



# Learning from lockdown

What the experiences of teachers,  
students and parents can tell us about  
what happened and where to next for  
New Zealand's school system



the  
education  
hub

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## About The Education Hub

The Education Hub is a not-for-profit with a mission to bridge the gap between research and practice in education in order to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people in New Zealand. Our work involves empowering educators as leaders of change in schools and ECE centres by ensuring they have easy access to the right information, in the right form, at the right time, and have the capacity and support to utilise it to improve practice.

## About the author

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## Executive summary

In May this year, following the eight-week physical closure of all schools in New Zealand due to the Covid-19 pandemic, The Education Hub undertook an online survey of teachers and school leaders, parents and students asking them to reflect on their experiences during the lockdown period, including the lessons learned and opportunities presented by the significant change to usual educational practice. This report discusses the findings of these surveys as well as exploring some of the opportunities, challenges and questions the findings raise for the future of school-level education in New Zealand.

The data showed that there was substantial variation in how schools and individual teachers approached teaching and learning during the lockdown period. This variation was similarly matched by a wide range of experiences of these approaches by teachers, students and parents. Across all sectors – primary, intermediate, secondary – there also were considerable differences in student engagement: between schools, within schools, and for individual students between different classes, at different times of the day and across the eight-week lockdown period.

The data suggest that a small minority of teachers preferred the experience of remote teaching and learning, and a considerable minority of students reported enjoying the opportunity to learn from home. However, a majority of respondents felt that important aspects of schooling were lost during remote learning.

While the approaches and models of distance learning are characterised by their heterogeneity, and the experiences of both students and teachers varied considerably, common themes emerged from the data regarding factors that contributed to more positive experiences. Many of these factors map neatly onto what research tells us is important for effective teaching and learning more generally. Factors include balancing attention to student wellbeing and relationships with academic learning, high expectations that are clearly communicated and upheld, rigorous learning tasks that activate hard thinking and deep learning, instructional practices informed by the science of learning, regular and clear feedback, and a balance between flexibility and routine.

The lockdown period shone a light on the range of existing inequities, disparities and divides within New Zealand's education system, as well as potentially exacerbating them. The most immediately apparent embodiment of this inequality was those students who did not have access to a device or internet connection at home to enable them to engage with online learning opportunities. However, inequalities also were identified in relation to environmental factors including whether students had access to a physical space that was conducive to learning during the lockdown period, access to parental or whānau support, and additional resources to support their learning.



**The lockdown period shone a light on the range of existing inequities, disparities and divides within New Zealand's education system, as well as potentially exacerbating them.**



Whether students held the requisite competencies and knowledge to engage in the more independent style of learning that was required of them during the lockdown period also impacted on engagement and learning outcomes. The lockdown period also raised concerns regarding the preparedness of schools and teachers to support the learning of neurodiverse students and those needing additional learning support, such as students with English as an additional language.

New Zealand, compared with many countries around the world, has been incredibly fortunate. While the lockdown period did uncover a number of tensions, challenges and concerns, the relative brevity of the period – eight weeks, of which two were school holidays – in many ways reduced the level of disruption to schooling and [hopefully] any sustained impact on student outcomes. However, in saying that, it must be acknowledged that for some, the lockdown period significantly impacted on their wellbeing and potentially their learning.

When thinking about the implications of the findings presented in this report, at a basic level, they provide guidance and suggestions for how to approach remote teaching and learning as part of NZ re-enters lockdown. However, within the data, a number of challenges and questions facing our schooling system are also identified. Any change can provide an opportunity for reflection – on what has gone before, on what happened during the change period, and on what could come next. The final section of the report identifies and reflects on the challenges and questions that can be found within the narrative reflections as well as ideas identified in the accounts of others, in New Zealand and around the world. These include how to address the sustained inequalities present in our education system, questions regarding the nature of effective pedagogy, curriculum design and instructional rigour, how to balance autonomy with consistency and coherence, and renewed consideration of how time is conceptualised and structured in schools.

**The lockdown period also raised concerns regarding the preparedness of schools and teachers to support the learning of neurodiverse students and those needing additional learning support**

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## Introduction: Setting the scene

**If you always do what you've always done,  
you'll always get what you've always got.**

Henry Ford

**When written in Chinese, the word crisis is  
composed of two characters – one represents  
danger, and the other represents opportunity.**

John F. Kennedy

Periods of change or crisis, while stressful and challenging when happening, can offer opportunities for reflection and transformation. The break from business as usual can create a space to examine existing practice, prompting new ways of thinking, and facilitating the chance to ask big questions about what is desirable and what might be possible in the future. The decision by the New Zealand Government on March 23rd 2020 to put the country into lockdown in response to the growing threat of Covid-19 prompted an eight-week closure of schools.<sup>1</sup> The lockdown period brought a substantial change to the day-to-day realities of educators, students and their families. Schools adopted new models of distance learning, and teachers, students and parents had to adjust to new expectations and new ways of working and engaging with one another.

A number of organisations involved in education as well as individual schools have undertaken work to capture the experiences of New Zealand students, teachers and parents during the lockdown period. These join a growing body of reports and projects around the world that have explored – both theoretically and empirically – the impact that Covid-19 is having on education. Many of these initiatives have moved beyond just documenting what happened or is happening to also explore how the current disruption to education simultaneously amplifies many of the challenges and issues with existing schooling systems while providing an opportunity, for those brave enough to take it, to rethink existing systems, structures and practices in education.

In a similar vein, this report hopes to add to this body of literature by presenting and reflecting on the narrative reflections of teachers, parents and students from across New Zealand. The purpose of this project is two-fold. Firstly, it captures data on what happened during the lockdown period, how teachers and schools approached remote teaching and learning, and how different members of school communities experienced, coped with, and conceptualised what happened. In doing so, it not only captures and documents an unprecedented moment in time, but it also offers some insights and lessons for the return to lockdown. Secondly, the report raises some initial challenges, questions and opportunities for the future of education in New Zealand that emerge from the narrative reflections and experiences captured. It does so not to provide answers but rather to provoke discussion and offer avenues for further thought and exploration.

<sup>1</sup> Note that of the eight-week period, two weeks were the end of term 1 holidays, and most schools partially reopened for a small number of children when the country moved to level 3 on April 27<sup>th</sup>.

## This study

On May 12th, as New Zealand moved into level 2, The Education Hub released an online survey to New Zealand teachers and school leaders, parents and students. The survey asked participants to write a narrative reflection – of any length – on their experiences of the lockdown period, exploring:

- The model of distance/online learning you and your school adopted
- The educational/teaching practices that worked well and those that did not work so well during the period of distance learning
- The important school and teaching practices that were lost or not well-supported in the online/distance environment
- The lessons learned, changes to practice, or new ideas that have emerged over the lockdown period that you are keen to transfer into your long-term practice even when schools return to “normal”

The surveys were distributed via The Education Hub’s mailing list and through social media. We received 251 submissions from teachers and school leaders, 64 from parents and 47 from students. There was no attempt to gain a representative sample. However, participants were geographically distributed across the country, and represented a range of schools. The narrative reflections were analysed using thematic content analysis in order to capture the key themes, ideas and lessons emerging from the participants’ accounts (see appendix A for a more detailed account of the methodology).

