



Students' Reactions to Remote Learning

A data story brought to you by the Cognia Innovation Lab

Last spring, at the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, schools unexpectedly and quickly were forced to shift from the familiar face-to-face learning environment to a remote learning or learning-at-home setting. Many schools, as well as families and students, were unprepared to change their routines, structures, plans, and expectations for the entire remainder of the school year. At Cognia™, we were interested in how students, teachers, and parents were adjusting to this new learning environment. We developed surveys to learn about their experiences and emotional well-being.

From late April through June 2020, more than 70,000 individuals completed our Student, Family, and Teacher Remote Learning Surveys. Of those, more than 38,000 were students in grades 3–12, from 11 countries.

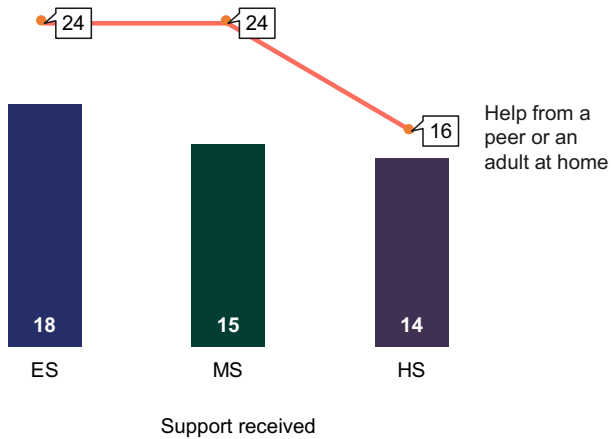
The information below is taken from responses to a selection of the questions on the Student Remote Learning Surveys. These responses give you a high-level, practical understanding of what students were thinking and feeling after the sudden transition to remote learning, to add to your insight as you begin a new school year in your physical or remote classrooms. We've organized these insights into three categories: emotional impact, academic impact, and personal impact.

To simplify, each analysis that follows is proportionally adjusted to represent a typical class size of 30 students. Unless otherwise indicated, each graph shows responses to two separate questions on the survey.

Emotional Impact

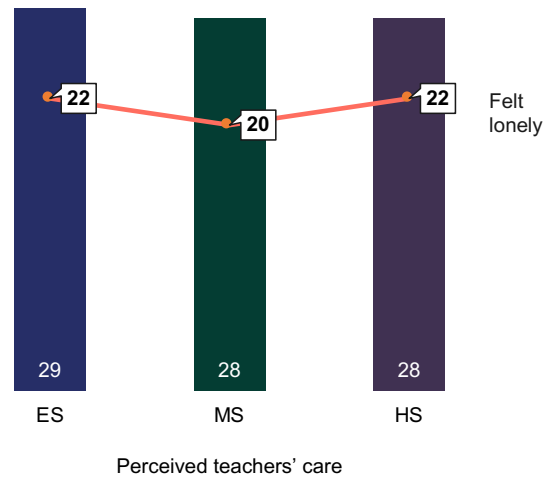
Support and help

Approximately half of the students felt they received support from their teacher most of the time, and a significant number of students first sought help on assignments from someone other than the teacher.



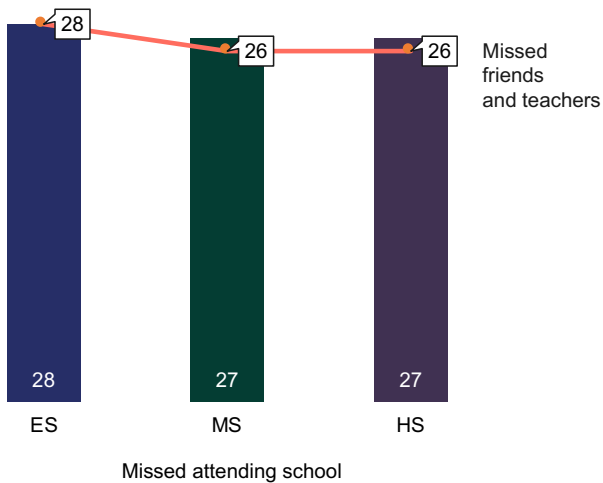
Feeling connected

Although almost all students reported that their teachers cared about them, close to two-thirds reported feeling lonely while learning remotely.



