



MORELAND UNIVERSITY DATA DIVE / APRIL 2022

Impacts of COVID-19 on Learning & Social-Emotional Development

Educator Perspectives on Learning Loss and Social-Emotional Development Loss during COVID-19

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Acknowledgement

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Finally, we acknowledge Moreland alumni without whom our university would not exist. The depth of their passions, the strength of their resolve, and the richness of their diversity inspire us to continue to live our commitment to creating the future of higher education and teacher preparation as we move toward more innovative, responsive, and affordable pathways to learning anywhere in the world.

Introduction and Guiding Questions

Moreland University's mission is to teach teachers around the world to be resourceful problem-solvers and tech-savvy educators through an online, collaborative, activity-based learning system designed for tomorrow's students in a dynamic and diverse world. The [TEACH-NOW® Teacher Preparation Certificate Program](#) is our flagship offering designed to equip, enable, and empower teachers to go into any learning environment anywhere in the world and diagnose where each learner is coming from. Over 6,000 alumni are changing the lives of students in 150+ countries as a result of graduating our program.

In addition to supporting teacher development through our online teacher certification program and [master's in education programs](#), we have sought ways to live fully into our mission by providing effective, engaging, and transformative professional development for educators to improve practice and renew teaching credentials. We seek to determine teachers' needs and responsively design our programming so that we can offer relevant and continuous professional development, especially in the face of potential learning and social-emotional development loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this survey of teachers, administrators, and educational providers around the world, we asked respondents to share their perspectives on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning and social-emotional development. Drawing from their observations, data, and interactions with students, teachers considered students' learning and development entering into the 2021-22 school year in comparison to pre-pandemic expected growth levels.

THE GUIDING QUESTIONS:

What are teachers' perceptions of, and perspectives on, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting toggle between in-person and online learning on student learning and social-emotional development?

According to educators in schools around the world, how did students fare in the 2021-22 school year in comparison to pre-pandemic expected learning outcomes and social-emotional development?



From more than 506 responses, we drilled down to understand educators' perspectives from specific grade bands, subject areas, professional roles, and regions. The report begins with an analysis of all responses from all participants. From there, the analysis focuses on subsets of respondents in the following order:

- Teachers & Teaching Assistants
- School-Based & District Administrators
- Respondents from Asia
- Respondents from South America & the Caribbean
- Respondents from North America
- Respondents from Europe
- Respondents from Africa

At the writing of this report, we recognize the lack of data on measurable learning and achievement loss as would be evident in, for example, standardized assessment scores. As demonstrated in the conclusion to this report, we compassionately acknowledge the critical impact this period has had on the wellbeing of students, educators, and families. What we seek here is to understand the perspectives of educators with first-hand experience in the classroom as a possible indicator of future data trends and necessary shifts educator preparation programs (EPPs) must make to meet the needs of teachers around the world. ■

Context: Educational Disruptions due to COVID-19

Adam Morgan, Ed.D., Faculty

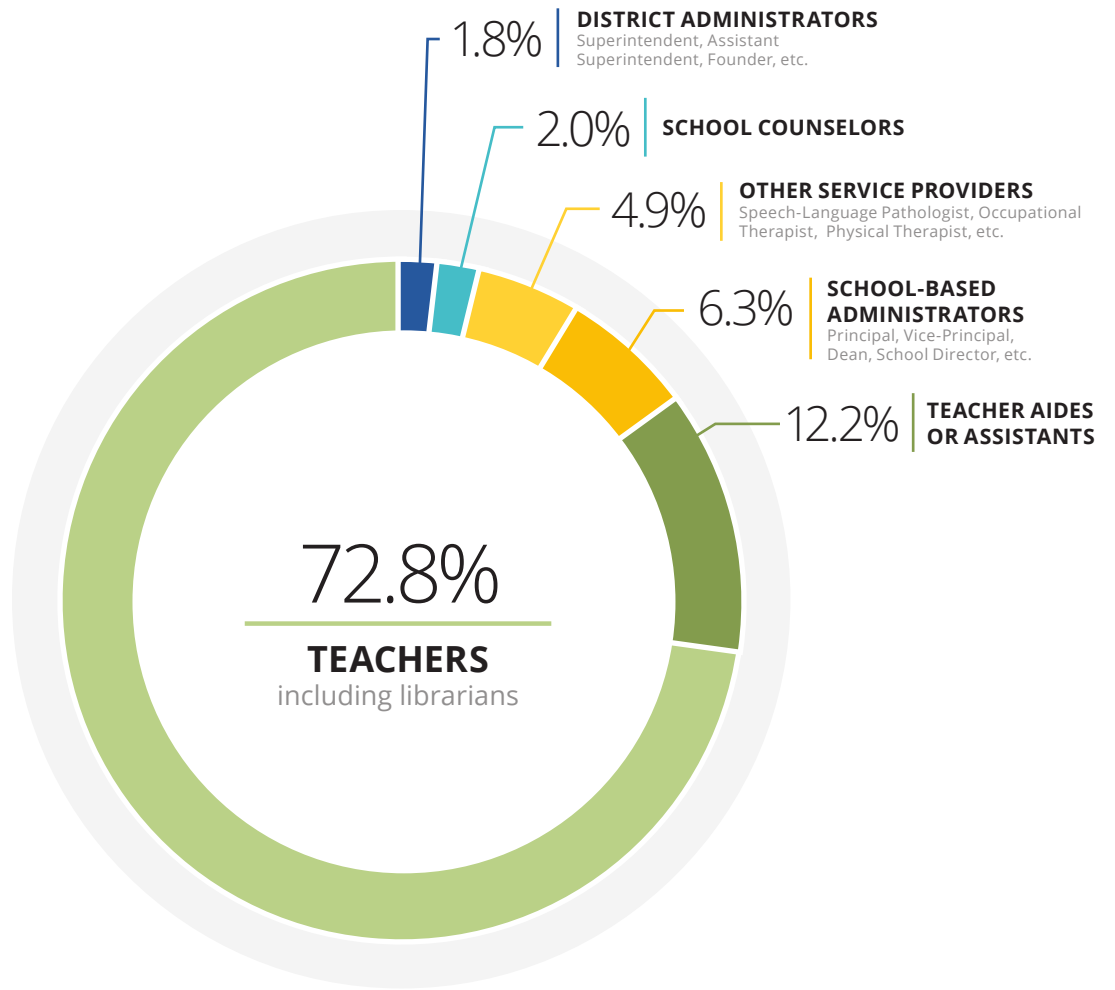
The profound effect the COVID-19 pandemic has had on K-12 educational institutions has yet to be fully understood. A growing body of evidence seeks to identify the unique challenges schools face as the pandemic moves into its third year. The primary educational disruptions of the pandemic consist of significant impacts on two interdependent student outcomes, academic achievement and social-emotional well-being. As the world seeks to regain its footing, understanding these challenges is of monumental importance to Moreland University as it prepares teachers to face the aftermath of the pandemic.

This investigation seeks to ascertain teachers' perceptions about measurable learning and social-emotional impacts—learning and development loss—due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning loss is one of the primary negative impacts that has been identified. Several factors influencing the exact amount of learning loss include the geographical location, age, gender, length of lockdowns or school closures, and socio-economic status (UNICEF, 2021). Donnelly and Patrinos (2021) through a meta-analysis identified learning loss as global and occurring, "...across a range of subjects, grade levels, and geographical regions." In their report, "The State of the Global Education Crisis," UNICEF (2021) documented yearly learning losses from 20% up to 70% worldwide. Mirroring this study, a report from the end of 2020 by McKinsey and Company (2021) and UNESCO found a learning gap ranging from 1.6 months to 2.5 months in just the first year of the pandemic.