## The structure of this report

This report is organised into four parts. Parts one to three report the findings from the analysis of the narrative reflections. Part one explores what happened during lockdown, considering modes of delivery and approaches to teaching and learning, the nature of student engagement, how the lockdown period influenced issues of equity and educational inequality, and the learning and professional development of teachers during the lockdown period. Part two identifies the instructional practices that appeared to lead to more positive and successful learning experiences, while part three explores the aspects of schools, schooling, teaching and learning that were lost or more difficult to replicate during distance learning. Finally, part four of the report moves beyond the findings of the data to explore some of the challenges, opportunities and questions for New Zealand education emerging from the lockdown period. The aspects covered in the final section are not an exhaustive list, nor does the discussion necessarily provide answers or a clear route forward. Rather, it identifies areas worthy of further discussion and exploration.

# PART 1

## What was important for remote teaching and learning?

There was substantial variation in how schools and individual teachers approached teaching and learning during the lockdown period, and this variation was similarly matched by a wide range of experiences of these approaches by teachers, students and parents.

A majority of schools utilised some form of online learning. However, there were some schools that chose, largely due to issues around access to a device and/or internet connection, to focus on offline approaches. In these instances, schools developed packs of materials that were handed out to students before schools closed or delivered to families during the lockdown period, and utilised government-produced learning materials. Phone calls were also used to maintain connections between schools and families. In some instances, teachers co-ordinated two or three different modes of delivery in order to accommodate the range of student needs and circumstances.

**Primary and intermediate teachers commented on using a wider range of online platforms and apps compared to their secondary counterparts.** Google suite, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Hapara, Seesaw, and Dojo were the most commonly mentioned; one teacher listed 15 different platforms and apps that they used. Secondary teachers were most likely to utilise the Google suite or Microsoft Teams, sometimes supplemented by other tools including Education Perfect, Stile, Screencastify and Zoom. A large number of teachers commented on the need to keep online learning simple, using one platform to facilitate easy navigation and keeping all work in one place. The benefits of such an approach were discussed by parents and students, who suggested that students (and families) became overwhelmed if teachers and schools utilised too many different platforms, apps or communication channels.

**Most teachers complemented online learning with offline activities.** Primary teachers in particular utilised the lockdown period to encourage students to engage in a wide range of activities, often beyond what they traditionally would do at school, emphasising the important learning associated with play, physical activity, reading, cooking, gardening and other activities undertaken at home or in the local community.

**There was variation among schools as to the level of consistency and control asserted over teachers' pedagogy and use of tools and platforms.** A small group of teachers (9%) commented on appreciating being given choice in the way they taught online:





For some staff it would have been stressful to learn how to effectively use another new tool to teach with .... being given the flexibility to teach in the best way to suit the teacher/subject/class was important for our mental health.

Feedback from parents and students suggested that learning was most successful when there was consistency across a whole school and between classes.

It took both us as parents and our student several days to conquer the multi-site learning structure. She would have a minimum of 8 tabs open at any one time to get her work done. Our thinking as parents was that if we were to be asked to work using this process, then we would be questioning the operating systems of the business. A one-stop shop for learning is really what we needed and one that a child can navigate easily.

**Synchronous online video calls were used by teachers across sectors** as a means to maintain connections and relationships with students, to provide explicit instruction and explain key concepts and pieces of work, for whole class and small group discussions, and as a form of “office hours” enabling students to ask questions and receive feedback. The frequency of these calls ranged from weekly “drop in” sessions to daily classes following the regular school timetable.

**There were significant differences in the experiences of both teachers and students of synchronous video calls.** Some teachers considered them to have minimal pedagogical value but to play an important aspect in maintaining relationships and facilitating ongoing engagement.

I cannot emphasise enough that the “personal connection” created by a phone call or zoom meeting was very important.

Others found the live interactions, particularly among small groups of students to be particularly beneficial for learning. Common criticisms of live video calls included:

- students turning off their cameras, resulting in an inability to see body language and other behavioural cues that enable teachers to tailor their lessons and to gauge student understanding
- unstable internet connections
- distractions in the home environment; students opting out of participating in calls
- more limited engagement in discussions compared to during in-person lessons
- an inability of students to connect due to sharing devices with other family members or the timing of sessions not fitting with family routines
- concerns from both teachers and whānau about “opening up their homes”

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**There were significant differences in the experiences of both teachers and students of synchronous video calls. Some teachers considered them to have minimal pedagogical value but to play an important aspect in maintaining relationships and facilitating ongoing engagement.**



## Sleep and teenagers

Research has shown that during adolescence biological sleep patterns shift towards later times for both going to sleep and waking, meaning it is not uncommon for teenagers not to be able to fall asleep before 11:00 pm. Teenagers need about eight to ten hours of sleep each night to function at their best.

However, research from the US has found that only 15% of teenagers reported sleeping at least 8.5 hours on school nights. Getting too little sleep can lead to a reduced ability to concentrate, shortened attention span, impaired memory, poor decision making and lack of enthusiasm.

Adapted from:

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/teens-and-sleep>

**Approximately 15% of teachers commented on using video recordings either instead of or to supplement synchronous teaching.** These were either pre-recorded videos or recordings of live sessions. Secondary teachers tended to focus on videos either explaining key concepts and content or providing instructions for learning activities. Primary and intermediate teachers also mentioned using videos for singing, reading stories and suggesting fun things to try at home. Recorded videos had the benefit of enabling students to engage with them in their own time and to re-watch content. However, the asynchronous nature meant that “one of the things that has been lost is the opportunity to discuss issues as they come up, a teachable moment”.

**A majority of schools adopted a more flexible approach to their timetables and scheduling.** For many schools, this involved teachers posting work for students on either a weekly or daily basis, often supplemented with daily or weekly video calls to provide support, feedback, and to answer questions and clarify instructions. A minority of schools conducted live lessons according to their existing daily timetables. However, more often timetables were used as a guide for when teachers could choose to organise live sessions with classes or individual students to ensure no clashes between subjects. Some teachers commented on adapting their timetable, usually to condense it into a shorter period of time and providing more breaks and free time for students.

**Greater flexibility was viewed favourably by a majority of teachers, parents and students.** There were accounts of greater flexibility enabling students to engage more deeply in tasks because they were able to dedicate extended periods of time to particular subjects and “catch-up” on other subjects at a later date. Flexible scheduling also aligned with when students preferred to work and teenage sleep patterns:

It has been good for my students to be able to learn at a time that best suits them. It is ridiculous that we force teenagers to get up and attend classes so early, when in reality most of them are more ready to work after 10am.

