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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON COVID-19 RESEARCH

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS FOR THE EARLY GRADE READING STUDY (EGRS), THE READING SUPPORT PROJECT (RSP) AND BENCHMARKING

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CATI	Computer Aided Telephonic Interview
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EFAL	English First Additional Language
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRS	Early Grade Reading Study
FPD	Foundation for Professional Development
GHS	General Household Survey
GoSA	Government of South Africa
HOD	Head of Department
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity
KK	Dr. Kenneth Kaunda District
NIDS-CRAM	National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey
NMM	Ngaka Modiri Molema District
NW	North West Province
PED	Provincial Education Department
PERFORM	Practical Education Research for Optimal Reading and Management
PERFORMANCE	Practical Education Research For Optimal Reading and Management: Analyze, Collaborate, Evaluate
PSS-10	Perceived Stress Scale
PSS10-C	Perceived Stress Scale COVID-19 modification
ReSEP	Research on Socio-Economic Policy

RSP	Reading Support Project
SARS-CoV-2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2
SGB	School Government Body
SMS	Short Message Service
SMT	School Management Team
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Khulisa Management Services is submitting this Preliminary Report on COVID-19 Research to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as part of the COVID-19 study which is conducted along with data collection and analysis for the Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS), the Reading Support Project (RSP) and the Language Benchmarking study.

Early 2020 marked the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 19, 2020, in response to this pandemic, the South African government closed schools and placed the country under "lockdown". Learners only returned to school in August 2020 and since then, learners were only attending school on a 50 percent rotational basis resulting in a continuation of the further loss of contact teaching time. This report delves into the impact of COVID-19 on schools, teachers and school managers in the North West Province, South AFrica.

The COVID-19 school disruption influences how schools and teachers function, which then influences learner performance and ultimately, learner outcomes. To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and future unplanned school disruptions, it is critical to understand how the COVID-19 disruption affected schooling, curriculum delivery, teacher performance, learner performance, and the psychosocial effects on individuals' emotions, thoughts, relationships, and ability to function. It is also important to understand the extent to which there were accessible alternative provisions for learning and the degree to which learning took place in the home. To explore each of these, the research team gathered insights from principals, SMT members and teachers.

This preliminary report draws on data from the educator COVID-19 survey, which was a computer aided telephonic interview (CATI) that collected responses from 439 teachers and SMT members from 197 quintile one to three primary schools in two districts in North West Province. The educators in the sample largely comprise Grade 1 to 3 teachers. The survey was implemented between the January 22 to 30, 2021 prior to the commencement of the 2021 academic year and in the midst of a "second wave" of COVID-19 infections, which resulted in the Department of Basic Education (DBE) delaying schools reopening for two weeks. The survey's timing could have affected the data. First, responses about the degree to which educators reported feeling in control and able to cope with the stress of COVID-19 could have been negatively biased by the uncertainty about school reopening in 2021. Second, educators' perceptions on learning losses were based on learner information gleaned prior to the two-month long summer break - a period during which these losses could have been amplified.

Third, educators were asked questions about a time period as far back as May and June 2020, and it is likely that recall bias may have affected their responses.

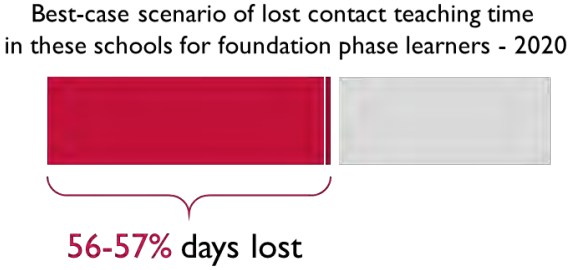
Despite these potential limitations, the educator COVID-19 survey provides insights into the extent to which teaching and learning has been disrupted due to COVID-19. It documents the level of psychosocial strain that educators are experiencing across a large school sample. Further, the survey also identifies what strategies or practices schools implemented to mitigate the disruption.

The findings are obtained from a large number of EGRS I schools and, to a lesser extent, the schools in the RSP that did not participate in the EGRS I. However, the educator and school sampling approach used for the survey remains purposive in nature. For this reason, the findings have limited generalizability and care should be taken not to extrapolate the results to all schools in the North West province or in South Africa. The findings also draw from self-reported educator responses, where self-reports and perceptions of learning losses would need to be verified with direct observations of practices adopted by schools or teachers, and objective data on learning losses.

QUESTION 1. HOW MUCH HAS TEACHING AND LEARNING BEEN DISRUPTED DUE TO COVID-19?

HOW MUCH CONTACT TIME DID LEARNERS LOSE DUE TO THE COVID-19 SCHOOL DISRUPTIONS IN 2020?

Kotzé (2021) calculates that relative to 2019, between 44 to 97 days of school days were lost for different grades in 2020. Kotzé notes that in the Foundation Phase grades specifically, 34 to 37 percent of official school days were lost in 2020 relative to 2019 due to school closures and phased-in grade approaches to the return to school. However, most schools in resource constrained school environments followed rotational time-tabling schedules, with learners only attending on alternate days. After accounting for alternate day rotational schedules, it is estimated that in 2020 Foundation Phase learners lost between 56-57 percent of school days relative to 2019 (Kotzé, 2021).



Alternative day rotational schedules were followed by most schools (at least 93%) reflected in the Educator COVID-19 Survey. Very little contact teaching took place during school closures with no online teaching identified by respondents in 92 percent of the schools reflected in the survey. Therefore, 56 to 57 percent of school days lost in 2020 relative to 2019 represents a best-case scenario of lost contact teaching time in these schools for Foundation Phase learners. If one accounts for learner absenteeism, this is likely to be considerably lower.

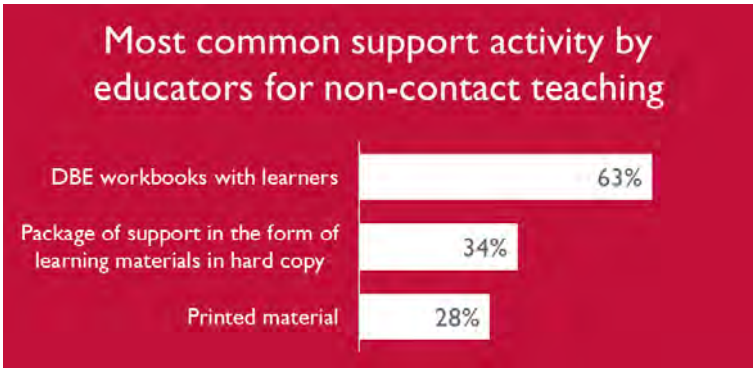
WHAT RESPONSE WAS IMPLEMENTED BY SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND HOW MUCH NON-CONTACT TEACHING DID SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS DELIVER DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD, AND AFTER SCHOOLING RESUMED?

Non-contact teaching activities during school closures

In the surveyed quintile one to three schools, almost none of the learners were reported as having access to virtual or online teaching opportunities during lockdown. Only four percent of educator respondents used an online or virtual teaching approach such as Skype, Zoom or Google Classrooms. In a school level analysis of responses, the use of online or virtual teaching during school closures was apparent in just eight percent of the schools.

Furthermore, very few educators in the two North West districts encouraged learners to listen to radio or to watch educational programs on television. Just five percent reported communicating to learners about radio or television classes.

However, the results are indicative of how many Foundation Phase learners in the two North West districts may have had access to the DBE workbooks, and potentially other hard copies of material to support learning at home. The provision of DBE workbooks or printed materials was apparent in 90 percent of 194 schools.



The most common support activity by educators for non-contact teaching was to send home "DBE workbooks with learners" (63%), followed by providing a "package of support in the form

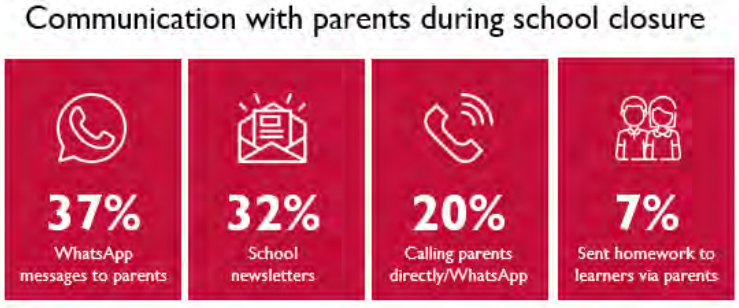
of learning materials in hard copy" (34%), and providing "printed material" which parents collected and returned (28%).

Rotational schedules when learners returned to school

For 93 percent of schools reflected in the survey, an alternate day rotational model was identified by at least one respondent in the school. The most common model of schooling adopted in Term 4 of 2020, was attendance on alternate days of the week (as reported by 51% of the educator sample) followed by a 10-day cycle of three days one week and two days the following week (reported by 39% of the educator sample). Platooning, where half of the learners attend in the morning and half in the afternoon, was very uncommon (reported by just 3% of the educator sample).

Communication with parents and teachers during school closures

The most common approaches to communicate with parents during school closures were sending "WhatsApp messages to parents" (37% of the educator sample), sending "school newsletters" (32%) and calling "parents directly or via WhatsApp" (20% of the educator sample). However, just seven percent of the respondents indicated that they sent homework to learners via parents.



Internal school communications between School Management Team (SMT) members and teachers during school closures arguably suffered with 43 percent of SMT respondents indicating that they communicated less directly with teachers during school closures.

HOW MUCH NON-CONTACT LEARNING DID LEARNERS DO DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD, AND AFTER SCHOOLING RESUMED?

Self-reported educator responses are indicative of whether any work was done by learners at home or whether efforts were made by schools and educators to support learning at home.

Non-contact learning during school closures

About 86 percent of teacher respondents provided homework to learners during the school closures. It is not clear, however, if this was distinct from just sending home printed materials and DBE workbooks with learners at the start of the school closures. Yet, even if homework was given, the question remains as to whether learners did this work? Teachers were then asked “Do you think that, in general, learners did most of the work that teachers gave them to do during school closures?” About 54 percent indicated that work was given during school closures and it was done by learners (either in full or partially).

54% of teachers reported work was given during school closures and it was done by learners (either in full or partially)

For the largest group of teachers that reported sending home DBE workbooks with learners, almost 60 percent indicated that learners did some of the work during the school closures. As expected, where teachers report uses of digital technology – reflected in the provision of soft copy material (via email or WhatsApp) or the use of online or virtual teaching – learners are more likely to be perceived as having done the work that they were given.

Non-contact learning after schooling resumed

It was necessary for schools to implement approaches to non-contact learning even after children returned to school, due to the rotational school schedules adopted and thus reduced opportunities to learn. About 90 percent of teacher respondents reported having given learners Setswana or English homework on the days they were not at school. Of teacher respondents, it is suggested that 71 percent gave learners both reading and writing homework in Setswana and 67 percent gave both reading and writing homework in English.

WHICH MODALITIES WERE MOST FEASIBLE TO FACILITATE NON-CONTACT LEARNING DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD, AND AFTER SCHOOLING RESUMED?

The use of DBE workbooks and printed materials given to learners to take home predominates as the *de facto* approach to support learning at home in North West schools in the survey sample. The use of hard copy material and DBE workbooks will also continue to be the dominant mode of non-contact learning if schools close again. For nearly 80 percent of teachers and SMT members, sending home DBE workbooks is considered the primary method for non-contact learning for future school closures.

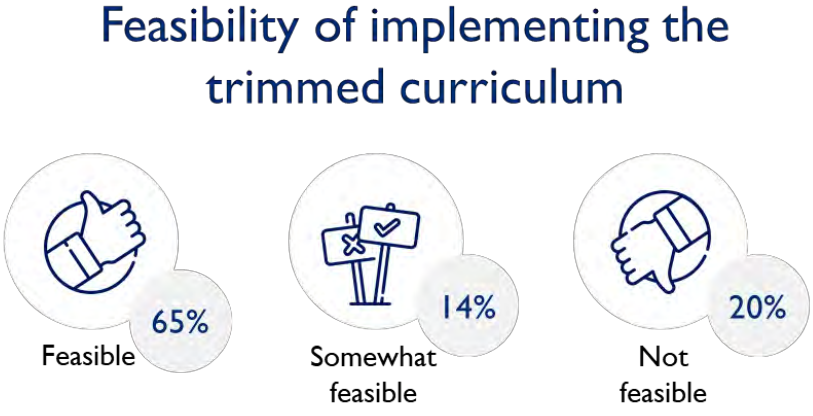
The survey highlights the limited feasibility and use of online teaching methods as a mode of non-contact teaching or learning

16% of teachers indicated that using an online (or internet) based teaching method would be feasible for them

There is little demand for training of teachers to use online teaching methods, with just 21 percent of teachers choosing "training on online teaching" as a practical support to improve their ability to teach during school closures.

TO WHAT EXTENT DID TEACHERS COVER THE STANDARD AND TRIMMED EGR CURRICULUM FOR THE 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR, AND HOW DOES THIS COMPARE TO BUSINESS AS USUAL?

There are a limited number of questions in the Educator COVID-19 Survey to address this specific research question. In her November 2020 article, Hoadley (p. 10-11) notes that curriculum trimming was a temporary measure implemented in 2020. While the first round of trimming was not substantial, a second round in July 2020 marked a shift toward focusing on the "core concepts" with decisions on what to include or exclude devolved to teachers. As such, trimming has become school-based and widely variable, with selection and pacing requirements relaxed. At the Foundation Phase, the DBE suggested that schools focus daily on core skills in Mathematics, Home Language and English, but teach Life Skills or Life Orientation on an alternating days. This was later rejected in favor of keeping all subjects. The Educator COVID-19 survey did ask teachers about the feasibility of implementing the trimmed curriculum. Nearly two thirds of the largely Foundation Phase educators agreed that it was feasible to implement (65%); a further 14 percent said it was "somewhat" feasible and 20 percent said it was not feasible to implement. How the guidance about trimming is being implemented by



teachers (especially those who reported feeling it was unfeasible to implement) is likely inconsistent and the amount of focus given to early grade reading (EGR) skills relative to pre-COVID-19 years is unknown. It is noted that a deeper analysis of the curriculum choices made by teachers will be possible after more data is collected from schools in 2021.

WHAT EFFECT HAS THE COVID-19 SCHOOL DISRUPTIONS HAD ON EARLY GRADE READING LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN 2020? (OBJECTIVE AND PERCEPTUAL)

There is little existing objective evidence on how learner performance in South Africa has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Educator COVID-19 Survey is instructive for identifying educator perceptions about the disruptions that the pandemic has had on early grade learning. Educators were asked to describe their learners' reading level in terms of where they would normally be at this time of year. There is almost unanimous agreement that learners are far behind where they should be at this time of the year: 95 percent of the teacher sample are aware that learner's reading development has digressed from its usual path. Of teacher respondents, 46 percent indicated that learners were about three months behind where learners usually are at this time of the year and 42 percent indicated learners being six months behind where they usually are. Worryingly, five percent indicated that learners were more than a year behind where learners are usually at this time of the year.

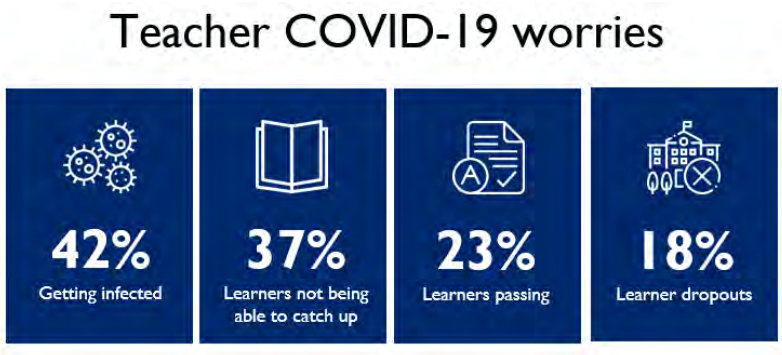
Specifically of Foundation Phase teachers, about 93 percent, 92 percent and 94 percent of surveyed teachers in Grades 1, 2 and 3 report that learners are behind in their reading development.

Teachers were also asked whether learners would catch up any learning losses from 2020 in 2021. About 41 percent said yes, a quarter (25%) said "No", and nearly a third (32%) responded "somewhat" or "maybe". Just one percent indicated that they didn't think there would be learning losses. The perceived likelihood of catch up is lower the further behind teachers think learners are in their reading.

QUESTION 2: HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND LEARNERS TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT THEIR ABILITY TO TEACH/LEARN OR SUPPORT LEARNERS HAS CHANGED?

WHAT ABOUT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WORRIES TEACHERS MOST?

When asked what worried educators the most in relation to COVID-19, 42 percent of respondents said, “getting infected” followed by 37 percent indicating that they were worried about learners not being able to catch up on their work. A further 23 percent indicated that they were worried about learners passing without having had enough instruction during 2020 and 18 percent of respondents were worried about learner drop-outs. Qualitative open-ended responses from educators support these findings, with 26 percent of educators noting the negative effect of absenteeism and dropouts (including irregular attendance due to COVID-19 regulations).



The 2021 workload also concerned educators. Not surprisingly, a higher number of respondents over the age of 34 (in other words, more experienced educators) were worried about getting infected (44%) than those under 34 (28%). This finding resonates with the fact that the risk of severe illness increases with age.[1]

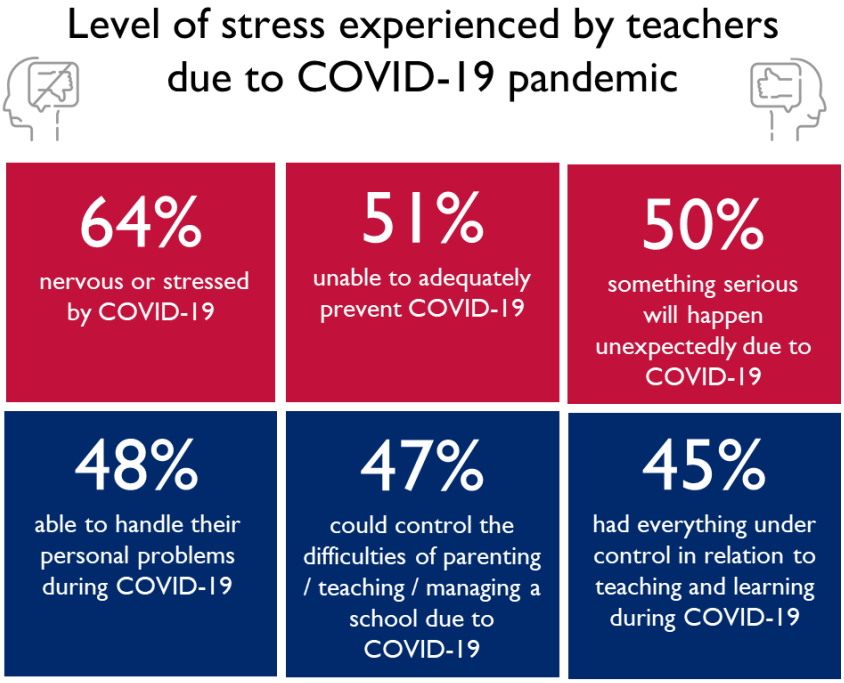
The data also showed that 16 percent of teachers worried about the lack of contact with learners, and therefore their limited ability to explain concepts. Relatedly, teachers worried about learners struggling with the curriculum content and not learning what they needed to learn. Further, qualitative open-ended responses indicated that teachers perceived or experienced that protocols prevented learning, noting problems such as masks making it difficult to communicate with and understand learners, confusion over the new timetable and alternate teaching days. Educators mentioned other concerns specific to learners, such as

[1] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/older-adults.html

learner forgetfulness, and a lack of learner concentration and focus, all of which will negatively influence learner outcomes.

WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

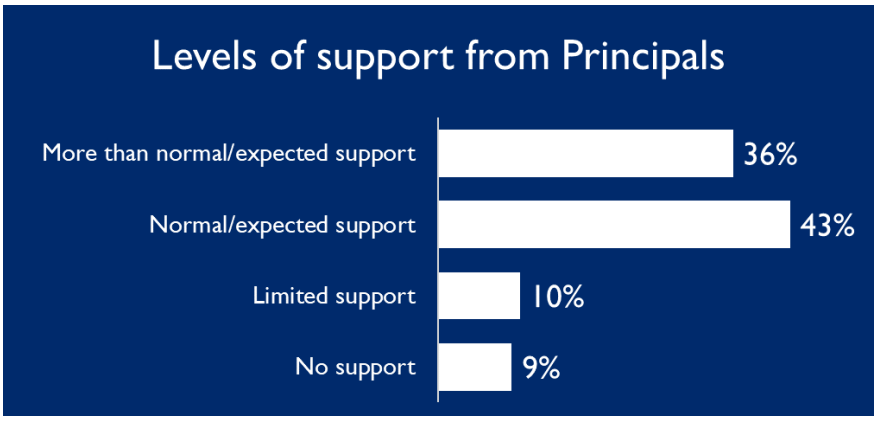
Many educators reported feeling stressed about COVID-19, mostly because their sense of control over the situation has been affected. Overall, 64 percent of respondents reported being nervous or stressed by COVID-19 frequently; 51 percent reported *being unable to adequately prevent COVID-19 frequently*; and 50 percent reported that they *frequently felt like something serious will happen unexpectedly because of COVID-19*. Not all educators reported serious distress related to COVID-19, with 48 percent reporting that they could handle their personal problems, 45 percent reporting that they had everything under control in relation to teaching and learning, and 47 percent reporting they could control the difficulties of parenting / teaching / managing a school that resulted from the COVID-19 disruption.



DID TEACHERS AND SCHOOL PRINCIPALS FEEL SUPPORTED TO DEAL WITH THE STRESS CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 DISRUPTIONS TO SCHOOL?