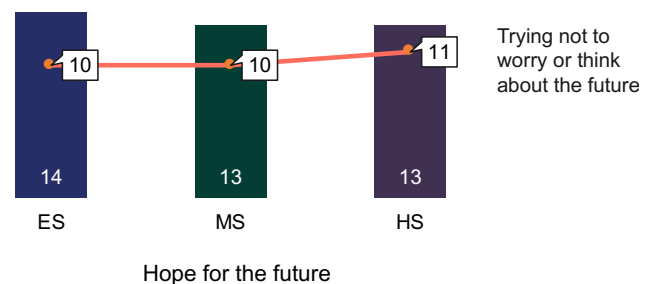
Missing school

Almost all students missed attending school and regretted not saying goodbye to teachers and friends.



Thoughts about the future

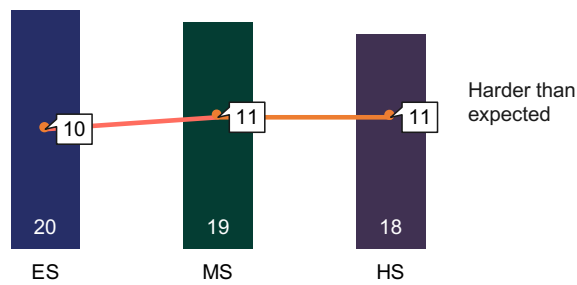
Slightly fewer than half of the students reported they were hopeful things would improve soon, while about one-third of students indicated trying not to worry or think about the future.



Academic Impact

Learning from home

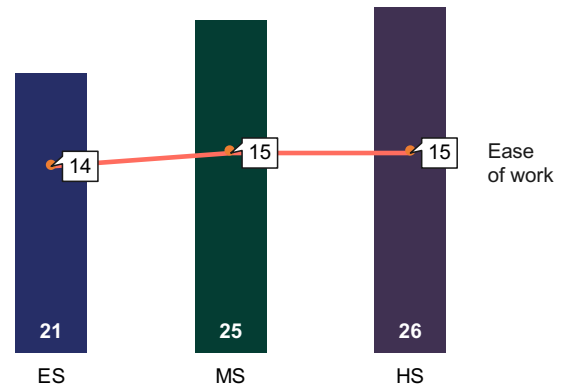
Close to two-thirds of the students, regardless of their grade level, responded that learning from home was “okay” or easier than expected, while in answering the same question, approximately one-third of students indicated learning from home was harder than expected.



Remote learning okay or easier than expected

Assignments

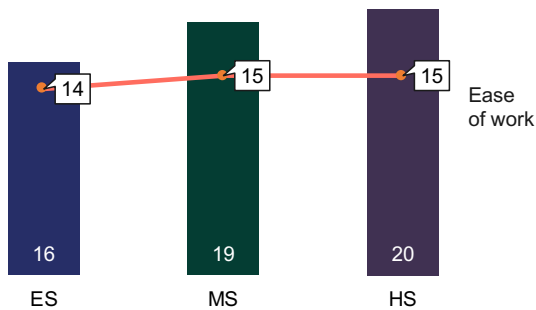
Half of the students reported that the assignments were “new and easy,” and more than half reported having more work to do in the remote setting.



Increased assignments

Preparedness

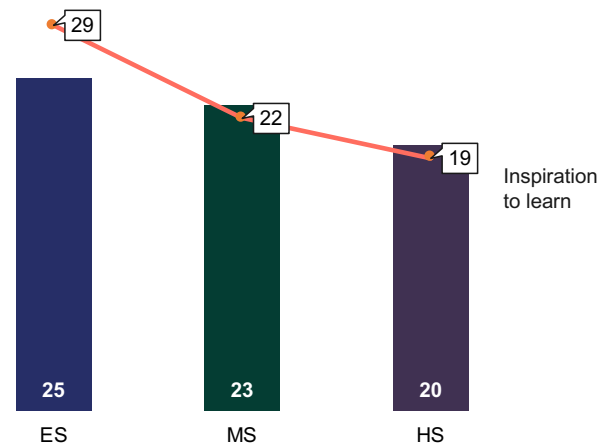
Close to two-thirds of the students felt some anxiety about being prepared for the next school year or college/career, which may be related to them reporting that the work was new and easy to complete.