However, as will be discussed in greater detail later on, a number of students struggled with establishing and following their own routine and schedule.

**Primary and intermediate teachers in particular also provided students with flexibility as to the learning activities with which they engaged, frequently providing “must do” and “can do” tasks.** A number of parents, however, commented that the degree of choice and the volume of activities being provided in some cases created considerable stress and quickly became overwhelming for students and their families.

## Across all sectors there was considerable variation in student engagement, which was manifest in a variety of ways:

- changes in engagement over the lockdown period – for some students engagement decreased over the eight weeks, while for others, their engagement increased as they grew concerned that they would be behind on their return to school
- differences in engagement between schools – ranging from 5-10% of students regularly engaging at some schools through to 95-100% at others
- differences within a school in individual student engagement between classes and subjects, across the school day, and with different types of activities

The reasons for engagement and disengagement were varied, and there were differences among teachers, parents and students as to the factors they identified as affecting engagement. Teachers typically identified access to a device or internet connection and the nature of the home environment as the primary reasons for disengagement. Parents and students identified a greater range of factors:

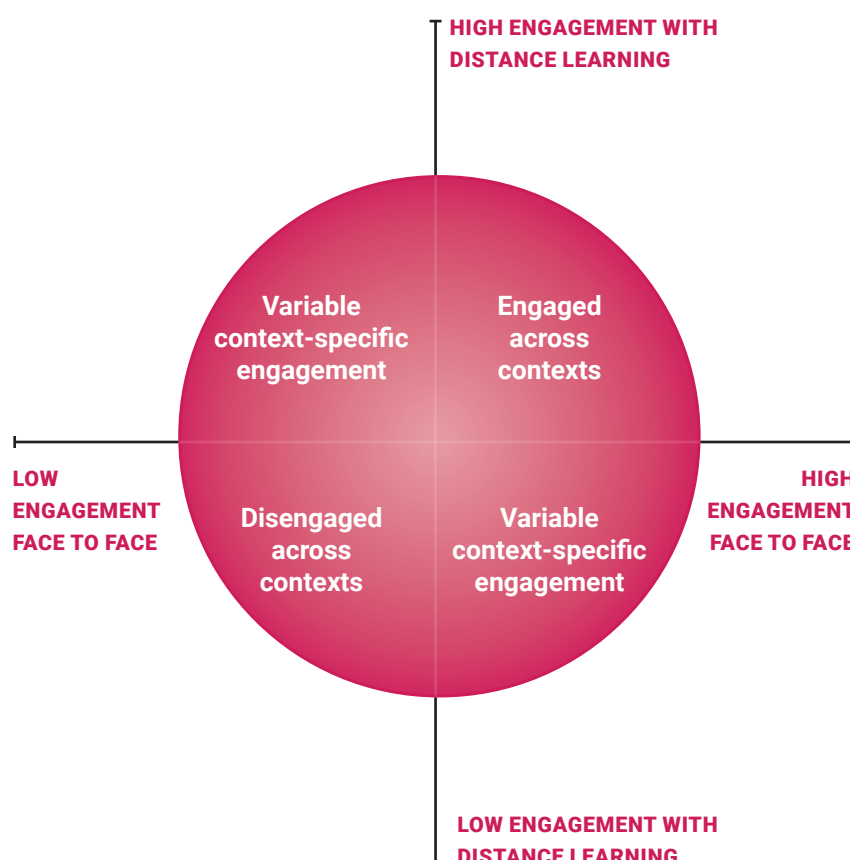
- 1) the ability of students to self-regulate, motivate and manage their time and learning
- 2) the age of students, with younger students often requiring greater parental support
- 3) families deciding to opt out – particularly at the primary and intermediate level – because it was becoming too stressful, required too much parental input, or it was considered to be low-level “busywork”
- 4) the quantity of work provided was too great, and became demotivating
- 5) a lack of expectation from teachers for work to be completed and a corresponding lack of accountability or feedback
- 6) a lack of interest in what was being taught
- 7) students determining which learning activities they would participate in and which they would not, based on need, interest, engagement – a number of students decided to not attend some or all video calls.

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Teachers typically identified access to a device or internet connection and the nature of the home environment as the primary reasons for disengagement.



**There were differences in the engagement of individual students between in-person and distance learning.** For some students, the shift to distance learning led to an increase in their engagement, with some teachers noting that students who rarely participated in class discussions in the classroom were beginning to engage online. Similarly, some students who appeared to be engaged in learning in face-to-face settings struggled with engagement and in particular the greater autonomy associated with distance learning. Some teachers commented that when those students participated in synchronous learning opportunities, they got more out of the lessons due to a reduction in disruptive behavior and classroom distractions. See diagram below.



Note: This diagram is based on averages, all engagement is influenced by a range of domain, contextual and individual factors

**The variation in engagement was also reflected in students having different responses to the prospect of returning to school.** A majority of students suggested that they were keen to return to the physical school environment. Reasons included a desire to interact in person with their friends, being more motivated to learn and engage in person, and recognising the value derived from face-to-face interactions with the teacher and other students in the classroom. However, a substantial minority of students indicated that they would prefer to continue learning at home.

As one parent explained:

My daughter loved it so much we are considering to kura depending on how school handle the return to school. Her results were excellent, her anxiety very low and she enjoyed school more than she has for years. I would love for the school to offer a permanent online opportunity for a large number of students and have it become the norm rather than the exception, my daughter adds 3hrs a day to her school day travelling and poured that extra time into her work during lockdown. I was delighted by the whole process and sad to send her back to school.

**During remote learning, disengagement and non-engagement became more evident to teachers, although this does not necessarily indicate an overall increase in disengaged students.** Teachers were able to utilise the (admittedly blunt) measure of who was logging onto the online platforms, participating in calls and submitting work to track engagement.

**While attendance is higher overall during face-to-face lessons, this should not be used as a proxy for engagement (and in turn engagement, while important, is not a proxy for learning).** As one teacher reflected:

50% engagement is not great, but what is it like in f2f? Probably about the same, but the attendance is higher f2f.

Student accounts suggest that many of them benefit from the supports and accountability structures of school-based learning. However, levels of disengaged behaviour remain high in many face-to-face settings. Experiences during lockdown suggest a need for schools to collect more student voice in order to better understand why and when students are disengaging from their learning.

**The lockdown period shone a light on the range of existing inequities, disparities and divides within our education system, as well as potentially exacerbating them.**

**The most immediately apparent embodiment of this inequality was those students who did not have access to a device or internet connection at home to enable them to engage with online learning opportunities.** Access varied significantly both between schools and within schools. Teachers discussed their concerns that the lockdown period will have exacerbated the achievement gap among students. While many schools and teachers went to considerable lengths to address inequalities of access by providing devices to students, delivering learning materials to students' homes and in some cases making daily phone calls to support the learning of students at home, there was substantial variation in the quantity and quality of teaching and learning students received and engaged with over the lockdown period.