Teachers reported that they felt most supported by principals, less supported by district officials and least supported by Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), which logically reflects the relative distance in the structure of each relationship. A total of 43 percent of teachers reported that the support to continue teaching during school closures they received

from principals was normal/ expected, while 36 percent said that it was more than normal/expected. A remaining 19 percent reported that they received no (9%) or limited (10%) support from their principals to continue teaching during school closures.



School Government Body (SGB) support to school management teams has not been severely affected by COVID-19 disruptions. Of SMT members in the sample, 76 percent reported normal/expected (43%) or more than normal/expected (33%) levels of support from the School Governing Body (SGB).

However, there is room for improvement in the extent to which SMTs feel supported by the DBE, as reflected in perceptions of district and provincial office support. When asked about District Officials' support in schools, 30 percent of SMT members reported feeling very (20%) or extremely (10%) supported. Contrastingly, 29 percent reported that they felt that they were not at all (6%) or only slightly (17%) supported by District Officials during school closures. Only 16 percent of SMT members reported feeling very (9%) or extremely (7%) supported by the Provincial Office. Conversely, 46 percent reported feeling that they were not at all (26%) or only slightly (20%) supported by the province during school closures.

HAS THE LEVEL OF STRESS CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED THE ABILITY OF SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND LEARNERS TO TEACH / LEARN?

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on teachers and learners via multiple pathways, such as the constraints of following COVID-19 protocols, constraints on teaching time and other stressors. Over half of the respondents (55%) reported that COVID-19 protocols have made it more difficult (29%) or extremely difficult (26%) to do their job. When asked if they thought it would be feasible to cover the curriculum in 2021, 44 percent reported that they will not be able to do so. Qualitative open-ended responses also reveal the potential academic impacts of COVID-19, such as the curriculum not being completed, time limits and constraints, and an expected drop in learner performance.

When asked about their ability to teach, 79 percent of respondents indicated that stress related to COVID-19 has had a moderate (43%), very (7%), or extreme (29%) negative impact on their ability to teach. Interestingly, pandemic related stress has had less of a perceived impact on SMT members' ability to manage a school. Just 28 percent of SMT members reported that COVID-19 related stress has impacted their ability to manage the school.

In relation to learner behavior, 47 percent of respondents reported that there was a large (24%) or some (23%) increase in the number of disruptive or challenging behaviors in learners since they returned to school in August. Qualitative open-ended responses reflect that eight percent of teachers perceive learners as having problematic or unproductive attitudes. Teachers referred to students "skipping school" and "not doing their work", or referred to attitudes such as "lack of commitment to schoolwork."

Concerns raised in the qualitative open-ended responses further focused on the disadvantages presented by a home-learning environment. Specifically, 17 percent of educators mentioned parents and/or caregivers of learners being unable or unwilling to assist with learning for various reasons. It was further noted by 23 percent of teachers that parents and/or caregivers had feelings of fear, anxiety, and stress, which then negatively contributes to a conducive home learning environment.

QUESTION 3: WHAT PSYCHOSOCIAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT CAN BE PROVIDED TO TEACHERS AND LEARNERS TO HELP REDUCE THEIR STRESS, AND SUPPORT THEIR ABILITY TO TEACH?

WHAT KIND OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PRACTICAL SUPPORT WILL HELP TO REDUCE TEACHERS' COVID-19 RELATED STRESS?

When asked what kind of psychosocial support can be provided to teachers to help them cope with teaching and learning during COVID-19, 46 percent of respondents said group sessions with other teachers, 42 percent wanted training on managing stress, and 40 percent requested training on how to support learners' wellbeing. Providing learners with psychosocial support to help them cope with learning during COVID-19 was deemed extremely important by 68 percent of respondents.

A higher number of SMT members (53%) compared to teachers (39%) indicated that training on managing stress would help them cope with teaching during COVID-19.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

South Africa's Foundation Phase learners have lost nearly 56 to 57 percent of school days in 2020, relative to 2019, due to school closures and rotational schedules implemented for face-to-face learning (Kotzé, 2021). In addition to these lost school days, 26 percent of teachers and SMT members note the problem of *additional* learner absenteeism. Alternate rotational schedules have continued into 2021, introducing the risk that learners will again lose at least half of their face-to-face school days in the 2021 calendar year. Based on international and local research it is estimated that for every one day of in-person teaching lost, at least 1.25 days of learning is lost (Gustafsson and Nuga, 2020). However, objective evidence on how learner performance has been impacted in South Africa is very limited. The educators who responded to the survey were in unanimous agreement that the learners have already fallen behind, and notably behind. That is a disconcerting finding since teachers typically tend to be more optimistic about learner performance than learning data reveals (Donovan, 2014). Further, existing evidence indicates that children typically do not easily "catch up" on foundational skills such as early grade decoding skills (Ardington et al., 2020; Spaull and Kotzé, 2015). These gaps in foundational skills can hinder future learning and have long-term implications for access to income and breaking cycles of poverty (Moses et al., 2017).

The changes to school routines and new demands imposed on teachers due to COVID-19 disruptions have placed a psychosocial burden on teachers. The survey shows that teachers have high levels of psycho-social stress and worry. Teachers, Head of Departments (HODs) and Principals have received some support from their colleagues, however more support is required to manage the risk of teacher burnout, teacher absenteeism, and teacher turnover (UNESCO, 2020).

Based on these findings, we provide nine recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Use data and contextual considerations to reflect on the benefits and challenges of rotational learner attendance schedules. Continued loss of face-to-face teaching and learning, due to school closures and rotational schedules, will further hamper learning of foundational numeracy and literacy skills, which will have severe implications for children's development and future life outcomes. The DBE, together with their key stakeholders, should consider the evidence on the susceptibility of children and adolescents to SARS-CoV-2 (Mccarthy et al., 2021), together with concerns about the future-life impacts of constrained learning trajectories (Moses et al., 2017).

Recommendation 2: Identify community afterschool homework facilities to support out-of-school learning. Learners require additional opportunities to catch up on lost learning. Leveraging existing infrastructure such as empty classrooms in the afternoons, libraries, or community facilities for afterschool homework or learning development centers could augment opportunities for children to learn and read. Volunteers could be recruited and trained to read to, or read with, children.

Recommendation 3: Develop a multi-modal national remedial program that informs a media strategy to support home learning. Learners are behind and in response many organizations have developed resources to support learning at home. For example, UNICEF has created grade-specific learning content for radio and television [2] dissemination. Three things would be necessary to maximize such resources: First, the resources should be integrated into a learning program so that a less fragmented offering is available. Second, buy-in from teachers is required to ensure this can become a supportive tool for themselves and for parents. Thirdly, the offering should encourage both oral and written learning support. In Foundation Phase especially, learners need access to written support material and opportunity to read and write regularly.

Recommendation 4: Develop resources and tools to support effective supervisory home support to learners who need to complete parts of their DBE workbooks outside of school. Homework plans that integrate with revised annual teaching plans (ATPs) and the DBE workbooks could be developed to help ease the

[2] https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/stories/new-unicef-south-africa-education-covid-19-case-study

burden of schools having to craft appropriate guidance to parents. Making such resources available in low tech, scalable and easy to share format, would be essential.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that reading resources are readily accessible to support home learning. Provide fiscal resources to ensure reading resources are accessible to learners in every home. Promising strategies include making reading anthologies available to learners or making open-source stories accessible to households through partnerships with print media.

Recommendation 6: Document successful school strategies used to address the various COVID-19 disruptions and challenges, and share widely.

Recommendation 7: Maintain COVID-19 protocols in the schools to make educators feel safe, but also encourage opportunities for peer support. Although educators are exposed to COVID-19 not only in schools, the DBE and school communities and school stakeholders should continue to take all possible steps to ensure that COVID-19 protocols are maintained in the school environment.

Recommendation 8: **Support peer-to-peer support amongst teachers**. Provide guidance and link SMT members to resources that would help them create more opportunities for in-person and virtual peer support between teachers. The normal social interactions between teachers may have been affected by social-distancing protocols, but half of survey respondents suggested learning and sharing sessions with others as a feasible support strategy. Existing platforms, such as WhatsApp, or the DBE Teacher Connect platform[3], could be used to disseminate information.

Recommendation 9: Launch a campaign to strongly encourage and support psychosocial check-ins at different levels of the school. Psychosocial check-ins from line managers are a way of providing extra support (Akerstrom, Corin, Severin, Jonsdottir and Björk 2021). This includes check-ins between teachers and their HoDs, between SMT members and SGB members, and SMT members and their colleagues at circuit, district and provincial offices. Check-ins can help decrease feelings of isolation and increase feelings of support, so long as they focus on people's emotions and feelings, rather than work-related deliverables. Such check-ins need not be long, can be implemented virtually and can therefore be done regularly and consistently.

[3] https://www.ecubed-dbe.org/

INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

Khulisa Management Services is submitting this Preliminary Report on COVID-19 Research to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as part of the COVID-19 study which is conducted along with data collection and analysis for the Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS), the Reading Support Project (RSP) and the Language Benchmarking study.

Early 2020 marked the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 19, 2020, in response to this pandemic, the South African government closed schools and placed the country under "lockdown". Learners only returned to school in August 2020 and since then, learners were only attending school on a 50 percent rotational basis resulting in a continuation of the further loss of contact teaching time. This report delves into the impact of COVID-19 on schools, teachers and school managers in the North West Province of South Africa.

BACKGROUND

Despite the government of South Africa's (GoSA) large investment in basic education, the country continues to face challenges providing a quality education in the majority of schools and its education indicators continue to lag behind those of its peers. In international comparative reading tests, South Africa consistently performs at the bottom with nearly 80 percent of Grade 4 students unable to read with comprehension in the language of their choice including home language (Howie et al, 2016). The GoSA considers education to be one of its highest domestic priorities and one of the greatest long-term challenges facing the country, as is evident in the National Development Plan which states its number one objective as improving the quality of basic education (DBE, 2013).

To support the GoSA, USAID/SA, awarded the PERFORMANCE Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) to Khulisa Management Services (Khulisa) to provide technical, analytical, advisory, monitoring, evaluation and related support services to assist USAID/SA in **effectively diagnosing needs, and planning, designing, monitoring, evaluating and learning from interventions.** PERFORMANCE helps to fill a critical research gap by providing rigorous analysis in target areas related to improving the quality of language and literacy skills of primary grade learners in South Africa and the region. Task Order 4 under PERFORMANCE has 12 objectives, two of which relate to COVID-19 Research. These are:

- Objective 4 - Create COVID-19 evaluation questions and/or tool in close collaboration with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and USAID; and

- Objective 12 - Analyze COVID-19 research data and produce final consolidated report on COVID-19 research.

AIM OF THE COVID-19 RESEARCH

As noted, students in the Foundation Phase of education (Grades R-3) returned to school in August 2020, after missing three to four months of “in person” schooling since the start of COVID-19. After returning to school, teaching and learning continued to be affected by the implementation of rotational time tabling. Whilst lost time is a severe threat to the attainment of educational outcomes, this research also explores whether the psychosocial impacts of COVID-19 have affected the degree to which teachers can teach, learners can learn, and parents can support. The three central evaluation questions are:

1. How much has teaching and learning been disrupted due to COVID-19?
2. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the psychosocial wellbeing of teachers, parents, and learners to such an extent that their ability to teach/learn or support learners has changed?
3. What psychosocial and practical support can be provided to teachers and learners to help reduce their stress, and support their ability to teach?

The data sources that inform the COVID-19 research include:

Computer Assisted Telephonic Interview (CATI) survey on COVID-19 with Teachers/Principals and SMTs - 20 questions (excluding demographics) in January 2021: Collect data focused on psychosocial well-being of individuals and their ability to pursue their duties. **GeoPoll SMS short code survey:** to obtain phone numbers from parents in order to administer CATI survey.

This preliminary report draws **only on data from the CATI survey with teachers and SMT members.** However, it is anticipated that a final report on the COVID-19 research will also consider other data sources. These are:

Computer Assisted Telephonic Interview (CATI) survey on COVID-19 with parents: 20 questions (excluding demographics) to Parents in early (May 2021): Collect data focused on psychosocial wellbeing of individuals and their ability to support their children during and after school closures.

Contextual tools for Impact Evaluation (include questions in contextual tools): To collect data that will be directly linked to learner assessments conducted for impact evaluation. The contextual tools include: Teacher Questionnaire, Principal Questionnaire, HOD Questionnaire (for Foundation Phase HOD), and School Functionality Tool

Learner COVID-19 Questionnaire (different from learner assessment): to gather insights from the Grade 4 and 7 learners on how COVID-19 affected life at home and at school.

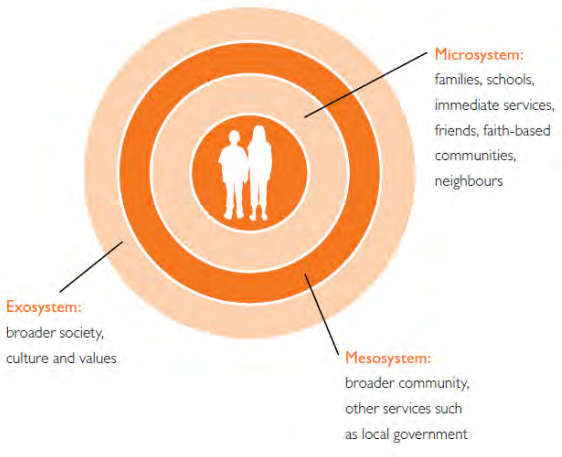
DBE Key Informant Interview Guide (to use with DBE officials): to collect data focused on psychosocial wellbeing of individuals and their ability to support schools (teachers and principals) and their perspective on how COVID-19 affected schools, teaching and learning.

RSP Implementation evaluation: in a sample of 60 schools selected from the implementation evaluation, included questions into teacher and principal/SMT surveys, classroom observations and a school functionality tool to understand how COVID-19 is affecting teaching and learning in those school environments.

The following section of this report briefly explores the literature which frames the evaluation questions and establishes the appropriate sub-questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Figure 1 Bronfenbrenner Ecological System's Theory



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) provides an approach for exploring the effects of the COVID-19 school disruptions on individuals and their functioning within the school. The theory broadly explores how the layers of environment form a larger ecosystem and impact directly on a person's actions. All layers of this ecosystem have been severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly at microsystem (e.g., school) level. These effects are felt deeply by the educators parents and children involved. A principal's or teacher's individual wellbeing may affect their ability to provide EGR teaching

and learning activities in the school setting upon reopening, as well as during the school closure period when learning was expected to take place in the home setting. The wellbeing and ability of parents to provide support to learning activities during the school closure time may influence learner outcomes, and similarly, learners' wellbeing may affect their ability to learn.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL DISRUPTIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted schooling considerably. The first most obvious disruption is to teaching time. Learners did not go to school for a period of four to five months. Schools resumed in August 2021, but most learners were still only attending schools on a 50 percent rotational basis to allow for adequate social distancing to be implemented. Loss of in-person teaching time may also have occurred due to teacher absenteeism, learner absenteeism, and additional closures when a positive COVID-19 case was reported at school. Protocols for screening learners and staff before they enter schools may have caused delays to the start of the school day.

However, the COVID-19 disruption in schools involved more than the loss of teaching time. Without any training or extra resources, educators were expected to facilitate learning at home during the lockdown. When rotational attendance was introduced, teachers were expected to provide work for learners to do at home on the days that they were not attending school.

Standard operating procedures introduced by the DBE required substantial changes to the routines of schools and behaviors of individuals: Regulations required schools to arrange classrooms differently; mask-wearing and hand sanitizing became part of the school day; routines such as receiving learners were changed. After-school activities and sport were halted. Social interaction among teachers and among learners were reduced to allow for social distancing, and reducing the likelihood of workplace transmissions. All these changes have placed enormous demands on teachers. More than half of the surveyed educators indicated that the COVID-19 protocols have made it more difficult to do their job (55%) and 64 percent of the surveyed educators indicate that they were nervous or stressed by COVID-19 fairly or very often.

In addition to the loss in teaching time, the alteration of school routines and changes in social interactions, changes to the curriculum were also implemented. The Curriculum was "trimmed" by the DBE and Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) relaxed the pacing requirements. At the Foundation Phase, the DBE suggested that schools spend more time on core concepts in Mathematics, Home Language and English First Additional Language (EFAL). They were

guided to reduce the time spent on Life Orientation. However, decisions on which topics to include or exclude were devolved to teachers - introducing the risk that curriculum implementation would be widely variable (Hoadley, 2020).

The delivery of curriculum may also have been affected where teachers were reassigned to teach other grades and subjects than normal, to fill in for colleagues that were working from home due to comorbidities.

DEFINING "PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING"

The adjustment to new practices, the uncertainty around the schooling calendar, fear of getting infected and the loss of social support have left many people more anxious that normal. It is expected that the changes in schools, together with additional stresses such as illness and loss of income in households may have affected learners, parents / guardians and educators' psychosocial wellbeing to such an extent that their ability to teach, support and learn may have been adversely affected (UNESCO, 2020).[4]

This study focuses on psychosocial wellbeing rather than only on the social-emotional effects of the COVID-19 school disruptions. This choice is based on the understanding that that a psychosocial approach recognizes that individuals live within and are influenced by their context. There is a dynamic interplay between the psychological and social worlds in which individuals exist.[5] The ability of individuals to function - adapt and to "self-manage" (Huber et al. 2011) - within this dynamic context is important. A socio-ecological framework helps illustrate the dynamic context of an individual within their micro-, meso- and exo-system (see figure 1).

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicates that wellbeing can be simply described as "judging life positively and feeling good" and can also provide a common metric that helps compare the effects of policies or in this case, the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals and their ability to function.[6] Measuring wellbeing is subjective and relies on self-reporting and a number of existing measures are available. Psychosocial refers to the dynamic relationship between internal psychological processes and external social processes. This interaction generates a state of psychosocial wellbeing when it leads to self-esteem, self-respect, and self-reliance (psychological processes), the mental health to function to a person's fullest capacity and cope with normal stress (a psychological state) and the ability to engage in

[4] UNESCO, 2020. Supporting teachers in back-to-school efforts. Guidance for policy-makers
[5] USAID, Thogomelo Project, 2010
[6] https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/wellbeing.htm

meaningful and effective relationships with others – including public institutions (a social process) (Attah et al., 2016).

The role of schools on children's lives have long been documented and researched. "Schooling does matter greatly. Moreover, the benefits can be surprisingly long lasting" (Rutter, 1991). It is crucial to appreciate that these long-term benefits rely on both effects on cognitive performance (in terms of learning specific skills, improved task orientation, and better persistence) and effects of self-esteem and self-efficacy (with respect to better attitudes to learning, raised parental expectations, and more positive teacher responses because the children are more rewarding to teach). In some circumstances positive school experiences of both academic and non-academic kinds can have a protective effect for children under stress and living otherwise unrewarding lives. These last points remind us once again that school provides a set of a social experiences for children as well as a place for scholastic learning, and that effective schools have both aspects of children's lives as part of their goals (Rutter, 1991).

There is also a growing body of literature which establishes the links between students' social-emotional functioning and their academic success and show that interventions focused on improving social-emotional functioning are linked to academic gains (Suldo et al., 2013). Psychosocial wellbeing are key concerns for our care and development of young people (McLaughlin, 2018). During COVID-19, the social lives of children have changed and their sense of belonging which has long been identified as having an impact on academic, psychological, and social outcomes are likely to have been affected (Allen et al., 2018).

The home environment and parent-child relationships also play an important role to support academic achievements (Chohan & Qhadir, 2013; Thida, de Gruiter & Kuppens, 2020). Thus, understanding how parents have been impacted by COVID-19 is an important aspect of this research. Exploring how parents have engaged with learning in the home during lockdown is important as parental involvement has been found to have a positive impact on learning outcomes (Harris & Goodall, 2008). The relationship between learners and teachers and the impact on learning outcomes is also well documented. Research has shown that positive, supportive teacher-student relationships are linked to fostering desirable socio-emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes (Hamre & Pianta, 2006; White & Kern, 2018), and protect children at risk for school failure (Ladd & Price, 1987). Therefore, teacher's psychosocial wellbeing is also central to learning outcomes, and this research explores both teachers' psychosocial wellbeing and their engagement with parents.

For the purposes of this study, the following dimensions of psychosocial wellbeing have been explored:

- Emotional: emotions, feelings and internal reactions to COVID-19 and changed school or home context
- Cognitive: Psychological or mental thoughts
- Social: extent and quality relationships and social interactions within the school context (principal – teacher – parent)
- Behavioral motivation/Functionality: flexibility to deal with changed teaching and learning practice

These dimensions have also been explored within a specific time context: the period during COVID-19 school closures (March to August 2020) and when schools re-opened and provided schooling (September to December 2020).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 school disruptions in the future, it is critical to gather insights from principals, teachers and parents on how teaching and learning can be supported and how any learning losses (days lost and learner outcomes) can be addressed. This research is designed to investigate how COVID-19 affected: schooling (loss of school days, relationships, and management); curriculum delivery (planned versus amended versus actual); teaching and learning performance; the extent of alternative provisions/learning at home; and the psychosocial effects of COVID-19 on individuals' emotions, thoughts, relationships, and ability to function (within the context of teaching and learning). Thus, the full set of evaluation questions and sub-questions include:

1. How much has teaching and learning been disrupted due to COVID-19?
1.1 How much contact time did learners lose due to the COVID-19 school disruptions in 2020?
1.2 What response was implemented by schools, teachers and parents to support learning during the lockdown period, and after schooling resumed?
1.3 How much non-contact teaching did schools and teachers deliver during the lockdown period, and after schooling resumed?
1.4 How much non-contact learning did learners do during the lockdown period, and after schooling resumed?
1.5 Which modalities were most feasible to facilitate non-contact learning during the lockdown period, and after schooling resumed?