Felt unprepared

Choice and inspiration

Two-thirds or more of the students responded that they had more choices to learn what interested them, and a similar number reported that they were inspired to learn beyond the requirements of initial assignments.

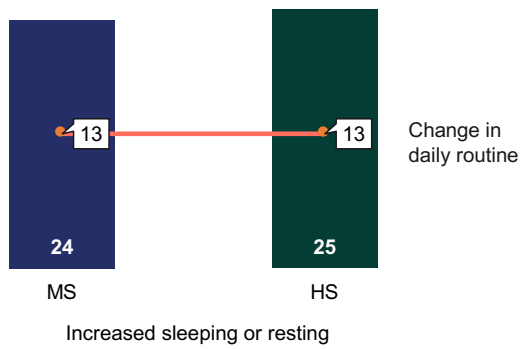


Student choice

Personal impact

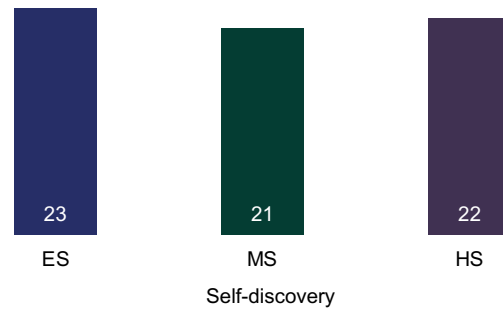
Changes in routine

Slightly fewer than half of the middle and high school students indicated that they experienced a change in their daily routine and structure at home, and almost all of these students reported that they slept or rested more while learning at home.



Self-discovery

In a single question, more than two-thirds of the students responded that they were learning new things about themselves while learning from home.



Suggestions to Improve the Remote Learning Experience

Based on the the trends revealed in this data, we suggest a few approaches school personnel can adopt to address learners' needs, and to help families address them as well.

To support learners

Learning environment

- Establish regular check-in times with individual learners and groups and hold them accountable to be present and engaged
- Send advance reminders to learners and set your expectations about what will be checked
- Teach learners how to be prepared for their check-in time and encourage them to ask questions and explain their work

Learning

- Assess each learner's level of preparedness for the new grade level or course as soon as possible and adapt lessons to meet his/her needs
- Give learners structured time to find new topics that stimulate their curiosity and hold them responsible for using the time to explore new interests
- Monitor their level of engagement and adapt your expectations and lessons if you observe detachment or lack of commitment

Learners' well-being

- Be certain that each learner has a remote learning partner who helps lessen their feelings of isolation or loneliness
- Be attuned to each learner's online behavior and commitment to learning, and immediately take appropriate action if you feel the learner needs assistance
- Allow time for learners to ask questions and talk about what they are hopeful or concerned about, and/or invite them to share

To support families

Learning environment

- Provide frequent and consistent communication about their child's progress and invite parents or caregivers to the check-in sessions
- Present suggestions about being consistent with routines, bedtime, schedules, and holding their child responsible for learning
- Ensure that parents or caregivers know your expectations for their child and understand why the expectations make a difference in their child's success

Learning

- Give easy-to-understand information about their child's level of preparedness and your plan to meet their child's needs
- Provide updates about their child's interests and areas of curiosity
- Offer tips for getting their child to talk about his/her new interests and to encourage deeper learning
- Communicate your observations about their child's engagement and collaborate on ways to improve or sustain the level of commitment to learning

Learners' well-being

- Share your remote-learning partner plan and expectations, and elicit family support
- Ask specific questions that pertain to your concerns about their child's behavior and together, develop a plan to help the child
- Check on the well-being of the parents/family and follow your school's protocol if they need support