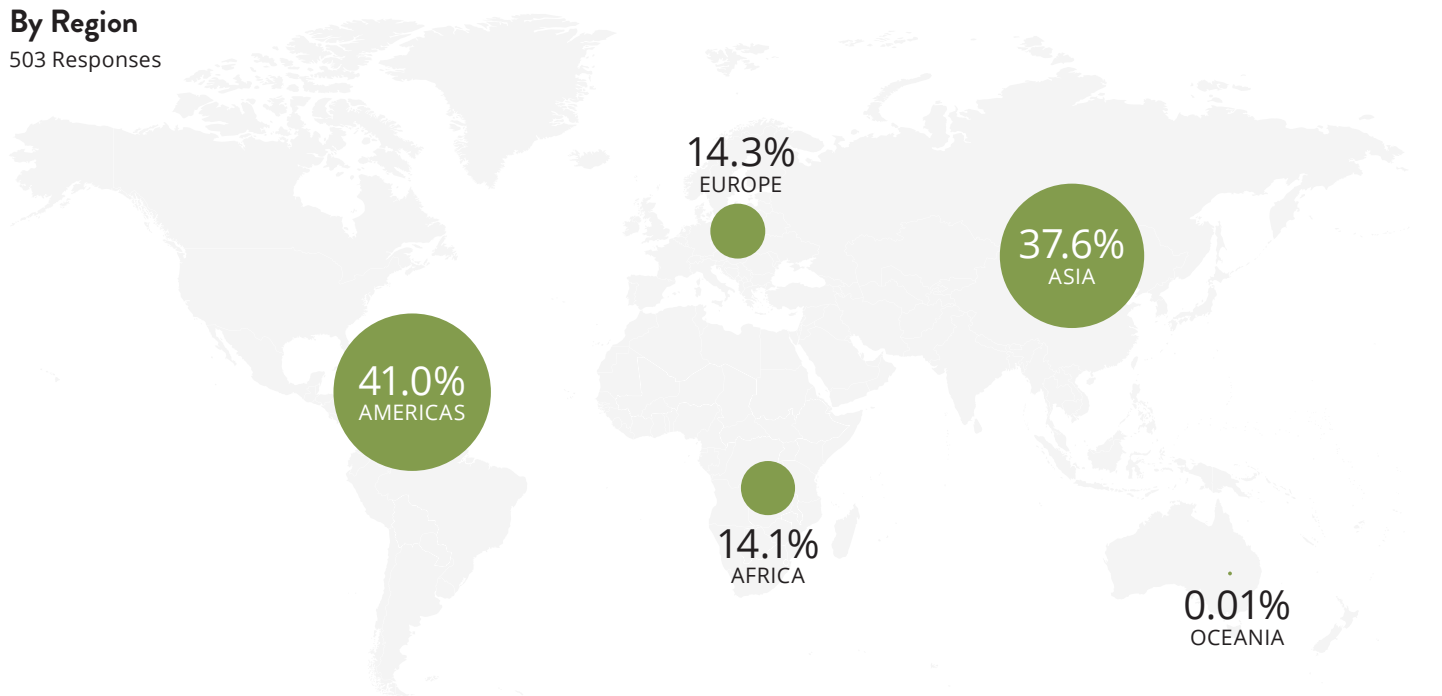
Another equally significant disruption of the pandemic has been to students' social-emotional development. The Hunt Institute (2021) reported notable, "...emotional, social, and behavioral challenges resulting from the crisis, characterized by UNICEF as high rates of anxiety and depression." (Horace Mann, 2021) It is crucial to recognize the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted students, particularly to improve and innovate teacher preparation. To support teacher training and development, EPPs should investigate and prioritize innovative strategies for learning and development recovery by deepening their understanding of this complex issue. ■

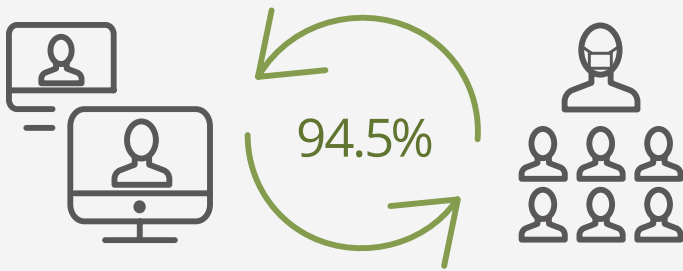
Total Responses from All Regions

By Roles
507 Responses



By Region
503 Responses





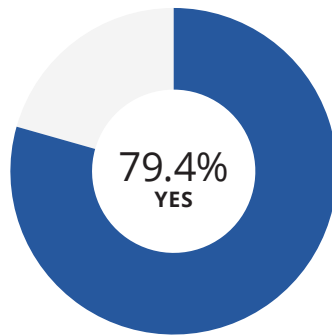
Toggle Between Online and In-Person Teaching

94.5% of respondents indicated that their students experienced a toggle between online and in-person teaching during the period from March 2020 to present.

Learning Gap

480 Responses

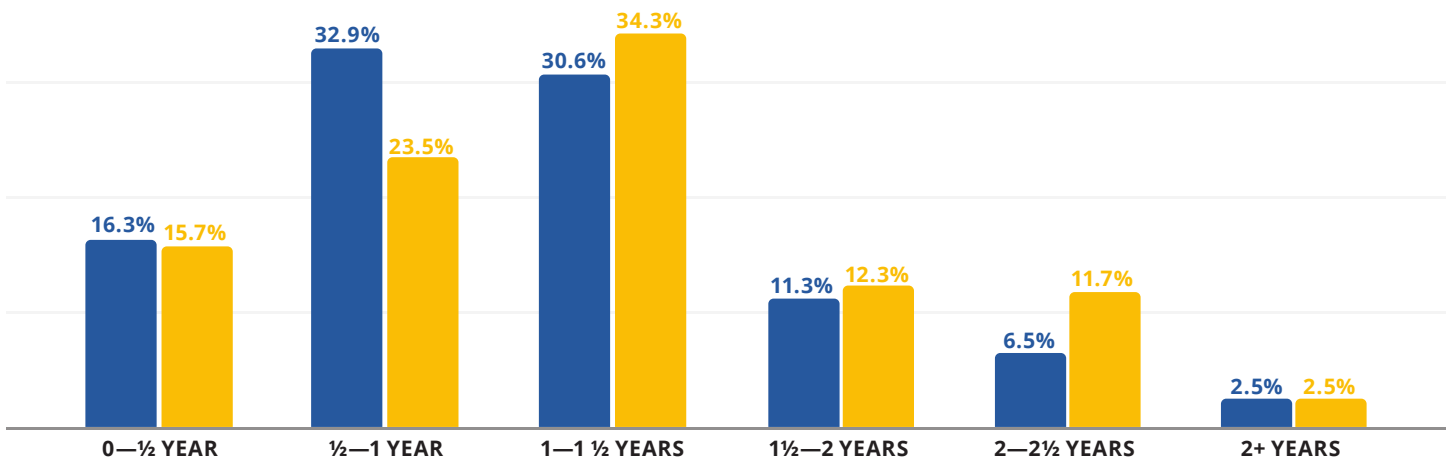
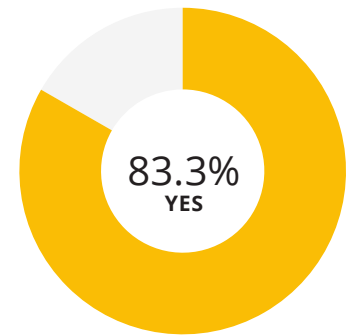
In comparison to pre-pandemic expected academic achievement, have your students experienced a measurable **learning gap** coming into the 2021-2022 school year?



Social-Emotional Gap

472 Responses

In comparison to pre-pandemic expected social-emotional development, have your students experienced a measurable **social-emotional development gap** coming into the 2021-2022 school year?



■ In increments of ½ years of learning, approximately **how big is the learning gap?**

■ In increments of ½ years of development, approximately **how big is the social-emotional development gap?**

Summary & Analysis

With 94.5% of respondents indicating that their students experienced a toggle between online and in-person schooling from March 2020 to present, the survey results underscore the universality of the shift to virtual learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

79.4% of respondents indicated that, in their view, students they serve have experienced a measurable learning gap in the past school year. Survey results suggest that learning gaps trend toward a half year to whole year of learning loss according to **63.5%** of respondents. The impacts on social-emotional development appear to be greater with respondents agreeing at a rate of **83.3%** that students experienced a developmental gap with trends toward a half year to whole year of developmental loss. Social-emotional development loss appears to trend higher than learning loss: **6.2% more respondents** selected a social-emotional development loss between one and a half and two and a half years than learning loss of the same amount.

Teachers saw greater COVID-19 impacts on social-emotional development than on learning.

3.9% more respondents indicated a social-emotional development loss than a learning loss. In free-response comments provided by respondents at the end of the survey, the social-emotional impact on students was a common theme.

Of 196 comments, **37 comments** (or approximately 19%) directly pointed to social-emotional development as a key concern as teachers return to the classroom this fall. **13 comments** highlighted mental health or grief as considerable challenges for students at this time, while ten comments indicated that students' feeling of stress and overwhelm has had an impact on learning. Finally, respondents mentioned classroom management and behavioral concerns in **11 comments**.

Teachers' personal worries and concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic rose to the surface as a pivotal data point in this survey.

Many comments pointed to the fact that **teachers feel overwhelmed and unhappy** given the challenges they faced this year.

"Teachers feel worried. How [do we] teach the current learning objectives while supporting students' social and emotional development?"

"Students are less driven to put in the daily effort needed to produce high quality work. It's a challenge keeping them engaged!"

"Teaching students with special needs online was very challenging."

"More challenging than ever before. [There was a] lack of social skills and knowledge of how to function. [There were] overwhelmed students and burnt-out teachers."

"I haven't been able to return to my home country to see my family in almost 3 years. My mental health is suffering from this."

Finally, a critically insightful trend in respondents' free-response comments at the end of the survey is family engagement.

There were **20 comments representing 10% of the total number of comments with the word "parent" or "family,"** representing the largest subgroup. The following are but a few of detailed comments on the vital role of family involvement as a lever of student success:

"Parental involvement plays a huge role in developing a child holistically."