1.6 To what extent did teachers cover the standard and trimmed EGR curriculum covered for the 2020 academic year, and how does this compare to business as usual? 1.7 What effect has the COVID-19 school disruptions had on early grade reading learner performance in 2020?
2. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the psychosocial wellbeing of teachers, parents and learners to such an extent that their ability to teach/learn or support learners has changed?
2.1 What about the COVID-19 pandemic worries teachers, parents and learners most? 2.2. What is the level of stress experienced by teachers, parents and learners due to COVID-19 pandemic? 2.3 Did teachers, parents and school principals feel supported to deal with the stress caused by the COVID-19 disruptions to school? 2.4 Has the level of stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability of schools, teachers and learners to teach / learn
3. What psychosocial and practical support can be provided to teachers and learners to help reduce their stress, and support their ability to teach?
3.1 What kind of psychological or practical support will help to reduce their COVID-19 related stress? 3.2 What kind of psychological or practical support do schools feel most able to provide?

Not all of these questions are answered in this preliminary report. All questions will be answered in the final report.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This preliminary report draws on data from the educator COVID-19 survey, which was a computer aided telephonic interview (CATI) that collected responses from 439 teachers and SMT members from 197 quintile 1 to 3 primary schools in two districts in North West Province. The educators in the sample largely comprise Grade 1 to 3 teachers (n=331). SMT members including Foundation Phase HODs, Principals and deputy principals were also included (n=108). The survey was implemented between the January 22 to 30, 2021 prior to the commencement of the 2021 academic year and in the midst of a “second wave” of COVID-19 infections, which resulted in the DBE delaying schools reopening for two weeks. The survey’s timing could have affected the data. First, responses about the degree to which educators reported feeling in control and able to cope with the stress of COVID-19 could have been negatively biased by the uncertainty about school reopening in 2021. Second, educators’ perceptions on learning losses were based on learner information gleaned prior to the two-month long summer break - a period during which these losses could have been amplified.

This section provides more detail about the instrument design, the sample, the survey methodology and analysis. The section concludes with a reflection on the response rates and the implications for generalizing the findings from this study.

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

Khulisa, together with the DBE and USAID, refined the research questions proposed in the Study Protocol and Methodology plan, and then set out to craft survey questions that could respond to each of the three COVID-19 research questions, and the sub-questions. The questions were reviewed together with GeoPoll who were contracted to collect the data. The review process included initial scripting of the survey instrument into GeoPoll's standard format, followed by an iterative process of edits and finalizations, and finally translation to Setswana. GeoPoll's technical team then performed programming and internal testing to prepare the survey for launch on the GeoPoll app.

A first set of questions confirmed or collected biographic information from respondents: their name, the name of the school where they work, the district of the school, their designation, their gender, their age, the grade they taught in 2021 and the year in which they started teaching. A second set of questions investigated the response of schools during lockdown and after learners returned to schools in 2021. A third set of questions probed the perceptions of teachers regarding learners' learning losses. Questions that were appropriate to the educators' role (i.e., teacher or SMT member) were asked – somewhere asked to all educators, and some were just asked of SMTs members.

The psychosocial wellbeing section is based on a fourth set of 22 survey questions. Most of these (14) were single response questions asked to all the respondents (teachers and SMT members). SMT members were asked four single response questions (regarding support felt from district officials, province and governing body and how COVID-19 related stress has impacted on their ability to manage schools) while teachers were asked two single response questions (regarding support received from principals and effect COVID-19 has had on their teaching). All respondents were asked what worries them most about COVID-19 and responses were ticked against present options that were not read out to respondents. Finally, one open-ended question was asked to all respondents on how they thought COVID-19 has affected learners' ability to learn.

The survey included nine items drawn from the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) modified for COVID-19 (PSS10-C). The PSS10-C instrument was validated in adult populations in Colombia. However, in our sample, the internal consistency was found lacking. Cronbach's

alpha for the 9 items of the scale were α = 0.53. The mean score across all respondents was 19.05 with the lowest score being 0 and the highest 36.[7] Given the low reliability score, we reported on the individual items, rather than the overall stress scale score.

SAMPLE

In order to conduct the telephonic survey, GeoPoll required Khulisa to provide a dataset with respondents and telephone numbers.[8] Therefore, Khulisa provided GeoPoll with a dataset of teachers, principals and SMTs from the 229 schools that are part of the evaluation sample. To consolidate this dataset, Khulisa underwent the following process:

1. Contacted the foundation for Professional development (FPD), who are the implementers of the Reading Support Project to obtain the most up to date data they had in November 2020. This included:
    a. the final list of project schools with phone numbers for principals/deputy principals; and
    b. a list of all RSP teachers captured by all coaches, which they used to contact people for the training
2. Identified gaps in the dataset and filled them in with phone numbers collected through the principal and teacher survey data from the fieldwork conducted in the same 229 schools in 2018
3. Topped up missing phone numbers through phoning six schools for which Khulisa had not been able to retrieve any contact details. Each school was called individually to obtain the principal, HOD and teacher cellphone numbers.
4. Shared the consolidated dataset with the DBE for checking
5. Received an updated dataset from the DBE, after a representative called all schools and updated the phone numbers where available.

At the end of the process, the database comprised of 1715 mobile numbers, divided into the two subjects of research interest: teachers (n=1257) and principals (n=458).

Upon reception of the sample from Khulisa, GeoPoll cleaned the dataset. The goal of cleaning is to create a sample that only has unique entries, which requires the identification and removal of incomplete and duplicate numbers. First, all numbers are reformatted, so they are consistent (e.g., parenthesis and dashes are removed, they are converted to

[7] *SD* = 4.83
[8] As specified in the Task Order proposal

numbers in excel, the country code [27] is separated from the main phone number, etc.). The reformatted main numbers are all then measured for length and numbers that are shorter or longer than nine characters are removed. At this point, the sample only contains complete numbers and GeoPoll checks for and removes duplicate entries. The final, cleaned dataset to be used had a total of 1443 (1219 teachers and 224 principals) numbers left.

Over the course of the fourteen-day data collection GeoPoll sent approximately 1,491 survey invitations via SMS to South African teachers and SMT members (e.g., principals, deputy principals, and head of departments) in Khulisa's database. The SMS invitations yielded approximately 974 opt-ins to the survey for an initial response rate of 73 percent. Of those who opted-in, 57 (4%) were deemed ineligible due to age or no longer holding a teaching or SMT position. Of those eligible, 487 (36%) dropped-off at some point in the survey.

ANALYSIS

In evaluating what the quantitative educator COVID-19 survey data tell us about teaching and learning disruptions, a largely descriptive approach has been used. In addition to providing responses for the total educator or SMT samples surveyed, responses are disaggregated by the respondent's age, gender or role. For those in EGRS schools, we consider how educator responses to GeoPoll questions may vary by the overall Setswana reading performance of the school as reflected in 2018 mean Grade 4 oral reading fluency scores, and by the rural/urban location of the school. The open-ended qualitative responses were analyzed using thematic analysis.

TRIANGULATION WITH OTHER DATA

The educator COVID-19 survey did not lean to answering all of the COVID-19 research questions – some of the questions will be answered in other data collection efforts which includes a parent COVID-19 survey, a learner COVID-19-questionnaire, district official COVID-19 interview, and a range of contextual tools which will be administered when the Khulisa fieldwork team visits schools later in 2021. The Khulisa team will use these additional data sources to triangulate the findings of the educator COVID-19 survey reported here.

AN EDUCATOR LEVEL ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE RATES

GeoPoll were provided with a 'sampling frame' of 1443 mobile numbers for teachers or principals. Of the 1443 persons reflected in the sampling frame, 31 percent were successfully interviewed by GeoPoll. Specifically, 107 unique SMT members were surveyed and 332

unique teachers. Of the total realized educator sample, almost a quarter (24%) are Grade 1 teachers, a further quarter (24 percent) are Grade 2 teachers, and 30 percent are Grade 3 teachers as seen

Figure 2.

In Table 1 to Table 3, we provide more clarity on educator response rates by the characteristics of the sampling frame. We highlight the following response patterns:

- Response rates differ very little by the role of the educator, but for those with missing information on their 'role', response rates are much lower (18%) (refer to Table 1).
- Response rates are virtually identical in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda (KK) and Ngaka Modiri Molema (NMM) (refer to Table 2).
- Response rates are slightly higher among Grade 3 teachers (36%) compared with Grade 1 (30 percent) and Grade 2 teachers (29%) (refer to Table 3).

While there appear to be very few differences in response rates by these educator level characteristics, in the next discussion we highlight notable differences in response rates by school level characteristics.

Table 1: Completed response rate by role of educators

	Percent with completed survey response	Total "sampling frame" (n)
Educator	31.6%	987
Departmental head	30.8%	120
Principal	33.0%	224
Missing	17.9%	112
Total of Sampling Frame	30.7%	1443

Table 2: Completed response rate by school district in which educator works

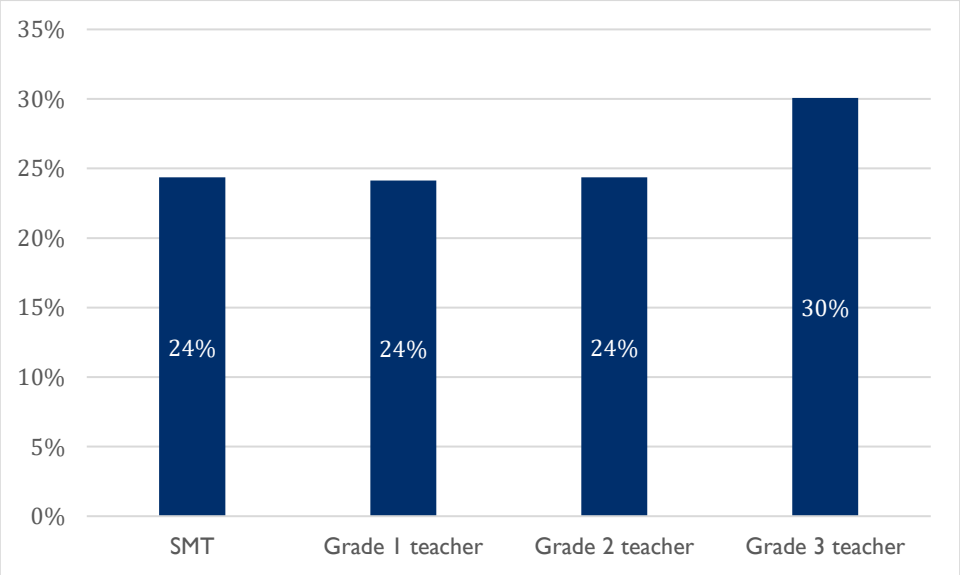
	Percent with completed survey response	Total "sampling frame" (n)
Dr. Kenneth Kaunda	30.7%	482
Ngaka Modiri Molema	30.7%	950

Total of Sampling Frame	30.7%	1432

Table 3: Completed response rate by grade taught by educator

	Percent with completed survey response	Total "sampling frame" N
Principals (not asked grade taught)	33.0%	224
Teachers: Grade Missing	17.4%	109
Teachers: Grade = 1	29.7%	370
Teachers: Grade = 2	28.7%	369
Teachers: Grade = 3	36.1%	371
Total of Sampling Frame	30.7%	1443

Figure 2: Characteristics of the educator COVID-19 survey sample



A SCHOOL LEVEL ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE RATES

In this section we consider which schools are reflected in 1) the sampling frame of educator mobile numbers provided to GeoPoll and 2) the schools in which educators that completed the educator COVID-19 survey work. This section highlights some aspects pertaining to selective response patterns by school characteristics and thus the non-representivity of the sample.

School response rates

The completed educator COVID-19 survey responses are for educators in **197 unique schools.** Since 265 unique schools were reflected in the sampling frame of educator mobile numbers that were provided to GeoPoll, successful responses were therefore obtained from

three quarters of the schools in the sampling frame. **This school level response rate at 74 percent is notably higher than the teacher/principal level response rate at 31 percent.**

In quarter 4 of 2019, there were 1537 schools in North West Province reflected in the DBE's Masterlist of Schools. Completed responses were obtained from educators in 13 percent of all schools in the North West province.

Although the educator sample is dominated by responses from Foundation Phase teachers (Grades 1 to 3 teachers), of those that self-report as being Foundation Phase teachers, they are located in only 156 of the 197 realized schools.

Many of the mobile numbers for educators in the sampling frame were drawn from EGRS I schools. Table 5 identifies how responses at the school level vary by the treatment arm of the EGRS.

- 229 (86%) EGRS I schools are reflected in the sampling frame of 265 unique schools.
- In the completed survey sample, responses from educators in **165 EGRS I schools** (72% of all EGRS I schools) were obtained.
- Responses by school were **more likely to be obtained from educators in the parent treatment arm** (78% of 50 schools) **and the coaching arm** (78% of 50 schools) compared with the training (73% of 49 schools) and control arms (64% of 80 schools)

Table 6 shows the number of educator responses by school. Typically, 4 educators were surveyed per school as reflected by the median. In EGRS schools about 5 educators were typically surveyed per school.

Table 4: Schools reflected in the educator COVID-19 survey in relation to the Masterlist of Schools and the "sampling frame", by district

		All NW schools	By North West Districts			
			Dr. Kenneth Kaunda	Ngaka Modiri Molema	Bojanala	Other
2019 Q4 Masterlist of schools	N	1537	208	439	528	362
'Sampling frame' of schools provided to GeoPoll	N	265	66	198	0	0
	Percent of Masterlist	17%	32%	45%	0%	0%
Number of schools reflected in completed surveys from educators	N	197	50	147	0	0
	Percent of school 'sampling frame'	74%	76%	74%	0%	0%
	Percent of Masterlist	13%	24%	33%	0%	0%

Source: Completed educator COVID-19 survey, Sampling frame to GeoPoll and Masterlist of Schools. **Notes:** The name of districts assigned to schools vary across the Masterlist, EGRS and educator COVID-19 survey data. We use the district name as per the educator COVID-19 survey and EGRS lists, where there are discrepancies.

Table 5: EGRS schools by district and treatment arm reflected in the sampling frame and completed educator COVID-19 survey sample

			By district		By treatment			
		All NW schools	KK	NMM	Control	Training	Coaching	Parents
'Sampling frame' of schools provided to GeoPoll	N	265	53	190	NA	NA	NA	NA
2018 EGRS school list	N	229	176	53	80	49	50	50
'Sampling frame' of schools	N	229	176	53	80	49	50	50
	percent of school	86 %	11%	3%	N-A	NA	NA	NA

			By district		By treatment			
		All NW schools	KK	NMM	Control	Training	Coaching	Parents
provided to GeoPoll	'sampling frame'							
Number of schools reflected in completed surveys from educators	N	165	127	38	51	36	39	39
	percent of EGRS schools	72%	72%	72%	64%	73%	78%	78%

Source: Completed educator COVID-19 survey, Sampling frame to GeoPoll and Masterlist of Schools. Own calculations. **Notes:** The name of districts assigned to schools vary across the Masterlist of schools, EGRS and educator COVID-19 survey data. We use the district name as per the educator COVID-19 survey and EGRS lists, where there are discrepancies.

Table 6: Number of teacher/principal completed responses by unique schools in the survey

	mean	p10	p25	p50	p75	p90	min	max	N
Number of educator responses per school	5.4	1	3	4	7	10	1	15	265
Number of educator responses per EGRS school	6.1	3	4	5	8	11	1	15	165

Source: Completed educator COVID-19 survey. Own calculations.

RESPONSE RATES BY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

By merging across datasets, we identify additional school level response characteristics as reflected in Table 4 and Table 7:

- Completed responses are obtained from educators in 50 unique schools in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda (reflecting 24% of all schools in that district) and 147 unique schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema (33% of all schools in that district). Thus, the educator responses are likely to be more representative of the schools in Ngaka Modiri Molema than Dr. Kenneth Kaunda.

With respect to school quintile, the sampling frame consisted of educator mobile numbers only for those in quintiles 1 to 3 schools.

- We find that the likelihood of responses was higher from quintiles 1 and 2 North West schools (24% and 33%) relative to those located in quintiles 3 schools (8%), partly due to the higher representation of quintiles 1 and 2 schools in the sampling frame of mobile numbers provided to GeoPoll.

We also consider how response characteristics hold in a multivariate context. As seen in Appendix Table A 1 which is a linear regression model predicting which EGRS schools were represented in the completed educator COVID-19 survey responses, we find that EGRS school responses are:

- less likely to be obtained from educators in quintile 3 EGRS schools (compared to quintile 1 EGRS schools) and/or those in EGRS schools in Dr. Kenneth Kaunda relative to Ngaka Modiri Molema districts;
- more likely to be obtained from educators in the parent control arm (relative to the control schools) and in EGRS schools with more educators; and
- less likely to come from those in rural EGRS schools.

Table 7: School quintiles reflected in the educator COVID-19 survey data in relation to the Masterlist of Schools and the "sampling frame" provided to GeoPoll

		By quintile					
		1	2	3	4	5	Private
2019 Q4 Masterlist of schools	N	519	303	486	130	12	85
'Sampling frame' of schools provided to GeoPoll	N	130	77	57	0	0	0
	percent of Masterlist	25%	25%	12%	0%	0%	0%
Number of schools reflected in completed surveys from educators	N	97	61	39	0	0	0
	percent of school 'sampling frame'	75%	79%	68%	0%	0%	0%
	percent of Masterlist	19%	20%	8%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Completed educator COVID-19 survey, Sampling frame to GeoPoll and Masterlist of Schools. Own calculations. **Notes**: The name of districts assigned to schools vary across the Masterlist, EGRS and educator COVID-19 survey data. We use the district name as per the educator COVID-19 survey and EGRS lists, where there are discrepancies.

DISRUPTIONS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Like most countries around the world, South Africa experienced unprecedented disruptions to schooling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. All schools were closed on March 18, 2020, which was followed by a phased approach to reopening schools for the remainder of the academic year (Mohohlwane et al., 2020).

In this section, we explore what the educator responses in the COVID-19 survey tell us about school disruptions, how schools or educators responded to the pandemic and how this may have affected teaching and learning. We analyze responses to the COVID-19 survey that specifically pertain to following seven research questions:

1.1 How much contact time did learners lose due to the COVID-19 school disruptions in 2020?

1.2 What response was implemented by schools, teachers and parents to support learning during the lockdown period, and after schooling resumed?

1.3 How much non-contact teaching did schools and teachers deliver during the lockdown period, and after schooling resumed?

1.4 How much non-contact learning did learners do during the lockdown period, and after schooling resumed?

1.5 Which modalities were most feasible to facilitate non-contact learning during the lockdown period, and after schooling resumed?

1.6 To what extent did teachers cover the standard and trimmed EGR curriculum covered for the 2020 academic year, and how does this compare to business as usual?

1.7 What effect has the COVID-19 school disruptions had on early grade reading learner performance in 2020?

RESEARCH QUESTION 1.1: HOW MUCH CONTACT TIME DID LEARNERS LOSE DUE TO THE COVID-19 SCHOOL DISRUPTIONS IN 2020?

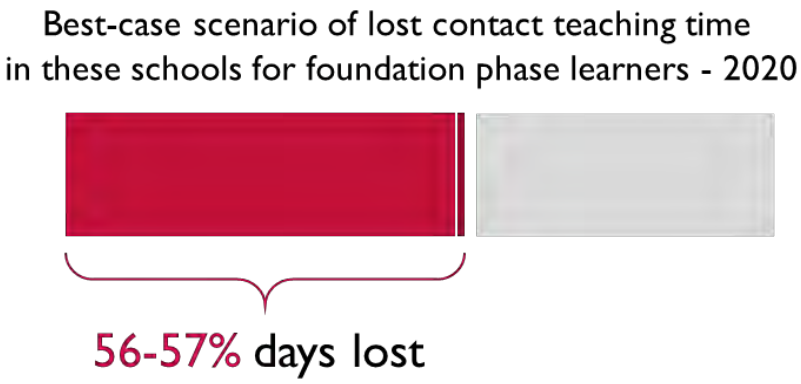
To reopen schools in 2020, the DBE opted for two complementary models. The first was the phased-in approach to the returning of different grades and the second was a rotational model once grades had returned to school. A phased approach to grade return supported the trialing of methods for social distancing and other COVID-19 safety protocols, while rotational models

directly supported social distancing in schools (Kotzé, 2021).[9] The first grades to return to school were Grades 7 and 12, on June 8, 2020. Grades 6 and 11 were re-opened on July 6. However, due to rising national infection rates all grades were closed again for the week of July 27 - 30. This was followed by a second round of phased reopening, with all grades expected to be back at school on August 31, 2020.

Between 44 – 97 days of school days were lost for the different grades in 2020

Accounting for temporary reopening and phase-grade approaches, Kotzé (2021) calculates that relative to 2019, between 44 – 97 days of school days were lost in 2020 for the different grades. She notes that in the Foundation Phase grades specifically, 34-37 percent of official school days in 2020 were lost relative to 2019, due to closures and phased-in grade approaches to the return to school. However, when considering that most schools in resource constrained school environments followed rotational time-tabling schedules, with learners only attending on alternate days, this impacted on school days lost. After accounting for rotational schedules, it is estimated that in 2020, Foundation Phase learners lost between 56-57 percent of school days relative to 2019 (Kotzé, 2021). This is much higher than even upper limits on estimates of the days learners lost between 17 percent and 43 percent of the “normal” number of school days during 2020, estimated by Van der Berg and Spaull (2020) and Mohohlwane et al, (2020).

[9] End of phase grades, such as Grade 7 and 12 were prioritized over other grades.



