EU SCIENCE HUB

The European Commission's science and knowledge service

Home   About Us   Research   Knowledge   Working With Us   Procurement

News & Events   Our Communities

Remote learning: lessons from COVID-19 and the way forward

JAN 25 2021

A recently published JRC study on schooling practices during the coronavirus pandemic shows that full-time remote education can deepen existing inequalities and often does not allow for a proper monitoring of student performance and well-being.

Teachers, parents, students – they are all important actors in remote education. ©stokkete, Adobestock

To make remote learning successful, more needs to be invested in the digital, pedagogical, social and emotional competences required.

Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: "The Digital Education Action Plan, adopted just a few months ago, responds to what we have learned during the COVID-19 crisis. During the last year technology has being used at an unprecedented scale in education and training, and continuing and improving it will make education and training systems fit for the digital age. The findings of this report will feed into this process leading to a modern, safe and equal education environment for our children."

The report findings are based on results of a qualitative study from June-August 2020 interviewing 150 school leaders, teachers, students and parents in primary and secondary education in five EU Member States (Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Italy and Poland).

They show that during full-time remote education, existing **inequalities** in access to education can worsen due to unequal access to digital infrastructure and equipment.

Lack of parents' digital competence limits their possibility to support and guide especially younger children. And also teachers and educational staff need **more advanced digital competence**, beyond digital content creation, in order to make remote schooling successful.

Monitoring student **performance** during remote schooling is challenging. Feedback takes longer which has negative effects on student learning performance. Ensuring student **wellbeing** and addressing their needs is key; they as well as their teachers need more support and training on how to maintain **good mental** health and boost resilience.
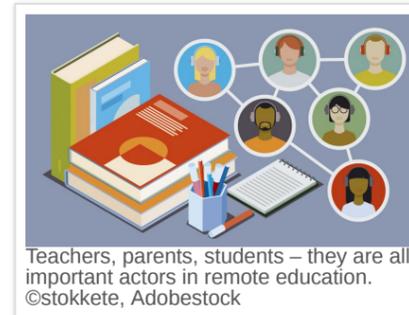
What makes full remote or blended learning successful?

Remote education, however, may complement in-person education, in particular for older children. According to the findings, the education system could better exploit the full potential of blended learning with **digital education plans** and **investment in teacher competences**.

A key element is the **access to good quality digital infrastructure and equipment**, including tools and competence to ensure **digital safety** during online learning.

The **Digital Education Action Plan**, adopted by the European Commission in September 2020 addresses these key element: a) Fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem and b) Enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.

One of the actions will be to propose a **Council Recommendation on online and distance learning** for primary and secondary education. Its focus should be an EU-wide common understanding of how to make distance, online and blended learning effective, inclusive and engaging by the end of 2021.

Facebook   Twitter   LinkedIn   E-mail

More share options