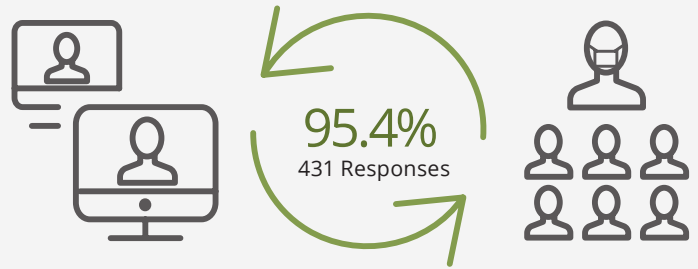
"We need to reach out to parents and help them recover from the pandemic."

"I believe it depends on how involved the parents were during the time they stayed at home [and] if [students] had brothers or sisters or the opportunity somehow to socialize during the pandemic."

Analysis by Role: Teachers & Teaching Assistants

Toggle Between Online and In-Person Teaching

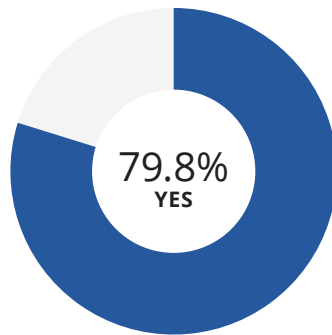
95.4% of respondents indicated that their students experienced a toggle between online and in-person teaching during the period from March 2020 to present.



Learning Gap

405 Responses

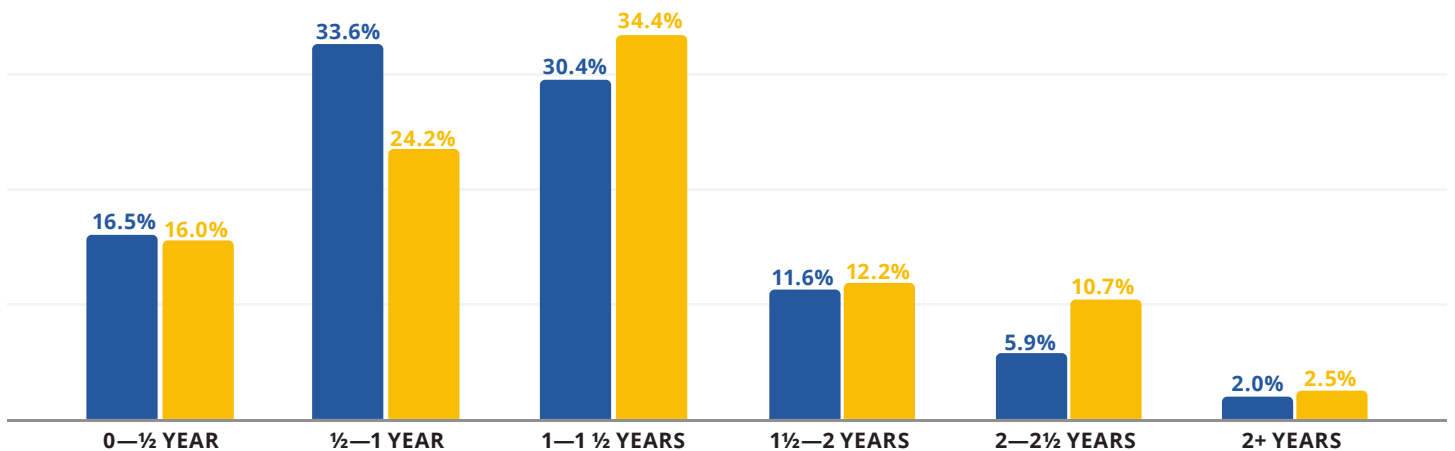
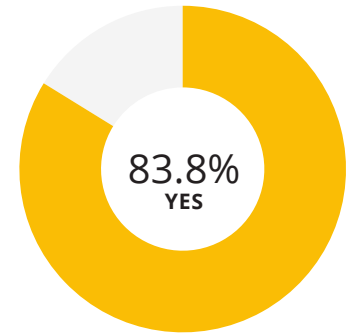
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Social-Emotional Gap

472 Responses

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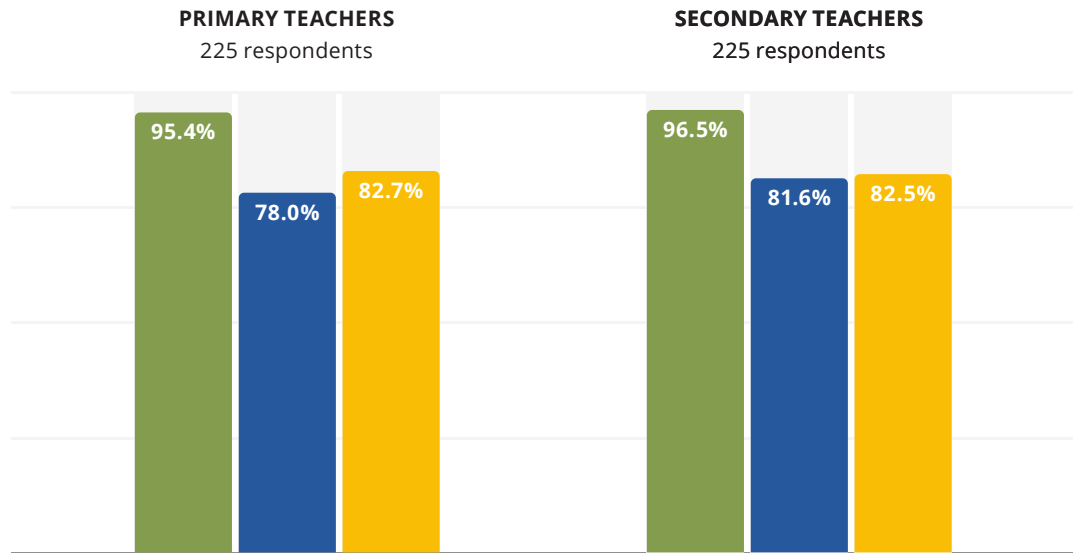


■ In increments of ½ years of learning, approximately **how big is the learning gap?**

■ In increments of ½ years of development, approximately **how big is the social-emotional development gap?**

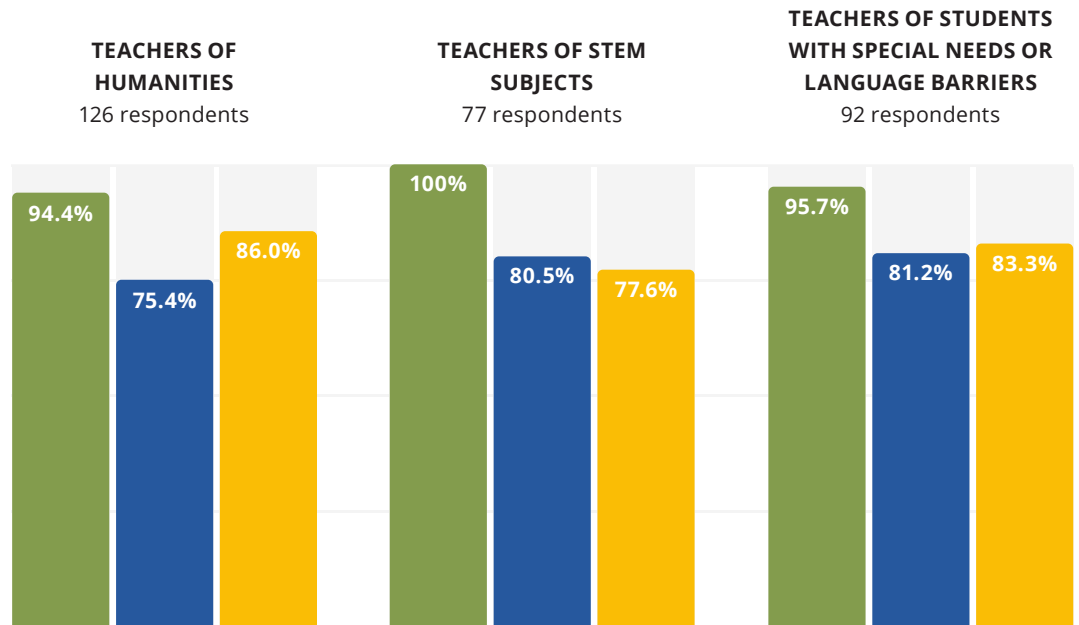
Grade Level

- Students toggled between online and in-person learning
- Students experienced learning loss
- Students experienced social-emotional development loss



Subject Area

- Students toggled between online and in-person learning
- Students experienced learning loss
- Students experienced social-emotional development loss



Summary & Analysis

Given that 415 of 506 responses to this survey came from teachers or teaching assistants, the survey results from this subgroup are largely in alignment with the overall results from all respondents.

The most intriguing takeaways from this survey data come from further analysis

of teachers by grade level and subject area: Drilling down further, 95.4% of primary teachers and 96.5% of secondary teachers reported that students experienced a toggle between online and in-person learning. While 78% of primary teachers indicated that their students experienced learning loss, 81.6% of secondary teachers indicated the same. Similarly, 82.7% of primary teachers indicated that their students experienced a social-emotional development loss, while 85% of secondary teachers indicated the same. Our data here points to an important opportunity for further research and study of the learning and social-emotional impacts of the pandemic on secondary students.