**Access varied significantly both between schools and within schools. Teachers discussed their concerns that the lockdown period will have exacerbated the achievement gap among students.**

**A number of teachers expressed concern that the lockdown experience would lead to greater disparity in educational outcomes for some students.**

Alongside inequalities in access, inequalities also were identified in relation to student-level and environmental or context-level factors. Individual students' capacity and readiness to learn, particularly at a distance, varied considerably. This included whether students possessed the requisite foundational knowledge, learning skills and social and emotional competencies to effectively engage with learning opportunities. Furthermore, the home context of students, including access to a physical space that was conducive to learning, access to parental or whānau support, and access to additional resources to support learning, impacted students' learning.

**Concern was also raised by teachers over their levels of preparedness and resourcing to support the learning of neurodiverse students and those needing additional learning support, such as students with English as an additional language.**

These reports were similarly recorded by both parents and students, who commented particularly on the greater quantity of reading required during remote learning, and the often fast pace of discussion during video calls. There were reports of schools successfully utilising learning



## Beyond the digital divide

While access to a device and the internet is a very tangible (and real) representation of the inequalities that exist within education and society more broadly, it belies a much deeper set of issues affecting equity in educational achievement. The digital divide is just one part of a much larger learning divide. The lockdown period made evident that not enough progress has been made towards addressing the inequality of social and educational capital students bring with them to their learning. Research has demonstrated that in a majority of cases, the learners who are best able to navigate the learning experience in online courses are those that already have considerable learning experience and have the

necessary skills, knowledge and dispositions to be able to regulate and drive their own learning. This becomes particularly problematic as, in many instances, online and distance learning contexts offer less of the traditional structures that support learners to build the necessary knowledge, learning dispositions and behaviours to participate effectively.

Equality of participation and outcomes in online learning are further challenged by online learning experiences frequently being conceptualised as decontextualised. Too often, little thought is given to the environments and spaces inhabited by individual learners. A



student's ability to learn and build knowledge is affected in part by their environment, and online learning is inextricably linked to a learner's offline environment. Factors such as having a suitable space at home in which to learn, the capacity of family members to support learning, access to books and other materials to enrich their education, and the other factors and challenges they have to compete with all impact a student's ability to engage in learning.

support teachers to work with both teachers and individual students to support ongoing learning. However, the ability to design learning pathways and opportunities that provide the necessary variety in supports and scaffolds for the diversity of learners is a substantial challenge, both in online learning and in face-to-face settings.

## **Overall, the lockdown period was an opportunity for considerable professional learning and growth for teachers, prompting the development of new skills and knowledge, as well as new opportunities for teacher collaboration and cooperation.**

**Teachers reported receiving support for their learning through school-led professional learning and increased teacher collaboration.** A number of schools provided some form of professional learning for teachers. Much of this learning focused on upskilling teachers in teaching online and different platforms, tools and apps. Several schools reported utilising teachers in different leadership roles, including Kāhui Ako positions, to support the learning of teachers. There also were reports of teachers in the same syndicates or departments collaborating more closely than they previously had done so that they could distribute the workload, particularly with respect to planning and the creation of learning activities and tasks.

**A majority of teachers felt their school management recognised the importance of and supported their wellbeing.** This was achieved through having clear and consistent expectations, regular communication and check-ins, as well as through professional development and opportunities to distribute the workload across teaching teams. However, for some teachers, they received little support from management:

I think areas that have been neglected by our school and the government is consideration of staff wellbeing. A lot of focus is on student wellbeing, but I keep hoping for an email or something from senior management asking me how I am doing and what they could do to help.

**There is some evidence to suggest that teacher learning was encouraged and enabled over this period.** The factors that appear to have contributed to this include the range of accessible learning opportunities on offer, many of which were offered free of charge by education organisations; greater teacher need to upskill resulting from the shift to distance teaching; and the increased flexibility and control many teachers experienced over their time, which provided some teachers with more discretionary time with which to engage with learning opportunities.

**There were also reports of teachers in the same syndicates or departments collaborating more closely than they previously had done so that they could distribute the workload, particularly with respect to planning and the creation of learning activities and tasks.**



## PART 2 What was important for remote teaching and learning?

While the approaches and models of distance learning are characterised by their heterogeneity – between schools, within schools and sometimes within specific classes – and the experiences of both students and teachers varied considerably, common themes emerged from the data regarding factors that contributed to more positive experiences. Many of these factors map neatly onto what research tells us is important for effective teaching and learning more generally.

**Much of the success of remote learning was reliant on the strength of relationships that existed – between teachers and students, between the school and parents, and between school leaders and teachers. These relationships were further underpinned by a strong, coherent school culture that was embedded across all aspects of the school, its processes and systems.** While existing relationships were critical during the lockdown period, teachers also reflected on how much more difficult it was to build or maintain relationships in an online environment:

One of my biggest concerns about this model is the way in which it deprioritised and made difficult the building of relationships.

The importance of incorporating a specific focus on relationships during teaching and learning was identified by teachers, parents and students. While students appreciated teachers' efforts to maintain connections, there remained a considerable number of students who reported not feeling confident or comfortable to ask their teachers for help or support.



### School culture and relationships

Students will be more motivated and successful in school when they believe that they belong and are accepted at school. The creation of a school culture where students feel safe, valued, supported, accepted and appreciated for their best qualities, and able to be their authentic selves, leads to improved student wellbeing and achievement. Similarly, the nature of teacher-student and

student-to-student relationships also substantially impact students' learning and wellbeing. It is important to realise that social connection – the interpersonal and interdependent closeness between people resulting in a sense of belonging – is not related to the number of friends or frequency of interactions but rather the positivity and closeness that an individual perceives in their interac-

tions with others. Teachers demonstrating genuine interest in and care for their students, holding high expectations, and supporting students to learn and achieve are essential to developing social connection and therefore student wellbeing and academic success.

Developed from a range of resources on [theeducationhub.org.nz](https://www.theeducationhub.org.nz)



**For some teachers, the lockdown period provided an opportunity to build or strengthen their relationships with whānau as it offered greater insight into the home lives of their students and opened up new channels of communication.** A number of teachers did question what this greater sense of connection and partnership could look like moving forward in terms of opportunities for maintaining closer relationships following lockdown. Teachers reported that the use of deans, support staff or senior leaders to connect with students and families who were not engaging or needed extra support was a particularly effective model for further supporting home-school connections.

**Some parents reported that the lockdown period gave them an opportunity to gain an insight into their children as learners.** For some, this involved a deeper understanding of what their children were actually capable of. For others, it enabled them to identify gaps in their child's learning. The greater role that many parents played in their child's learning during lockdown provoked a wide range of responses. Many parents valued the greater visibility and closer connection between home and school, but also experienced feelings of being overwhelmed, out of their depth, or unsure of how best to support their children. The parents of secondary school children often expressed the reticence of their child to share with them what they were working on or the expectations of their school.

