

## **Transcript of Interview with Mario A Travino by Mario S Travino**

**Interviewee:** Mario A Trevino

**Interviewer:** Mario S Trevino

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**Location (Interviewee):**

**Location (Interviewer):**

**Transcriber:** Lily Crigler

**Abstract:** Mario A Travino shares his experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to being an elementary school teacher.

**Mario S Trevino 00:01**

So for this interview, I will be talking with my dad about his experience during this pandemic. So I'll let him introduce himself.

**Mario A Trevino 00:11**

My name is Mario A Trevino. I've completed my 23rd year as an elementary school teacher. Currently I work at, for Harlandale Independent School District at Columbia Heights Elementary, teaching second graders, which I've taught before. This is my fourth year teaching second graders. Also, I've taught fourth graders and fifth graders for most of my 23 years.

**Mario S Trevino 00:41**

Okay, so now that we know that you've been in this elementary school background for a while, how would you say the pandemic affected you during the first few weeks when everyone found out about the whole situation?

**Mario A Trevino 01:01**

The pandemic affected us when it started pretty hard because as a district or even as a teacher, we were not prepared to deal with this pandemic, of the students having to go online. You know, I work at a title one school, so it's difficult for them to just say, oh, we can just go online. Most of the students do not have a computer or internet available.

**Mario S Trevino 01:35**

Since like you said, you work at a title one district, would you say that your online experience took a little longer to get adjusted to like, as in children required more time to make their full adjustment?

**Mario A Trevino 01:53**

I would say in a way it did. And I'm realizing that you know, some second graders are very knowledgeable about using a computer. But once you're in school, because being in school, the teacher can use immediately help, but now we also had to depend on parents helping them, can't log on, do not know a certain password or username, connecting them to their inter-, to their routers at home. For that we need parents and parents are not, you know, a lot of students, or my students, their grandparents are the ones taking care of them. So it affected them in a difficult way, having to not only teach the student, but at the same time in some instances, as teachers, we had to teach the parents, their caregivers, and in other instances, even teach ourselves as teachers. How do we deal with all this technology that students are going to be needing during this pandemic?

**Mario S Trevino 02:56**

The problems that you talked about how you had to deal with a lot of parents or grandparents in some cases, was there a language barrier there as well for some teachers? I know that at your school, it is mostly bilingual, but were there any teachers who had a tough time communicating with the parents of their students?

**Mario A Trevino** 03:18

Yeah, some parents in my school did have that problem. I'm a bilingual teacher, so I can speak to the parents or their grandparents in their native language, Spanish. But there are some students that you know, in our, in a monolingual classroom, but unfortunately, their parents do not speak English. So monolingual most of the time, not always, but there's some teachers that the only language they know is English. So it's hard. How are they going to communicate not only hi, bye, but technical issues of how to help the, their child connect to the internet, realizing that all I know is very little Spanish, which is not going to get me by conversational Spanish, yes, but not, or how to connect to the internet with a parent or a grandparent that only speaks Spanish, so it was tough for some teachers.

**Mario S Trevino** 04:15

Like you said, during this time, you were a second grade teacher, seeing how second grade kids are younger, when it comes to other kids in elementary, would you say that your group had more challenges? Or did they find it easier to adapt to a new setting?

**Mario A Trevino** 04:38

I would say I mean, obviously they had it a little bit easier than the kindergarteners or first graders, but, and maybe a little bit easier than some third, fourth or fifth but you know, the ones are more fluid in connecting and being up to par with technology would have to of been the upper kids, the students in fifth grade or third grade or fourth grade. But you know, that's, that year, I had 12 students in my classroom online, and they were very knowledgeable. So that helped a lot. You know, they were able to remember their passwords for different websites, so that that really helped. But yes, I know that teachers in the lower grades had a bit more difficult time. They really needed the parents' assistance.

**Mario S Trevino** 05:24

So you said dealing with second graders, was there any time in which you had problems with attendance as in they weren't able to show up? Was it worse now that they were online, compared to when you were in person?

**Mario A Trevino** 05:41

I think it was pretty good. But we have to realize, or, you know, you have to realize that as a bilingual teacher, bilingual students up to this point in my district, they still show up more often to school than monolingual students. And talking to my colleagues, they would always have kids not showing up, kids messing around, which is I'm not saying I had 100% attendance everyday, but it was way better than having to teach monolingual students. The bilingual students in that district, they're still you know, they still believe that you, or they, they hope, and their parents also wish and know that education is the way to go. So compared to my colleagues, I had a very good, good attendance rate, a good... kids showing up. I never had those issues where, you know, the child never shows up or shows up only once a week, no. But again, I attribute all of that to them being bilingual students.

**Mario S Trevino** 06:44

Now that we're in a time where we're starting to move back towards a completely in person classroom, would you say there's challenges in that process, just like there were when we switched to virtual?

**Mario A Trevino** 06:59

I think there, there is challenges and there always will be challenges because we realize, which we kind of knew as teachers, but I don't think society or many other professions realized just how important we were. And we noticed that, you know, even though we were online, like I said, myself, students showed up 90% of the time or more, we stil, it wasn't the same as has having the students in class. So they did fall a little behind, which we're now we're dealing with, now that we are, we have 100% in person. We did see, and I do see that some students, you didn't want to believe it has teacher, but they did fall behind more than what happens every summer.

**Mario S Trevino** 07:49

That problem that you talked about that students falling behind, do you think it's something that not just bilingual or even just elementary, but do you think it's a problem that happened with ages ranging from elementary to even up to college? Do you think that is a similarity between the complete education system?

**Mario A Trevino** 08:11

I would say yes, you know, you do need that interaction with a teacher with a colleague, students needed amongst the other students, they can help each other without us realizing that they are helping each other. But when you're at home, you're isolated. That's it, it's just you. And if you, if they don't have parents that are going to motivate them, they're, they're going to be falling behind a little bit more because in the classroom, as a teacher, you're always, you know, you can do it. I know, you can give me your best. We're constantly reminding them, but at home, maybe parents had to go to work. So they were, they weren't there, like a teacher from seven to three every single day. So yeah, I think it affects everybody, not just elementary, but all the way up to higher institutional learning.

**Mario S Trevino** 08:59

And for the final part of this, I wanted to ask you, do you think there's any benefits to the virtual setting? And if so, are there some things you would want to keep as we make this transition back to a completely in person setting?

**Mario A Trevino** 09:14

I did find that there's, there are benefits because, I mean, I see my own personal as I can remember, when I went to school, there are some students that, you know, being in classes just is not the way that they learn. They prefer to alone, one on one, alone. And then there's other ones that they need that social interaction. So yeah, there is benefits to going online or being in person. I mean, it's I think it's, it's benefits both ways.

**Mario S Trevino** 09:49

I think we can both agree that hopefully, now that we are seeing safer acts being put in place, and we're dealing better with this pandemic, we hope that we can go back to finding the new normal and reaching a point where we can get rid of the gap that we saw happen due to the pandemic.