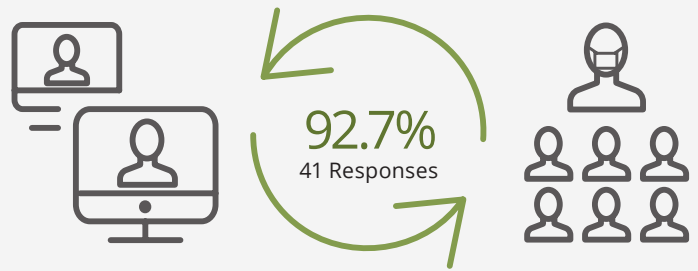
The clear message here is that secondary teachers have noted greater impacts by COVID-19 on students' learning and social-emotional development than primary teachers.

In terms of subject areas, we have divided survey responses into teachers of humanities (including languages, social sciences, and arts), STEM, and students with special needs or language barriers. Teachers of humanities reported that students experienced the highest percentage of social-emotional developmental loss while teachers of students with special needs or language barriers reported that students experienced the highest percentage of learning loss. Conversely, humanities teachers indicated that students experienced the lowest percentage of learning loss in comparison to other subject areas by a margin of 5%. ■

Analysis by Role: School-Based & District Administrators

Toggle Between Online and In-Person Teaching

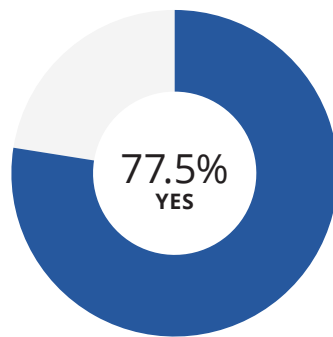
92.7% of respondents indicated that their students experienced a toggle between online and in-person teaching during the period from March 2020 to present.



Learning Gap

40 Responses

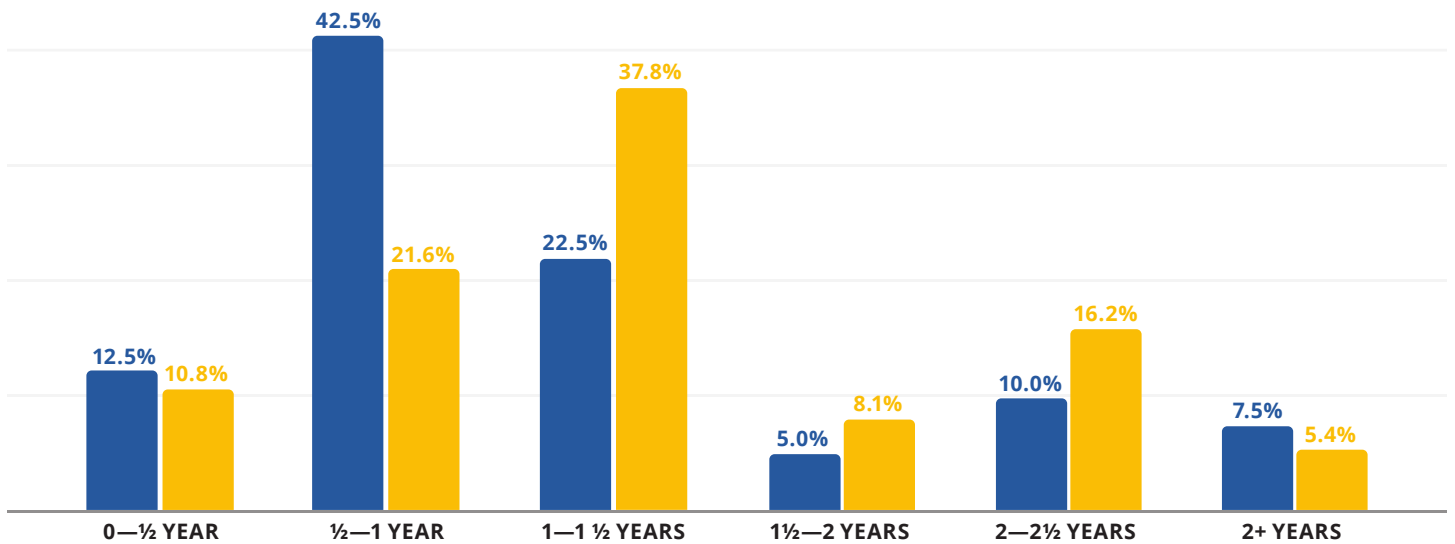
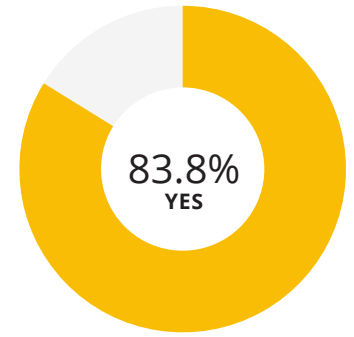
In comparison to pre-pandemic expected academic achievement, have your students experienced a measurable **learning gap** coming into the 2021-2022 school year?



Social-Emotional Gap

37 Responses

In comparison to pre-pandemic expected social-emotional development, have your students experienced a measurable **social-emotional development gap** coming into the 2021-2022 school year?



■ In increments of ½ years of learning, approximately **how big is the learning gap?**

■ In increments of ½ years of development, approximately **how big is the social-emotional development gap?**

Summary & Analysis

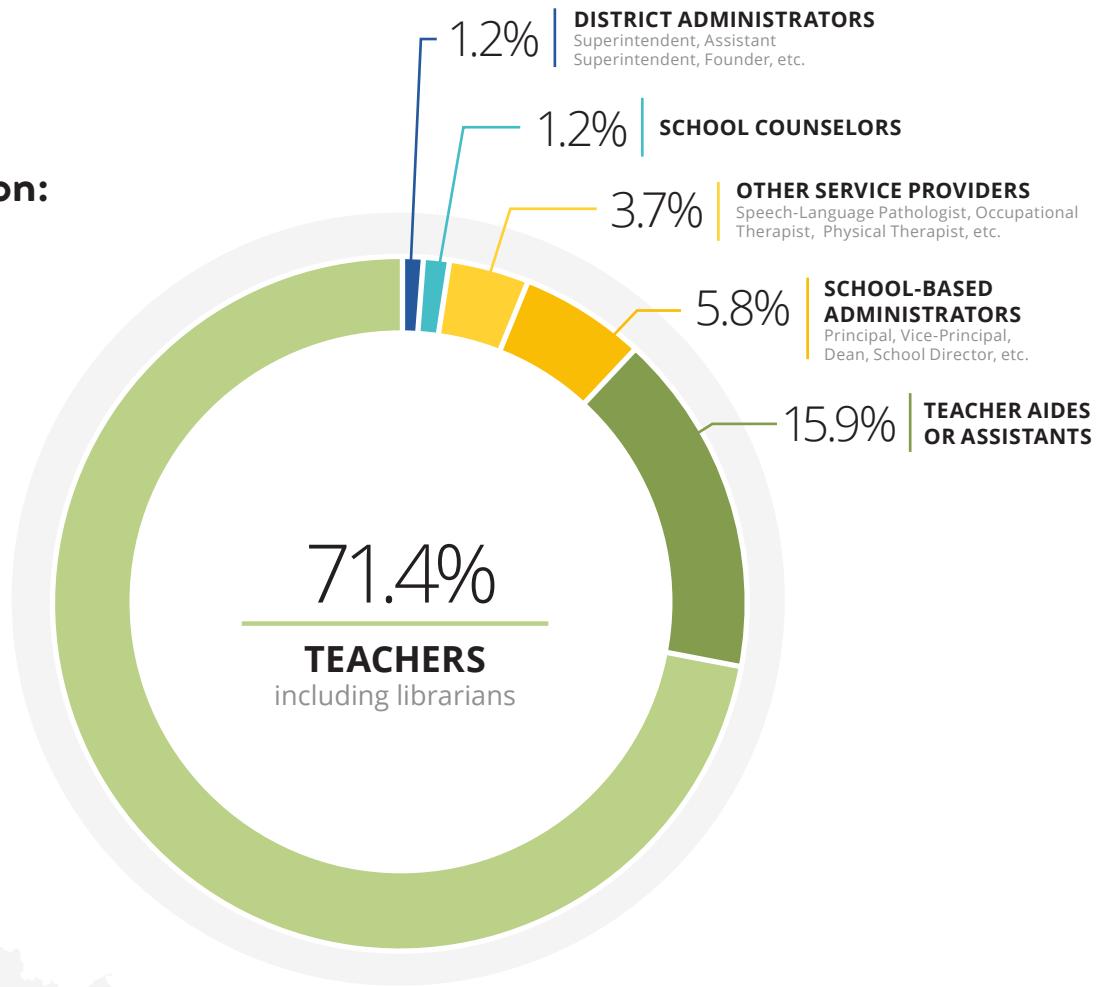
School and district administration, a smaller group than teachers with only 41 responses, **reported lower COVID-19 impacts** on student learning and social-emotional development.

2.5% fewer administrators than teachers indicated potential learning loss during this period, while the reported negative impacts on social-emotional development appear to be the same across both groups.