**Focusing on wellbeing was recognised by a majority of students, parents and teachers as being important over this period.** Most teachers commented on incorporating a focus on wellbeing into their teaching and learning during lockdown. This took a variety of forms, including incorporating wellbeing-focused activities as part of video calls or, in secondary schools, holding tutor or form time to support students' wellbeing; having daily check-ins to see how students were getting on; and the inclusion of learning activities focused on wellbeing. For some families, the balance between academic work and wellbeing was not right. This included those who felt too much emphasis was placed on wellbeing at the expense of academic work:

A majority of the zoom meetings were all about 'how are you doing?' Rather than what have you been doing. It was not a class like setting at all, just a talk about your emotions kind of time. Which made them feel uncertain about how they should feel as it was not the normal types of discussions and focus that their teachers have. I am discouraged about how learning now takes place at the primary and intermediate school. I feel like it's too easy going and the kids aren't pushed enough.

However, there also were those families who felt the quantity of work was too high, leading students or families to decide to opt out from schoolwork. There could be more of a focus on wellbeing for the teenagers, not overloading them with work.



## Wellbeing, learning and our emotions

Over the past two decades, advances in neuroscience have revolutionised the way we think about the connection between learning, emotions and the brain. There is extensive evidence that emotions and learning are inextricably connected and that learning is affected by our prior experiences and our emotions. This means teachers can leverage the power of positive emotions and utilise affect-based strategies to improve teaching and learning. While positive emotions can have positive impact on learning and lead to improved learning outcomes, negative emotions can have the opposite effect. When the brain is exposed to negative emotions such as fear, sadness and stress, it reacts by releasing specific chemicals (neurotransmitters) that have the effect of blocking an individual's thoughts and behaviour (emotional blocking). A student who is stressed in their personal life cannot learn effectively and will have a harder time being engaged and paying attention in class.

Adapted from: Borja, C. (2019). *The Brain, Emotions and Learning*. The Education Hub. Retrieved from: <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/the-brain-emotions-and-learning/>

**The frequency and consistency of communication between school and home played an important role in both students' and parents' experiences.** While there was considerable variation between individuals as to whether they preferred daily or weekly communication, regular communication delivered consistently through the same communication channels enabled people to understand expectations, organise and plan their time, and develop a routine. It was important that schools communicated both with students and with parents. Similarly, consistency in terms of when work was being set, how students were expected to complete it, and the processes used for submitting work and receiving feedback supported ongoing engagement and learning. Too much communication, and communication delivered across too many channels, tended to quickly overwhelm people.

**Instructions to students needed to be clear and precise, explicitly setting out what students were required to do.** Shorter instructions, which where necessary broke tasks into chunks, tended to be more effective in scaffolding students through the learning. Providing opportunities for students to clarify their understanding of tasks and to ask questions – through video calls, via email, or using chat functions – was beneficial. Some teachers found that recording short videos of themselves talking through a task supported students' learning.



## Designing for learning

**Research on the science of learning has identified a number of practices that enhance student engagement and learning. These include:**

- Communicating learning objectives and providing a rationale for the work being undertaken
- Structuring learning activities into an appropriate sequence of tasks and “chunking” information into manageable pieces so as not overload a student’s working memory
- Providing adequate scaffolding to enable all students to access the requisite learning
- Providing explicit instruction when teaching new content or skills and connecting new ideas to what previously has been learnt
- Ensuring students receive regular, specific, clear and task-oriented feedback as well as the opportunity to assess how they are progressing in relation to the learning objectives
- Making content explicit through modelling and examples
- Providing opportunities for students to revisit content through a range of activities

Adapted from a range of resources available on:

[theeducationhub.org.nz](https://www.theeducationhub.org.nz)

**Maintaining high expectations and holding students accountable for meeting these expectations was critical for maintaining students' motivation and engagement and facilitating learning.** Students (and their families) benefitted from knowing exactly what was expected of them, by when and why.

As the lockdown went on my children engaged less and less, one more than the other. Why? When there was no expectation placed on students to learn they didn't do it. One teacher occasionally asked the students to do an activity and share at the next session. When this expectation was made clear my children would ensure that activity was completed. However, for most learning activities it was clearly stated as optional and there was no chance to share their work and gain feedback. These aspects of teacher feedback and teacher expectation were two aspects which determined my children's engagement and effort.

**Utilising a variety of tasks that were well-matched to the intended learning outcomes and moving beyond low-level tasks and "busy work" to engage students in meaningful learning, supported motivation and engagement.**

Relying too heavily on the same tasks – common examples included worksheets in primary school or Education Perfect at secondary school – decreased student motivation and engagement. It was important that teachers carefully sequenced the tasks with which they were asking students to engage so that they built logically from one another, facilitating deeper levels of learning.

**Students who established some form of routine or daily structure were more likely to stay up-to-date with work and to maintain their engagement.**

For some students, the school maintaining their usual daily timetable was beneficial. However, for other students, schools allowing a degree of flexibility over when and how students completed tasks facilitated greater and often deeper engagement with tasks.

The biggest positive she found was being able to work at her own pace - she generally worked school hours, but if she was making really good progress in a subject she could spend the whole day on it, then catch up with her other subjects the next day for example.



## High expectations

Teachers' beliefs about their students and what they can achieve have a substantial impact on students' learning and progress. Research shows that, as well as holding expectations about individual students, teachers can be identified as having uniformly high or low expectations of an entire class of students. High expectation teachers believe that students will make accelerated, rather than normal, progress, and that pupils will move above their current level of performance (for example, from average to above average), whereas, in general, low expectation teachers do not expect their students to make significant changes to their level of achievement over a year's tuition.

Adapted from the work of Rubie-Davies, C. (2014). *Becoming A High Expectation Teacher*. Routledge.



## Motivation, choice, challenge and autonomy

Research suggests that while the potential for motivation lies within individuals, it can be influenced by the environment, and developed and maintained with the use of particular motivational strategies. Motivation is primarily influenced by: interest in the task; the value the task holds for a person; and the expectations a person has about their likelihood of success in completing the task. These three influences can interrelate. Interest can be triggered by learning about the value of the task, and further reinforced when the person does well at the task and consequently experiences positive feelings. Teachers can structure their teaching in ways that boost student motivation. This includes providing tasks with just the right level of challenge, so that with well-designed scaffolds a student can accomplish them and therefore feel a sense of competence, accomplishment and autonomy. Furthermore, providing students with structured choice, such as two different options for how to present their work, can also promote motivation (although be aware that too much choice can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and demotivation).

Adapted from Chuter, C. (2020). *The Role of Motivation in Learning*. The Education Hub. Retrieved from: <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/motivation/>

**Providing students with a degree of choice over how they completed a task typically led to greater engagement in the learning and a higher probability of the task being completed.** This worked to build student agency and a sense of autonomy over and responsibility for their learning:

I think the classes that worked best were where work was set, or a project identified, [and] the student given some choice to complete and ask for help as needed.