As will be explained in the next section, for most schools (at least 93%) reflected in the COVID-19 survey, alternative day rotational schedules were followed. **Very little contact teaching took place during school closures since no online teaching was identified by respondents in 93 percent of the schools reflected in the survey.** Therefore, 56-57 percent of school days lost in 2020 relative to 2019 represents a best-case scenario of lost contact teaching time in these schools for Foundation Phase learners.

Actual contact teaching time that individual learners lost due to COVID-19 school disruptions in 2020 would have additionally been affected by individual learner and teacher attendance patterns, hours spent at school on days attended, and time-on-task when at school relative to 2019. Measuring this would therefore require access to detailed and accurate administrative records on learner and teacher attendance, identifying school timetabling schedules and observing time-on-task, which is beyond the scope of an educator telephone survey.

Drawing on evidence from the NIDS-CRAM survey (the National Income Dynamics Study – Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey, presented by Mohohlwane et al, 2020) suggests that in July 2020, learner attendance rates were lower than in normal times, even for those grades officially open. According to the General Household Survey (GHS) of 2018, the average daily absentee rate was two percent. According to evidence from the NIDS-CRAM survey, the lowest absentee rate during July 2020 was observed among Grade 12 learners, at 12 percent. That is, for Grade 12 learners, the absentee rate was about six times higher than usual in July 2020. Evidence from the third wave of the NIDS-CRAM survey, presented in a more recent report by Mohohlwane et al. (2020), shows that attendance rates had returned to normal levels

by November 2020, with 98 percent of learners reportedly attending school in almost all grades. The authors caution, however, that this attendance rate overstates daily attendance, given that rotational timetabling was in place.

Table 8: Total number of official teaching days in 2020

Grades	Jan – 18 March	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total: 2020	Total: 2019	percent of school days lost*
Gr 7 & 12	46	14	20	20	21	17	17	155	199	**22%**
Gr R, 6 & 11	46		15	20	21	17	17	136	199	**32%**
Gr 3 & 10	46		10	20	21	17	17	131	199	**34%**
Gr 1 & 2	46		5	20	21	17	17	126	199	**37%**
Gr 4 & 9	46			15	21	17	17	116	199	**42%**
Gr 5 & 8	46			1	21	17	17	102	199	**49%**

Source: Kotzé, 2021. **Notes:** *relative to 2019

Table 9: Estimated number of days at school for learners after accounting for rotational school schedules

Grades	Jan – 18 March	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Total: 2020	Total: 2019	percent of school days lost*
Gr 7 & 12	46	7	10	10	11	9	9	101	199	**49%**
Gr R, 6 & 11	46		8	10	11	9	9	91	199	**54%**
Gr 3 & 10	46		5	10	11	9	9	89	199	**56%**
Gr 1 & 2	46		3	10	11	9	9	86	199	**57%**
Gr 4 & 9	46			8	11	9	9	81	199	**59%**
Gr 5 & 8	46			1	11	9	9	74	199	**63%**

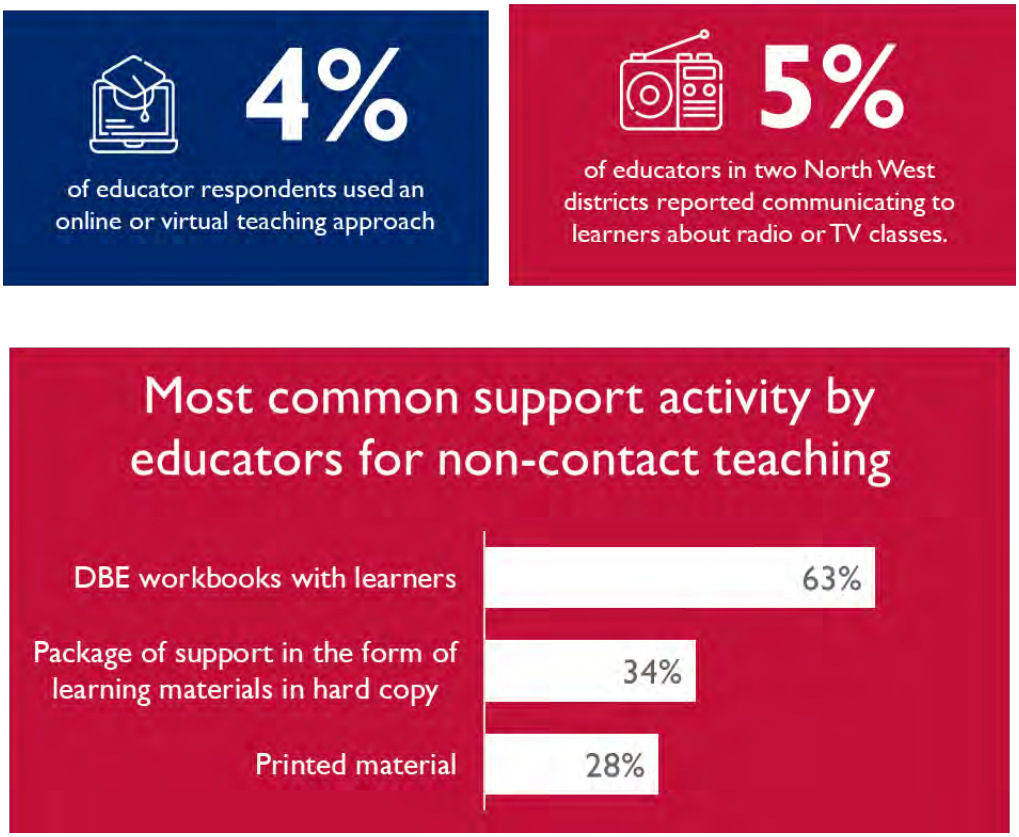
Source: Kotzé, 2021. **Notes:** *relative to 2019

RESEARCH QUESTIONS 1.2 AND 1.3: WHAT RESPONSE WAS IMPLEMENTED BY SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND HOW MUCH NON-CONTACT TEACHING DID SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS DELIVER DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD, AND AFTER SCHOOLING RESUMED?

Research questions 1.2 and 1.3 are very similar, and difficult to disaggregate using the available COVID-19 survey data. For brevity's sake, we address them together in this section.

NON-CONTACT TEACHING ACTIVITIES DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES

Teachers and SMT members were asked about the types of activities they engaged in to support non-contact teaching during school closures in 2020. A list of possible options was read to the respondent as shown in Figure 3 and they could select multiple response options. We highlight the following results:



- **The most commonly cited support activity for non-contact teaching[10] was to send home "DBE workbooks with learners" (63%)**, followed by providing a "package of support in the form of learning materials in hard copy" (34%), providing "printed material" which parents collected and returned (28%), and providing a "package of support in the form of learning materials in soft copy [e.g., Sent through Email/WhatsApp]" (13%).

- **Only four percent (1% + 3%) of respondents used an online or virtual teaching approach** such as using Skype, Zoom or Google Classrooms. Just **five percent of respondents communicated to learners about radio or television classes.**

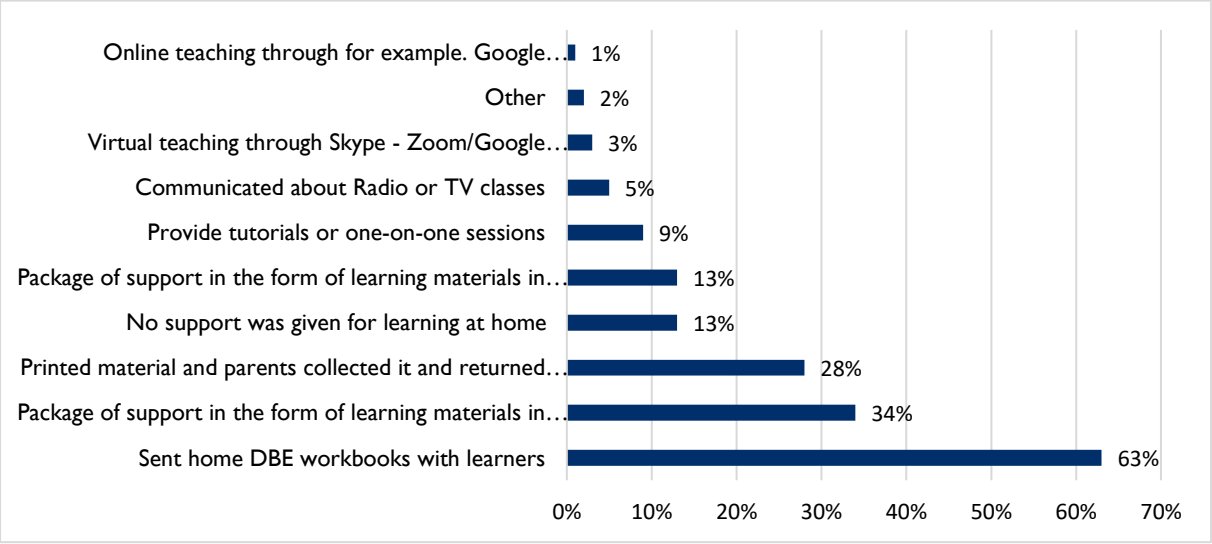
[10] Multiple responses

- Also, it is noted that 13 percent of respondents indicated that there was no "support for learning at home".

- Responses vary little by respondent or school characteristics, although we note sending home DBE workbooks to learners was a more common practice (72%) for respondents in township EGRS schools in this COVID-19 survey sample than among respondents in EGRS schools in rural areas (59%) (see Table A 2).

These results are indicative of how learners' access to virtual or online teaching opportunities during lockdown was almost non-existent in the schools reflected in the COVID-19 educator survey. Furthermore, very few educators in the two North West districts encouraged learners to listen to radio or to watch educational programs on television. In a school level analysis of responses, **the use of online or virtual teaching during school closures was apparent in just eight percent of 194 schools** (see Figure 6). However, the results in Figure 3 are indicative of how many Foundation Phase children in the two North West districts may have had access to the DBE workbooks, and potentially other hard copies of material to support learning at home. The **provision of DBE workbooks or printed materials was apparent in 90 percent of 195 schools** (see Figure 6). As explained in the next section, self-reported responses from educators also suggest that most gave homework to learners during school closures. Given almost no engagement with schoolteachers during lockdown, learning at home may have been highly dependent on whether parents or caregivers encouraged learners to use their DBE workbooks or printed materials at home.

Figure 3: Which of the following activities were done to support non-contact teaching and learning in your school during school closure? (Read options)



Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: Multiple response options. Teacher and SMT responses. N = 439.

ROTATIONAL SCHEDULES WHEN LEARNERS RETURNED TO SCHOOL

All teachers and SMT members were asked about the model, with respect to rotations or timetabling, that the school adopted in Term 4 (of 2020) in response to COVID-19.

As seen in Table 10, the most common model of schooling adopted in Term 4 of 2020, was attendance on alternate days of the week (51% of the educator sample) followed by a 10-day cycle of three days one week and two days the following week (39% of the educator sample). A further five percent indicated that stronger and weaker learners attended on separate days, while 1 percent indicated that girls and boys attended on separate days. Platooning, where half of the learners attend in the morning and the other half in the afternoon, was very uncommon (3%).

There are some differences in school models reported across SMT members and teachers and by EGRS reading performance. Compared with teachers, SMT members were less likely to report children attending in a 10-day cycle. In EGRS schools in the highest performing tercile[11] with respect to average Grade 4 Setswana reading scores, educators are relatively more likely to report a 10-day cycle relative to educators in lower performing schools.

It was also useful to repeat this analysis at the school level. We identify later in Figure 6, 93 percent of schools reflected in the survey an alternate day rotational model was identified by at least one respondent in the school.

[11] It is instructive to identity whether disruptions differentially affected schools depending on their performance levels. It is expected that poorest performing schools, which may also be less well managed, may have been disrupted more.

Table 10: What model of schooling has your school adopted in Term 4 as a result of COVID-19?

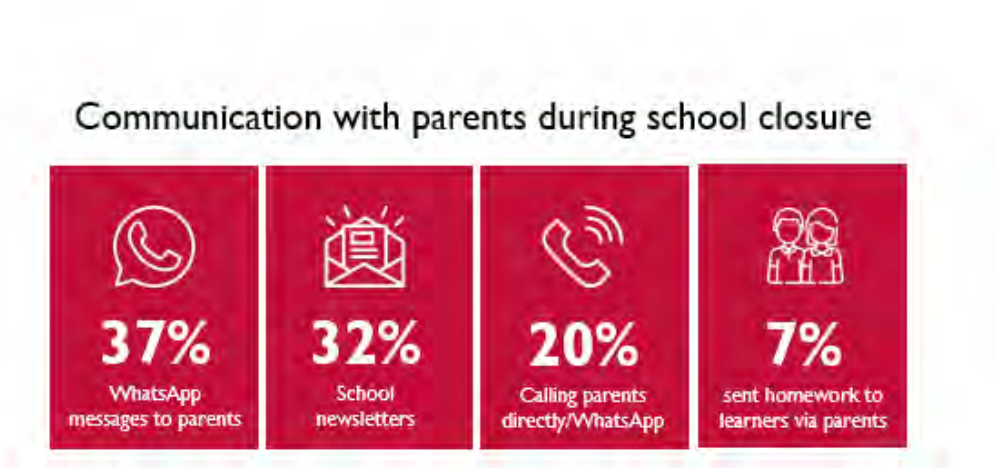
	Total	Role		District		Reading Score*			
	Total	SMT	Teacher	KK	NMM	T1	T2	T3	NA
1) All children came back in fourth term	4%	6%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	6%	1%
2) Strong and weaker learners separate days	5%	6%	5%	4%	6%	5%	8%	4%	3%
3) and boys attend separate days	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	3%
4) Alternate days of the week	51%	58%	49%	49%	52%	51%	58%	42%	55%
5) 10 day cycle [3 days one week and 2 days following week]	39%	25%	43%	42%	38%	38%	36%	44%	36%
6) Half the children attend in the morning and half in the afternoon	3%	5%	3%	1%	4%	4%	3%	4%	1%
7) Other	11%	17%	9%	12%	10%	10%	9%	10%	13%
88) Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
99) Refused	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
N	**439**	**107**	**332**	**104**	**335**	**117**	**116**	**115**	**91**

Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: Multiple response options. Teachers and SMT members were asked this question. We find little difference by age of respondent or the EGRS location of the school to warrant these disaggregation. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3. Results for non-EGRS schools, are shown in the "NA" column.[12]

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES

Teachers were asked about how they communicated with parents during the COVID-19 school closures. As shown in Table 11, **the most common approaches were sending "WhatsApp messages to parents" (37%), sending "school newsletters" (32%) and calling "parents directly or via WhatsApp" (20%). Just 7 percent of the respondents indicated that they sent homework to learners via parents.** Only 14 percent of the total respondent sample indicated that they did not communicate at all with parents.[13]

[12] An investigation of the degree to which schools with high reading scores and low reading scores differ in their COVID response, is useful, since both may relate to how well a school is managed.
[13] There are slight differences in preferred modes of communication with parents by the respondents' age, gender, and their school location as seen in Table A 3. For example, teachers in township schools are more likely to communicate to parents via WhatsApp message than to call them directly, compared with teachers in rural schools.



Compared with teachers, SMT communications with parents were less direct. About 59 percent of SMT members compared with 32 percent of teachers indicated that they sent newsletters to parents. Roughly a quarter of SMT members indicated that they sent WhatsApp messages to parents compared to 37 percent of teachers.[14]

Compared to before COVID-19 (Term 1), 31 percent of teacher respondents indicated that their communications with parents had become less frequent, 19 percent reported more frequent communications, 17 percent indicated no change in frequency as seen inTable 12[15] Relative to older teachers, younger teachers between the ages of 20 and 39 were more likely to report that the frequency of their communication with parents had declined (40%) during COVID-19 school closures.

[14] Use of WhatsApp messages by SMT members is more common among younger SMT members and for SMT members sampled from Ngara Modiri Molema district schools as seen in

Table A 4.

[15] Although the referring question was a single response question, the associated responses are not mutually exclusive, making this somewhat hard to interpret.

Table 11: In the midst of COVID-19 school closures, how did you communicate with parents of your learners? (Options not read out, multiple response option)

	Teachers	SMT members
1) I sent WhatsApp messages to parents	37%	24%
2) I called parents directly or via WhatsApp	20%	14%
3) I visited their homes	2%	3%
4) I used platforms such as google classrooms/ Microsoft teams/Zoom etc.	0%	3%
5) I sent homework to learners via parents	7%	7%
6) I sent school newsletters	32%	59%
7) I shared the timetable of online lessons	1%	1%
8) I did not communicate with parents directly	14%	11%
9)The school communicated with parents	14%	17%
88) Don't know	1%	1%
99) Refused	0%	0%
N	**332**	**107**

Source: Educator COVID-19 survey. **Notes:** Multiple response options. Teachers and SMT members were asked this question separately.

Table 12: During school closures, did the communication with parents change, when compared to before? (Term 1)

	Total	Age Group			Role		Reading Score*			
	Total	20-39	40-49	50-69	SMT	Teacher	T1	T2	T3	NA
No, there was no change	17%	15%	15%	19%	14%	18%	9%	22%	17%	22%
More frequently	19%	19%	24%	17%	16%	20%	21%	15%	19%	23%
Less frequently	31%	40%	29%	29%	32%	30%	34%	30%	31%	25%
More directly	5%	0%	7%	6%	9%	4%	9%	5%	4%	1%
Less directly	12%	9%	9%	14%	14%	11%	14%	8%	12%	13%
With more people	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	0%	2%
With fewer parents	13%	12%	12%	14%	11%	14%	11%	15%	16%	11%
Don't know	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	0%	3%	1%	2%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
N	**439**	**68**	**123**	**248**	**107**	**332**	**117**	**116**	**115**	**91**

Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes:** Single response options. Teacher and SMT responses grouped together. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3. Results for non-EGRS schools, are shown in the NA column.

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES

The SMT members were asked to reflect on how communication with teachers changed during the school closure period. Response options as shown in Table 13 were not mutually exclusive, dealing with both the frequency of communication and how direct this was. But the question responses only allowed for a single response. This makes the responses hard to interpret.

Nevertheless, we can see that **the most commonly selected option, by 43 percent of SMT respondents, was that they communicated 'less directly' with teachers.** A quarter indicated that there was no change in communication. SMT members were more likely to report less direct communication with teachers if they were in EGRS schools in reading tercile 3 (60%), and in EGRS township schools (58%).

Table 13: During school closures, did the type of communication with teachers change, when compared to before?

	Total	District		Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	KK	NMM	T1	T2	T3	NA	Township	Rural
1) No - there was no change	24%	24%	24%	28%	15%	20%	38%	15%	23%
2) We communicated more frequently	11%	12%	11%	15%	7%	4%	19%	8%	11%
3) We communicated less frequently	19%	24%	18%	18%	22%	16%	19%	15%	20%
4) We communicated more directly	3%	0%	3%	0%	11%	0%	0%	4%	3%
5) We communicated less directly	43%	41%	43%	38%	44%	60%	25%	58%	43%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	**107**	**17**	**90**	**39**	**27**	**25**	**16**	**26**	**65**

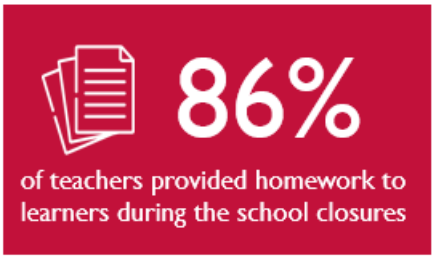
Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: Single response option only. SMT responses only. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1.4: HOW MUCH NON-CONTACT LEARNING DID LEARNERS DO DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD, AND AFTER SCHOOLING RESUMED?

While we cannot deduce from the COVID-19 educator survey exactly how much work was actually done during the lockdown period or once schooling resumed in Term 4 of 2020, self-reported educator responses are indicative of whether any work was done by learners at home or whether efforts were made by schools and educators to support learning at home.

NON-CONTACT LEARNING DURING LOCKDOWN

When asked about how much homework teachers gave to learners during school closures, many responded positively as seen in Table 14. Only 14 percent indicated they did not give homework. **This suggests that 86 percent of respondents provided homework.** Over a quarter of the respondents said they gave the "same amount as they would usually do in class" (26%) and a further 37 percent indicated about they gave "about half the amount as they would usually do in class." In better performing EGRS schools in reading tercile 3, educators are arguably more realistic about homework given – they are more likely to report providing "half the amount" of work as they would usually do compared to teachers in schools with weaker average home language reading scores.



Yet, even if homework was given, the question remains as to whether learners did this work? In

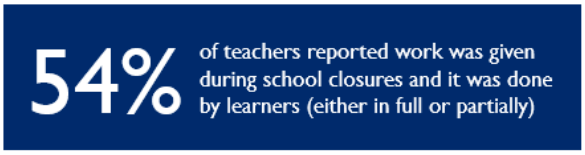


Figure 4, we show responses to the question "Do you think that, in general, learners did most of the work that teachers gave them to do during school closures?" Of the total COVID-19 educator survey sample, 38 percent responded "No". A further eight percent indicated that they did not give any work to learners during school closures. **A remainder of 54 percent indicated that work was given during school closures and it was done by learners (either in full or partially).** Although we note that the addition of the word "most" into the question phrasing makes the answers to this question hard to interpret.

