central Research Question**

How do participants metaphorically describe learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon?

The task of developing a metaphorical description may seem daunting when first presented with the challenge. During the focus group interview (2022), Caleb admitted, "The metaphor was difficult to think about. I was not very satisfied with my answer" (p. 8). However, after completing the task, participants saw the ease with which the metaphor allowed them to communicate the true essence of their experience. In the same focus group, Hallie (2022) also stated, "Originally I was stumped by the question but once I made the connection to the game I grew up playing as a child, I felt like I was able to explain myself well" (p. 8). In every case the participant understood the power of the metaphor to describe. Each participant narrated their experience by way of one of three metaphorical structures; a phase of life, a game or athletic experience, or a piece of media.

These structures that were identified during the collection and analysis communicated richly the experience of the phenomenon. Several students described dark times of life when things never seemed to go their way or they described what they perceived to be the normal course of life that was full of let downs. One even described their experience using the typical

battles of life that come upon individuals unexpectedly. Other participants discussed their experience by way of experienced competition. Olivia stated, “I was intrinsically motivated by the closures because it seemed like everyone was counting us out. My coach had said something similar in my freshmen year” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 9). The regular waiver of requirements motivated her specifically because she remembered the experience with her coach discounting her abilities as an athlete. Finally, the remainder of the participants connected their experience to a song or movie they had heard or seen. One example was Ella’s comparison to the Olivia Rodrigo song. She believed the song adequately represented her experience since every time she made progress, she would lose ground due to some other occurrence.

### **Subordinate Question One**

How do participants attribute cause to their learning loss resulting from the school closures of the phenomenon?

As stated in Chapter Two, Weiner’s (1974) attribution of behavior model was used to develop an understanding of how individuals interpret events and contemplate a rationale for their behaviors in certain circumstances. AT explains how the participants of the study used information to arrive at casual explanations for their response during a phenomenon. While each participant in this study described their learning loss differently, they all explained that the closures had a negative impact on their progress toward graduation. Yet, how they attributed cause for learning loss differed among the participants. In most instances, participants attributed their learning loss to circumstances outside of their control and the closures’ impact on their individual effort. This is not to say that they all had poor effort as a result of the closures, but rather the closures demoralized their progress. After multiple years of academic interruptions, they grew apathetic toward achievement. During each interview, participants were asked to rank

the order in which they attributed cause for their learning loss. Compositely, the group's average rankings were as follows: luck or chance (circumstance), effort, ability, and level of difficulty. Each of the AT constructs are discussed more thoroughly below with each subordinate research questions.

### **Subordinate Question Two**

How do participants attribute their ability (learning characteristics or preferred modalities) to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

Participant ability was a factor considered when analyzing learning loss. Individual participants described their ability going into each closure at different levels. As stated above, the composite ranking of ability was third out of the four constructs of AT. Irvin stated, "I was not the best student and so my ability certainly played a role in the learning loss I experienced because I started the closures behind my peers" (Interview, 2022, p. 2). However, Olivia expressed, "I was a strong student going into the closures. I was well prepared in middle school and aspired to graduate with an IB diploma" (Interview, 2022, p. 2). Randy, who was in middle school during both closures, similarly described a strong preparation and a solid foundation coming out of middle school. He stated, "I believed that I was better prepared since my teachers did a phenomenal job adapting to the conditions and did their very best to provide a quality education" (Interview, 2022, p. 4). Ella rated her middle school educational experience prior to the storm as a nine on a 10-point scale. In terms of a cause of attribution, ability was determined before the closures occurred. Students entered each closure with the ability necessary to succeed or unable to produce the outcomes required during the closures. It is also important to note that none of the participants ranked ability first in attribution.

### **Subordinate Question Three**

How do participants attribute their effort to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

Effort was commonly described as a contributing factor in the learning loss of the participants. As mentioned above, effort was the second highest rated attribution cause among the participants. With each closure that occurred, participant effort progressively worsened and apathy developed over time. Students became disengaged and disenfranchised with each passing assessment. Caleb and Randy were the only participants that described their effort as unaffected. However, they both reported that outside factors like home life and parental support prevented their effort from decline. Many of the participants spoke directly to their developing lack of effort. Ella stated, “Since I could not go to school, I saw no need to perform. I’m sure that when I quit trying, I became a weaker student” (Focus Group, 2022, p. 2). Irvin admitted that the low rigor program he was forced to use during the COVID-19 closure led to a lack of effort on his part. He stated, “I made good grades using *Edgenuity*, but I’m not sure of how much I really learned” (Interview, 2022, p. 3). While some exceptions exist, effort was certainly the most negatively impacted construct among those identified in AT where the student had any measurable ability to control the outcome.

#### **Subordinate Question Four**

How do participants attribute the level of difficulty to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

The level of difficulty for all the content standards to be mastered was considered the lowest construct that attributed to learning loss. The participants all agreed that because there was no change in the expectation of the standards themselves, the student participants did not attribute any of their learning loss to the difficulty of the grade level material. The only mention

of the level of difficulty outside of the specific subordinate question was from Irvin, who stated, “The move to Edgenuity as a platform, made my schoolwork easier because there was less accountability” (Interview, 2022, p. 3). Even this is not a true reflection of the level of difficulty. It does, however, reference the change that occurred in the platforms that were used to deliver the instruction after the COVID-19 closure. Each participant spoke of how well most of their instructors adapted to the confines of the closures. They all described alternative instructional methods that were employed by their teachers. While some teachers were not as savvy with the technology, the participants shared the belief that teachers did the best they could and did a fair job at making the adjustments (Focus Group, 2022)

#### **Subordinate Question Five**

How do participants attribute the luck or chance (circumstance) to the learning loss experienced during the phenomenon?

The circumstances surrounding each of the subsequent year closures, or the luck or chance of the incidents, was certainly the most attributed cause for the learning loss among the participants. Most of the students rated this attribute as the number one cause for their experienced learning loss. A common refrain was, What are you going to do; we lived through a category five hurricane and the next year our school closed due to a global pandemic (Focus Group, 2022). And yet, while these circumstances attributed to their learning loss, none of the participants believed these causes to be within their ability to control the outcomes of their learning. What is most telling about the description of the participant experiences is the federal, state, and local response to the circumstances that played a role in the outcome of the students’ learning.

During the first closure of HM, participants understood the need for closure and the need to reopen the schools as soon the local government agencies decided. Most of the participant understood the community could not reopen until the schools were reopened. Hallie stated, “Even though many of us experienced damage or trauma from the storm, returning to a sense of normalcy, albeit a new normal, was critical to moving on” (Interview, 2022, p. 2).

In the subsequent closure, participants did not understand the necessity. Randy alluded to the fact that everyone around him seemed fine and he could not live his life with the freedoms he once enjoyed (Interview, 2022). Ella shared that the social isolation was the worst part about the COVID-19 closure. We were locked in our homes for no reason and no one in my family even got sick until after the lockdown was lifted (Focus Group, 2022). And finally, Tricia shared that decisions being made on students’ behalf seemed to be what brought about the most significant learning loss, not the disease itself (Focus Group, 2022). While many participants understood and were sympathetic to the threat that COVID-19 posed to their teachers, they believed that closure created more harm to the actual students than the threat COVID-19 posed to the teacher.

### **Summary**

Chapter Four detailed the results and key findings of this transcendental phenomenology of student perspectives of learning loss from subsequent year school closures in Bay County, Florida. Anonymously, student participants richly described their experiences to explain the essence of this subsequent year phenomenon of extended school closures and how those closures attributed to their learning. Horized themes were reduced into the five invariant constituents of missed opportunities, trauma induced apathy, challenges of school closure, student adaptation to the unexpected, and waiving expectations and lowering the bar. These five constituents were unpacked via verbatim descriptions from the journal, interview, and focus group transcripts.

Those narrative descriptions were developed into textural-structural and a composite textural-structural description to describe the essence of the phenomenon in question. Finally, Chapter Four concluded with a narrative response to each of the five guiding research questions predetermined in the proposal. Each of those narratives were grounded in the literature from Chapter Two and the overall composite description of the phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

Finally, the purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss due to multiple school closures during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years while attending BDS in Bay County, Florida. Chapter Five serves to synthesize the study's findings and refine the interpretations of the principal researcher's perspective. The chapter is comprised of five major sections that conclude the inquiry. First, the chapter provides a discussion of the principal findings. Second, the chapter provides a concise summary of the implications of the study for future policy and practice. Third, the chapter provides a theoretical and methodological discussion of the investigative implications. Forth, the chapter provides an analysis of the decision matrix used to limit or delimit the study and justifies those decision with precise rationales. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research surrounding the topic of educational environments from the student perspective. Chapter Five is the summation of the most important constructs discovered during the investigative process of the phenomenon.

### **Discussion**

A concise response to the central and subordinate research questions provides a summarized glance at the principal findings of the study. Moustakas (1994) asserted, "The final step in phenomenological research is the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essence of the experience as a whole" (p. 100). The following discussion is a synthesis of the research question responses into a composite portrayal that is the essence of the participants' experience with learning loss in subsequent year school closures.