In terms of years of social-emotional development loss, **7.7% more administrators** than teachers noted a loss of one year or greater. ■



Analysis by Region: Asia





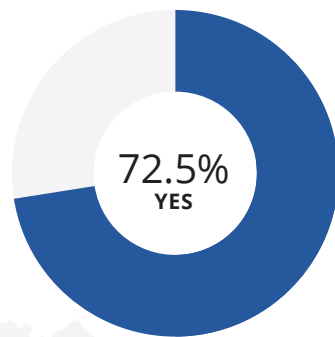
Toggle Between Online and In-Person Teaching

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Learning Gap

178 Responses

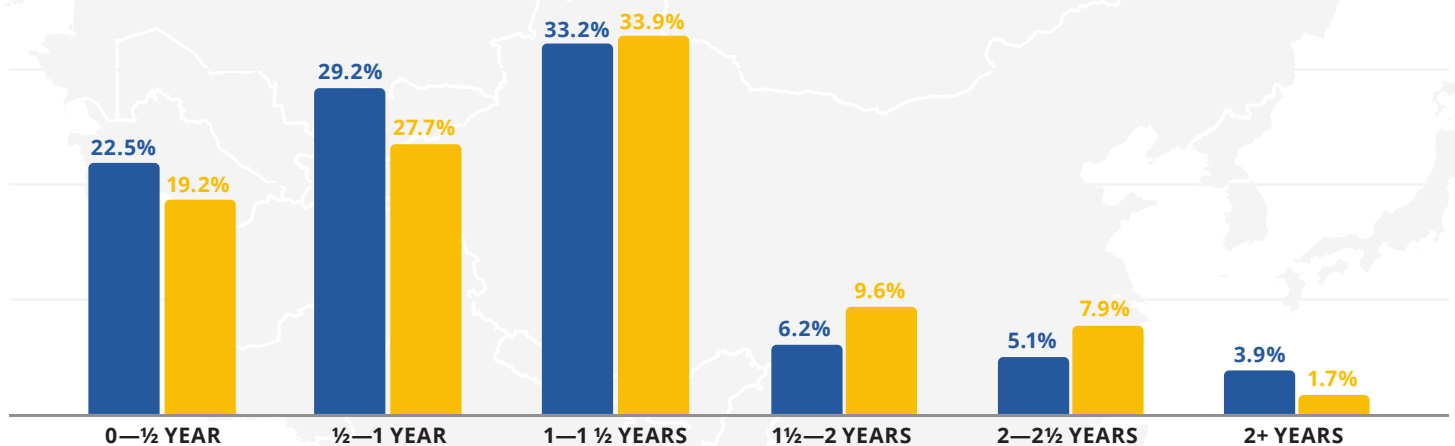
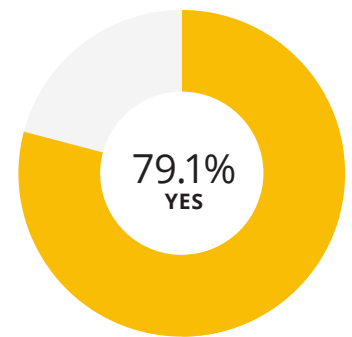
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Social-Emotional Gap

177 Responses

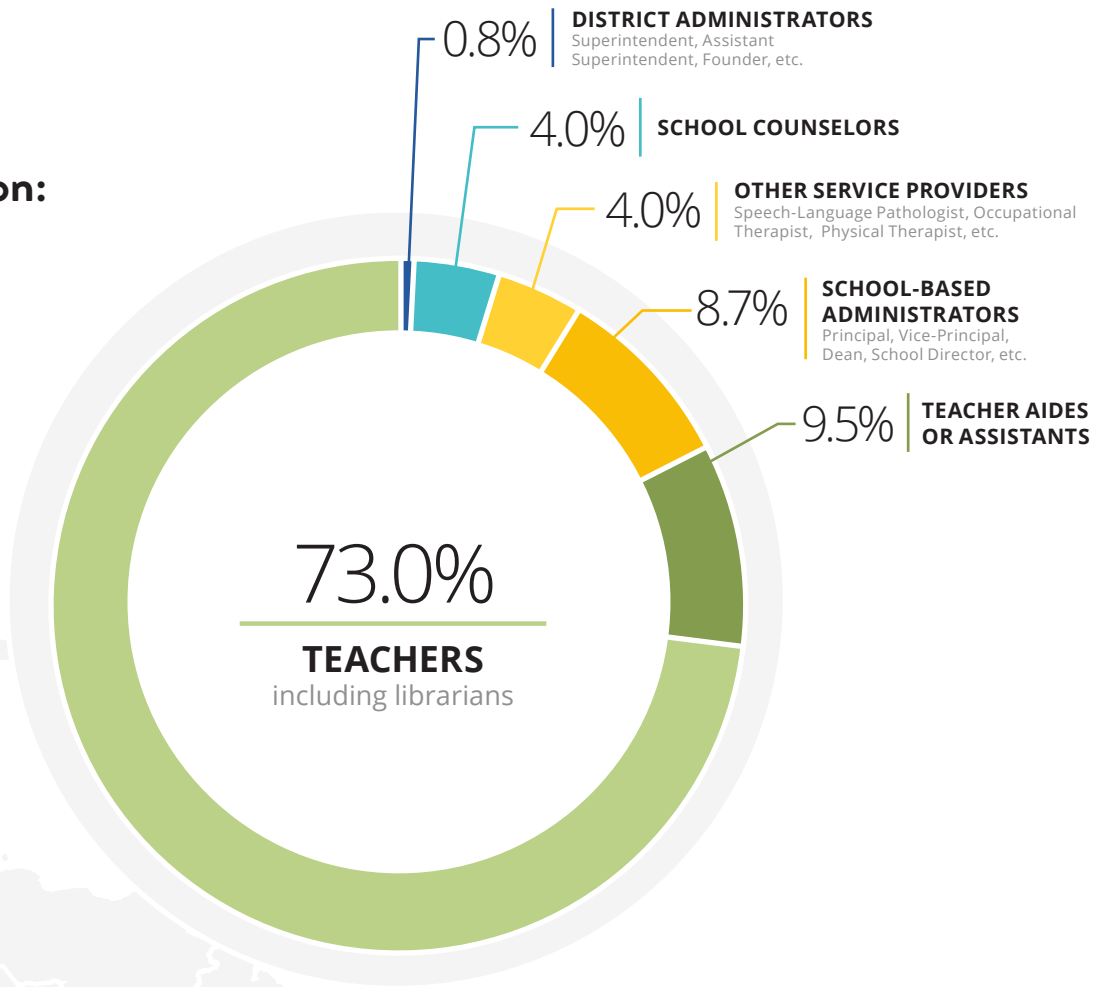
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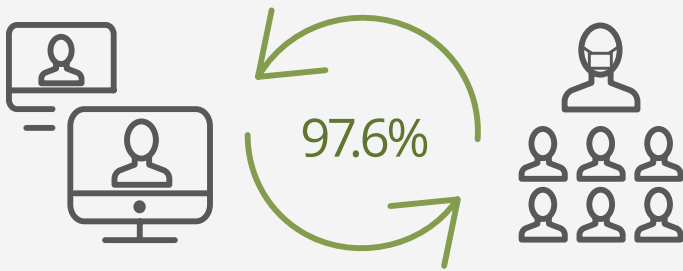
Analysis by Region: South America & the Caribbean



SOUTH AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

126

of 507 global survey responses



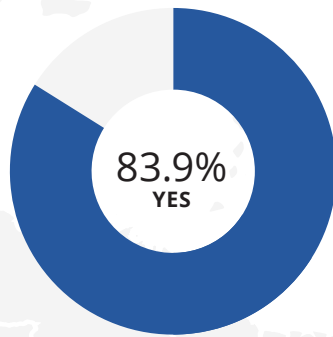
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Learning Gap