We find some interesting differences in educators' perceptions of whether learners did work at home by the type of non-contact teaching methods adopted by educators or schools during the school closures. Source: Own calculations on COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: The percentage reporting learners did work at home during school closures is derived from the question "Do you think that, in general, learners did most of the work that teachers gave them to do during school closure?"

shows the percentage of respondents indicating that learners did at least some of the work that they were given during the school closures by the type of non-contact teaching approaches used by the respondent. As expected, if no support was given for learning at home, then respondents are far less likely to report that learners did any work at home. Where teachers report use of digital technology – reflected in the provision of soft copy material (via email or WhatsApp) or the use of online or virtual teaching – learners are more likely to be perceived as having done the work that they were given. **For the largest group of teachers that reported sending home DBE workbooks with learners, almost 60 percent indicated that learners did some of the work during the school closures.**

Table 14: How much homework did you give to learners during school closure as a result of COVID-19? (Read options)

	Total	Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	T1	T2	T3	NA	Town-ship	Rural
About the same amount as they would usually do in class	26%	28%	30%	19%	28%	28%	23%
About half the amount as they would usually do in class	37%	36%	36%	42%	33%	40%	38%
About the same as two weeks of class	16%	15%	13%	16%	19%	12%	17%
They only did some reading	7%	3%	7%	11%	7%	10%	6%
I did not give learners any work to complete	14%	18%	13%	12%	13%	10%	17%
	100 %	**100 %**	**100 %**	**100 %**	**100 %**	**100%**	**100 %**
N	**332**	**78**	**89**	**90**	**75**	**81**	**169**

Source: Educator COVID-19 survey. Own calculations. **Notes**: Single response option. Teachers only asked this question. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3.

Figure 4: Do you think that, in general, learners did most of the work that teachers gave them to do during school closure?

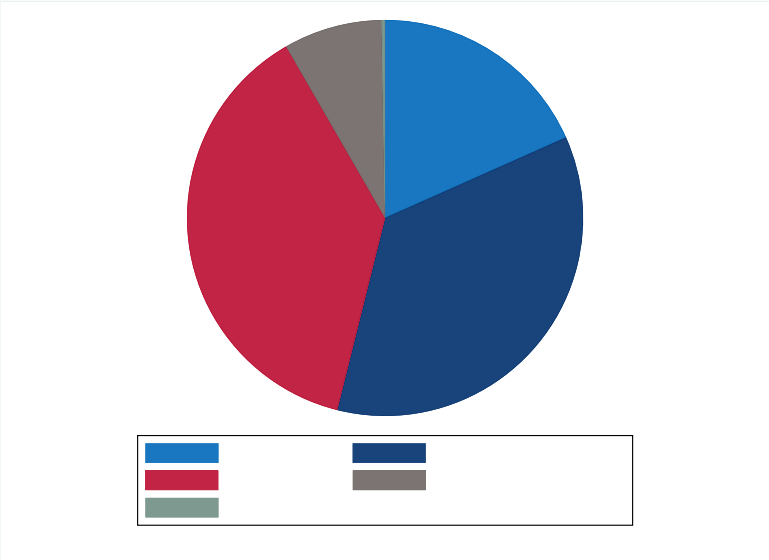
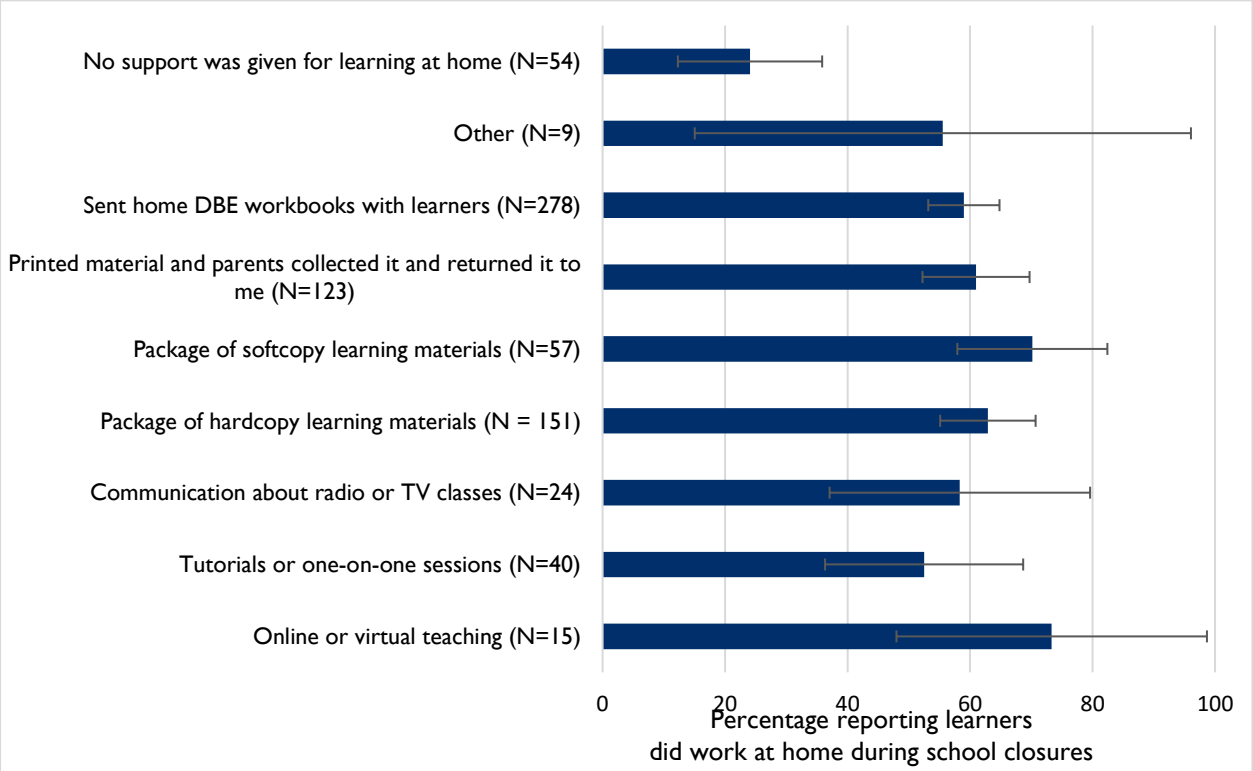


Figure 5: Percentage of respondents indicating learners did some work during the school closures, by non-contact teaching approaches used during the school closures.



Source: Own calculations on COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: The percentage reporting learners did work at home during school closures is derived from the question "Do you think that, in general, learners did most of the work that teachers gave them to do during school closure?"

NON-CONTACT LEARNING AFTER SCHOOLING RESUMED

It was necessary for schools to implement approaches to non-contact learning even after children returned to school, due to the rotational school schedules adopted and thus reduced opportunities to learn. In particular, teachers should have ensured that learners were given work to do on the days they were not attending school.

The COVID-19 educator survey asked teachers about how much Setswana and English reading and writing homework they gave to learners to complete on the days they were not at school. Interpreting the "quantities" of homework that are provided as response options to these questions is not straightforward, but one can imply from the responses whether any language homework was given and the nature of this homework. As seen in Table 15, **about 90 percent of teacher respondents reported having given learners Setswana or English homework. Of teacher respondents, it is suggested that 71 percent gave learners both reading and writing homework in Setswana and 67 percent gave both reading and writing homework in English.**

Table 15: How much Setswana/English reading and writing homework do you give to learners to complete on the days they are not at school?

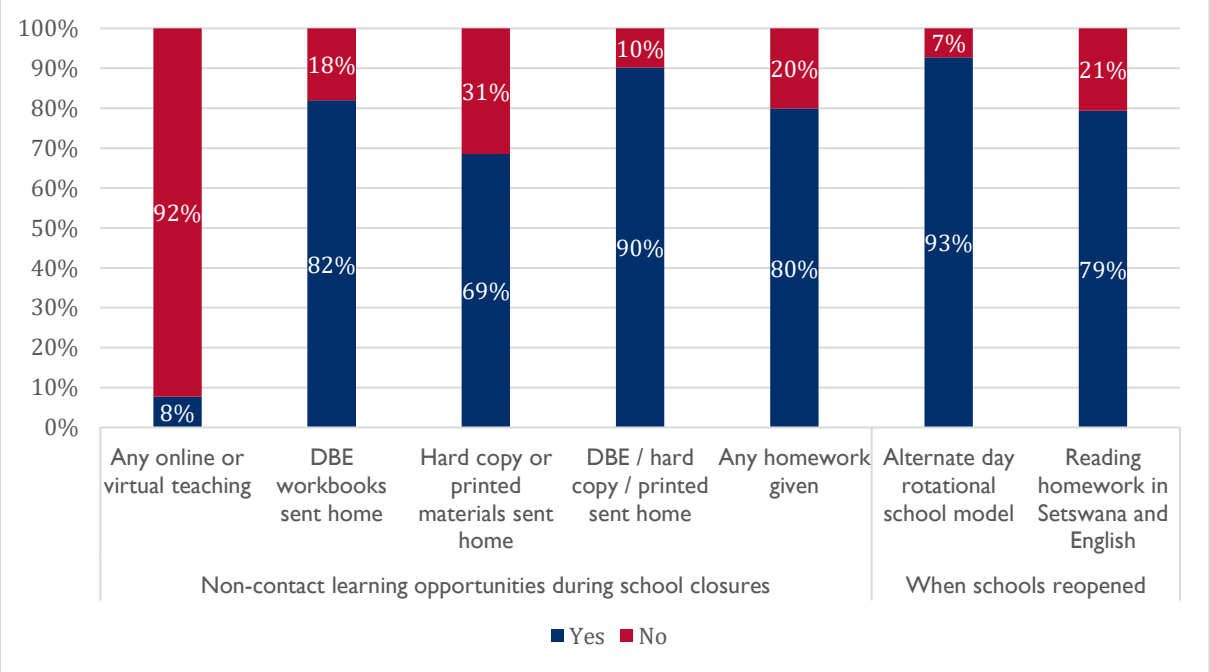
	Setswana	English
a) About the same amount as they would usually do in class	35%	28%
b) About half the amount they would usually do in class	37%	39%
c) I only give them some reading to do	18%	22%
d) I do not give learners any work to complete when they are not at school*	8%	9%
e) Other	2%	2%
f) Don't Know	1%	1%
	100%	**100%**
N	**332**	**332**
Implied from responses:		
Gave any homework to learners (100%-d-e-f)	90%	89%
Gave reading *and* writing homework to learners (100%-d-e-f-c)	71%	67%
Gave Setswana and English language homework	89%	

Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: Single response option. Teacher responses only. *There were two almost identical response options for Setswana that are condensed here to one category.

As a summary of the discussion so far, Figure 6 provides a school level overview of non-contact teaching and learning opportunities reported by teachers across 194 schools in the COVID-19 educator survey sample. Despite the limited use of online or virtual teaching methods (in just 8% of the schools reflected), non-contact learning opportunities were made

available during school closures through the provision of DBE or printed materials (in 90% of the schools reflected). Despite the implementation of alternate day rotational schedules in at least 93 percent of the schools, responses suggest that language homework was being given in nearly 80 percent of the schools. An unanswered question, however, is the extent to which learners were able to engage with materials and texts at home to advance in their learning and reading. Answering this requires objective learning data.

Figure 6: A summary of indicators related to contact and non-contact teaching and learning across schools in the COVID-19 educator survey. A school level analysis.



Source: Educator COVID-19 survey. **Notes**: 194 schools are reflected in this analysis. Educator level responses are used to identify schools where alternate day rotational school models or different non-contact teaching approaches are reported by at least one educator responding from the school.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1:5: WHICH MODALITIES WERE MOST FEASIBLE TO FACILITATE NON-CONTACT LEARNING DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD, AND AFTER SCHOOLING RESUMED?

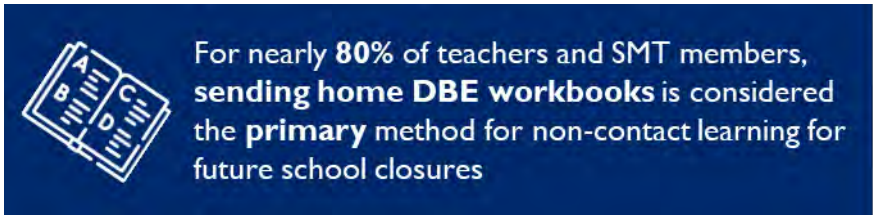
In this section, we ascertain the feasibility of different approaches to non-contact learning by considering educator responses to the COVID-19 educator survey items on i) different modalities of non-contact learning used during school closures; ii) the feasibility of different approaches if schools were to close again; and iii) practical support or training identified as necessary to facilitate the use of different modalities of non-contact learning or teaching.

We outline two major findings:

- **The use of hard copy material and DBE workbooks is and will continue to be the dominant mode of non-contact learning during school closures.**
- **The limited feasibility and use of online teaching methods as a mode of non-contact teaching or learning.**

DOMINANT USE OF HARD COPY MATERIAL AND DBE WORKBOOKS AS MODES OF NON-CONTACT LEARNING

The use of DBE workbooks and printed materials given to learners to take home was the *de facto* approach to support learning at home in North West schools in the COVID-19 educator survey sample. Teachers' perceived feasibility of non-contact learning modalities for future school closures is also consistent with reported practices identified during the school closures of 2020. **For nearly 80 percent of teachers and SMT members, sending home DBE workbooks is considered the primary method for non-contact learning for future school closures** (see Table 16). Second to this is providing printed material. Around 58 percent and 61 percent of teachers and SMT members respectively indicate that providing printed material is key to supporting learning during school closures. **These results highlight the continued importance of DBE workbooks as a structured tool to support learning in schools and in the home.** They also imply that creating opportunities for children to learn during school closures may require the development of structure, tools, and plans to augment the educational value of workbooks and printed materials for learning at home. Bottlenecks with respect to printing hard copy material or distributing hard copy material or books for learning or reading at home should be identified and addressed.



The COVID-19 educator survey data hints at a lack of printed materials at schools, or ability to print or restrictive costs of printing, as hindering teachers in resource-constrained school environments from providing non-contact learning opportunities to learners.

Figure 7 shows responses to questions asking teachers about what practical support would help them improve their ability to teach (effectively) should the second wave of COVID-19 result in school closures. These were multiple response questions, with ten different supports identified. In terms of a practical support for non-contact teaching, the most selected option by 41 percent of teachers was the provision of “hard copy material”.

Teachers were second most likely to select “training on the adjusting of ATPs (Annual Teaching Plans)” as a primary practical support required – this response was selected by a third of teachers.

SMT members were asked a similar question but in relation to what practical support would improve their teacher’s ability to teach. What is interesting, is that **many SMT members recognize the need for teachers to consider new approaches to teaching.** The most common option selected by SMT members in terms of practical support to improve teachers’ ability to teach during school closures was “training to adapt to change and identify new teaching approaches” – this option was selected by 43 percent of SMT members (see

Figure 7). This suggests that teachers could think differently or expand the possibilities of creating non-contact learning opportunities beyond just providing DBE workbooks or printed materials to learners.

LIMITED FEASIBILITY OF ONLINE TEACHING METHODS

One of the clearest results from the COVID-19 educator survey is that online teaching did not occur in the schools reflected in the sample. Just four percent of teachers responding to the survey reported that they used online teaching methods during the 2020 school closures (see Figure 3). This is not surprising given how few learners in these schools have access to computers or internet.

However, 16 percent of teachers in the sample indicated that if school closures happened again, using an online (or internet) based teaching method would be feasible for them (see Table 16). SMT members are arguably more realistic in this regard, with only 6 percent indicating that online teaching is a feasible method for their teachers if schools were to close again.

The survey highlights the limited feasibility and use of online teaching methods as a mode of non-contact teaching or learning

16% of teachers indicated that using an online (or internet) based teaching method would be feasible for them

Possibly due to the limited feasibility of implementing online teaching for learners in resource-constrained environments, just 21 percent of teacher respondents chose “training on online teaching” as a practical support to improve their ability to teach during school closures as seen in

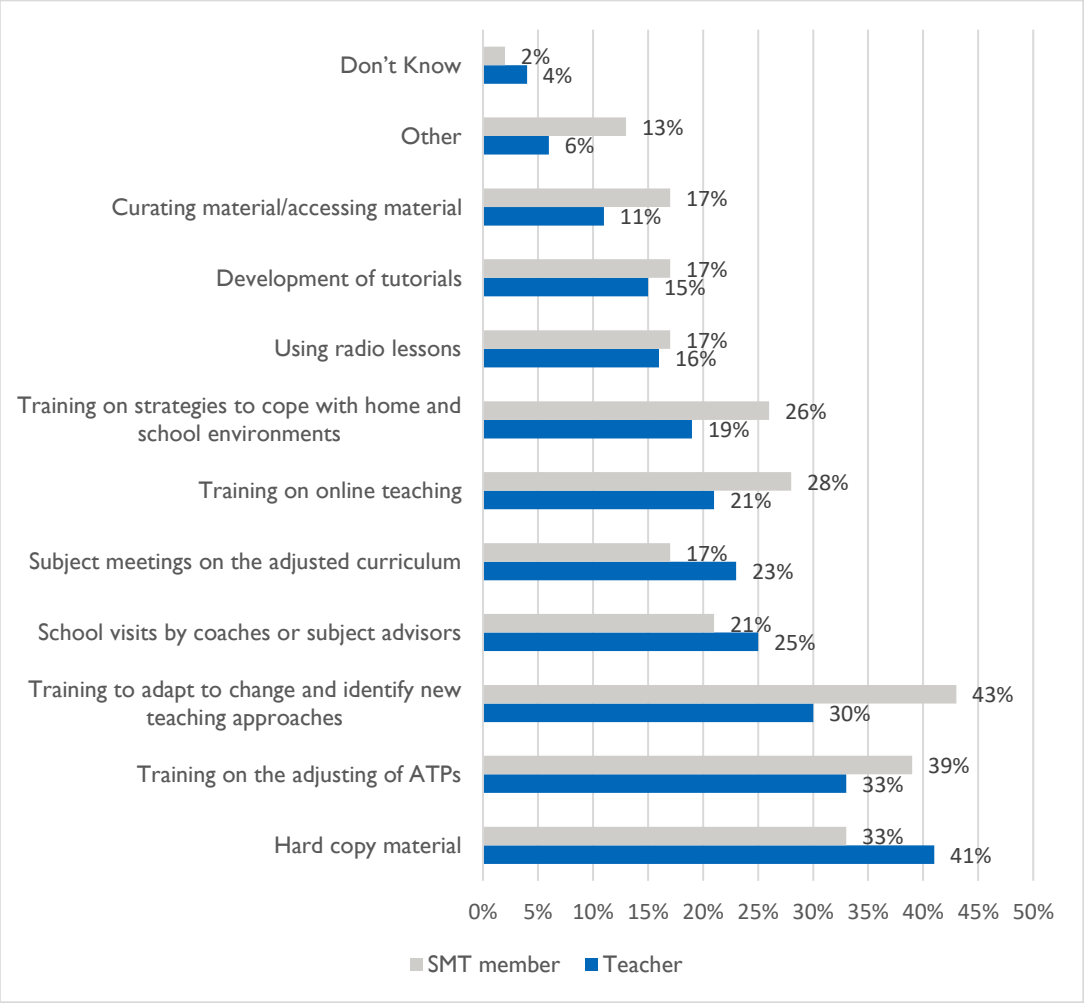
Figure 7. The feasibility of online teaching can also be explored by identifying whether some teachers in a school report using online or virtual methods, but others do not. There were four cases of schools in the sample where at least one but not all the teacher respondents in the school reported using online or virtual methods for non-contact teaching during school closures. If this is a feasible method for one teacher in a school, it may be feasible for more teachers.

Table 16: If schools had to close again, which of the following teaching activities would be most feasible for you / your teachers?

	Teacher	SMT member
Provide teaching using an online [internet] based method	16%	6%
Provide printed materials	58%	61%
Send home DBE workbooks	79%	79%
Don't Know	3%	3%
Refuse	0%	0%
N	**332**	**107**

Source: Educator COVID-19 survey. **Notes**: Multiple response option. Teachers and SMT were asked this question separately. "All of the above" was also a response option. We add to options 1 to 3, the percentage that respond "All of the above".

Figure 7: Practical support that would help teachers improve their ability to teach (effectively) if schools closed

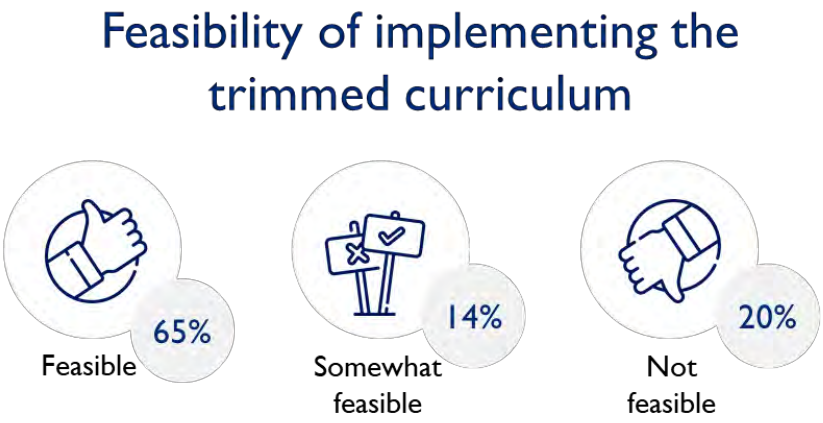


Source: Educator COVID-19 survey. **Notes**: Multiple response options. Number of teachers in calculation = 322. Number of SMT members in calculation = 107. Teachers were asked the following question: "Should this second wave of COVID-19 result in school closures, what practical support would help improve your ability to teach (to teach effectively)? Please indicate all forms of support." SMT members were asked the following question: "Should COVID-19 carry on into 2021, what practical support would help improve your teachers' ability to teach (to teach effectively)? Please indicate all forms of support."

RESEARCH QUESTION 1.6: TO WHAT EXTENT DID TEACHERS COVER THE STANDARD AND TRIMMED EGR CURRICULUM COVERED FOR THE 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR, AND HOW DOES THIS COMPARE TO BUSINESS AS USUAL?