## **Interpretation of Findings**

The investigative framework deployed was a single central question and five subordinate questions that ultimately sought to determine how participants attributed cause to their learning loss resulting from the phenomenon under investigation; metaphorically and otherwise. Compositely, participants described the absence of traditional learning opportunities, unseen challenges related to abysmal living conditions or social isolation, developing apathy or laissez-faire attitudes toward academic progress or the meeting of graduation requirements, an inability to adapt to changing standards or novice learning platforms, and an overall lack of belief from stakeholders in their abilities to achieve as their existential results or causes for a lack of learning within the phenomenon. Evident in each transcript, participants believed the compounding of subsequent closures was the problem. The learning loss that occurred as a result of back-to-back years was not immediate, but detrimental nonetheless. In fact, the data shows that it was the compounding closures, subsequent years of waiving assessments, and the misgivings of the state to promote students despite the normal achievement levels that led to tremendous student apathy. This apathy resulted in systemic, time-tested, data-proven learning loss from the student perspective. What follows is a brief, yet complete, description of the most significant interpretations from the horizoned themes of the study.

### ***Social Isolation***

Each closure brought about its own challenges of isolation. HM left students not only alone with their families but disconnected from their peers. All cellular service towers, with one exception, was destroyed by the storm and students were unable to communicate in the immediate aftermath of the storm. Curfews disallowed the normal circulation around town and students whose homes suffered damage found themselves isolated in physical labor to mitigate

damage or repair their own physical structures. Moreover, during the COVID-19 closure, students had the opportunity to communicate via social media but they were unable to interact in person, as was their custom. While these limitations may seem superficial, the negative impact on learning cannot be overstated. Each participant, at some point in their respective transcripts, referenced the isolation they experienced. They discussed how each closure limited their peer groups and they each described the social learning factors that were affected. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory posited that learners utilize observations, interactions, imitations, and modeling of others as a mode to retain and understand complex ideas. These interactions were strictly limited during both closures of the phenomenon and during subsequent years that followed 2020 while families still feared sending their students to a brick-and-mortar campus. Furthermore, as can be seen from the graduation rate of 2021, this lack of interaction contributed greatly to learning loss; both qualitatively and quantitatively.

### *Developing Apathy*

The closure of HM was the initial traumatic event to BDS students. If that lone event was all that would have occurred, one may be able to deny the negative academic effect on students. However, the subsequent closure of COVID-19 brought about an unsteadiness to learning progression and this unsteadiness quickly developed into a lack of belief from students that they would be held accountable to the previously established requirements to progress through the grade levels and ultimately to secondary graduation. This lack of belief steadily resulted in a developing apathy among the students.

Many participants repeatedly asserted their disbelief that high-stakes testing would continue to be required after waivers were given to BDS following HM. As students believed they would not be held accountable to traditional requirements, they became apathetic and

ceased to care about the expectations for their preceding cohorts. A critical mass of participants described a lack of concern observed among their peers. For example, Virginia stated, “They stopped caring altogether.” A cloud of apathy set over the cohorts as they sensed the waning accountability for traditional graduation requirements.

Compounding the problem, state officials offered similar waivers as late as the 2020 academic school year. As 2021 came about, BDS students were convinced all academic culpability was decimated and an immediate state of laissez-faire grew over the student body; a state that would not be recovered in a single academic year. Because the waivers, like the closures, occurred in subsequent school years, the developing apathy was progressive in nature. Students would require more substantive proof from their supervising stakeholders that traditional graduation requirements would be reasserted in order to dispel this growing apathy.

### ***Lagging Confidence from Stakeholders***

Every metaphorical description provided by the participants had underlain a belief among the student participants that they could not overcome the challenges set before them. Weinstein and Middlestadt (1979) expressed that students are more aware of teacher or administrative expectations than stakeholders realize. Rubie-Davies et al. (2020) concluded:

Students who perceive that their teachers have high expectations for them may form more positive beliefs about their academic capabilities whereas those for whom teachers have lower expectations may assimilate those perceptions into their assessment of their potential, leading to correspondingly higher or lower achievement. (p. 6)

Moreover, Hattie (2018) determined that students with high self-efficacy considerably accelerated their own achievement with an effect size of +0.92 and classrooms where teachers regularly display high expectations for students accelerated achievement by an effect size of

+0.43. Participants of this phenomenon observed and described a lagging confidence from their supervising stakeholders; namely their own teachers.

Furthermore, Hattie (2018) determined that learning environments with rich motivational approaches contributed to accelerated student achievement with an effect size of +0.69 while environments with insincere or only surface motivational approaches had a negative impact on achievement and detracted from learning with a negative effect size of -0.11 (Hattie, 2018). The participants in this phenomenon described instructors who were reeling themselves from the causes of school closure. As teachers redirected their attention from motivating students with high expectations to meeting their own personal mitigation needs, they were often unable to provide the rich motivational approaches required to demonstrate confidence in their students.

In addition to lagging teacher confidence, many of the student participant transcripts also referenced a lack of belief from state and federal stakeholders in their ability to achieve success on traditional EOC's and statewide assessments. Participants were collectively convinced that the issued waivers and exemptions from the traditional assessments were to be perceived as lower expectations in their ability to achieve. Participants inferred or interpreted those waivers as a lack of confidence in their ability to perform or demonstrate proficiency.

### **Implications for Policy or Practice**

Given the three major interpretations above, which resulted from the findings of this investigation, there are certain recommendations that are warranted for both future policy decisions and future practitioners of education. All the various types of stakeholders, policymakers, administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and school board members could benefit from a deep understanding of these student perspectives should school closures be required in the future.

### *Implications for Policy*

The most crucial policies relevant to these findings are those associated with assessment and high-stakes testing. While all students may enjoy a reprieve from a high-stakes assessment, the lessons learned during this phenomenon are that the standards of expectation should remain static, even during catastrophic events or global pandemics. This does not mean that graduation rates or assessment results will not be affected in the year of such an event but policymakers must account for subsequent year effects and the perceived communication of waiving assessment requirements. Moreover, enacting such waivers also affects the perceptions and attitudes of students toward these high-stakes assessments and those attitudes cannot be altered or repaired expeditiously. The preceding cohorts are watching carefully to see how they may be treated in subsequent years.

A better approach may be to add years of academic eligibility to those students who fail to meet the standards of graduation in the years of closure. Instead of lowering the bar for everyone on the front end, policymakers can devise plans to remediate students who are not successful on the back end. Currently in the state of Florida, fifth year seniors are not allowed to remain on the traditional campus and continue to work toward graduation if they fail to meet their requirements in four years. The only exception to this would be students who are identified as ESE and have an IEP that provides special accommodations. In the case where closures occur, a caveat may be written into policy that allows twelfth year general education students to continue working on the traditional campus for an additional year, should they fail to meet the static requirements. This policy would also allow the testing requirements to remain static in the case of closure, regardless of the reason.

A second policy matter to be considered is the closure of schools in general. Following the HM closure, BDS hosted a public forum where open dialogue was allowed to debate the reopening of schools (BDS, 2018). While many individual employees advocated to remain closed for personal reasons related to storm recovery, the district believed the first step in returning to a sense of normalcy was to reopen schools. In the transcript of the forum BDS asserted:

Our community must be allowed to return to school. Workers cannot go back to work and employers cannot rebuild without school as a central, stabilizing force for our community. We have an obligation to our families and our taxpayers to provide that stability as soon as we possibly can. Therefore, we must have a start date to begin to restore those vital services. Ultimately, every BDS employee is paid to be here for the children of Bay County and the children and their families need us desperately to have school, now more than ever. (p. 1)

The context of this statement was a tumultuous time during the life of BDS. It rang harshly in the ears of many hearers. HM had destroyed thousands of homes in the county and over four thousand students were lost as refugees to other surrounding areas. Yet, despite the circumstances and the harshness of the statement, the district rightly predicted with every waking hour that school was not in session, the Bay County community was losing. City managers, mayors, governors, and all community leaders must account for the spiraling effects of school closures. The vital services that are derailed, the workforce that is handcuffed to a bedside table,

the children who go without instruction and fail to progress to the next grade level all must be considered when making these important public policy decisions.

The subsequent closure of COVID-19 was even more politicized at the state and federal level. In 2020 BDS students did not return to a brick-and-mortar campus after March 13<sup>th</sup> of 2020. The following academic year only about 65% of students returned to campus in the Fall while the remaining 35% stayed home for fear of contracting the coronavirus. From the participants' perspective, the cost was great and much learning loss occurred. While there are certainly other health related matters, not germane to this discussion, that may be considered, school district ICP's and/or contingency plans should be developed and ready to deploy should future pandemics result from other coronaviruses or diseases.

### ***Implications for Practice***

When considering policy and practice, policymaking for public education occurs at the district and/or state level(s) in most cases, where matters of practice reside at the school level. As a matter of practice, the implications of this investigation are related to preparing and planning for how best to approach school closures, should organizational leaders decide a situation warrants a shutdown. However, the practice or approach to managing a closure will differ depending on policymaker's implementation of their contingency plan or how they plan to manage fifth year seniors.

The lessons learned from the participant perspectives of this investigation showed that closures should be course of last resort. Should closure be unavoidable, a school's best practice may be to continue in its implementation of the scheduled assessment calendar for courses, EOCs, and state testing alike; even if that implementation requires alternative site or remote facilitation. Student proficiency may not be what is hoped for given the instruction that occurred

in an academic year. However, alterations to annual graduation requirements and waiving of assessments trigger a causal sequence or mechanical effect that is challenging to undo or overcome. It is true, this best practice may result in learning loss for the students affected by the cause for closure in the current year. Yet, the subsequent year students would remain on track to progress as normal.