118 Responses

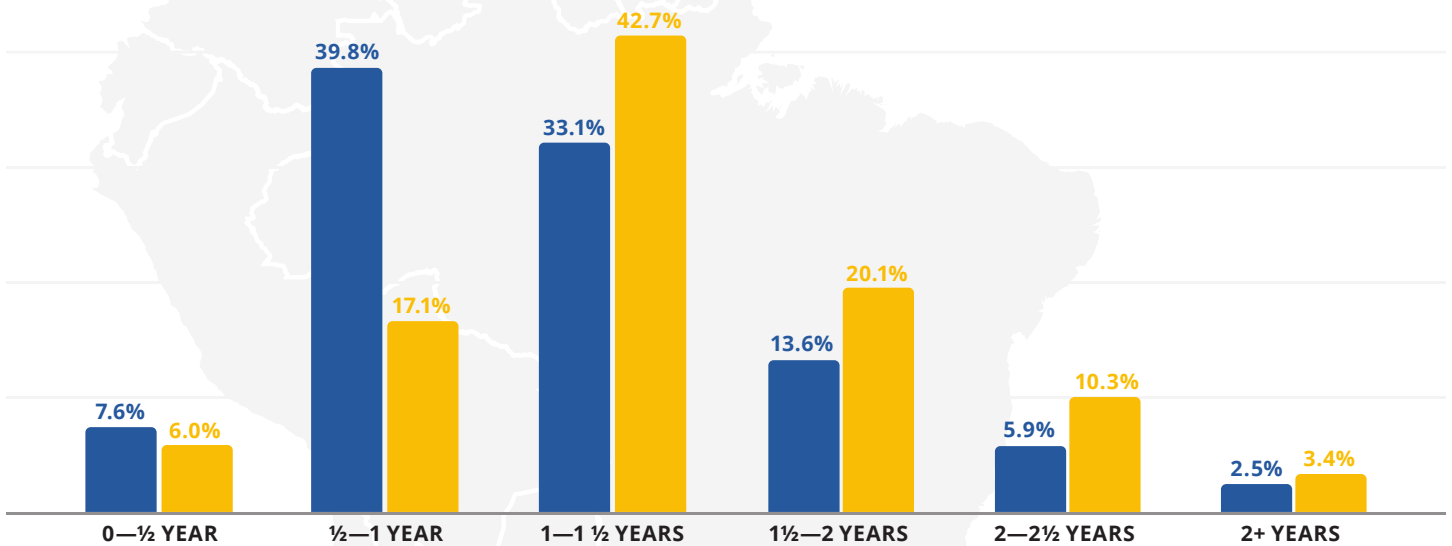
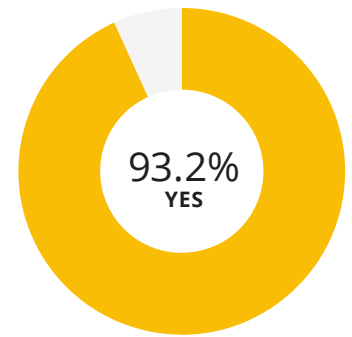
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Social-Emotional Gap

117 Responses

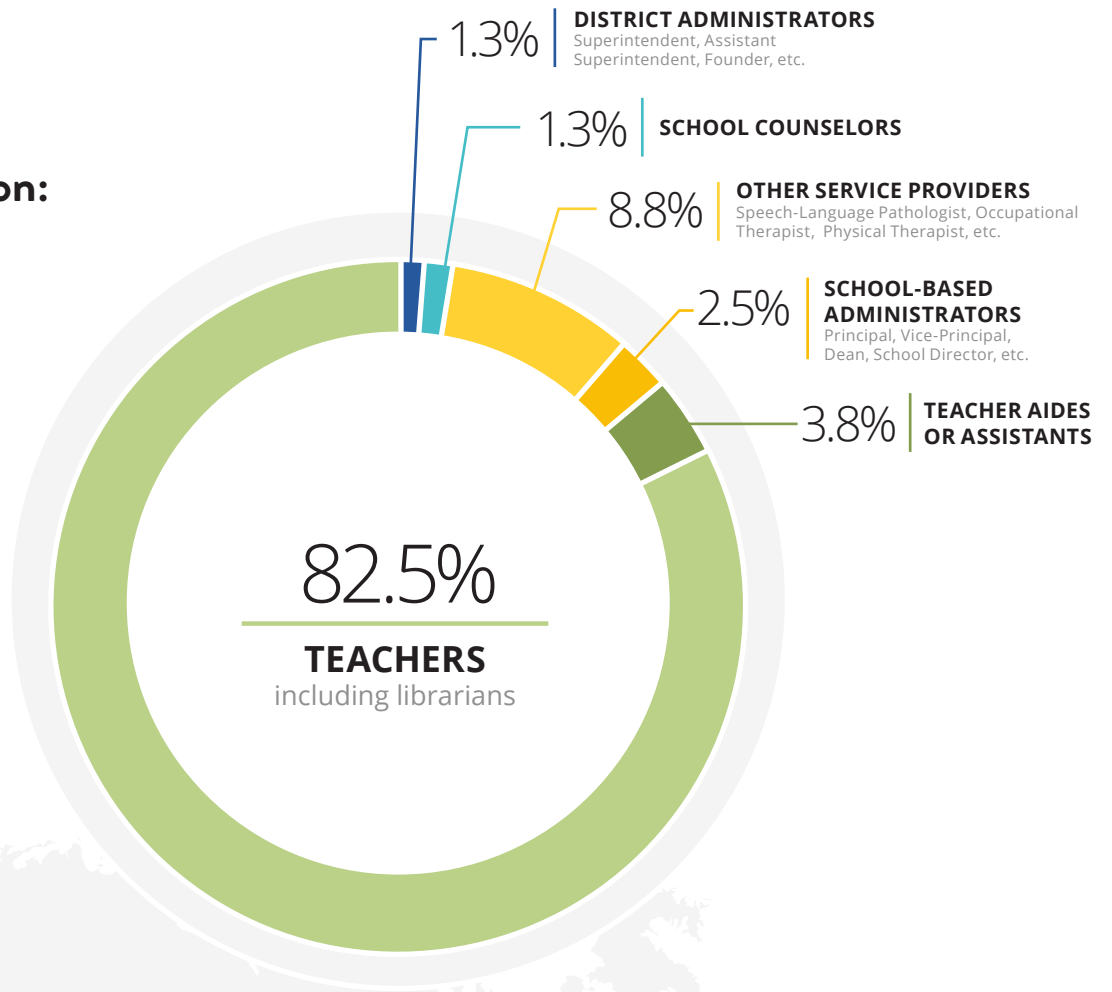
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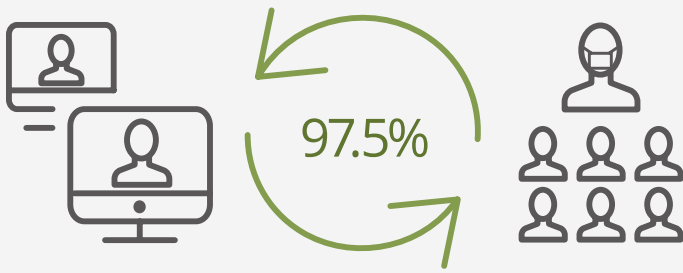
Analysis by Region: North America



NORTH AMERICA

80

of 507 global survey responses



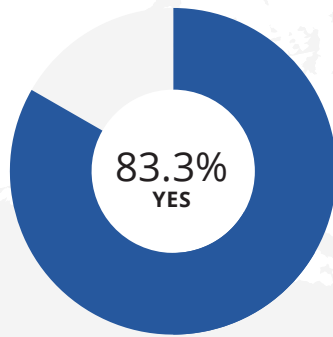
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Learning Gap

78 Responses

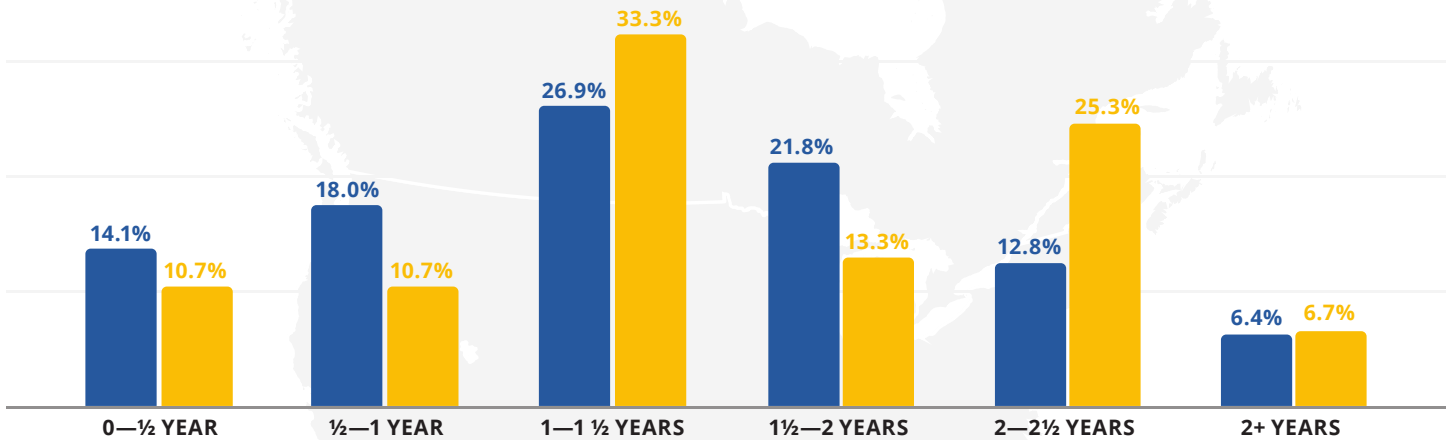
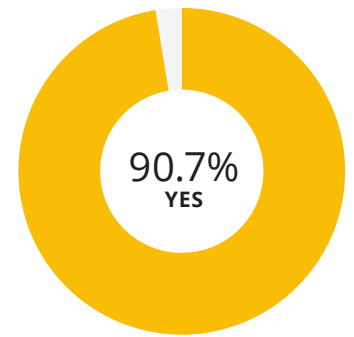
In comparison to pre-pandemic expected academic achievement, have your students experienced a measurable **learning gap** coming into the 2021-2022 school year?