Acknowledging the large losses in school days due to COVID-19, the DBE reduced the curriculum that teachers and learners would be required to complete in the 2020 year. In their November 2020 article, Hoadley (p. 10-11) note that curriculum trimming was a temporary measure implemented in 2020. While the first round of trimming was not substantial, a second

round in July 2020 marked a shift toward focusing on the "core concepts" with decisions on what to include or exclude devolved to teachers. As such, trimming has become school-based and widely variable, with selection and pacing requirements relaxed. At the Foundation Phase, the DBE suggested that schools focus daily on core concepts in Mathematics, Home Language and English, but teach Life Skills or Life Orientation on alternating days.



In the COVID-19 survey, educators were asked about whether they thought the trimmed curriculum was feasible to implement. Nearly two thirds agreed (responding "yes") that it was feasible to implement (65%); a further 14 percent said it was "somewhat" feasible and 20 percent said it was not feasible to implement. Younger teachers aged 20 to 39 were less likely to think it was feasible to implement as compared with older teacher respondents. On average, teachers and SMT members shared similar views about the implementation feasibility of the trimmed curriculum.

Table 17: Do you think the trimmed curriculum was feasible to implement?

	Total	Age Group			Role		Reading Score			
	Total	20-39	40-49	50-69	SMT	Teacher	T1	T2	T3	NA
No	20%	28%	21%	18%	17%	19%	17%	17%	19%	30%
Somewhat	14%	22%	10%	15%	15%	16%	17%	13%	17%	11%
Yes	65%	50%	69%	67%	68%	65%	66%	70%	63%	59%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
N	**439**	**68**	**123**	**248**	**107**	**332**	**117**	**116**	**115**	**91**

Source: COVID-19 educator survey **Notes**: Single response option. Teacher and SMT responses.

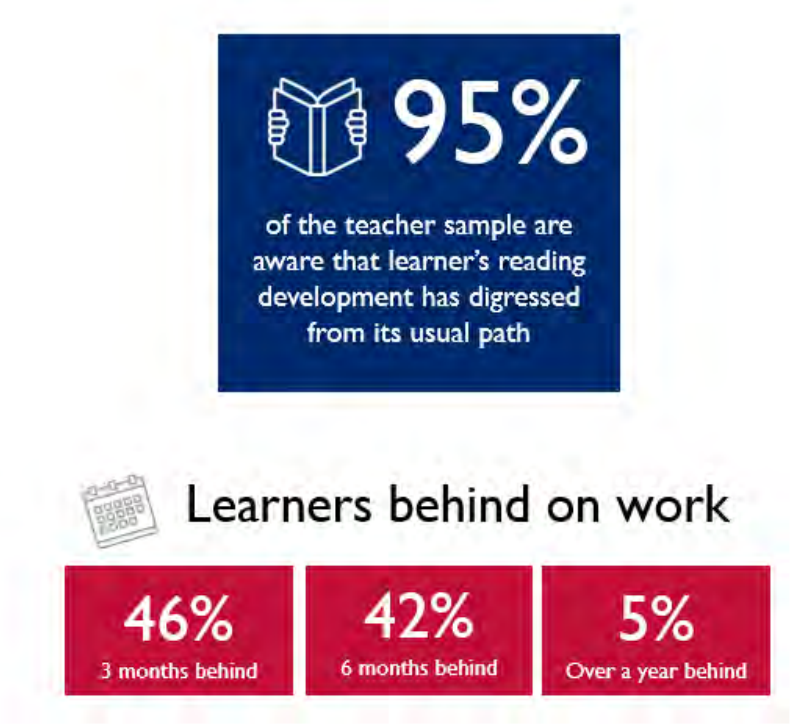
RESEARCH QUESTION 1.7: WHAT EFFECT HAS THE COVID-19 SCHOOL DISRUPTIONS HAD ON EARLY GRADE READING LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN 2020?

As we have shown, COVID-19 severely impacted on available contact teaching time at schools in 2020. The big question that remains unanswered is how negatively the disruption to schooling has impacted on learner performance. International education institutions propose thinking of lost school days in terms of learner trajectories, measuring how much an average learner learns in a year and then estimating the learning loss resulting from the pandemic (Mohohlwane et al., 2020). Gustafsson and Nuga (2020) propose a ratio of 1.25 for South Africa, meaning that for every day of schooling lost, learning will be reduced by one-and-a-quarter days. Learning losses are expected to share a larger than one-to-one ratio with the amount of time learners were not attending school based on evidence from other forms of interruptions to schooling, whereby realized learning losses exceed the amount of learning that would have been lost under “business as usual” conditions.

But these are merely proposed estimates of lost learning. We do not yet have objective evidence on how learner performance has been impacted. However, the COVID-19 educator survey is instructive for identifying educator perceptions about the disruptions that the pandemic has had on early grade learning.

PERCEPTIONS OF READING DEVELOPMENT DECLINES

Educators were asked to describe their learners' reading level in terms of where they would normally be at this time of year. The clearest result emerging from Table 18 is that **there is almost unanimous agreement that learners are far behind where they should be at this time of the year.** Just five percent of the educator respondents indicate that learners’ reading levels were “about the same” compared with learners they had the previous year, implying that almost **95 percent of the sample are aware that learners’ reading development has digressed from its usual path.**



Of teacher respondents, 46 percent indicated that learners were about three months behind where learners usually are at this time of the year and 42 percent indicated learners being six months behind where they usually are. Worryingly, five percent indicated that learners were more than a year behind where learners are usually at this time of the year.

The dramatic impacts of COVID-19 are particularly evident in Foundation Phase teachers' reports about how far learners are behind in their reading development. As shown in Figure 8, about 93 percent, 92 percent and 94 percent of surveyed teachers in Grades 1, 2 and 3 report that learners are behind. The extent to which learners are perceived to be behind is also very similar across the three Foundation Phase grade teachers.

SMT members are slightly more optimistic about learners' reading development than teachers. Educators in schools with average Setswana reading scores in higher performing terciles are slightly less optimistic about current reading levels than educators in schools in the worst performing reading tercile. There are few differences in overall responses across educators from EGRS schools in township compared with rural areas.

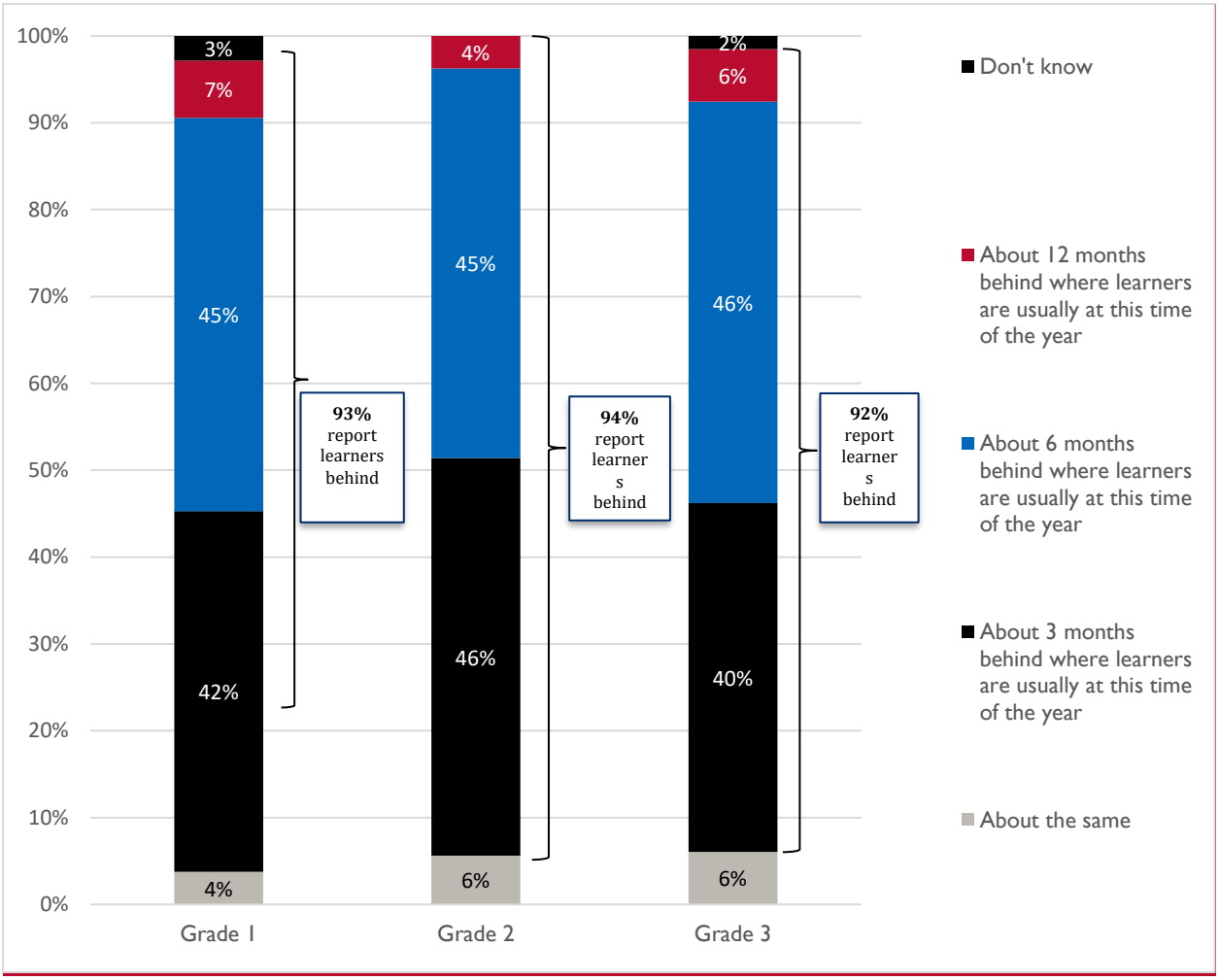
As reading data is collected to obtain objective evidence on reading losses, we will be able to further explore how these perceptual responses relate to objective reading levels.

Table 18: Compared to learners you had last year, how would you describe these learners' reading level in terms of where they should be at this time of year?

	Total	Role		District		Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	SMT	Teacher	KK	NMM	T1	T2	T3	NA	Town-ship	Rural
About 12 months behind where learners are usually at this time of the year	5%	4%	6%	5%	5%	3%	6%	5%	7%	5%	5%
About 6 months behind where learners are usually at this time of the year	42%	39%	43%	37%	44%	38%	42%	43%	46%	45%	41%
About 3 months behind where learners are usually at this time of the year	46%	51%	44%	52%	44%	47%	45%	50%	41%	42%	48%
About the same	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	9%	6%	3%	4%	7%	6%
Don't know	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%	0%	2%	2%	0%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
N	**439**	**107**	**332**	**104**	**335**	**117**	**116**	**115**	**91**	**107**	**234**

Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: Single response option. Teacher and SMT responses. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3.

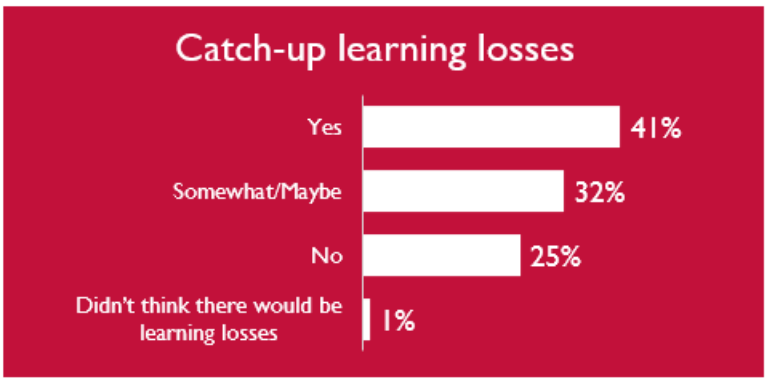
Figure 8: Grade 1-3 teacher's response to the question "Compared to learners you had last year, how would you describe these learners' reading level in terms of where they should be at this time of year?"



Source: COVID-19 educator survey **Notes**: N Grade 1 teachers = 106, N Grade 2 teachers = 107, N Grade 3 teachers = 132. Teachers from 156 North West schools.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WHETHER LEARNERS WILL BE ABLE TO CATCH-UP LEARNING LOSSES

Teachers were also asked whether learners would catch-up any learning losses from 2020 in 2021. About 41 percent said yes (see Table 19), a quarter (25%) said “No”, and nearly a third (32%) responded “somewhat” or “maybe”. Just one percent indicated that they didn’t think there would be learning losses and therefore the question was not applicable.



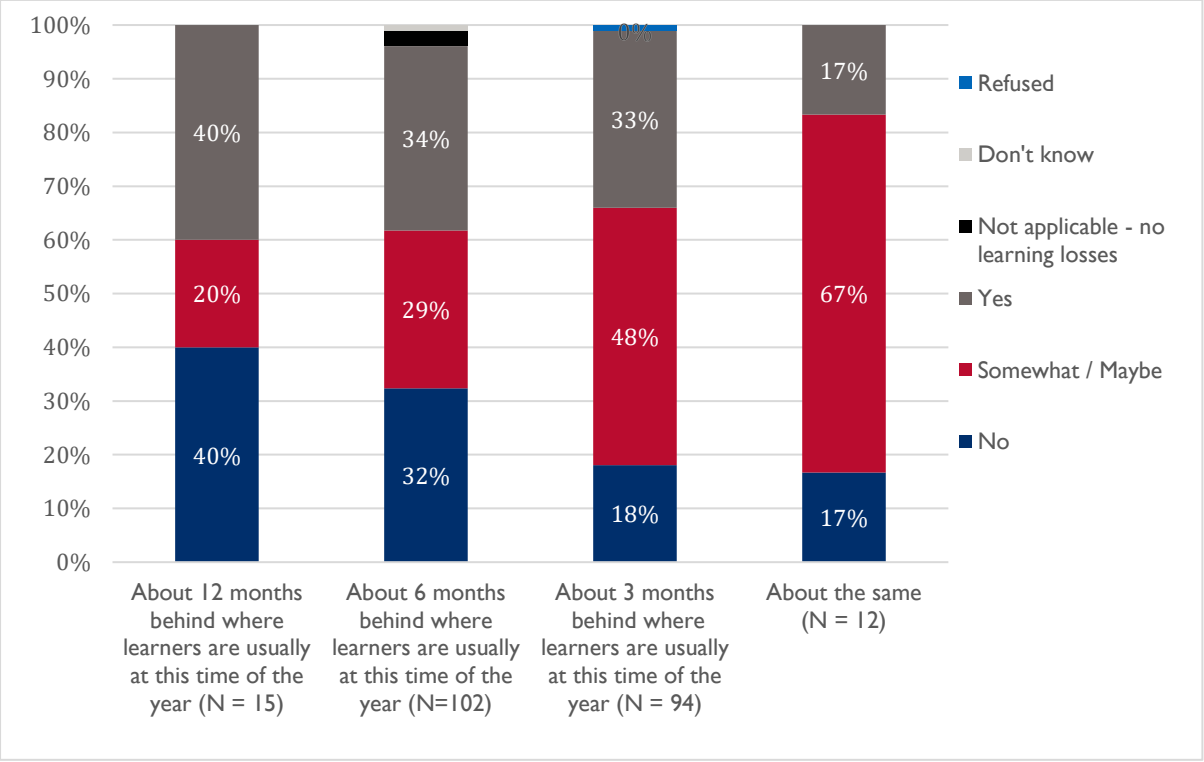
We then disaggregate Foundation Phase teachers’ perceptions of whether learners will catch-up any learning losses from 2020 to 2021 by how far behind they think learners are in their reading compared to where they usually would be. As seen in Figure 9, the perceived likelihood of catch-up is lower the further behind teachers think learners are in their reading. Of the largest group that think learners are three or six months behind where they should be, an almost equal third in each group think learners will catch-up. But compared to teachers who say learners are three months behind in their reading, teachers that respond that learners are six months behind are almost twice as likely to say that learners will not catch-up any learning losses (32% versus 18%) and they are also less likely to respond that learners will catch-up “somewhat” or that “maybe” there will be some catch-up (28% versus 48%).

Table 19: Do you think that learners will be able to catch-up any learning losses from 2020 in 2021?

	Total	Age Group			Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	20-39	40-49	50-69	T1	T2	T3	NA	Town-ship	Rural
Yes	41%	38%	40%	43%	45%	40%	46%	32%	35%	48%
No	25%	41%	22%	21%	19%	30%	23%	28%	33%	20%
Somewhat / Maybe	32%	19%	35%	35%	35%	27%	28%	40%	28%	30%
Not applicable (I don't think there were learning losses)	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Don't know	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Refused	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
N	**332**	**63**	**96**	**173**	**78**	**89**	**90**	**75**	**81**	**169**

Source: COVID-19 educator survey **Notes**: Single response option. Teacher responses only. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3.

Figure 9: Foundation Phase teachers' perceptions of whether learners will catch-up learning losses from 2020 to 2021, by how much they think learners are behind in their reading compared to where they usually are.



Source: COVID-19 educator survey **Notes**: Grade 1 to 3 teacher responses only. N = 228.

PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING OF TEACHERS

The previous section presents initial data on how the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted schooling. Such disruption is likely to have resulted in considerable changes in the psychosocial wellbeing of teachers, learners, and their families. In this section, we use the COVID-19 educator survey results to understand the level of psychosocial stress that teachers are facing and explore some of the COVID-19 related worries they have. We investigate the following research questions:

2.1 What about the COVID-19 pandemic worries teachers and SMT members the most?

2.2. What is the level of stress experienced by teachers due to COVID-19 pandemic?

2.3 Did teachers and school principals feel supported to deal with the stress caused by the COVID-19 disruptions to school?

2.4 Has the level of stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability of schools, teachers, and learners to teach / learn?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2.1: WHAT ABOUT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WORRIES TEACHERS AND SMT MEMBERS THE MOST?

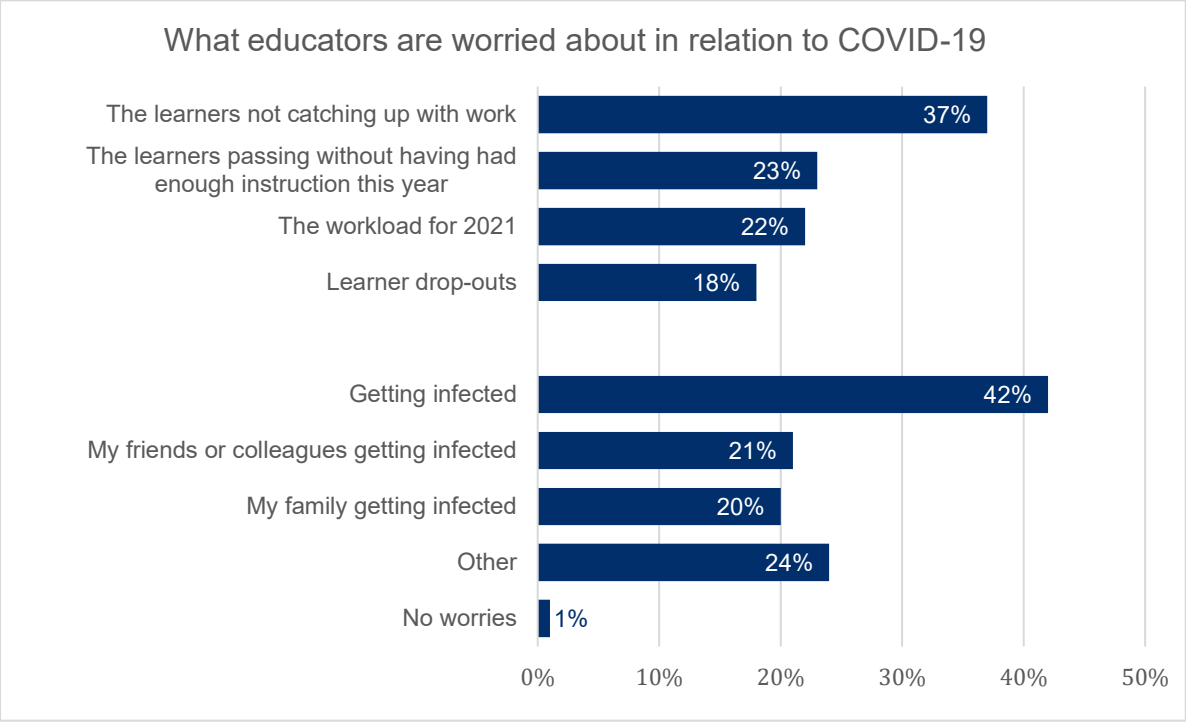
Source: COVID-19 educator survey **Notes:** Multiple response option. Spontaneous mention. All teacher and SMT respondents n=439

For educators, distress can stem from both the COVID-19 related health risks and the increased workload of teaching in new and challenging ways with inadequate training. This can lead to burnout, resulting in high rates of absenteeism, and may contribute to higher levels of teacher turnover (UNESCO, 2020).[16] In this study, educators were asked what

[16] UNESCO, 2020. Supporting teachers in back-to-school efforts. Guidance for policy-makers

worries them most about COVID-19 and were encouraged to share multiple answers. Almost all (99%) of the respondents mentioned at least one worry. Educators mentioned worries related to personal health, and worries related to work.

Figure 10: What worries you the most about COVID-19 and teaching at the moment? (Spontaneous mention)



Source: COVID-19 educator survey **Notes**: Multiple response option. Spontaneous mention. All teacher and SMT respondents n=439

More than a third of respondents (42%) said they worried about “getting infected” followed by 21 percent expressing concerns about colleagues or family being infected.