A second practical implication now understood to be a best practice in most school plant contexts may be to plan a course of study for test preparation in the years of closure that can be used to mitigate the potential shortfall in instruction during the closure period. This would be a natural or organic addendum to the ICP. Instead of communicating low expectations that students cannot achieve success by canceling assessments or giving waivers to testing, a better approach may be to additionally arm students with the tools necessary for success by using assessment interventions, accelerated learning, or prescriptive scheduling on course materials needed to progress or graduate. This would also serve as an added layer of insulation to the rigor and high expectations established by policymakers.

### **Theoretical and Empirical Implications**

The theoretical implications of this research are those related to the use of AT. As stated in Chapter One, McLeod (2012) asserted, “Attribution theory deals with how the social perceiver uses information to arrive at causal explanations for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form causal judgments” (p. 23). This investigation uniquely set AT as the theoretical framework from which participants would describe their experience within the phenomenon. Findings of this study certainly support the determinations of AT. Student participants were able to attribute cause for their learning loss resulting from the subsequent year school closures. The framework allowed participants to gather information from



the memory of their experience and interpret those memories to arrive at causal explanations for their response to the phenomenon. As stated in Chapter Four, most participants attributed cause for their learning loss to the construct of luck or chance, also known as circumstance. While this particular construct offers little in the way to predict or prevent future closures, it does certainly intimate a need for preparedness or planning toward the possibility of school closures. Moreover, the construct also intimates a predicted response from the traditional student regarding how they may respond in similar circumstances, given similar contexts. Finally, this research shows the efficacy of AT in assisting participants in the descriptive process for phenomena. The implication being that future phenomenological researchers would do well to consider the framework as a tool for providing rich descriptions to an experience.

The empirical implications of this research are those related to the limited scope of research surrounding student perspectives of learning environments and the use of metaphors in describing those experiences within a phenomenon. First, the field of educational research is sparse regarding student perspectives in educational environments. Why? One could make the argument that, among all the stakeholders that contribute to public education, the student's voice is most relevant. Yet, the student's voice is sought after the least. Researchers target the perspective of teachers, administrators, superintendents, school board members, community members, and parents; all the while foregoing the opportunity to hear from the most relevant and powerful stakeholder of all. Hattie's (2009) research alone, which *The Times Educational Supplement* dubbed as teaching's holy grail, reiterates self-efficacy and metacognition as the strongest indicators of student achievement. Why is it that researchers refuse to listen to the perspectives of students. Their learning is what we aspire to improve. Their capacity is what we, as educators, look to increase. Their voice is what we should move closest to the microphone.

Second, like the research of Mitchell (2019), this inquiry also included the use of the metaphor into the descriptive process. While several studies utilized metaphors as a tool for description in phenomenology (Akturk et al., 2015; Nurettin, 2015; Yildirim & Simsek, 2006; Yilmaz et al., 2017), most transcendental phenomenologies do not capitalize on the efficacy of the tool. In this investigation, metaphors allowed participants to describe their experience as it was, by painting strong, rich illustrations and visualizations of human life. Students were permitted to use figurative language or figures of speech to annotate their environments. Metaphors are all around us as human beings and we can take the complex task of description and simplify it by using simple pictures of our everyday English language. If Moustakas (1994) believed the goal of phenomenology was to study how individuals make meaning of their lived experience, why not use a tool for description that simplifies the task for our co-researchers?

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The intent of this section is to build validity around the decision matrix employed to limit or define the boundaries of the investigation. Limitations are the potential weaknesses of a study that are unable to be controlled during an investigation. How these limitations are judged will be the determination of the reader. Four limitations are described below from this investigation: sample size, participant age inclusion, my presuppositions and philosophical assumptions, and my employment with Bay District Schools.

The original goal and proposal of research included a sample size of 15 participants. I sought to create a pool of 40 potential participants, from which I would narrow my purposeful sampling to 15 research participants. The goal of 15 participants was set to reach data saturation more efficiently. Yet, I was unable to acquire the 15 participants due to limited willingness in participation or failure to meet the criteria. However, I did reach data saturation as many of my

participant responses were repetitive in nature toward the end of the collection period. Thus, 10 participants were a sufficient sampling to complete the study. Moreover, previous phenomenologists show that studies can range in sample size from one to 325. Those same studies recommend an ideal range be between three and 10 participants (Creswell, 2013; Dukes, 1984; Edwards, 2006; Padilla, 2003; & Polkinghorne, 1989). Because I was able to acquire the recommended 10 participants who met all the pre-determined criteria, I felt confident proceeding with the investigation.

The age of the participants to be included in the study was a concern during the proposal phase. My purposeful sampling included the criteria that each participant be enrolled in at least the sixth grade during the 2018-2019 academic school year or the first closure of the phenomenon. Since the study was approved for completion in November of 2021, the youngest participant I could include in the project would be ninth graders or students approximately 15 years of age. Parental consent and child assent was required by IRB for all participants under the age of 18. Without concern, I successfully acquired the consent and assent. Yet, the concern was the ability of the 15-year-old student participants to use the metaphors to describe their experience. However, it is my belief that the metaphor simplified the process for the younger participants and allowed them to provide a more rich, robust description of their experience.

Delimitations are the intentional boundaries determined by the researcher throughout the design and execution of research (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020). The decision matrix of the research was intentional before, during, and after the inquiry in order to effectively address the research questions and determine the student's perspective of and extent of learning loss during subsequent year school closures. This qualitative, transcendental, phenomenological method was expressly chosen to give a voice to the students of BDS.

Finally, participants were selected from among the five BDS secondary schools of Bay County, Florida. A purposeful, criteria sampling was used to recruit 10 students who attended BDS schools during the entire 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic school years. Additionally, students were required to have been enrolled in at least the sixth grade during the 2018-2019 school year. I collected data from the participants using 10 individual journals, 10 individual interviews, and one collective focus group interview. Each of the interviews, including the focus group, were transcribed and, along with the journal transcripts, loaded into QDAS NVivo for organization and analysis. The analysis resulted in the rich narration provided above.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In consideration of the study findings, limitations, and the delimitations, I recommend the following qualitative and quantitative projects. Three specific studies, with the appropriate design, would add to the field of literature and further inform stakeholders and serve to advance conversations on learning loss, school closures, and student perspectives on COVID-19 lockdowns.

First, I suggest a qualitative historical analysis of students who experience lockdown during COVID-19. Such an analysis would add to the findings of this investigation by giving further insight into the learning and learning environments of students who endured this challenging time. The analysis would also serve to document the phenomenon and allow stakeholders to see what successes were had and what mistakes were made. The analysis could be used in preparation and planning for future closures and support the efforts of district ICPs.

I would further suggest a quantitative correlational study of college preparedness for students who endured significant school closures during their final year of secondary education. Stakeholders could use the data to mitigate future learning loss in the event where schools are

forced to close unexpectedly. Twelfth grade students are in the most precarious of positions when closures occur. They have no additional time to recover missed instruction or complete what should be static graduation requirements.

Finally, I suggest a comparative analysis of the instructional methods of accelerated learning versus reteaching/remediation to determine effectiveness for students who have suffered significant learning loss due to school closure. Data from such a study would allow for districts to show their instructors research based best practice when instructional time must be condensed. The temptation of every teacher is to pause curriculum to teach foundational dependent content. However, curricula are mapped and paced by designers to cover the required standards of each course. When closures occur, it is critical to have a plan for standard coverage, be it acceleration or remediation. This comparative analysis would shed light on the best course forward.

### **Conclusion**

How do students describe the learning experience when their learning institution is closed? This transcendental phenomenology was designed to give a voice to students to describe the lived experiences of multiple school closures during the subsequent academic years. Using AT and metaphors as the framework for participant descriptions, student described the essence of their experience with learning loss during school closures as a bout with social isolation and lagging confidence from stakeholders, resulting in progressive apathy toward the global educational process. The purpose of this investigation was realized, as it was determined that students in public educational environments are on precarious footing in the best of circumstances and closures bring about significant momentum shifts to progress. Closures of any kind, must only be considered as a matter of last resort as these academic closures are a threat to the fabric of our long-standing tradition of the American public educational system.

## References

- Akturk, A.O., Mihci, S., & Celik, I. (2015). Metaphors of high school students about the concept of "interactive whiteboard". *International Journal of Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology*, 3(2), 120-131.
- Allen, I., & Seaman, J. (2010). Learning on demand: Online education in the United States. Retrieved from: <http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/survey/pdf/learningondemand.pdf>
- Allen, I., & Seaman, J. (2014). Grade change: Tracking online education in the United States. *Babson Park, MA: Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group*. Retrieved from: <http://wwwonlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/gradechange.pdf>
- American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>
- Anderson, D. M., & Walker, M. B. (2015). Does shortening the school week impact student performance? Evidence from the four-day school week. *Education Finance and Policy*, 10(1), 314-349.
- Anderson, E.H., & Spencer, M.H. (2002). Cognitive Representations of AIDS: A phenomenological study. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(10), 1338-1352.
- Armitage, R., & Nellums, L.B. (2020). Considering inequalities in the school closure response to COVID-19. *Lancet Global Health*, 8:e644. doi: 10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30116-9.
- Aspen Institute. (2019). *Integrating social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD): An action guide for school leadership teams*. The Aspen Institute Education & Society Program.