Social-Emotional Gap

75 Responses

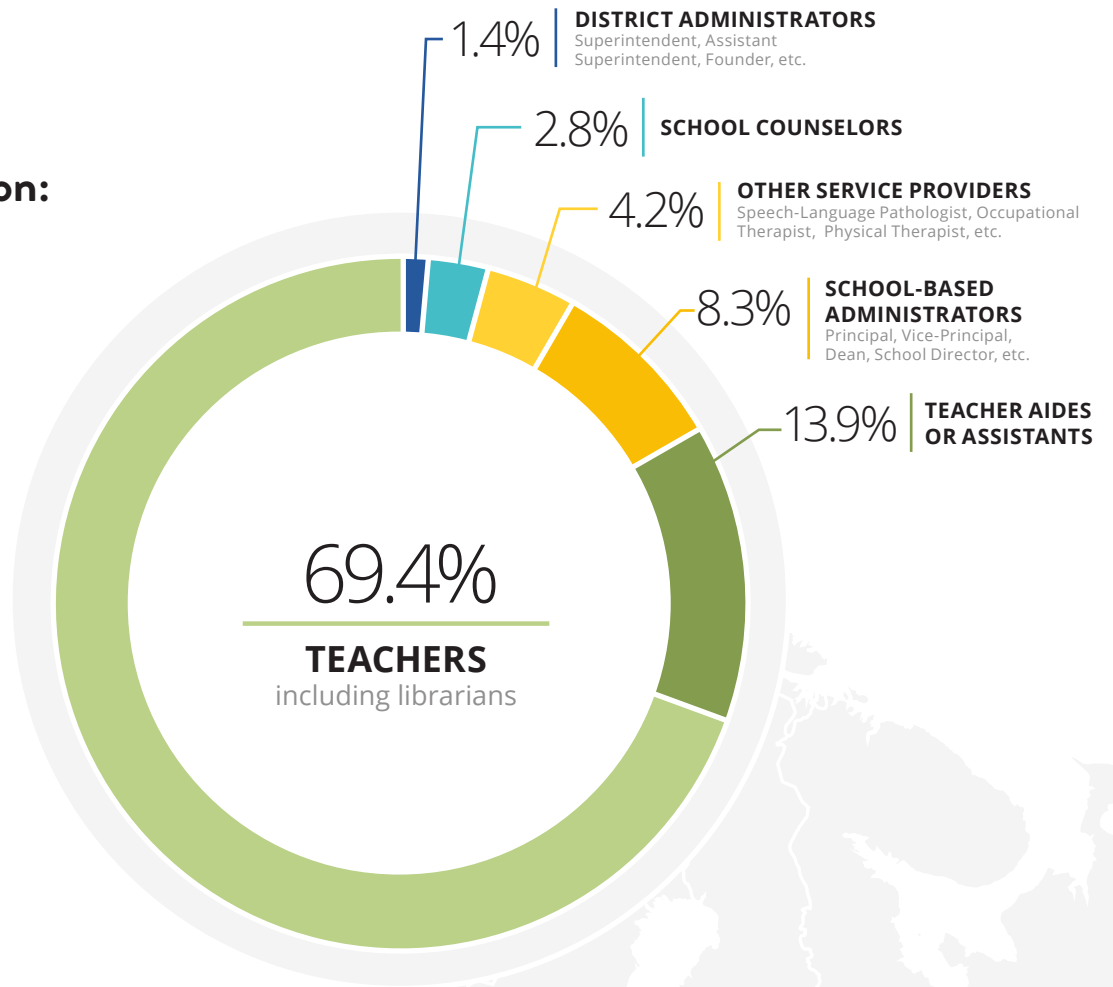
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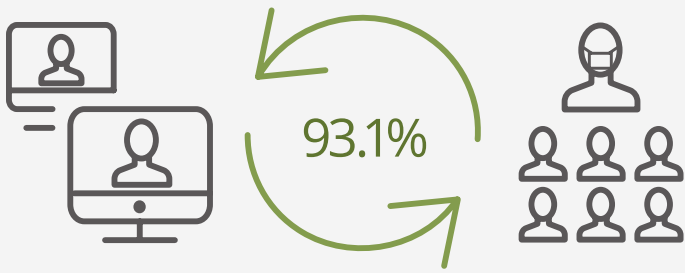
■ In increments of ½ years of development, approximately **how big is the social-emotional development gap?**

Analysis by Region: Europe



EUROPE
72

of 507 global survey responses



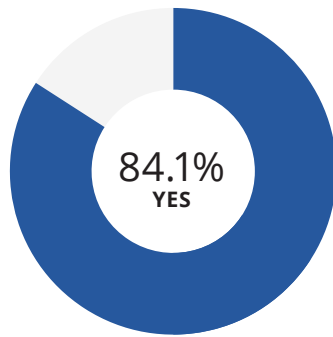
Toggle Between Online and In-Person Teaching

93.1% of respondents indicated that their students experienced a toggle between online and in-person teaching during the period from March 2020 to present.

Learning Gap

69 Responses

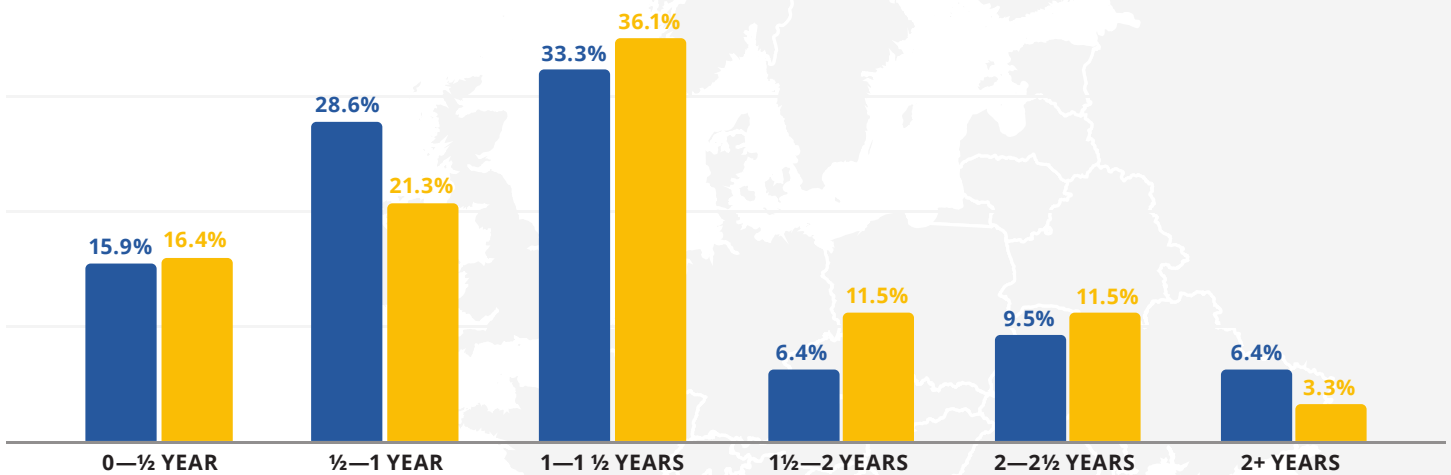
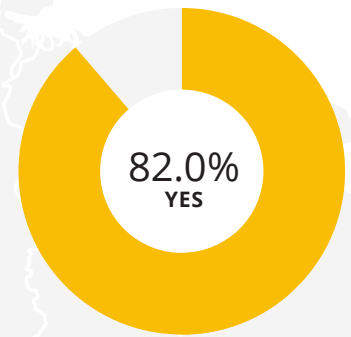
In comparison to pre-pandemic expected academic achievement, have your students experienced a measurable **learning gap** coming into the 2021-2022 school year?