**Providing regular formative assessment and feedback that was connected to the expectations set by the teacher was crucial for motivation and engagement as well as for ongoing learning.** Feedback also enabled teachers to understand how well students were understanding the work being set. A number of teachers recognised that while feedback made a considerable demand on their time, the shift to distance learning enabled them to provide more regular, targeted feedback and that aspects of their approach to feedback were worth continuing when they returned to in-person teaching.

I felt that my ability to use formative assessment to inform my planning actually increased, and I put more effort in ensuring that the most important parts of the learning were focussed on. In a way, I became better at responding to my students' needs and planning more engaging content.

**The ability to provide just-in-time support and in-the-moment feedback, as would occur in the classroom, was identified by some teachers and students as critical to sustaining engagement and learning.** This often involved students being able to participate in one-on-one calls with teachers, send emails throughout the day, or utilise chat functions.

I added synchronous chat to my arsenal which was great - one class was on Discord and other classes were invited into Google Chat Rooms. This allowed me to be present for most of the day if there were quick questions that could be answered over a quick back and forwards conversation. This became apparent to me when speaking to my 11 year old daughter - she missed the opportunity to ask quick questions, often about some detail of the task, before moving on.

However, facilitating this continual availability did create a substantial burden for some teachers, particularly those in secondary schools who had multiple classes and teachers with their own families they also were caring for.

**Self-regulation and self-management were identified as critical skills students needed to engage successfully in distance learning, enabling them to structure and manage their time, to prioritise activities, and to select suitable strategies and overcome challenges.** However, teachers, parents and students reported on substantial differences in the ability to self-regulate and self-manage among students. Some teachers reported that their prior focus on developing these skills meant that their students were well prepared for taking greater control over their learning. However, a majority of teachers reported differences among students:

Some students grew self-management skills and flourished in the home/distance learning situations. Some students admitted to being easily distracted and needing to be in the school environment to keep focused.

Differences at the individual family level were also mentioned in the accounts of a number of parents:

If your children are self-motivated (about 30% in our family) then it is plain sailing, but I am assuming that for the majority of families lock down learning would have been a struggle at least half of the time.

**There was general recognition from teachers that it was challenging to develop the systems and structures at a distance to support the development of self-regulation and self-management skills.** Similarly, students commented on the absence of the school environment and the teacher as motivators during distance learning.



## Self-regulation and self-management

Self-regulation is the process by which students monitor and control their cognition, motivation, and behaviour in order to achieve certain goals. There are several interweaving theories of self-regulation, but most common models conceptualise self-regulation in terms of a series of steps involving forethought or planning, performance, and reflection. These steps can be explicitly taught

and, while self-regulation increases to some extent with age, the research is clear that self-regulation can be improved and that the role of the teacher is crucial in supporting and promoting self-regulated learning. What is more, students' emotions and their beliefs about their own ability play a key role in the development and exercise of self-regulation, and teachers can further support

self-regulation by teaching students about self-efficacy, the impact their own beliefs have on their ability to learn, and the role of the emotions in learning.

Adapted from Chuter, C. (2020). The Importance of Self Regulation for Learning. The Education Hub. Retrieved from: <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/self-regulation/>

## PART 3 What was lost during remote learning?

While a small minority of teachers preferred the experience of remote teaching and learning, and a considerable minority of students reported enjoying the opportunity to learn from home, a majority of respondents felt that important aspects of schooling were lost during remote learning.

**The social component of teaching and learning was challenging to replicate in distance models. While teachers endeavored to offer opportunities for connection with students (and in many instances these were appreciated by the students), the online interactions and engagement were not a substitute for the nature of interactions and relationships that are enabled in the classroom.** Missing from online interactions were many of the non-verbal cues – gestures, facial expressions – that contribute to in-person interactions. This was exacerbated by the reticence of many students to turn on their video cameras. Furthermore, the mood and energy of online calls were not the same as that developed in a classroom, with fewer opportunities for personal connections and conversations, or for chance encounters and teachable moments to arise serendipitously:

The important aspect of face-to-face contact and building of rapport is often lost in online learning. There's that lack of human touch and online teaching definitely feels more mechanical. You also can't hear their tone or read facial expressions over email and it makes it hard to gauge how students are learning.

Furthermore, students reported missing engagement with their friends and the social aspects of school.

**Where possible, teachers did utilise co-operative learning activities and discussions, but there was general consensus that these were, on average, less effective than in a classroom setting.** There were anecdotes of one-off highly engaged and engaging discussions, and of students who spoke and contributed more online than they did face-to-face. However, in general it was seen as more challenging to run discussions online. There similarly were fewer opportunities to unpack tasks, to engage in collaborative group work, or for students to learn from one another in the way they would do in the classroom. Some teachers did report using break-out rooms online or holding “drop in” sessions for students as a way to encourage small group discussion and to foster greater opportunities for interactions.



There are examples of teachers of practical subjects – art, drama, construction, technology, science – developing creative approaches to distance teaching and learning. However, for the most part, teachers reported it being more difficult to achieve the breadth and richness of the practical learning. As several teachers reported:

I am very much looking forward to getting back to classes, to sport, to practical work and to shared student experiences.

Online, there were fewer spontaneous teaching and teachable moments - those opportunities that arise in the natural flow of a class to dig deeper into an idea, to explore a new idea in greater detail, or to demonstrate the connection between ideas. Several teachers noted the absence of the “hot-context” ever-changing nature of the face-to-face classroom was not replicable at a distance, and much of the richness of chance discussions was lost.

## Recommendations for future lockdowns



### Government level

All children have a device and an internet connection at home



### School level

Policies and processes for distance learning and remote working, including modes of delivery, the structure of teaching and learning, expectations for staff and students, communication systems, and necessary resourcing, are in place

A cohesive school culture and a common commitment to shared values underpins all aspects of school life

Strong, bi-directional and mutually affirming home-school partnerships are present

Student voice is regularly gathered in order to understand levels of student engagement and the factors influencing engagement/disengagement

Students and staff members have adequate knowledge and skills of ICT

Clear expectations, processes and channels for timely, consistent and responsive communication among all members of the school community exist



### Instructional level

Instructional practice that explicitly teaches and actively builds self-regulation and self-management skills in students is embedded into day-to-day teaching and learning

Teachers attend to students' wellbeing but ensure that this is balanced with academic learning

Expectations are high and are clearly communicated, and students (and teachers) are held accountable for reaching them

Rigorous learning tasks that activate hard thinking and lead to deeper learning are routine

Instructional practice is informed by the science of learning

Systems are in place for providing students with regular, specific, clear and task-oriented feedback

A balance is struck between flexibility and supporting routine and schedule

Sufficient support is available for students with additional learning needs

Note: these recommendations emerge from the data collected by The Education Hub and do not necessarily reflect a complete list of items or areas that need to be in place to support schools, students and families were New Zealand to enter lockdown again.