- Atteberry, A., & McEachin, A. (2016). School's out: Summer learning loss across grade levels and school contexts in the United States today. In Alexander, K., Pitcock, S., & Boulay, M. (Eds). *Summer learning and summer learning loss*, pp 35-54. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Babinčáková, M., & Bernard, P. (2020). Online experimentation during COVID-19 secondary school closures: Teaching methods and student perceptions. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 97(9), 3295-3300.
- Bacon, I., McKay, E., Reynolds, F., & McIntyre, A. (2018). The lived experience of codependency: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 18(3), 754-771.
- Baker, M., & Bishop, F. L. (2015). Out of school: A phenomenological exploration of extended non-attendance. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 31(4), 354-368.
- Baird, M.D., & Pane, J. (2019). Translating standardized effects of education programs into more interpretable metrics. *Educational Researcher*, 48(4), 217-228.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychology*, 28, 117- 148.
- Bay District Schools. (2020). *Hurricane Michael recovery information*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/hurricane-michael>
- Bay District Schools. (2020). *Academic updates for elementary and secondary instruction: Post Hurricane Michael*. Retrieved from: [http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/uploads/Academic%20School%20Board%20Workshop%201\\_24\\_2019.pdf](http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/uploads/Academic%20School%20Board%20Workshop%201_24_2019.pdf)

Bay District Schools. (2020). *Facilities updates post Hurricane Michael*. Retrieved from:

<http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/uploads/Facilities%20Post%20Hurricane%20Michael%202%20v1.pdf>

Bay District Schools. (2020). *Estimated financial impacts from Hurricane Michael*. Retrieved

from: <http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/uploads/Finance%201.24.19%20Presentation%20Hurricane.pdf>

Bay District Schools. (2020). *Instructional Continuity Plan*. Retrieved from:

[http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/uploads/Public%20ICP%20Guidance%20Document%20\(links\)%2003252020.pdf](http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/uploads/Public%20ICP%20Guidance%20Document%20(links)%2003252020.pdf)

Bao, X., Qu, H., Zhang, R., & Hogan, T. P. (2020). Modeling reading ability gain in

kindergarten children during COVID-19 school closures. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(17), 6371. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17176371>

Bauer, W. M., & Gaskell, G. (Eds.). (2007). *Qualitative research with text, image and sound: A practical handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Berthold, P., Gersons, R., Geert, E., Smit, A., Kazlauskas, E., & McFarlane, A. (2020). Can a

‘second disaster’ during and after the COVID-19 pandemic be mitigated? *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 11(1), 1815283.

Bezen, S., Aykutlu, I., Bayrak, C., & Secken, N., (2017). Metaphorical perceptions of the

concepts “teaching profession” and “raising children.” *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research (EJER)*, 17(71), 141-158.

Blizak, D., Blizak, S., Bouchenak, O., & Yahiaoui, K. (2020). Students’ perceptions regarding

the abrupt transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: Case of faculty



- of chemistry and hydrocarbons at the University of Boumerdes Algeria. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 97(9), 2466-2471.
- Bowers, L.M. & Schwarz, I. (2018). Preventing summer learning loss: Results of a summer literacy program for students from low-ses homes. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 34(2), 99-116.
- Briggs, T. (2019). Post-Hurricane Michael damage assessment using ADCIRC storm surge hindcast, image classification, and LiDAR. *Shore & Beach*, 3–14.  
<https://doi.org/10.34237/1008741>
- Brown, J. (1997). Researcher as instrument: An exploration of the relationship between gestalt and qualitative methodology. *Gestalt Review*, 1(1), 71-84. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44394012>
- Burkam, D.T., Ready, D.D., Lee, V.E., & LoGerfo, L.F. (2004). Social-class differences in summer learning between kindergarten and first grade: Model specification and estimation. *Sociology of Education*, 77:1–31. doi: 10.1177/003804070407700101.
- Callaghan, J. (2020). The interaction of Hurricane Michael with an upper trough leading to intensification right up to landfall. *Tropical Cyclone Research and Review*, 9(2), 135-142.
- Carr, S. (2004) As distance education comes of age: The challenge is keeping students. *Chronicle of Higher Education, Information Technology Section*. Retrieved from:  
<http://chronicle.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/free/v46/i23/23a00101.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Catastrophic flooding in Louisiana*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readiness/stories/la.htm#:~:text=In%20August>

%202016%2C%20southeastern%20Louisiana,than%20150%2C000%20homes%20and%20businesses.

Christmann, E. (2017). A comparison of the achievement of statistics students enrolled in online and face-to-face settings. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 14(6), 323-330.

Christodoulou, J.A., Cyr, A., Murtagh, J., Chang, P., Lin, J., Guarino, A.J., Hook, P., Gabrieli, J.D.E. (2016). Impact of intensive summer reading intervention for children with reading disabilities and difficulties in early elementary school. *Journal of Learning Disability*, 50:115–127. doi: 10.1177/0022219415617163.

Ciavarella, C., Fumanelli, L., & Merler, S. (2016). School closure policies at municipality level for mitigating influenza spread: A model-based evaluation. *BMC Infect Dis* 16(1), 576.

Cooper, H., Valentine, J. C., Charlton, K., & Melson, A. (2003). The effects of modified school calendars on student achievement and on school and community attitudes. *Review of Educational Research*, 73(1), 1-52.

Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, K., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores: A narrative and meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(3), 227-268.

Cooper, H., Charlton, K., Valentine, J. C., & Muhlenbruck, L. (2000). Making the most of summer school: A meta-analytic and narrative review. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 65, i-127.

Council of the Great City Schools. (2020). *Addressing unfinished learning after COVID-19 school closures*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from: [www.cgcs.org](http://www.cgcs.org)

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N., (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Dahl, K. K., & Millora, C. M., (2016). Lifelong learning from natural disasters: Transformative group-based learning at Philippine universities. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 35*(6), 648-663.
- Daly, D. (1996). Attribution theory and the glass ceiling: Career development among federal employees. *Public Administration & Management: An Interactive Journal*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hbg.psu.edu/faculty/jxr11/glass1sp.html>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68-78.
- Denzin, N. K. (1994). The art and politics of interpretation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 500-515). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Deslauriers, L., & Wieman, C. (2011). Learning and retention of quantum concepts with different teaching methods. *Physical Review ST Physics Education Research, (7)*1, 010101-1-010101-6.
- Devault, G. (2018). *Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thebalance.com/establishing-trustworthiness-in-qualitative-research-2297042>
- Di Pietro, G. (2018). The academic impact of natural disasters: Evidence from L'Aquila earthquake. *Education Economics, 26*(1), 62-77.
- Dills, A., Hernandez-Julian, R., & Rotthoff, K. W., (2016). Knowledge decay between semesters. *Economics of Education Review, 50*(1), 63-74.
- Doumas, K. (2012). Students' experiences and perceptions of in-depth approaches in teaching and understanding subject matter. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 56*(3), 295-313.

- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Ballantine.
- Education Week. (2020, September 16). Map: Coronavirus and school closures in 2019-2020. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures-in-2019-2020/2020/03>
- Enriquez, A. (2010). Enhancing student performance using tablet computers. *College Teaching*, 58(3), 77-84.
- Esnard, A. M., Lai, B. S., Wyczalkowski, C., Malmin, N., & Shah, H. J. (2018). School vulnerability to disaster: Examination of school closure, demographic, and exposure factors in hurricane Ike's wind swath. *Natural Hazards*, 90(2), 513-535.
- Fan, W., Zhou, M., Cheung, F. M., Zhang, J., & Zhou, X. (2016). Contributions of resilience to mental health in Chinese secondary school students at different disaster stress levels. *The Asia - Pacific Education Researcher*, 25(3), 389-398.
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC) (2019). *October 2018 Hurricane Michael's impact on communications: preparation, effect, and recovery*. A Report of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Public Safety Docket No. 18-339. Retrieved from: <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-releases-reportcommunication-impacts-hurricane-michael>
- Fishman, E. J., & Husman, J. (2017). Extending attribution theory: Considering students' perceived control of the attribution process. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 109(4), 559-573.
- Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). *Social cognition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Florida Department of Education. (2020). *Standards & instructional support*. Retrieved from: <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/>

Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC), 2018. *Hurricane Season Power Outage Reports*.

Retrieved from: <http://floridapsc.com/Home/HurricaneReport>.

Frey, B. (2018). *The SAGE encyclopedia of educational research, measurement, and evaluation* (Vols. 1-4). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Geert E. (2020). A framework of meaning attribution following loss. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, *11*(1), 1776563.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Gershenson, S. & Hayes, M.S. (2018). The implications of summer learning loss for value added estimates of teacher effectiveness. *Educational Policy* *32*(1), 55-85.

Graham, S., & Williams, C. (2009). An attributional approach to motivation in school. *Handbook of motivation at school*, 11-34.

Graves, J., McMullen, S. & Rouse, K. (2013) Multi-track year-round schooling as cost saving reform: Not just a matter of time. *Education Finance and Policy*, *8*(3), 300-315.