The most common work-related worries mentioned by educators were about learners not being able to catch up on their work (37%) and learners passing without having had enough instruction during 2019 (37 %). Almost a quarter of the educators (22%) shared that they were concerned about the workload for 2021.

In the qualitative open ended survey responses, educators expressed concern that the curriculum had not been covered:

- Because of weekly rotation we didn't cover curriculum, learner's don’t come to school regularly due to virus (Teacher, 80)
- Affected them badly we could not cover the syllabus unlike the previous year (SMT, 52)

- Work was not done, only formal assessments done (SMT, 437)
- Most of the time we were teaching them the protocols of COVID-19 we were delayed (SMT, 241)

Some expressed the sentiment that learning losses may have occurred:

- [COVID-19] Traumatized learner's… they went backwards. [We] had to redo all the work they forget the work and their parents don't help (Teacher, 420)
- [COVID-19] Took us back a lot… kids can't read at all (Teacher, 418)

And some teachers reflected on the possibility that important foundational skills may have been skipped:

- [COVID-19] Affected them badly the phonics were not done which will be difficult for learners (Teacher, 47)

In January 2021, prior to the opening of schools, 18 percent of the educators in this survey mentioned learner drop-outs as one of their prominent worries.[17] In qualitative open-ended responses from educators, six percent of the interviewees spoke about learner drop-out when asked how COVID-19 affected learners. Educators often spoke of absenteeism and drop-out together. Fear was often mentioned as one of the reasons learners drop out:

- Most of the learners fear coming to school, other drop out...they are struggling (Female, 238)
- Most the learners were afraid to attend school because of COVID-19 and also parent take them out because of pressure they have about COVID-19 some they were coming twice a week (Female, 245)

Two responses suggested that patterns in rural areas may be different than in less rural areas:

- Some learner couldn't come to school anymore especially those from farms and 3 learners passed on then 16 teachers were affected (Female, 268)
- It has affected them a lot...most of the learner's did not come back. Especially in this rural area (Male, 145)

The concern among educators about dropout could be contextualized against data available about caregivers' worries from NIDS CRAM Wave 3 survey (published Feb 2021). The NIDS CRAM study notes that while overall rates of worry about learners' returning to school have declined (from 72% of households in July 2020 to 52% in November 2020) *half* of caregivers

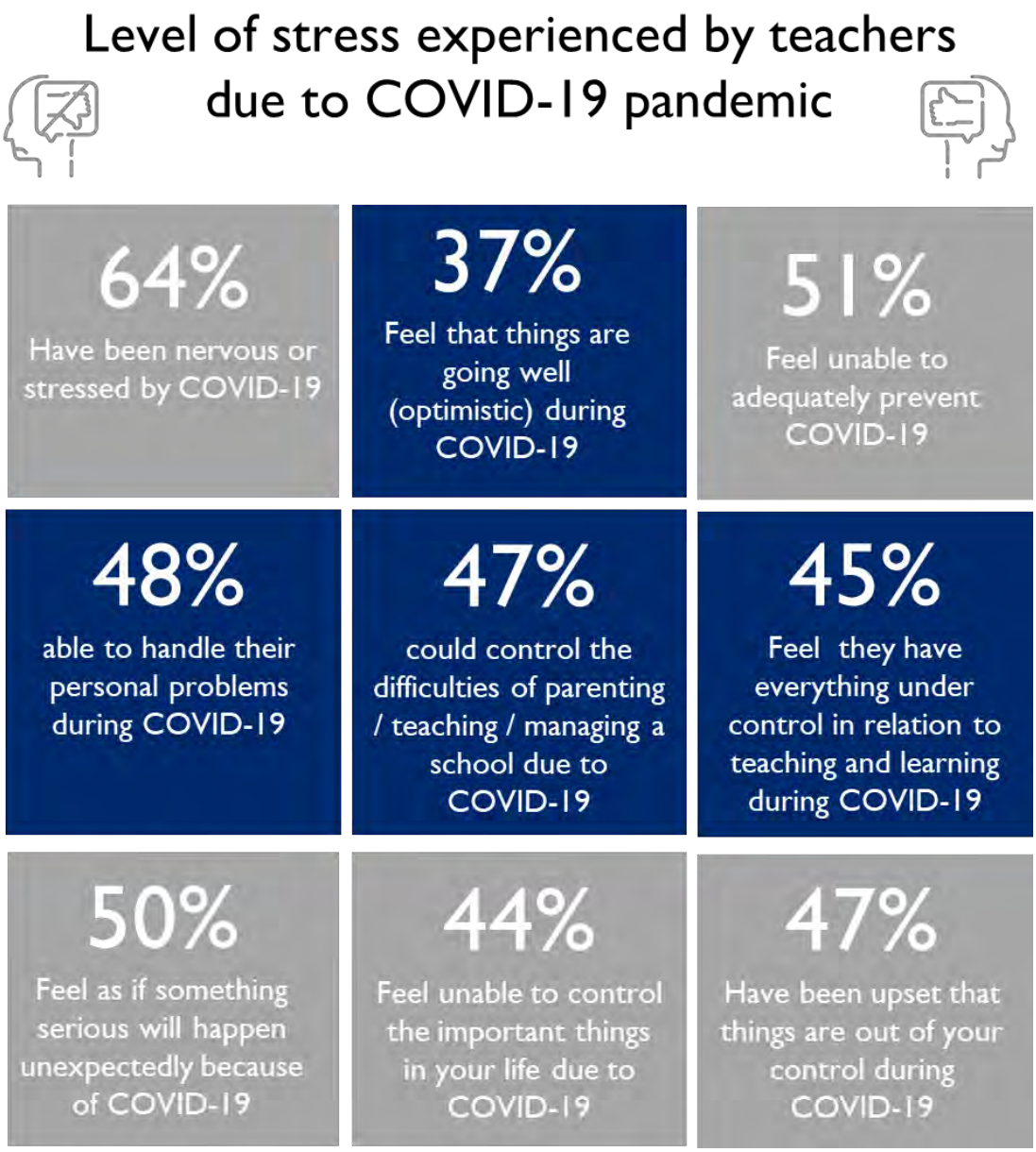
[17] On average, respondents identified 2.08 issues they were worried about, with a range of between 0 and 7*SD* = 1.44

in the country are worried about children returning to school. While the sampled data for the educator COVID-19 survey and the national NIDS CRAM data are not directly comparable, it appears that both data sets highlight drop-out as an area of concern.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2.2: WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF STRESS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

International literature show that the COVID-19 pandemic does not only threatened physical health of persons; the mental health of individuals is also affected by the low predictability and uncertainty associated with the pandemic (Lv. et al., 2020). Stark et al. (2020) concur by stating that the impact on individuals' mental health is a public health challenge. According to the results of a study conducted by Lv et al. (2020), the pandemic may have had psychological consequences such as an increase in negative emotions such as depression and anxiety. These feelings of uncertainty, panic and anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic could exacerbate and prolong social and health inequalities within countries (Ataguba, 2020; Naidu, 2020).

The educator COVID-19 survey could not give an indication of the degree to which educators' stress has *changed* in response to COVID-19, since no baseline data existed. However, the survey provides some insights into the COVID-19 related stress using nine items adapted from the Perceived Stress Scale-COVID-19 (PSS-C-10).



Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: Respondents were asked nine questions phrased as in this example: "How often have you been upset that things out of your control during COVID-19?" Four items were phrased positively, five items were phrased negatively. Respondents could choose: Never, almost never, sometimes, fairly often, very often and don't know. For the purposes of interpretation, we group the responses "fairly often" or "very often" together. Data reported are for all teacher and SMT respondents. n = 439.

As expected, many respondents reported feeling stressed by COVID-19, and this was mostly in relation to their sense of control over the situation. Worryingly, only 37 percent of the surveyed educators felt that things are going well "fairly often" or "very often" during COVID-19.

In qualitative open-ended responses from educators, some expressed fear and difficulty with adjusting. Some examples are shared below:

- "Everyone is scared" (Teacher, 106)
- "Learners were not able to learn, and teachers were also not so well" (Teacher, 225)
- "When they [learners] came back, they were shocked and also us teachers" (Teacher, 432)
- "The new normal was difficult...no parent involvement..." (SMT, 329)

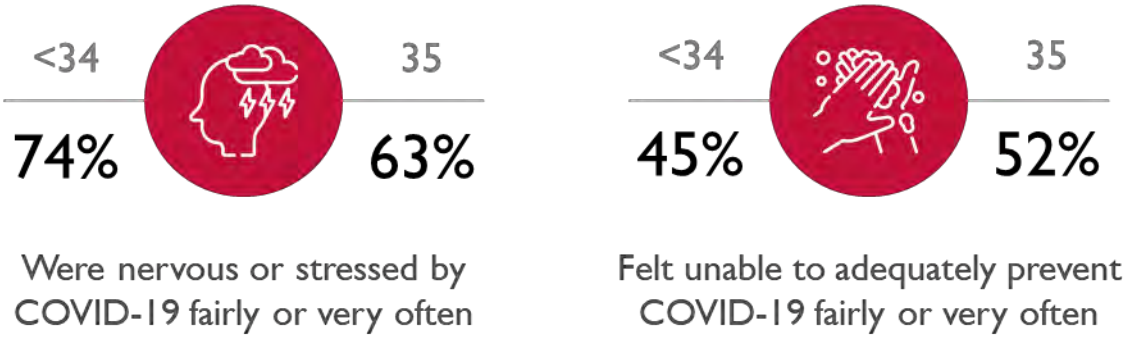
More than 40 percent of respondents selected "very often" or "fairly often" for the following items investigating the frequency of negative emotions:

→ How often have you been nervous or stressed by COVID-19? (64%)
→ How often do you feel unable to adequately prevent COVID-19? (51%)
→ How often do you feel as if something serious will happen unexpectedly because of COVID-19? (50%)
→ How often have you been upset that things are out of your control during COVID-19? (47%)
→ How often do you feel that you are unable to control the important things in your life due to COVID-19? (44%)

Fewer than half of the respondents selected "very often" or "fairly often" for the items investigating positive emotions. Almost half of respondents felt that they were able to handle their personal problems during the COVID-19 pandemic (48%); 45 percent responded that they had everything under control in relation to teaching and learning during COVID-19; and 47 percent felt they could control the difficulties of parenting/teaching/managing a school due to COVID-19.

There were differences in responses to two questions on the PSS-C between younger (<34) and older respondents (35+). Older respondents seemed to be coping better:

→ "How often have you been upset that things are out of your control during COVID-19?" with 28 percent of younger respondents compared to 11 percent of older respondents responding "Fairly often"
→ "How often do you feel that you are unable to control the important things in your life due to COVID-19?" with nine percent of younger respondents compared to 18 percent of older respondents responding "Fairly often"



Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes**: Respondents were asked nine questions phrased as in this example: "How often have you been upset that things out of your control during COVID-19?" Four items were phrased positively, five items were phrased negatively. Respondents could choose: Never, almost never, sometimes, fairly often, very often and don't know. For the purposes of interpretation, we group the responses "fairly often" or "very often" together. Data reported are for all teacher and SMT respondents. n = 439

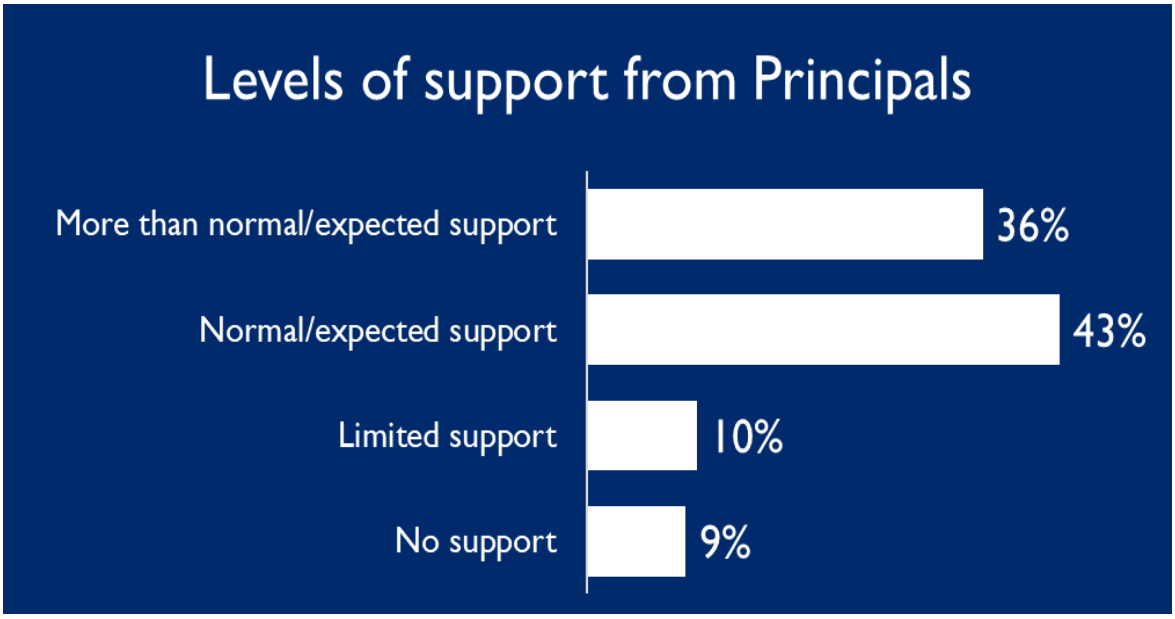
The high levels of stress reported by participants are not surprising. While there is no baseline of stress levels to compare against, the survey results tell us that many teachers' stress levels are high and thus their psychosocial wellbeing are fragile. Some show more resilience in the multilayered ecological systems in which they operate, but support and mitigation are critical to help educators reduce their stress and support their ability to teach.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2.3: DID TEACHERS AND SCHOOL PRINCIPALS FEEL SUPPORTED TO DEAL WITH THE STRESS CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 DISRUPTIONS TO SCHOOL?

Support from Principals

Respondents who were not principals were asked the degree to which they felt supported by their principal to continue teaching during school closure. The Figure below depicts the results.

Figure 11: Levels of Support from Principals



Source: Educator COVID-19 survey. **Notes**: Single response option. Read options. All respondents who were not principals n = 331 teachers and n=10 SMT members.

Almost half of respondents (43%) felt that the support they received from principals was normal/as expected, while 36 percent said that it was more than normal/expected. On the other hand, 19 percent felt that they got no (9%) or limited support (10%) from their principals. This is a positive finding indicating that overall, most teachers felt supported by their principals. Further research should explore what kinds of support are most effective to mitigate stress.

Support from School Governing Bodies (SGBs)

SMT members (n = 107) were asked if they felt supported by their School Governing Body (SGB) during school closure. Like the results regarding principals' support, most SMT members felt support. 76 percent felt normal/expected (43%) or more than normal/expected (33%) levels of support from the SGB. On the other hand, 23 percent felt that they got no (6 percent) or limited (17%) support from the SGB during school closures. Only 2 percent of SMT members reported that there was no functioning SGB at their school. This finding is interesting given that many quintile 1 to 3 schools are known to have SGBs that are not functioning optimally (Bayat et al., 2014). Bayat et al. quote one principal saying:

- "I can list an impressive number of things they are involved with, but actually they do nothing, they have no capacity to do anything worthwhile" (p. 359)

Further research should explore which kinds of support SGBs can offer.

Support from District Officials

The DBE's *Action Plan to* 2024 notes that districts, under normal circumstances, are not always able to provide the quality of support required, however principals tend to report high satisfaction with support from districts. For example, school monitoring survey results indicate that, on average, approximately 78 percent of all principals in the country are satisfied with district support services. Against these findings, in the educator COVID-19 survey, SMT members were also

SMT members (n = 107) were asked if they felt supported by District Officials during school closure. Ten percent felt extremely supported, 20 percent felt very supported and 20 percent felt moderately supported by District Officials. On the other hand, 29 percent felt that they were not at all (6%) or only slightly (17%) supported by District Officials during school closures.

Support from Provincial Education Department

SMT members were asked if they felt supported by the Province during school closure. In response, 16 percent felt very (9%) or extremely (7%) supported by the Province. On the other hand, 46 percent felt that were not at all (26%) or only slightly (20%) supported by the Province during school closures.

It appears that educators and officials felt more support the closer they were to the school level, and less support the farther away they were from the school level. This indicates several points to follow up on: 1) what does support look like at each of these levels; 2) why is it more effective at the school and SGB levels; 3) how can educators feel more supported by district and provincial education officials/bodies; and 4) how can effective support be scaled up to help mitigate the negative effects of COVID-19.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2.4: HAS THE LEVEL OF STRESS CAUSED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED THE ABILITY OF SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND LEARNERS TO TEACH / LEARN?

Survey results show that the COVID-19 has impacted on teachers and learners via multiple pathways, such as the constraints of following COVID-19 protocols and constraints on teaching. Over half of the respondents (55%) reported that COVID-19 protocols have made it

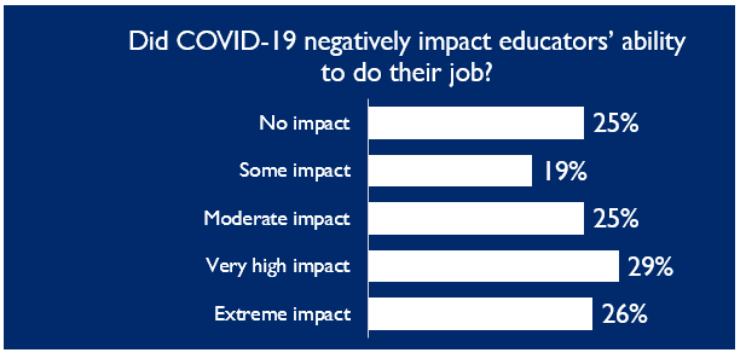
Source: COVID-19 educator survey. Notes: Single response option. **Read options**. All respondents n = 439.

more difficult (29%) or extremely difficult (26%) to do their job. When asked if they thought it would be feasible to cover the curriculum in 2021, 44 percent reported that they will not be able to do so. Qualitative open-ended responses also reveal the potential academic impacts of COVID-19, such as the curriculum not being completed, time limits and an expected drop in learner performance.

When asked about their ability to teach, 79 percent of educators indicated that stress related to COVID-19 has had a moderate (43%), very (7%), or extreme (29%) negative impact on their ability to teach. Interestingly, SMT members were less likely to say that pandemic related stress has had an impact on SMT members' ability to manage a school. Just 28 percent of SMT members reported that COVID-19 related stress has impacted their ability to manage the school.

Direct responses from parents about their ability to support learning was not yet available (A parent survey is planned later in 2021). However, teachers reported that parents' ability to support is inadequate. In response to a qualitative open-ended question: "How has COVID-19 affected learners?" 17 percent of educators spontaneously mentioned parents and/or caregivers of learners being unable or unwilling to assist with learning for various reasons. It was further noted by 23 percent of teachers that parents and/or caregivers had feelings of fear, anxiety, and stress, which then negatively effects conducive home learning environment.

Figure 12: Perceived impact of COVID-19 on educators' ability to teach, and SMT members' ability to manage schools



Source: Educator COVID-19 survey. Notes: Single response option. **Read options**. All respondents n = 439

In relation to learner behavior, 47 percent of respondents reported that there was a large (24%) or some (23%) increase in the number of disruptive or challenging behaviors in learners since they returned to school in August. Qualitative open-ended responses reflect that eight percent of teachers perceive learners as having problematic or unproductive attitudes. Teachers referred to students "skipping school" and "not doing their work", or referred to attitudes such as "lack of commitment to schoolwork."

Academic impact

In response to a qualitative open-ended question: "How has COVID-19 affected learners?" educators noted several effects COVID-19 has had on academics, such the curriculum not being completed, time limits and constraints, a drop in learner performance, learners struggling with the curriculum content, delays, learners not learning all they should, learner forgetfulness, and a lack of learner concentration and focus.

- "Affected them a lot. Before lockdown they knew how to read and write and when they came back, they forgot how to read and write or hold a pencil. Can't recognize the words" (Female, 32)

Respondents reported that these experiences were more of a problem than they would be in a normal academic year. Respondents also made special mention of COVID-19 negatively impacting slower learners, as these individuals battled to keep up and could not get the usual extra help teachers would offer during a normal academic year:

- "Affected very much. Learners left behind. Couldn't cope. Clever kids coped. Weaker couldn't cope..." (Female, 71)

Absenteeism and Drop-outs

In response to a qualitative open-ended question, about a quarter of respondents (26%) spontaneously mention concerns about absenteeism and drop-outs, including irregular attendance due to COVID-19 regulations:

- "Lot's learners' didn't get a chance to study more, not attend regularly lots of absenteeism" (35+, 227)
- "A lot because we were not meeting on daily basis they were struggling" (35+, 5)
- "they were affected badly because some dropped out and others failed and lost focused" (35+, 381)

Some respondents also highlighted that parents and/or caregivers are fearful of COVID-19, so they preferred for their children to stay at home which contributed to the rates of absenteeism and drop-outs. Furthermore, some parents and/or caregivers avoided going

into the school themselves to meet with teachers and find out what work needed to be done and how to assist their children with the schoolwork, which negatively impacted learners.

- “learners were not attending, parents were scared to let their kids come to school” (35+, 217)
- “Parents don't come to school because they are afraid to be infected. So, you cannot guide the parents how to teach the homework” (35+, 246)

Distress

Related to this parental fear, 23 percent of the respondents mentioned distress in response to a qualitative open-ended question. Respondents mentioned distress being experienced by a few different people, with learner distress (in the form of fear, anxiety, and stress) being the most widely spoken of, followed by parent distress and then teacher distress.

