

How the COVID-19 home-schooling experience can boost creativity and enhance teacher feedback

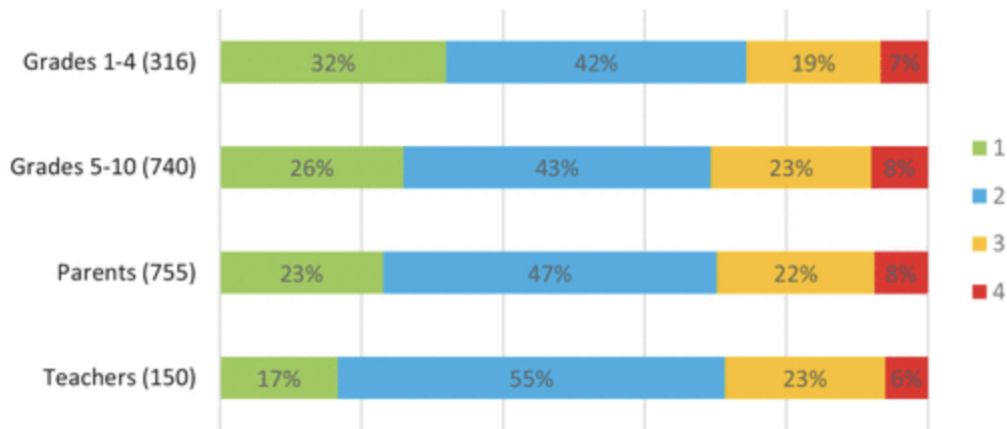


Sara Bubb

You might expect that the lockdown imposed by Covid-19 last spring would undermine schools' progress in engaging pupils with more creative teaching and learning. But in the Norwegian municipality where I am involved in school improvement, this has not been the case at all.

Much has been written about the negative impact of the pandemic on pupils' education but [research](#) that I conducted with Mari-Ana Jones has found much to celebrate about remote teaching and learning. When the Covid-19 lockdown hit, it looked like a severe obstacle to the gains in creative teaching made between September and March, but surveys in April 2020 of teachers, parents and carers and pupils aged 6-9 and 10-16 showed that was far from the case. There was more creative learning, better progress, more useful feedback and greater student independence. School leaders reported that they wanted to implement changes based on the experience of remote learning enforced by the lockdown, so that the crisis has become an opportunity for grassroots innovation.

Responses to statements about having more creative tasks in home-school than in normal school (1=strongly agree, 4=strongly disagree)



About 70% of pupils agreed that more creative tasks had taken place at home-school than normal. A teacher explained: "I have much more time to plan, create relevant tasks, and to provide feedback." Less time was spent on class management.

It was easy to assume that feedback to pupils from teachers might be severely limited without classroom contact. However, two-thirds of pupils thought that they received feedback that helped more than usual. One pupil said, "teachers get to see how good all the pupils are, and not just those who always raise their hands in class."

Just over half of the teachers also agreed that they gave more useful feedback than usual. One said, "I have probably also divided my attention more fairly between the pupils, as all pupils are now 'shouting' equally loudly."

Two-thirds of parents and carers said they had gained more insight into their children's learning and over half felt that they were in a better position to help their children with schoolwork.



Many schools have managed remote teaching well. In this particular case a key to the success of remote teaching and learning was that all the schools had digital learning well established already. Every child and teacher had a tablet or laptop, loaded with programs enabling the whole class to gather at the start and end of every day. In this close-knit community, expectations of what the schools and children could do were high. Close communication among teachers – and between teachers and families – meant the bar was high for teaching standards as well.

Let's not just assume that a 'normal school day' is worth returning to but learn lessons from what stakeholders tell us was better during home-school.

Bubb, S., & Jones, M. - A. (2020). **Learning from the COVID-19 home-schooling experience: listening to pupils, parents/carers and teachers.** *Improving Schools*, 23 (3), 209-222. doi:10.1177/1365480220958797

Sara Bubb & Mari-Ana Jones will be holding a webinar for the Department of Learning & Leadership on 20 October 4-5pm <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/events/2020/oct/virtual-event-listening-students-improve-schools-especially-covid-19-times>