Guclu, H., Read, J., Vukotich, C. J., Galloway, D. D., Gao, H., Rainey, J. J., et al. (2016). Social contact networks and mixing among students in K-12 schools in Pittsburgh, PA. *PLoS ONE* *11*(3): e0151139.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, *18*(1), 59-82.

doi:10.1177/1525822X05279903

Hatch, J.A. (2002). *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. Albany, New York: SUNY Press.

Harris, D. (2015). Good news for New Orleans: Early evidence shows reforms lifting student achievement. *Education Next*, *15*(4), 8-15.

- Harvey, J. H. & Weary, G. (1985). *Attribution: Basic issues and applications*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Hegel, G.W.F., (1910). *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. New York: Wiley.
- Hoi, C. W., Zhou, M., Teo, T., & Nie, Y. (2017). Measuring efficacy sources: Development and validation of the sources of teacher efficacy questionnaire (STEQ) for Chinese teachers. *Psychology In the Schools*, 54(7), 756-769.
- Howard, L. S. (2019). California Wildfires, Hurricane Michael Top List of 2018's Costliest Natural Disasters: Munich Re. *Insurance Journal*, 1(8), 1.
- Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas* (W.R. Boyce Gibson, Trans.). London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Husserl, E. (1970). *Logical investigations*. (J. N. Findlay, Trans.). New York: Humanities Press
- Husserl, E. (1977). *Cartesian meditations: An introduction to metaphysics* (D. Cairns, Trans.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Johnston, J., Riley, J., Ryan, C., & Kelly-Vance, L. (2104). Evaluation of a summer reading program to reduce summer setback. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 31:334–350. doi: 10.1080/10573569.2013.857978.
- Jones, E. E. et al., (1972). *Attribution: Perceiving the causes of behavior*. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.
- Jones, E. E., & Davis, K. E. (1965). From acts to dispositions: the attribution process in social psychology, in L. Berkowitz (ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Volume 2, pp. 219-266), New York: Academic Press.
- Jones, E. E., & Harris, V. A. (1967). The attribution of attitudes. *Journal of experimental social psychology*, 3(1), 1-24.

- Judge, M. (2021). COVID-19 school closures and the uptake of digital assessment for learning/ pilot projecting during Ireland's national lockdown. *Irish Educational Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/03323315.2021.1917443
- Juth, V., Silver, R.C., Seyle, D.C. et al. (2015). Post-disaster mental health among parent-child dyads after a major earthquake in Indonesia. *Abnormal Child Psychology*, 43(7), 1309-1318.
- Kaden, U. (2020). COVID-19 school closure-related changes to the professional life of a K-12 teacher. *Education Sciences*, 10(6), 165.
- Karabay, A. (2016). An investigation of prospective teachers' views regarding teacher identity via metaphor. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research (EJER)*, 16(65), 1-35.
- Kassin, S., Fein, S., & Markus, H. R. (2017). *Social psychology* (10th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.
- Kawano, S., & Kakehashi, M. (2015). Substantial impact of school closure on the transmission dynamics during the pandemic flu H1N1-2009 in Oita, Japan. *PLoS One*, 10(12), e0144839.
- Kelley, H. H. (1967). Attribution theory in social psychology. In D. Levine (ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (Volume 15, pp. 192-238). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Khalili, S., Harre, M., & Morley, P. (2018). A temporal social resilience framework of communities to disasters in Australia. *Geoenvironmental Disasters*, 5(1), 1-9.
- Kim, J.S., & White, T.G. (2008). Scaffolding voluntary summer reading for children in grades 3 to 5: An experimental study. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 12:1-23. doi: 10.1080/10888430701746849.

- Kim J. S., & Quinn D. M. (2013). The effects of summer reading on low-income children's literacy achievement from kindergarten to grade 8 a meta-analysis of classroom and home interventions. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 386–431.
- Kockelmans, J.J. (Ed.) (1967). *Phenomenology*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Korn, C. W., Rosenblau, G., Rodriguez Buritica, J.M., & Heekeren, H. R. (2016). Performance feedback processing is positively biased as predicted by attribution theory. *PLoS One*, 11(2), e0148581.
- Kousky, C. (2016). Impacts of natural disasters on children. *The Future of Children* 26(1), 73-92.
- Kuhfeld, M. & Soland, J. (2021). The learning curve: Revisiting the assumption of linear growth during the school year. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness* 0(1), 1-29.  
DOI: 10.1080/19345747.2020.1839990
- Kuhfeld, M., Soland, J., Tarasawa, B., Johnson, A., Ruzek, E., & Liu, J. (2020). *Projecting the Potential Impacts of COVID-19 School Closures on Academic Achievement*. EdWorkingPapers; Providence, RI.
- Kuhfeld, M. et al., (2020). *How is COVID-19 affecting student learning?* Brown Center Chalkboard. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2020/12/03/how-is-covid-19-affecting-student-learning/>
- Lai, B. et al. (2019) Trajectories of school recovery after a natural disaster: Risk and protective factors. *Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy*, 10(1), 32–51.
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge.



- Le Brocque, R. et al., (2017). Schools and natural disaster recovery: The unique and vital role that teachers and education professionals play in ensuring the mental health of students following natural disasters. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, 27(1), 1-23.
- Lewis, F. M. & Daltroy, L. H. (1990). How causal explanations influence health behavior: Attribution theory. In Glanz, K., Lewis, F.M., and Rimer, B.K. (Ed.), *Health Education and Health Behavior: Theory, Research, and Practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc.
- Leiber, M. (2017). Assessing the mental health impact of the 2011 great Japan earthquake, tsunami, and radiation disaster on elementary and middle school children in the Fukushima Prefecture of Japan. *PLoS One*, 12(1), e0170402.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lovrić, R., Farčić, N., Mikšić, Š., & Včev, A. (2020). Studying during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative inductive content analysis of nursing students' perceptions and experiences. *Education Sciences*, 10(7), 188.
- Lynch, K., & Kim, J. S. (2017). Effects of a summer mathematics intervention for low-income children: A randomized experiment. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 39(1), 31–53.
- MacNaughton, G. (2001). Action research. In G. MacNaughton, S. A. Rolfe, & I. Siraj-Blatchford (Eds.), *Doing early childhood research: International perspectives on theory and practice* (pp. 208-223). Crow's Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin.

- Malmberg, L.E., Hagger, H., Burn, K., Mutton, T., & Colls, H. (2010). Observed classroom quality during teacher education and two years of professional practice. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(4), 916-932.
- Malmstadt, J.C., Elsner, J.B., & Jagger, T.H. (2010). Risk of strong hurricane winds to Florida cities. *Applied Meteorological Climate, 49*, 2121-2132.
- Marstaller, M. (2020). Student experiences of the COVID-19 lockdown. *Changing English, 27*(3), 231-234.
- Maymon, R., Hall, N. C., Goetz, T., Chiarella, A., & Rahimi, S. (2018). Technology, attributions, and emotions in post-secondary education: An application of Weiner's attribution theory to academic computing problems. *PLoS ONE 13*(3): e0193443
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- McLaren, C. (2004). A comparison of student persistence and performance in online and classroom business statistics experiences. *Decision Science Journal of Innovative Education, 2*(1), 1-10.
- McLeod, S. A. (2012). *Attribution theory*. Simply Psychology. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/attribution-theory.html>
- McLeod, J. D., Uemura, R., & Rohrman, S. (2012). Adolescent Mental Health, Behavior Problems, and Academic Achievement. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 53*(4), 482-497.
- McLeod, S. A. (2018). *Fundamental attribution error*. Simply Psychology.  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/fundamental-attribution.html>

- McMullen, S. & Rouse, K. (2012). The impact of year-round schooling on academic achievement: Evidence from mandatory school calendar conversions. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 4(4), 230-252.
- Hattie, & Yates, G. C. R. (2014). *Visible learning and the science of how we learn*. Routledge, an imprint of Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mitchell, C. (2011). *Doing visual research*. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mitchell, R.T. (2019). *Student perceptions of trivium-based education in classical Christian schools: A phenomenological study*. Liberty University.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mruck, K., & Breuer, F. (2003). Subjectivity and reflexivity in qualitative research: The FQS issues. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 4(2). Retrieved, from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/696/1505>
- Navarro, J. A., Kohl, K. S., Cetron, M. S., & Markel, H. (2016). A tale of many cities: A contemporary historical study of the implementation of school closures during the 2009 pA(H1N1) influenza pandemic. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, 41(3), 393–421.
- Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(2), 90-97.
- NWEA (2020). *About NWEA*. Northwest Evaluation Association. <https://www.nwea.org/about/>
- Nurettin, B. (2015). A study on high school students' perceptions of "geographical environment". *Educational Research and Reviews*, 10(7), 1009-1014.