## PART

## 4

**Within and  
beyond the  
data: questions,  
challenges and  
opportunities**

**New Zealand, compared with many countries around the world, has been incredibly lucky. While the lockdown period did uncover a number of tensions, challenges and concerns, the relative brevity of the period – eight weeks, of which two were school holidays – in many ways reduced the level of disruption to schooling and [hopefully] any sustained impact on student outcomes. However, in saying that, it must be acknowledged that for some, the lockdown period significantly impacted on their wellbeing and potentially their learning.**

When thinking about the implications of the findings presented in this report, at a basic level, they provide guidance and suggestions for how to approach remote teaching and learning as part of New Zealand goes into lockdown again (see Recommendations opposite). However, within the data, a number of challenges and questions facing our schooling system are identified. Any change can provide an opportunity for reflection – on what has gone before, on what happened during the change period, and on what could come next. This final section of the report identifies and reflects on the challenges and questions that can be found within the narrative reflections as well as ideas identified in the accounts of others, in New Zealand and around the world.

This final section of the report presents an opportunity to use the lockdown and the experiences of teachers, students and parents to think more broadly about the New Zealand school system. While in places the link between the ideas discussed in this section and the lockdown experience may seem somewhat tenuous, all of the challenges and questions raised do have a basis in the data. The data here serve as a springboard for moving beyond the lockdown, to explore these ideas and their implications more broadly. It does not, nor does it seek to, present a complete vision for the future of education in New Zealand. Rather, it is hoped that this section will provoke new thinking and raise further questions, providing a basis for further discussion and debate.

**Equity remains a substantial and unresolved issue in New Zealand.** The lockdown period highlighted the extent of the digital divide and the need for every child to have access to a device and a home internet connection in order to facilitate diverse and distributed learning opportunities. However, providing universal access will not solve the equity issue in education. Ultimately, addressing educational equity requires a broad set of approaches and solutions that go beyond just a focus on education to also address the social and economic conditions that perpetuate inequalities.

Research suggests that a child's success at school is largely set before they even enter school. A family's socio-economic status and living conditions, a child's psychological and physical wellbeing, experiences during a child's first

1000 days, and access to high quality early childhood education all have a significant impact on their success at school.<sup>2</sup> In fact, some research has shown that approximately 70% of a student's academic success at school is determined by factors outside of the school.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, if New Zealand wants to truly improve equity in education, this will require a holistic effort involving social and economic change alongside improvements to the education system.

It remains imperative that all schools are equipped, supported and required to ensure success for all students. This demands an exploration of the policy-level and structural factors that may be hindering (or enabling) these efforts as well as a deep examination of whether and how a school's culture and the teaching and learning it offers are creating an environment for effective learning for every student. Part of this must also incorporate greater support for inclusivity in schools, including ensuring teachers can effectively build relationships with, teach and support students from all cultural backgrounds, as well as neurodiverse students and those with additional learning needs.

**Deep, rigorous learning supported by the utilisation of rich tasks is not occurring consistently across all classrooms.** The types and levels of work students were expected to do varied significantly during the lockdown period. The unprecedented nature of this time, which saw teachers having to shift to distance learning models with limited preparation time as well as many teachers' awareness of the need not to overwhelm or overload families and students with academic school work, may account for some of this variation. However, there is evidence to suggest that individual school and teacher expectations and their pedagogical and curricular approaches, together with structural and system level factors, are, in some instances, setting a low bar for minimum expectations or unintentionally imposing limitations on the learning that is occurring.<sup>4</sup>

The development of deeper learning opportunities requires teachers not only to be effective pedagogues and to hold high expectations for all their students but also to be strong curriculum thinkers and designers. Harvard professor Richard Elmore's concept of the instructional core suggests that, in order to improve student learning, it is necessary to raise the level of content, extend teachers' skill and knowledge, and increase the level of students' active learning of the content. For Elmore, task predicts performance. That is, the tasks or activities students are given to do on a daily basis determine the learning that will occur. He explains, 'Teachers have expectations about what students can do, and preconceived notions about what kind of task it is appropriate to ask students to do'. Too often, the tasks students regularly are asked to do are not cognitively demanding enough, and subsequently lead to low-level learning.

**All teachers need to have a sound understanding of the science of learning and know how to translate the theory of how people learn into effective pedagogical approaches.** Research over the past two decades has made substantial advances in understanding how people's minds process and store information, and how that information is applied in new situations or to solve

<sup>2</sup> Berliner, D. Glass, G. & Associates (2014). 50 Myths and Lies that Threaten America's Public Schools; The Real Crisis in Education. Teachers College Press.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> This draws on the concept of floors and ceilings proposed in Mehta, J. & Fine, S. (2019). In Search of Deeper Learning; The Quest to Remake the American High School. Harvard University Press. It has been further explored in Hood, N. (2019). [Floors and Ceilings in Education; What limits are we placing on students and teachers.](#) The Education Hub. Hood, N. (2019). [Why the Learning Sciences also need Curriculum Design and Deeper Learning.](#) The Education Hub.

complex problems. All teachers employ a theory of learning that influences how they design their instructional practice. It is essential that teachers' theories of learning are informed by and encompass up-to-date research on how cognition works so that they can design learning opportunities that will have maximum impact for their students.<sup>5</sup>

The research documented in this report suggests that there are basic principles of effective teaching that are consistent across all modes of learning – online, distance, hybrid, face-to-face (see section 2). It is essential that these are understood and routinely utilised by teachers. This does not, however, mean that all effective teaching looks the same. In fact, The Education Hub firmly subscribes to notion of professional pluralism in teaching. That is, there are different ways of achieving the desired outcomes. However, there are common components that should be incorporated across all pedagogical approaches to ensure effective teaching and learning.

**There needs to be consideration given to the balance between autonomy and coherence/ consistency within New Zealand's education system, particularly in relation to curriculum.** There is much discussion in the education research about the balance between autonomy and consistency. Autonomy often is associated with greater opportunities for innovation in and the opportunity to adapt particular approaches and offerings to the individual school context. However, it also can also lead to more limited collaboration and opportunities for sharing resources as well as substantial differences in what children learn and are required to do in different schools. While some teachers identified that there occurred greater cooperation among teachers and between schools during the lockdown period, by and large the sharing of professional development initiatives or teaching and learning resources between schools remained limited.

At a curriculum level, consideration should be given to the balance between a local curriculum and a centrally mandated curriculum. During the lockdown period, advice commonly given to schools was that, rather than trying to do everything, schools should identify and focus on the learning they most value and want to prioritise. This presents an opportunity for opening up a national conversation about the curriculum. Is the curriculum document and the ways in which it currently is implemented in New Zealand schools fit for purpose? How should schools balance breadth and depth in the curriculum? What knowledge do teachers need to effectively implement the curriculum? Is the curriculum contributing to educational inequalities?