- “A lot especially because parents were to assist they struggled as parents are not patient...teachers are very very important...learners were scared and concentration was affected” (35+, 72)
- “Anxiety ...struggled to cope and concentrate was affected” (35+, 74)

Respondents also noted that some learners experienced illness (either by getting sick themselves or having unwell family members), learners passing away or learners’ family members passing away. Some respondents also linked this distress with reduced academic outputs and lower concentration levels of students:

- “Learners parents were afraid and stressed cause they taught they will be inflected...they struggled slot and could not concentrate” (35+, 213)
- “... It also affected those who were no fortunate to come back. They had commodities like asthma they were afraid to bring learners to school. Personally, as a teacher I’m very sad to see an intelligence kid repeat class, but there are those who came just passed because they came on term 4” (35+, 329)

Disadvantages of a Home-Learning Environment

When asked about the difficulties of a home-learning environment, 17 percent of respondents referred to problems with providing a conducive home-learning environment and oftentimes mentioned that children would not focus on their schoolwork. Educators mention issues like parents and/or caregivers of learners being unable or unwilling to assist with learning for various reasons. Respondents noted that some caregivers are illiterate and therefore were not able to help learners at all, while others were disinterested in or disengaged from the home-learning process.

- "...Parents are illiterate so they couldn't do the work that the teachers do in normal circumstances to help the kids. So, the kids found it hard to cope" (Teacher, 181)

Some others mentioned problems such as children being at home alone or parents doing the work for their children instead of assisting them.

- "...Parents were not supportive, so they struggle to learn at home" (SMT, 233)
- "...The parents do the work instead of helping the kids with the homework" (Teacher, 350)

Protocols in the way of learning

Almost a fifth of respondents (16%) mentioned that COVID-19 protocols got in the way of learning and/or teaching, due to problems like masks making it difficult to communicate with and understand learners, confusion over the new timetable and alternate teaching days, and a lack of physical or contact teaching which inhibited teacher engagement and explanation.

- "...reading was affected. Because of mask couldn't hear the kids in reading. Kids lose their mask...Had to go monitor the kids washing their hands during breaks. Keep them away from groups" (Teacher, 91)
- "It affected them negatively because they need physical interactions to understand..." (Teacher, 133)
- "They were afraid to communicate and do reading lessons. Because of the distance. You can't get close to them. Can't go individually and help them" (Teacher, 387)
- "Some learners couldn't come to school some came on wrongs days it created a mess..." (SMT, 270)

Perceived Negative Student Attitudes

This theme relates to respondents referring to the problematic or unproductive attitudes they believed students had, and what sort of impact these 'negative attitudes' had. These negative attitudes included respondents referring to students as "lazy," as not doing their work, or more general negative attitudes like learners' lack of commitment to schoolwork and skipping school.

- "They become lazy during the days when they are supposed to be home" (SMT, 351)
- "...It has affected learners in a negative way, the learners are not doing the work (SMT, 323)
- "They were not used to come in different days but they are used to come to school every day, so some had even an opportunity to bunk school..." (Teacher, 395)

- "Learners have lost interest. Coming for the sake of coming. When they do come, they are confused and don't follow the timetable" (Female, 208)

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR DEALING WITH COVID-19

Despite the high levels of stress that educators are experiencing, schools and educators have implemented support strategies, or have identified the need for support strategies.

This section explores which kind psychological support teachers and SMTs value most, and also provides an insight into the types of support that they feel most able to provide.[18] The educator COVID-19 survey data was analyzed to answer the research question 3.1.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3.1: WHAT KIND OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT WILL HELP TO REDUCE THEIR COVID-19 RELATED STRESS?

When asked what kind of psychosocial support can be provided to teachers to help them cope with teaching and learning during COVID-19, 46 percent of respondents said group sessions with other teachers, 42 percent wanted training on managing stress, and 40 percent requested training on how to support learners' wellbeing. Providing learners with psychosocial support to help them cope with learning during COVID-19 was deemed extremely important by 68 percent of respondents.

A higher number of SMT members (53%) compared to teachers (39%) indicated that training on managing stress would help them cope with teaching during COVID-19.

Source: The COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes:** Single / Multiple response option. Spontaneous mention. Teacher responses only / SMT responses only/ All respondents n=439

[18] Practical support requested by educators

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

South Africa's Foundation Phase learners have lost nearly 56 to 57 percent of school days in 2020, relative to 2019, due to school closures and rotational schedules implemented for face-to-face learning (Kotzé, 2021). In addition to these lost school days, 26 percent of teachers and SMT members note the problem of *additional* learner absenteeism. Alternate rotational schedules have continued into 2021, introducing the risk that learners will again lose at least half of their face-to-face school days in the 2021 calendar year. Based on international and local research it is estimated that for every one day of in-person teaching lost, at least 1.25 days of learning is lost (Gustafsson and Nuga, 2020). However, objective evidence on how learner performance has been impacted in South Africa is very limited. The educators who responded to the survey were in unanimous agreement that the learners have already fallen behind, and notably behind. That is a disconcerting finding since teachers typically tend to be more optimistic about learner performance than learning data reveals (Donovan, 2014). Further, existing evidence indicates that children typically do not easily "catch up" on foundational skills such as early grade decoding skills (Ardington et al., 2020; Spaull and Kotzé, 2015). These gaps in foundational skills can hinder future learning and have long-term implications for access to income and breaking cycles of poverty (Moses et al., 2017).

The changes to school routines and new demands imposed on teachers due to COVID-19 disruptions have placed a psychosocial burden on teachers. The survey shows that teachers have high levels of psycho-social stress and worry. Teachers, Head of Departments (HODs) and Principals have received some support from their colleagues, however more support is required to manage the risk of teacher burnout, teacher absenteeism, and teacher turnover (UNESCO, 2020).

Based on these findings, we provide nine recommendations.

> **Recommendation 1: Use data and contextual considerations to reflect on the benefits and challenges of rotational learner attendance schedules.** Continued loss of face-to-face teaching and learning, due to school closures and rotational schedules, will further hamper learning of foundational numeracy and literacy skills, which will have severe implications for children's development and future life outcomes. The DBE, together with their key stakeholders, should consider the evidence on the susceptibility of children and adolescents to SARS-CoV-2 (Tendesayi et al., 2021), together with concerns about the future-life impacts of constrained learning trajectories (Moses et al., 2017).

Recommendation 2: Identify community afterschool homework facilities to support out-of-school learning. Learners require additional opportunities to catch up on lost learning. Leveraging existing infrastructure such as empty classrooms in the afternoons, libraries, or community facilities for afterschool homework or learning development centers could augment opportunities for children to learn and read. Volunteers could be recruited and trained to read to, or read with, children.

Recommendation 3: Develop a multi-modal national remedial program that informs a media strategy to support home learning. Learners are behind and in response many organizations have developed resources to support learning at home. For example, UNICEF has created grade-specific learning content for radio and television [19] dissemination. Three things would be necessary to maximize such resources: First, the resources should be integrated into a learning program so that a less fragmented offering is available. Second, buy-in from teachers is required to ensure this can become a supportive tool for themselves and for parents. Thirdly, the offering should encourage both oral and written learning support. In Foundation Phase especially, learners need access to written support material and opportunity to read and write regularly.

Recommendation 4: Develop resources and tools to support effective supervisory home support to learners who need to complete parts of their DBE workbooks outside of school. Homework plans that integrate with revised annual teaching plans (ATPs) and the DBE workbooks could be developed to help ease the burden of schools having to craft appropriate guidance to parents. Making such resources available in low tech, scalable and easy to share format, would be essential.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that reading resources are readily accessible to support home learning. Provide fiscal resources to ensure reading resources are accessible to learners in every home. Promising strategies include making reading anthologies available to learners or making open-source stories accessible to households through partnerships with print media.

[19] https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/stories/new-unicef-south-africa-education-covid-19-case-study

Recommendation 6: Document successful school strategies used to address the various COVID-19 disruptions and challenges, and share widely.

Recommendation 7: Maintain COVID-19 protocols in the schools to make educators feel safe, but also encourage opportunities for peer support. Although educators are exposed to COVID-19 not only in schools, the DBE and school communities and school stakeholders should continue to take all possible steps to ensure that COVID-19 protocols are maintained in the school environment.

Recommendation 8: **Support peer-to-peer support amongst teachers**. Provide guidance and link SMT members to resources that would help them create more opportunities for in-person and virtual peer support between teachers. The normal social interactions between teachers may have been affected by social-distancing protocols, but half of survey respondents suggested learning and sharing sessions with others as a feasible support strategy. Existing platforms, such as WhatsApp, or the DBE Teacher Connect platform,[20] could be used to disseminate information.

Recommendation 9: Launch a campaign to strongly encourage and support psychosocial check-ins at different levels of the school. Psychosocial check-ins from line managers are a way of providing extra support (Akerstrom, Corin, Severin, Jonsdottir and Björk 2021). This includes check-ins between teachers and their HoDs, between SMT members and SGB members, and SMT members and their colleagues at circuit, district and provincial offices. Check-ins can help decrease feelings of isolation and increase feelings of support, so long as they focus on people's emotions and feelings, rather than work-related deliverables. Such check-ins need not be long, can be implemented virtually and can therefore be done regularly and consistently.

[20] https://www.ecubed-dbe.org/

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A: RESPONSE RATES

Table A 1: Predicting the EGRS schools reflected in completed GeoPoll survey responses

	(1)	(2)
Quintile 2 (Ref: quintile 1)	-0.026	-0.066
	(0.070)	(0.075)
Quintile 3 (Ref = quintile 1)	-0.151*	-0.216**
	(0.085)	(0.092)
1. Training (Ref = control)	-0.004	-0.023
	(0.082)	(0.087)
2. Coaching (Ref = control)	0.051	-0.015
	(0.082)	(0.088)
3. Parents (Ref = control)	0.153*	0.100
	(0.082)	(0.088)
Number of educators in 2019	0.009**	0.003
	(0.004)	(0.005)
School median Grade 4 wave 4 ORF Setswana	-0.001	0.000
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Kenneth Kaunda district (Ref: Ngaka Modiri)	-0.138*	-0.129
	(0.076)	(0.080)
Rural		-0.165**
		(0.077)
Constant	0.224**	0.403**
	(0.108)	(0.149)
Observations	227	201
R-squared	0.058	0.072

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.001. Missing data for 2 EGRS schools in estimation 1. Missing rural indicator for 228 schools in regression 2. Sample only includes one teacher observation per school.

Table A 2: Which of the following activities were done to support non-contact teaching and learning in your school during school closure? (Read options)

		Role		District		Reading Score				Type of Area	
	Total	SMT	Teacher	KK	NMM	T1	T2	T3	NA	Township	Rural
1) Provide tutorials or one-on-one sessions	9%	8%	9%	5%	10%	8%	11%	10%	7%	9%	10%
2) Online teaching through for example. Google Classrooms	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%
3) Communicated about Radio or TV classes	5%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%	4%	4%	8%	5%	6%
4) Virtual teaching through Skype - Zoom/Google meetings/MS Teams or WhatsApp	3%	1%	4%	4%	3%	3%	1%	5%	2%	4%	3%
5) Package of support in the form of learning materials in hard copies	34%	29%	36%	28%	36%	40%	32%	31%	34%	32%	36%
6) Package of support in the form of learning materials in soft copy [e.g., Sent through Email/WhatsApp]	13%	7%	15%	16%	12%	9%	12%	10%	22%	16%	9%
7) Printed material and parents collected it and returned it to me	28%	30%	27%	21%	30%	29%	26%	29%	29%	18%	32%
8) Sent home DBE workbooks with learners	63%	60%	64%	66%	62%	62%	66%	61%	65%	72%	59%
9) Other	2%	5%	1%	4%	1%	2%	3%	3%	0%	3%	2%
10) No support was given for learning at home	13%	14%	12%	14%	12%	10%	15%	12%	13%	13%	12%
Don't know	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Refused	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
N	**439**	**107**	**332**	**104**	**335**	**117**	**116**	**115**	**91**	**107**	**234**

Notes: Multiple response options. Teacher and SMT responses. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3. ^Area type is only available for respondents in EGRS schools.

Table A 3: In the midst of COVID-19 school closures, how did you communicate with parents of your learners? (Teacher responses)

		Age Group			Gender		Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	20-39	40-49	50-69	F	M	T1	T2	T3	NA	Township	Rural
1)I sent WhatsApp messages to parents	37%	38%	41%	34%	37%	33%	35%	36%	36%	41%	40%	34%
2)I called parents directly or via WhatsApp	20%	22%	22%	19%	20%	21%	21%	20%	23%	17%	17%	24%
3)I visited their homes	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	4%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
4)I used platforms such as google classrooms/ Microsoft teams/Zoom etc.	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
5)I sent homework to learners via parents	7%	6%	8%	6%	7%	4%	10%	7%	7%	4%	7%	8%
6)I sent school newsletters	32%	33%	27%	34%	31%	38%	32%	35%	32%	27%	30%	36%
7) I shared the time-table of online lessons	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	4%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
8)I did not communicate with parents directly	14%	14%	15%	14%	15%	13%	17%	17%	14%	9%	20%	14%
9)The school communicated with parents	14%	14%	16%	13%	14%	21%	15%	8%	17%	17%	17%	11%
88)DON'T KNOW	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
99)REFUSED"	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
N	**332**	**63**	**96**	**173**	**308**	**24**	**78**	**89**	**90**	**75**	**81**	**169**

Notes: Multiple response options. Teacher responses. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3. Area type is only available for respondents in EGRS schools.

Table A 4: In the midst of COVID-19 school closures, how did you communicate with parents of your learners? (SMT responses)

		District		Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	KK	NMM	T1	T2	T3	NA	Township	Rural
1)I sent WhatsApp messages to parents	24%	6%	28%	21%	30%	16%	38%	19%	23%
2)I called parents directly or via WhatsApp	14%	18%	13%	18%	19%	8%	6%	8%	18%
3)I visited their homes	3%	0%	3%	5%	0%	4%	0%	4%	3%
4)I used platforms such as google classrooms/ Microsoft teams/Zoom etc.	3%	0%	3%	3%	4%	0%	6%	0%	3%
5)I sent homework to learners via parents	7%	0%	8%	10%	7%	4%	0%	0%	11%
6)I sent school newsletters	59%	65%	58%	56%	56%	60%	69%	54%	58%
7) I shared the time-table of online lessons	1%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%
8)I did not communicate with parents directly	11%	18%	10%	8%	11%	16%	13%	12%	11%
9)The school communicated with parents	17%	29%	14%	13%	19%	16%	25%	15%	15%
88) Don't know	1%	6%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%
99) Refused	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
N	**107**	**17**	**90**	**39**	**27**	**25**	**16**	**26**	**65**

Notes: Multiple response options. SMT responses. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3. Area type is only available for respondents in EGRS schools.

Table A 5: Do you think that, in general, learners did most of the work that teachers gave them to do during school closures?

	Total	Role		District		Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	SMT	Teacher	KK	NMM	T1	T2	T3	NA	Township	Rural
Yes	18%	14%	20%	16%	19%	15%	24%	16%	18%	13%	21%
Yes but only some	36%	36%	36%	37%	36%	36%	36%	36%	36%	44%	32%
No	38%	43%	36%	37%	38%	39%	33%	41%	38%	35%	38%
I did not give any work to learners	8%	7%	9%	11%	7%	9%	7%	7%	8%	7%	9%
Don't know	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
	100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
N	**439**	**107**	**332**	**104**	**335**	**117**	**116**	**115**	**91**	**107**	**234**

Notes: Single response option. SMT and teacher responses. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3. Area type is only available for respondents in EGRS schools.

Table A 6: If schools had to close again, which of the following teaching activities would be most feasible for you?

	Total	Age Group			Gender		Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	20-39	40-49	50-69	Female	Male	T1	T2	T3	NA	Town-ship	Rural
1.Provide teaching using an online based method	6%	10%	2%	7%	5%	17%	1%	6%	12%	4%	9%	5%
2.Provide printed materials	48%	49%	52%	45%	50%	25%	50%	45%	47%	51%	37%	51%
3.Send home DBE workbooks	69%	70%	69%	68%	69%	58%	62%	67%	73%	72%	65%	70%
4.All of the above	10%	14%	9%	9%	9%	21%	15%	11%	8%	7%	14%	10%
5. Don't Know	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	8%	1%	6%	2%	4%	4%	3%
6. Refuse	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
N	**332**	**63**	**96**	**173**	**308**	**24**	**78**	**89**	**90**	**75**	**81**	**169**

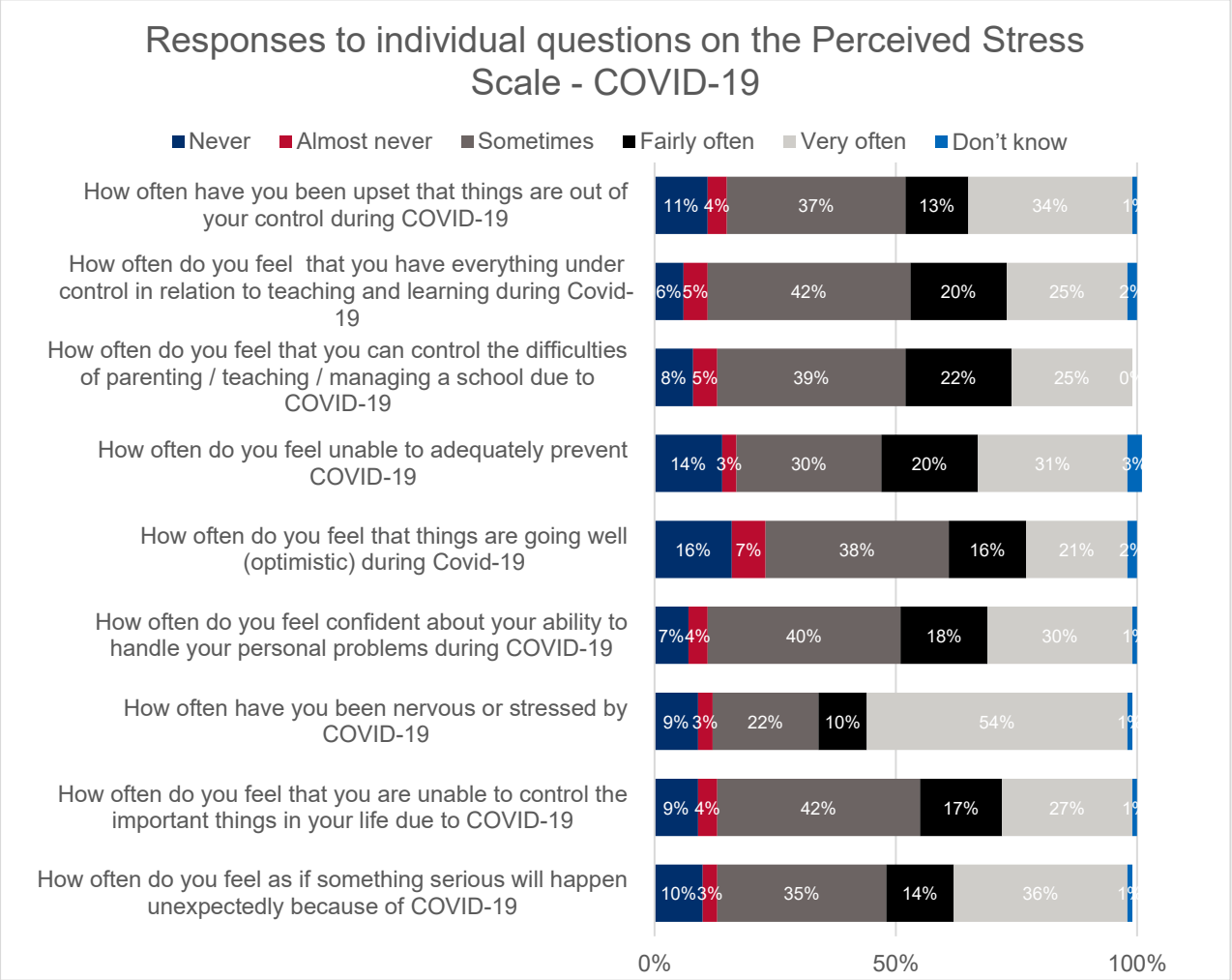
Notes: Multiple response options. Teacher responses only. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3. Area type is only available for respondents in EGRS schools.

Table A 7: If schools had to close again, which of the following teaching activities would be most feasible for your teachers?

	Total	Age Group			Reading Score*				Type of Area	
	Total	20-39	40-49	50-69	T1	T2	T3	NA	Township	Rural
1. Provide teaching using an online based method	3%	0%	4%	3%	3%	0%	8%	0%	0%	3%
2. Provide printed materials	58%	40%	56%	60%	51%	59%	60%	69%	46%	60%
3. Send home DBE workbooks	76%	100%	74%	75%	79%	81%	64%	75%	77%	75%
4. All of the above	3%	0%	7%	1%	8%	0%	0%	0%	4%	3%
5. Don't Know	3%	0%	0%	4%	3%	4%	4%	0%	8%	2%
6. Refuse	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
N	**107**	**5**	**27**	**75**	**39**	**27**	**25**	**16**	**26**	**65**

Notes: Multiple response options. SMT responses only. *Reading score reflects the tercile of the school with respect to their Grade 4 average EGRS reading score in Setswana in 2018. T1 = Tercile 1, T2 = Tercile 2, T3 = Tercile 3. Area type is only available for respondents in EGRS schools.

ANNEX B: EDUCATORS' RESPONSES TO INDIVIDUAL PSS-C ITEMS.



Source: COVID-19 educator survey. **Notes:** Respondents were asked nine questions phrased as in this example: "How often have you been upset that things out of your control during COVID-19?" Respondents could choose: Never, almost never, sometimes, fairly often, very often and don't know. For the purposes of interpretation we