- Ortlipp, M. (2008). Keeping and using reflective journals in the qualitative research process. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 695-705.
- Pathak, A., Zhang, L., & Ganapati, N. E. (2020). Understanding multisector stakeholder value dynamics in Hurricane Michael: Toward collaborative decision-making in disaster contexts. *Natural Hazards Review*, 21(3), 4020032. [https://doi.org/10.1061/\(ASCE\)NH.1527-6996.0000400](https://doi.org/10.1061/(ASCE)NH.1527-6996.0000400)
- Pattal, E.A., Cooper, H., & Allen, A.B. (2010). Extending the school day or school year: A systematic review of research (1985-2009). *Review of Educational Research*, 80(3), 401-436.
- Patton, M.Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Perryman, D. R. (2018). *Hurricane Michael to cost the US economy almost \$53 billion*. The Perryman Group. Retrieved from: <https://www.perrymangroup.com/publications/pressrelease/2018/10/12/hurricane-michael-to-cost-the-us-economy-almost-53-billion/>
- Plumb, C., & LaMere, B. (2011). Comparing student learning in a required electrical engineering undergraduate course: Traditional face-to-face versus online. In: *2011 Annual Conference of the International Network for Engineering Education and Research*, Belfast, England.
- Preston, J., Chadderton, C., Kitagawa, K., & Edmonds, C. (2015) Community response in disasters: An ecological learning framework. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 34(6), 727-753.
- Polikoff, M.S. (2012). The redundancy of mathematics instruction in US elementary and middle schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, 113(2), 230-251.

- Polit, D.F., & Beck, C.T. (2014). *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice* (8th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1983). *Methodology for the human sciences: Systems of inquiry*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1989). Phenomenological Research Methods. In R.S. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential phenomenological perspectives in psychology* (pp.41-600. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Raccanello, D., Burro, R., & Hall, R. (2017). Children's emotional experience two years after an earthquake: An exploration of knowledge of earthquakes and associated emotions. *PLoS ONE* 12(12): e0189633.
- Rainey, J. J., Kenney, J., Wilburn, B., Putman, A., Zheteyeva, Y., & O'Sullivan, M. (2016). Online work force analyzes social media to identify consequences of an unplanned school closure: Using technology to prepare for the next pandemic. *PLoS ONE* 11(9), e0163207.
- Rasinski, T., Paige, D., Rains, C., Stewart, F., Julovich, B., Prenkert, W., Rupley, W., & Nicols, W. (2017) Effects of intensive fluency instruction on the reading proficiency of third-grade struggling readers. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 33(6), 519-532.
- Reeves, J., and T. Lush. (2018). *Hurricane Michael wipes out Mexico Beach, Florida, in apocalyptic assault*. Retrieved from: <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/weather/hurricane/fl-ne-hurricane-michael-apocalypse-20181011-story.html>
- Remley, T. P. (2015). Counseling in New Orleans 10 years after Hurricane Katrina: A commentary on the aftermath recovery, and the future. *The Professional Counselor*, 5(4), 431-441.

- Richards, M. P., Stroub, K. J., & Guthery, S. (2020). The effects of school closures on teacher labor markets outcomes: Evidence from Texas. *AERA Open*, 6(2).
- Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the Attribution Process. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 10, pp. 173-220). Boston, MA: Academic Press.
- Rubie-Davies, C., Kane, M., Alansari, M., Watson, P., Annaline, F., & McDonald, L. (2020). Achievement and beliefs outcomes of students with high and low expectation teachers. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal*, 23(5), 1173-1201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-020-09574-y>
- Rundle, A.G., Park, Y., Herbstman, J.B., Kinsey, E.W., & Wang, Y.C. (2020). COVID-19–related school closings and risk of weight gain among children. *Obesity*, 28:1008–1009. doi: 10.1002/oby.22813.
- Saldana, J. (2015). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Scheitlin, K.N., Elsner, J.B., Lewers, S.W., Malmstadt, J.C., & Jagger, T.H. (2011). Risk assessment of hurricane winds for Eglin Air Force Base in northwestern Florida, USA. *Theoretical Applications of Climate*, 105, 287-296.
- Schmitt, R. (1968). Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological reduction. In J.J. Kockelmans' (Ed.), *Phenomenology* (pp. 58-68). Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Schunk, D.H., Meece, J.R., and Pintrich, P.R., (2013). *Motivation in Education: Theory, Research and Applications*, 4th Ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

- Senkbeil, J., Myers, L., Jasko, S., Reed, J., & Mueller, R. (2020). Communication and hazard perception lessons from category five hurricane Michael. *Atmosphere, 11*(8), 804.
- Sezer, S. (2018). Prospective teachers' perceptions on educational policy: A metaphorical analysis. *International Journal of Progressive Education, 14*(2), 121-135.
- Smith, R., Flamez, J., & Vela, J. (2015). An exploratory investigation of levels of learning and learning efficiency between online and face-to-face instruction. *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation, 6*(1), 47-57.
- Snyder, T., Dinkes, R., Sonnenberg, W., and Cornman, S. (2019). *Study of the Title I, part A grant program mathematical formulas 2019-016*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.
- Strøm, I. F., Schultz, J., Wentzel-Larsen, T. & Dyb, G. (2016). School performance after experiencing trauma: a longitudinal study of school functioning in survivors of the Utøya shootings in 2011. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 7*(1), 31359.
- Spradley, J.P. (1980). *Participant Observation*. New York City, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Superville, D. R. (2018). After the hurricane, a superintendent picks up the pieces; Florida leader leans on experts to open schools after hurricane. *Education Week, 38*(11), 1.
- The University of Chicago Urban Education Institute. (2018). *Cultivating social, emotional, and academic development in new knowledge and developments in public education* (pp. 11-16).

- Tsai, V., Khan, N. M., Shi, J., Rainey, J., Gao, H., Zheteyeva, Y. (2017). Evaluation of unintended social and economic consequences of an unplanned school closure in rural Illinois. *Journal of School Health, 87*(7), 546-553.
- Van der Putten, S. (2017). A trace of motivational theory in education through attribution theory, Self-worth theories and self-determination theory. *SFU Educational Review, 10*(1), 1-12.
- Van Dinther, M., Dochy, F., Segers, M., & Braeken, J. (2014). Student perceptions of assessment and student self-efficacy in competence-based education. *Educational Studies, 40*(3), 330-351.
- van Kaam, A. (1959). Phenomenal analysis: Exemplified by a study of the experience of “really feeling understood.” *Journal of Individual Psychology, 15*(1), 66-72.
- van Kaam, A. (1969). *Existential foundations of psychology*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario: The Althouse Press.
- Vaughn, A., Taasobshirazi, G., & Johnson, M., (2020). Imposter phenomenon and motivation: Women in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education, 45*(4), 780-795.
- von Hippel, P. T., (2019). Is summer learning loss real? *Education Next, 19*(4).
- Uscher-Pines, L., Schwartz, H. L., Ahmed, F., Zheteyeva, Y., Meza, E., Baker, G., & Uzicanin, A. (2018). School practices to promote social distancing in K-12 schools: Review of influenza pandemic policies and practices. *BMC Public Health, 18*(1), 406.
- Wang, G., Zhang, Y., Zhao, J., Zhang, J., & Jiang, F. (2020). Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak. *Lancet Global Health, 395*:945–947. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30547-X.



- Wanzek, J., Stevens, E., Williams, K., Scammacca, N., Vaughn, S., & Sargent, K. (2018). Current evidence on the effects of intensive early reading interventions. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 51*(6), 612-624.
- Ward, M.E. & Shelley, K. (2008). Hurricane Katrina's impact on students and staff members in the schools of Mississippi. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR), 13*:2-3, 335-353, DOI: 10.1080/10824660802350474
- Webb, A. S., & Welsh, A. J. (2019). Phenomenology as a methodology for scholarship of teaching and learning research. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry, 7*(1), 168-181.
- Weiner, B. (1974). *Achievement motivation and attribution theory*. Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.
- Weiner, B. (1980). *Human motivation*. New York City, NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. *Psychological Review, 92*(4), 548.
- Weiner, B. (1986). *An attributional theory of motivation and emotion*. New York City, NY: Springer-Verlag.
- Weinstein, R. S., & Middlestadt, S. E. (1979). Student perceptions of teacher interactions with male high and low achievers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 71*, 421-431.
- Whitehead, A. L. (2014). Politics, religion, attribution theory, and attitudes toward same-sex unions. *Social Science Quarterly, 95*(3), 701-718.
- Wong, Z., Goldsman, D., & Kwok-Leung, T. (2016). Economic evaluation of individual school closure strategies: The Hong Kong 2009 H1N1 pandemic. *PLoS One, 11*(1), e0147052.

- Woodcock, S. & Moore, B. (2018). Inclusion and students with specific learning difficulties: The double-edged sword of stigma and teacher attributions. *Educational Psychology, 41*(3), 338-357.
- Ya Ni, A. (2013). Comparing the effectiveness of classroom and online learning: Teacher research methods. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 19*(2), 199-245.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2006). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (6. Baskı). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Yılmaz, A., Esenturk, O. K., Demir, G. T., & Ilhan, E. L. (2017). Metaphoric perception of gifted students about physical education course and physical education teachers. *Journal of Education and Learning, 6*(2), 220-234.
- Yuksel, P., & Yildirim, S. (2015). Theoretical frameworks, methods, and procedures for conducting phenomenological studies in educational settings. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(1), 1-20.
- Zheteyeva, Y., Rainey, J. J., Gao, H., Jacobson, E. U., Adhikari, B. B., Shi, J., et al. (2017). Unintended costs and consequences of school closures implemented in preparation for Hurricane Isaac in Harrison County School District, Mississippi, August-September 2012. *PLoS ONE 12*(11): e0184326.