Currently, the implementation of the New Zealand Curriculum relies heavily on individual teachers (or in some cases schools) being expert curriculum designers. This is problematic because designing a coherent curriculum is an incredibly complex undertaking. It not only requires considerable knowledge and expertise but also a significant amount of time. It requires an understanding of how conceptual knowledge develops both within and across learning areas, over time and at different stages. A curriculum further requires



**How should schools balance breadth and depth in the curriculum? What knowledge do teachers need to effectively implement the curriculum? Is the curriculum contributing to educational inequalities?**

<sup>5</sup> See for example: Deans for Impact (2015). *The Science of Learning*. Deans for Impact. Willingham, D. (2010). *Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom*. Wiley. Coe, R., Rauch, C.J., Kime, S., Singleton, D. (2020). *Great Teaching Toolkit Evidence Review*. Evidence Based Education.

curriculum materials and resources, and research shows that the design and nature of these materials and resources impacts the learning that takes place.<sup>6</sup> However, with a local curriculum, there is little consistency or quality control over the design and development of curriculum resources and materials.

Furthermore, it has the potential to deepen educational inequalities. This is because research clearly demonstrates that what and how much a person knows directly impacts their ability to access new learning and new information, and to engage in higher order thinking tasks such as critical thinking and problem-solving.<sup>7</sup> This does not discount the importance of schools engaging with their local communities and local issues, but rather suggests that the local must not be the end point of education. Indeed, it could be argued that understanding the local necessitates also understanding the national and the global. Very rarely do events or scenarios – be they economic, social, political, environmental, historical, scientific, or ecological in nature – occur in isolation. They form part of a much broader eco-system.

**How time is used in schools should be examined.** Time was a recurring theme emerging from the lockdown reflections of teachers, students and parents. The research on time in schools provides few definite answers regarding how schools should approach time, be that the structure of the school year, the length of a school day, or the structure of a school's timetable. However, the data reported here as well as anecdotal evidence from different schools around New Zealand and internationally provides avenues for further exploration.

Consideration should be given to the length of periods to enable maximum sustained learning as well as facilitating the types of deep learning to which most schools aspire. Similarly, consideration should be given to the degree of flexibility offered to students, particularly at the secondary school level. What this flexibility could and should look like and how it might work to expand the traditional boundaries of what a school is, how it operates and how it interacts and intersects with other organisations remains to be seen.

At the teacher level, consideration of how to provide teachers with adequate time for ongoing learning, reflection and collaboration is critical. Similarly, the distribution of teachers' time across different tasks – classroom teaching, preparation, and providing feedback – and how these are distributed across different teachers within a school and across a school day or week also should be considered. For some teachers, lockdown prompted them to take a more collaborative approach to the design and preparation of teaching materials and resources. For others, it prompted a rethinking of how they structure their working day. It seems there is an opportunity to consider what this might mean in the physical school context.



**Consideration should be given to the length of periods to enable maximum sustained learning as well as facilitating the types of deep learning to which most schools aspire**

<sup>6</sup> Whitehurst, G.J. (2009). Don't forget curriculum. Brookings Institution. Chingos, M. M., & Whitehurst, G. J. (2012). Choosing blindly: Instructional materials, teacher effectiveness, and the Common Core. Brookings Institution.

<sup>7</sup> Willingham, D. (2007). Critical Thinking; Why is it so Hard to Teach?. American Educator. Retrieved from: [https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Crit\\_Thinking.pdf](https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/Crit_Thinking.pdf)



**Where to from here?** This report is not intended to be a comprehensive account of what happened in New Zealand schools during the lockdown period. However, it does provide a valuable record of some of the educational experiences of teachers, parents and students during this unique period of time. The long term impact and implications of the lockdown on schools, teachers or students remain unknown, particularly as many school systems around the world remain physically closed.

The lockdown as a whole, plus the experiences of teachers, students and parents, present an opportunity. However, it is easy to fall back into business as usual and not to follow up on the questions the experience raised, the opportunities it presented, or the challenges it uncovered or exacerbated. At an individual school level, there is an opportunity for schools to capture and listen to the voices of their community. This is not straightforward. It requires trying to make sense of the wide range of opinions and experiences, to explore what might be possible and then to plan how to make change and move forward in a way that is carefully structured and managed, inclusive and continually evaluated. At a national level, there has been some renewed focus on long-existing issues facing the education system and society more broadly. The question now remains as to how, as a country, we will choose to address them.

## Appendix A: Methodology

### The survey

The Education Hub developed three Survey Monkey surveys, one for teachers and school leaders, one for parents, and a third for students. Each survey asked participants to complete a written reflection on their experiences during the lockdown period, including the lessons learned and opportunities presented by the significant change to usual educational practice. Participants were advised that their reflections could be as long or short as they wanted and did not need to be polished pieces of writing. Nor did they need to address all of the areas listed. The survey was open for just over two weeks and participation was incentivised by a prize of \$500 to the school library of two participants.

The teacher and school leader survey also collected data on the participant's role within the school, their geographical region and school name (this was not compulsory). Parents were asked how many school-aged children they had, their region and the name of their school (this was not compulsory). Students were asked their region, year level and school name (this was not compulsory).

### Participants

The surveys were distributed via The Education Hub's mailing list and through social media. We received 251 submissions from teachers and school leaders, 64 from parents and 47 from students. There was no attempt to gain a representative sample. However, participants were geographically distributed across the country, and represented a range of schools. Information about the distribution of participants is documented in the tables below.

Given the nature of the student responses, which principally came from a small number of schools (it was suggested that teachers could use the reflective writing as a learning activity for their students), a decision was made not to include the student data in the formal analysis. However, all of the student responses were read in detail and they did shape elements of the writing up of the findings in this report.

Educator	
Teacher	45%
Middle leader e.g. HoD, head of syndicate, dean, CoL position etc	25%
Other senior leader e.g. AP, DP	12%
Other	7%
SENCO, RTLB, RTLit, learning support	6%
Principal	5%

School	
Primary or intermediate	49%
Secondary	51%

Parents	
Primary or intermediate	37%
Secondary	56%
Other e.g. Yr 1-13, Te Kura, special school	7%

## Analysis

Thematic content analysis was undertaken. All of the survey data was loaded into NVivo qualitative analysis software. It was decided to separate participants into three groups for analysis – primary and intermediate teachers, secondary teachers, and parents. The same approach was undertaken for the analysis of each of the three groups. Firstly, the data was read in order to familiarise the researcher with the key ideas. Then each element of the data was given a code, developing high-level themes and patterns within the data. These were modified and refined during the coding process and following conversations between the researchers working with the data. The primary and intermediate data was first coded. The codes developed for this data set were then the basis of the codes for the secondary teacher dataset. However, these were modified and refined due to some differences between the two sets of data. The third set of data to be analysed was that of parents. Again, the coding scheme was modified in order to reflect differences in the data.

Following the thematic coding and its review, an overview of the themes was written up, together with illustrative quotes. This was then utilised to inform the writing up of parts one, two and three of the report.



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