

Remote learning tough for teachers working from home with many clocking extra hours, survey finds

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Survey revealed teachers under pressure and some students refusing to turn on their camera. Credit: Raw Pixel

Nearly half of the teachers in a nationwide survey conducted during the

height of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic reported working almost an entire extra day while teaching from home, with some working in excess of 20 hours extra per week.

This was on top of teachers reporting significant mental health and wellbeing problems during this period.

The [Australian Education Survey](#), examining the impact of COVID-19, was led by Dr. Natasha Ziebell from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and received more than 1200 responses from teachers who work across the education sectors.

It found 66 percent of all teachers reported working more hours than usual during every week of isolation.

"The pressure on us right now is enormous," said one [teacher](#). "It is difficult to manage healthy breaks away from work because parents and children and our leaders all require so much from us right now."

Another said: "My life consists of remote learning. Recording lessons, responding to work, providing feedback, attending meetings, and everything else in between."

Additionally, almost three-quarters of schoolteachers surveyed expressed concerns about the remote learning negatively affecting students' emotional wellbeing.

Regarding [school attendance](#), 15 percent of all primary and secondary school teachers reported their students always attended class, while 16 percent reported their students were attending online classes only half the time.

On work standard, 56 percent of all primary and secondary school

teachers agreed students were producing the same standard of work before remote learning, 37 percent disagreed.

But the results weren't all negative, with some teachers reporting students who are easily distracted or disruptive in the classroom, engaged with their work better when working independently at home.

Teachers also identified creative opportunities emerging from the shift to remote and online delivery with teachers using a wide range of tools, including online learning platforms, making pre-recorded videos, using interactive games and tasks and activities that made use of students' home environment, such as gardening and cooking.

"We are very capable educators and have done a remarkable job of supporting our students during an unprecedented time," said one teacher. "This shall strengthen our relationships with students and parents, who have greater insight and appreciation of the role we play in their child's life."

Dr. Ziebell said the data highlights the ability of teachers to quickly shift teaching to remote learning platforms with many significantly improving their digital proficiency and collaboration with fellow staff members. It also shows what was successful during remote learning and what was challenging.

"We saw many teachers get creative in delivering highly specialized lessons, to boosting their digital literacy, and increasing communication with parents and guardians about the needs of students," Dr. Ziebell said.

"The switch to remote learning was rapid and the response from teachers and parents was remarkable, but what the teachers have identified are important considerations as the COVID-19 situation evolves and in the event that there is return to remote learning. It also exposed how

vulnerable children can slip through the cracks of the system—particularly when some teachers reported students refusing to even turn on the camera and report for their classes."

More information: Ziebell et al., Australian Education Survey Examining the impact of COVID-19 Report Summary (2020). [education.unimelb.edu.au/_dat... Education-Survey.pdf](https://education.unimelb.edu.au/_dat...Education-Survey.pdf)

Provided by University of Melbourne

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