## Appendix A

### IRB Approval Letter

---

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 23, 2021

Todd Mitchell  
James Eller

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-305 STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING LOSS FOLLOWING TRAUMATIC MULTI-EVENT SCHOOL CLOSURES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Dear Todd Mitchell, James Eller:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: November 23, 2021. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.


Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**Research Ethics Office**



## Appendix B

### Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear BDS Parent or Student,

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting qualitative research as part of the requirements for degree completion. The purpose of my research is to understand and describe the experiences of students who were academically impacted during the school closures of the 2018-2019 (Hurricane Michael) and 2019-2020 (COVID-19 Pandemic) academic years while attending Bay District Schools (BDS) in Bay County, Florida. I am writing to invite you or you and your student to participate in the research.

If you are a student at least 18 years of age or older, or the guardian of a minor child at least 14 years of age who was enrolled in Bay District Schools of Bay County, Florida for the entirety of the 2018-2019 and the 2019-2020 school year you are eligible to participate or give consent for your student to participate. If you are willing, you will be asked to complete a brief screener designed to collect specific identifying demographic information that will remain confidential through the entirety of the research. Full participation will consist of a recorded interview, written responses to five journal prompts, and a focus group interview with other students who meet the criteria of the study. Each of the interviews and journal entries should take approximately one hour of your time, for a total of six to seven hours of commitment.

If interested, email [██████████](mailto:██████████) to request a consent/assent form to be signed via the DocuSign platform. Once received, I will email the demographic screener for you to complete and be entered into the participant pool.

All participants who meet the criteria that are added to the pool will be automatically entered into a drawing for a \$50 Visa gift card. 10-15 participants will be selected from the pool to be a part of the research sample. Each member of the sample who completes all three phases of the data collection will be entered into a second drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card. Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to the telling of your story.

Respectfully,

Dr. Robert Mitchell  
PhD Candidate  
Liberty University

## Appendix C

### Demographic Screener

#### Demographic Screener for Research

Please complete this form to determine eligibility in the research on BDS school closures.

Email \*

Valid email

This form is collecting emails. [Change settings](#)

Participant Name (Student): \*

\*

Short answer text

Who is completing this form? \*

\*

- Student at least 18 years of age
- Parent or legal guardian who is granting consent for minor child to participate

Student gender: \*

\*

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other...

How would you describe your or your student's ethnic identity? \*

\*

- Prefer not to answer
- Other...

Were you or your student enrolled in Bay District Schools for all of the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years? \* \*

Yes

No

What grade were you or your student in during the 2018-2019 school year \* \*

	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which BDS school(s) did you or your student attend during 2018-2019 and 2019-2020? \* \*

Short answer text  
.....

What is your average household income?

Less than \$25,000

\$25,000 to \$50,000

\$50,000 to \$75,000

\$75,000 to \$100,000

Over \$100,000

Other...

## Appendix D

### Participant Consent Form

#### Consent

**Title of the Project:** Student Perceptions of Learning Loss Following Traumatic Multi-Event School Closures: A Phenomenological Study

**Principal Investigator:** Robert Todd Mitchell, Liberty University, School of Education

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be at least 14 years of age and have been enrolled for the entire academic year in a Bay District School (BDS) during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school year. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study will be to describe the lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss due to multiple school closures during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years while attending BDS in Bay County, Florida.

#### What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete a recorded interview lasting approximately one hour with the researcher.
2. Complete 5 journal entries using at least 200 words each. Each of the entries should take approximately one hour or less to complete.
3. Complete a recorded focus group interview with the other sample members, facilitated by the researcher, to discuss the purpose of the study. The interview should last approximately one hour.
4. Review your transcribed responses from the individual interview and the focus group interview to ensure recording accuracy. This review should take approximately one hour.

#### How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect any direct benefits from participating in this study.

#### What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify any participant. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

- The interview and focus group will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- I am a mandatory reporter and as such I am required by law to report any accounts of child abuse, neglect, or intent to harm self or others.

#### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participant candidates will be compensated for participating by entrance into a drawing for a gift card of \$50.00. Individuals invited to become a part of the final sample will be entered into an additional drawing for a gift card of \$100.00.

#### **Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?**

The researcher serves as assistant principal at Rutherford High School. To limit potential or perceived conflicts a research assistant will ensure that all data is stripped of identifiers before the researcher receives it. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

#### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or BDS. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

#### **What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. If your withdrawal occurs after the Focus Group, the interview data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

#### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this study Robert Todd Mitchell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. James Eller, at [REDACTED].

#### **Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, [REDACTED].



*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

#### **Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record/photograph me as part of my participation in this study.

---

Printed Subject Name

---

Signature & Date

## Appendix E

### Parental Consent Form

#### Parental Consent

**Title of the Project:** Student Perceptions of Learning Loss Following Traumatic Multi-Event School Closures: A Phenomenological Study

**Principal Investigator:** Robert Todd Mitchell, Liberty University, School of Education

#### Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your student is invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be at least 14 years of age and have been enrolled for the entire academic year in a Bay District School (BDS) during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school year. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your student to take part in this research project.

#### What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study will be to describe the lived experiences of students who suffered learning loss due to multiple school closures during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years while attending BDS in Bay County, Florida.

#### What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your student to be in this study, I will ask him or her to do the following things:

1. Complete a recorded interview lasting approximately one hour with the researcher.
2. Complete 5 journal entries using at least 200 words each. Each of the entries should take approximately one hour or less to complete.
3. Complete a recorded focus group interview with the other sample members, facilitated by the researcher, to discuss the purpose of the study. The interview should last approximately one hour.
4. Review your transcribed responses from the individual interview and the focus group interview to ensure recording accuracy. This review should take approximately one hour.

#### How could participants or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

#### What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify any participant. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- The interview and focus group will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- I am a mandatory reporter and as such I am required by law to report any accounts of child abuse, neglect, or intent to harm self or others.

#### **How will participants be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participant candidates will be compensated for participating by entrance into a drawing for a gift card of \$50.00. Individuals invited to become a part of the final sample will be entered into an additional drawing for a gift card of \$100.00.

#### **What conflicts of interest exist in this study?**

The researcher serves as assistant principal at Rutherford High School. To limit potential or perceived conflicts a research assistant will ensure that all data is stripped of identifiers before the researcher receives it. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to allow your student to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on her or his decision to allow his or her student participate in this study.

#### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your student to participate will not affect yours or his or her current or future relations with Liberty University or BDS. If you decide to allow your student to participate, he or she is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

#### **What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw your student from the study or your student chooses to withdraw, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw her or him or should your student choose to withdraw, data collected from your student, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your student's contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw him or her or your student chooses to withdraw.

#### **Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this study Robert Todd Mitchell. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. James Eller, at [REDACTED].

**Whom do you contact if you have questions about rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, [REDACTED]

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University*

**Your Consent**

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your student to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my student to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record my student as part of his/her participation in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Minor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If you would prefer that your child NOT PARTICIPATE in this study, please sign this document and return it to your student's school office.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Child's/Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix F

### Child Assent Form

#### Child Assent to Participate in a Research Study

***What is the name of the study and who is doing the study?***

The name of the study is Student Perceptions of Learning Loss Following Traumatic Multi-Event School Closures: A Phenomenological Study, and the person doing the study is Robert Todd Mitchell.

***Why is Robert Todd Mitchell doing this study?***

Robert Todd Mitchell wants to know how students will describe their experience with school closures during the Hurricane Michael school year and the Pandemic school year while attending Bay District School (BDS) in Bay County, Florida.

***Why am I being asked to be in this study?***

You are being asked to be in this study because you are at least 14 years of age and you were enrolled for the entire academic year in a BDS during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years.

***If I decide to be in the study, what will happen and how long will it take?***

If you decide to be in this study, you will do the following things:

1. Complete a recorded interview lasting approximately one hour with the researcher.
2. Complete 5 journal entries using at least 200 words each. Each of the entries should take approximately one hour or less to complete.
3. Complete a recorded focus group interview with the other sample members, facilitated by the researcher, to discuss the purpose of the study. The interview should last approximately one hour.
4. Review your responses from the interview and the focus group interview to ensure recording accuracy. This review should take approximately one hour.

***Do I have to be in this study?***

No, you do not have to be in this study. If you want to be in this study, then tell the researcher. If you don't want to, it's OK to say no. The researcher will not be angry. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

***What if I have a question?***

You can ask questions any time. You can ask now. You can ask later. You can talk to the researcher. If you do not understand something, please ask the researcher to explain it to you again.

Signing your name below means that you want to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Robert Todd Mitchell  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. James Eller - \_\_\_\_\_

Liberty University Institutional Review Board  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix G**  
**Participant Thank You Letter**

June 21, 2022

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am extremely grateful for your willingness to participate in this research. The sharing of your unique experience has assisted me in giving voice to students who have lived the phenomenon of school closures. I am eternally thankful for your support.

Enclosed is your interview transcript for the purpose of the member check. Please read through the transcript at your earliest convenience and consider if the transcript accurately captures the essence of your experience. Do not be concerned with grammatical errors. Remember, your description of the experience is what is most important in this activity. Contact me if you would like to make revisions or elaborations to the transcript. I am happy to arrange a future meeting to discuss any concerns you may have.

Once again, your time and efforts are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

R. Todd Mitchell

## Appendix H

### Individual Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me, and explain how you came to be a part of this study.  
CRQ
2. Describe the nature of your relationship with BDS, the school grade you were in during the 2018-2019 school year, and please share your HM story. CRQ
3. So to clarify, what kind of loss did you or your family experience during and after HM?  
CRQ
4. What was it like to be displaced from your normal routine? CRQ
5. Considering the various types of learners (auditory, visual/spatial, physical/kinesthetic, social/interpersonal, solitary/intrapersonal, etc...) what kind of learner would you say that you are; and how did the school closure affect your ability to learn? SQ1
6. What was it like to return to campus after being at home for that period; and did you continue to work from home to maintain your academic progress? SQ2
7. What was it like returning to the classroom and sitting through academic lessons covering new material with your teacher? SQ3
8. How did the time off from school during the storm recovery affect your outlook toward goal setting and aspirations for when you are older? SQ3
9. How did the time off from school during the storm recovery affect your outlook toward failure or hardship? SQ3
10. How much of your learning, or lack of learning, during the 2018-2019 school year would you attribute to luck, chance, fate, or providence; please elaborate or explain in depth?  
SQ4

11. In what ways, if any, do you feel like you missed out on a quality education during the 2018-2019 academic year with the storm's closure? CRQ
12. To clarify, do you believe you suffered from learning loss during the school closure of 2018-2019; and if so, do you attribute this loss to your abilities as a learner, your effort or lack of effort, the situational difficulties, or do you simply chalk it up to luck or chance? Please elaborate on your response. CRQ
13. Let's talk about the pandemic and the closure in the spring of 2020. Please explain in detail, how you and your family were directly affected by COVID-19? CRQ
14. What was it like to have school canceled again for the second year in a row? CRQ
15. How did the move to distance learning affect you as a \_\_\_\_\_ learner, please explain with as much detail as possible? SQ1
16. Did you find that your level of effort increased or decreased with the move to distance learning; please explain how? SQ2
17. What was it like to have to adapt to distance learning in the middle of a school year? SQ3
18. What was it like not being able to see your classmates in a brick and mortar setting that you were accustomed to? SQ3
19. How much of your learning, or lack of learning, during the 2019-2020 school year would you attribute to luck, chance, fate, or providence; please elaborate or explain in depth? SQ4
20. To clarify, do you believe you suffered from learning loss during the school closure of 2019-2020; and if so, do you attribute this loss to your abilities as a learner, your effort or lack of effort, the situational difficulties, or do you simply chalk it up to luck or chance? Please elaborate on your response. CRQ



21. On a scale from one to five, with one being completely unprepared and five being completely prepared, how prepared were you to face the academic challenges the following years after each respective school closure? Please elaborate on your rating.  
CRQ
22. How did each school closure affect your mindset toward learning? CRQ
23. How did each school closure affect your mindset towards your future goals and aspirations? CRQ
24. I would like to ask you a question that will prompt you to put everything together, so to speak. Reflecting on your lifetime of academic progress, what advice would you give to a student who you know is about to go through a traumatic school closure and a global pandemic, so you can ensure they are more successful than you may have been? CRQ
25. Describe your experience of learning loss during the combination of both school closures metaphorically. What would you liken, associate, or compare each separate closure to and what would you liken, associate, or compare the overall all experience to? CRQ
26. We have covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've given to this. One final question... What else do you think would be important for me to know about your experiences during the school closures, as it relates to your learning or loss of learning? CRQ

## Appendix I

### Individual Journal Prompts

1. Using at least 200 words, recount your experience as a BDS student during the months of October and November during 2018; include any transitional accounts that occurred with your school and specific challenges you may have faced academically during the aftermath of the storm recovery. CRQ
2. Using at least 200 words, recount your perception of how the local school district made accommodations to your situation with regards to grading and/or statewide high-stakes testing during the closure resulting from HM during the 2018-2019 school year. CRQ
3. Using at least 200 words, recount your experience as a BDS student during the months of March, April, and May at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year; include any transitional accounts that occurred with your instructional methods or platforms and describe any specific challenges you may have faced academically during the closure brought on by the pandemic. CRQ
4. Using at least 200 words, recount your perception of how the state and local school district made accommodations to your situation with regards to grading and/or statewide high-stakes testing during the closure resulting from the pandemic during the 2019-2020 school year. CRQ
5. Using at least 200 words and reflecting on your experience of learning loss during the combination of both school closures, what metaphorical comparison would you use to describe or give voice to your individual experience with each closure (HM and COVID-19) and the overall subsequent year school closure phenomenon; elaborate and explain why you choose the metaphorical description? CRQ

## Appendix J

### Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Will each member of the group introduce themselves by sharing your first names only, your grade level, and the school that you currently or most recently attend and the school you attended in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020? CRQ
2. Would a volunteer begin by identifying which of the two closures caused the greatest challenge to your academic goals and progress as a student? Please describe which of the two closures seemed to impact your learning abilities and style most prominently, and elaborate on why you believe this to be so. SQ1
3. As a follow up to John's response, which of the closures seemed to impact your mindset towards school most negatively? Please elaborate on why you think this is so. SQ3
4. Would anyone in the group agree that transitioning to a new remote or virtual delivery model, outside of the traditional brick and mortar classroom, added additional challenges to the closure of the pandemic; please explain how? CRQ
5. In what ways did the trauma related to the hurricane contribute more to potential learning loss than the closure of the pandemic alone? CRQ
6. Can I have a volunteer comment on which closure seemed longer, despite the actual length; and why? SQ3
7. Would anyone agree or disagree; please explain? SQ3
8. Sally, how do you think the closures impacted the quality of your work and the effort you put forth? SQ2

9. Research indicates that the majority of K-12 students never suffer an extended school closure. You all have suffered two in subsequent years. How do you believe this, if at all, will impact your futures? Feel free to respond negatively or positively. CRQ
10. What would you compare suffering two school closures in subsequent years to, and why? Elaborate on the connections to what you have experienced? CRQ
11. Did anyone find the questions on the metaphorical description challenging in either the interview or journals, if so, why do you believe this was a struggle? CRQ
12. How did your teachers attempt to make up for lost time upon your return to school after each closure? Can anyone share a specific example that you remember? Did you feel like this was necessary? SQ3
13. For those who did believe learning loss occurred during the closures, did anyone find that you were more likely to attribute cause, or blame your learning loss on bad luck or chance? If so, why? Can a volunteer please follow-up in agreement or disagreement? SQ4

### Appendix K

### Reflective Journal Sample

Level	Difficulty	Effort	Ability	Student
1	3	2	4	Caleb
1	4	2	3	Ella
1	4	3	2	Halle
1	4	2	3	Irvin
1	3	4	2	Jacob
1	4	2	3	Tricia
1	4	2	3	Olivia
1	3	4	2	Randy
1	4	2	3	Thomas
1	4	2	3	Virginia

(3.7) (2.0) (2.8)

15 - Table 9 - p.152  
 Caleb - Sacrificial period of life  
 Corey -  
 Dale -  
 Ella - A song by Olivia Rodrigo entitled One Step Forward, Three Steps Back  
 Halle - student  
 Irvin - A member of a racing athletic team  
 Jacob -  
 John - Another day at the office  
 Laura - student  
 Max -  
 Olivia - A difficult message delivered by a coach  
 Randy - A battle of life  
 Thomas - A movie I have seen before  
 Tricia - student  
 Virginia - A bad dream she couldn't make from

Personal Themes - 8 - 158  
 151 - 9 - Comparative BOS and Family  
 152 - 10 - BOS formal subgroup Data  
 153 - 11 - Subgroup Descriptions  
 154 - 12/11  
 K 1 2 3 4 5 6  
 5/6 6/7 7/8 8/9 9/10 11/12  
 19/20 20/21 21/22  
 10: 2GR  
 11: 10/10/20

Central QUESTION

SWS:

1. AT
2. Ability ~~Decrease in ability~~
3. Effort
4. Level of Difficulty
5. ~~Ability~~ Luck or Chance / Providence Circumstances

Social Isolation  
 Developing Agency  
 Laying Confidence from Stakeholders

Ranking

1. Luck or Chance
2. Effort
3. Ability
4. Difficulty

78 - 82.3	4.3
81 - 86.1	5.1
82.5 - 86.9	4.4
88.5 - 90	1.5
3,825	

18-19 - 19-20	-.5	12	26.3	17.4	10.8
19-20 - 20-21	-.1	8.4	3.9	1	1.7
			Tues	Fri	

(13.2) (2.98)

Red Cross

Storm Year - (1-10) } 4/5 preparedness  
 COVID Yr - (1-10) } 7 or 8 - Teachers did well - 10 w/ no storm  
 3/5 preparedness EasyLink 5/5 preparedness

Strong

Custom - whole year living in apartment - out of home

Missed quality ed (storm) - No - all standards covered

- 2 Ability/Level of Difficulty
- 1 Effort - gave all the whole time
- 4 - Circumstance
- 3 Chance, Providence, Luck

This time its very different because it was on a global stage

I thought it was a waste of time. (Dumbled down)

Instructions with no Discussion - Lack of connection  
 Emotional w/ teachers

Strong - (COVID Affected work ethic)

I missed the classroom format

They covered standards but lacked depth - Not stretched out

Some were definitely in a state of apathy

Expectation moved from teacher to student