Social-Emotional Gap

61 Responses

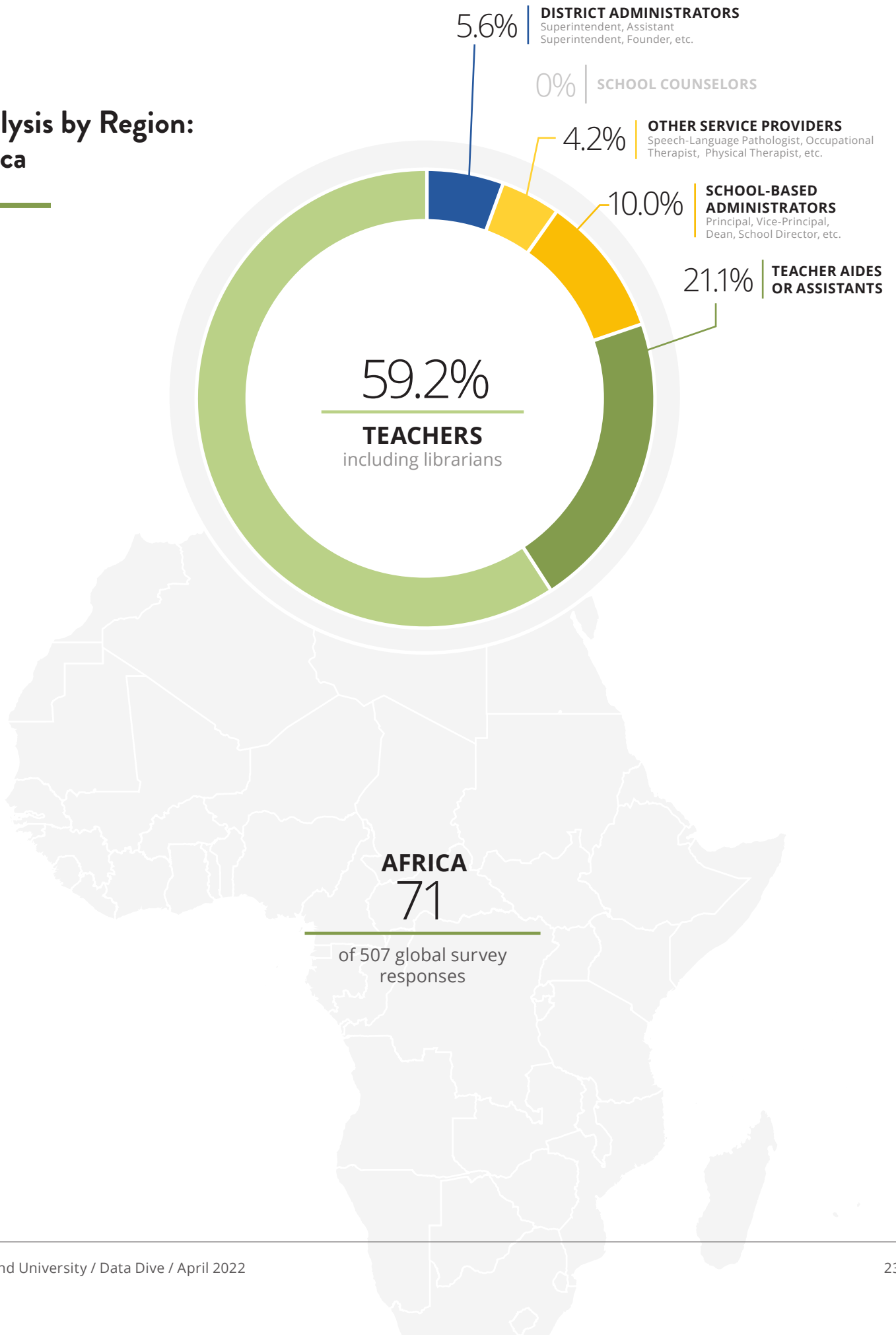
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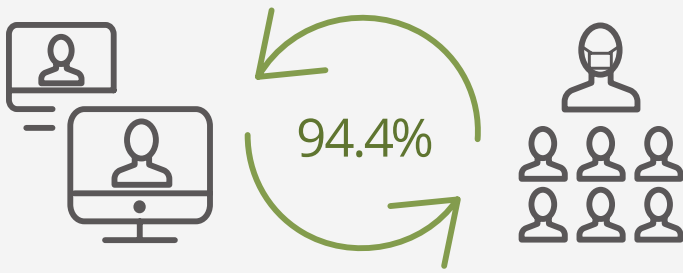


■ In increments of ½ years of learning, approximately **how big is the learning gap?**

■ In increments of ½ years of development, approximately **how big is the social-emotional development gap?**

Analysis by Region: Africa





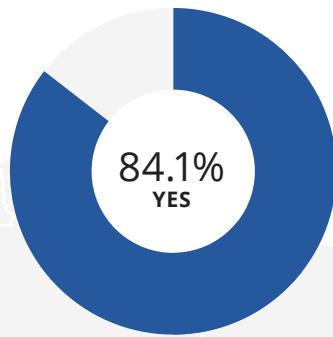
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Learning Gap

69 Responses

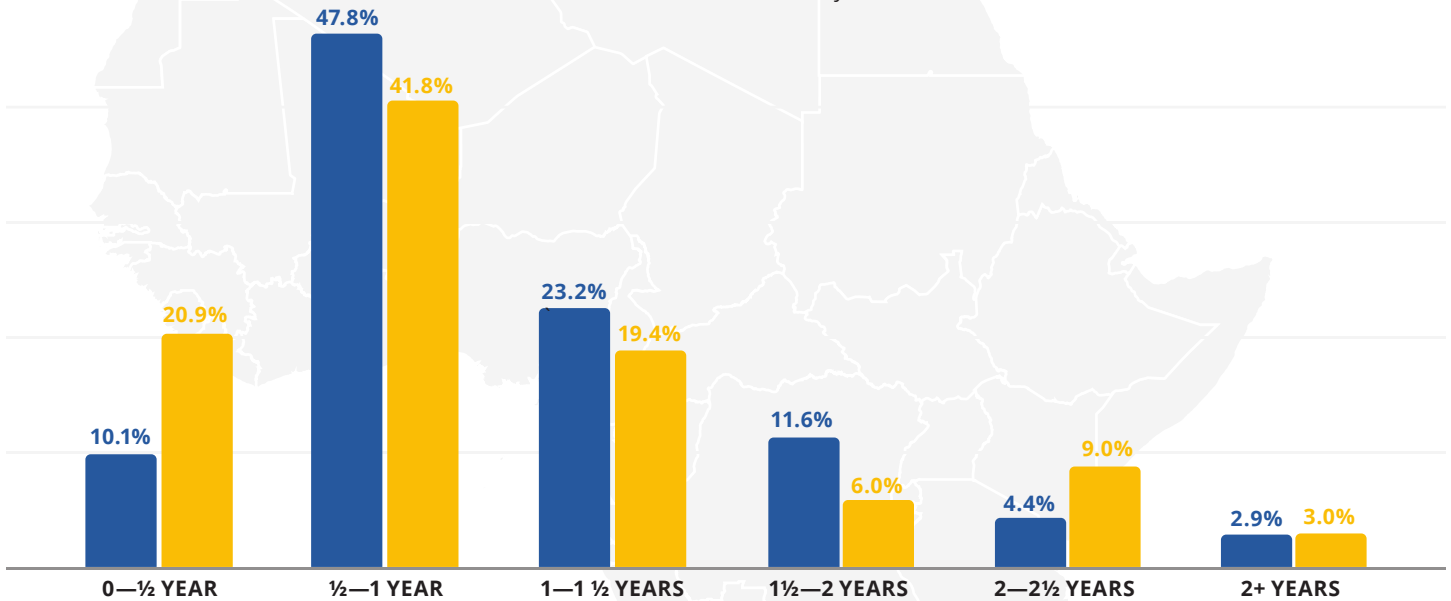
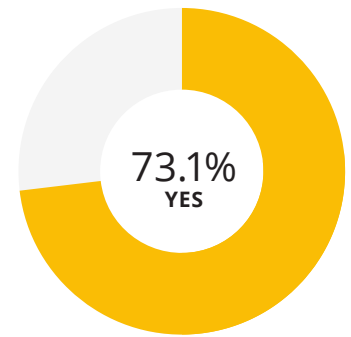
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Social-Emotional Gap

67 Responses

In comparison to pre-pandemic expected social-emotional development, have your students experienced a measurable **social-emotional development gap** coming into the 2021-2022 school year?



■ In increments of ½ years of learning, approximately **how big is the learning gap?**

■ In increments of ½ years of development, approximately **how big is the social-emotional development gap?**

Comparative Regional Summary & Analysis

Asia is the geographical region wherein respondents indicated the lowest percentage of toggle between in-person and online learning. Only **72.5%** of respondents from this region indicated that students experienced a learning loss, **the lowest rate of any region by a margin of at least 10%**. This low rate of learning loss is substantiated by 84.9% of respondents' who indicated that **learning loss measured in half years was concentrated around zero, half, and one years of loss**. It would appear that respondents from Asia noted that their students experience the least severe learning impacts of any other region. One possible explanation could be that, according to respondents, fewer students here than anywhere else toggled between in-person and online learning during this period.

With **85.5%** indicating that students experienced a measurable learning loss, respondents from **Africa** indicated at the **highest rate of any region that student learning was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic**. With **93.2%** indicating that students experienced a measurable social-emotional development loss, respondents from **South America and the Caribbean** indicated at the **highest rate of any region that student development was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic**. Conversely, respondents from **Africa** reported at a rate of **73.1%** that students experienced a social-emotional development loss, **the lowest of any region by a margin of at least 6%**. This low rate of social-emotional development loss is substantiated by 82.1% of respondents' who indicated that **social-emotional development loss measured in half years was concentrated around zero, half, and one years of loss**. In comparison to all other regions, these data suggest that educators in Africa noted greater negative impact on learning and significantly less negative impact on social-emotional development during this period. This outcome merits further research and investigation of teacher perspectives on the impacts of COVID-19 on student learning and development in Africa.

In terms of the level (i.e., number of years) of learning loss, **North American and European respondents** indicated at a rate of **6.4%** that students experienced learning loss of two and a half years or more, the **highest rate at that level of any region**. In terms of the level (i.e., number of years) of social-emotional development loss, **6.7%** of respondents from North America indicated that students experienced a **social-emotional development loss of two and a half years or more, more than any other region by a margin of at least 3%**. These results suggest that educators in North America and Europe observed students falling behind pre-pandemic expected learning and development outcomes at levels greater than any other region during this period.

Conclusion: Opportunities for Compassion and Innovation

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Learning loss is a hot topic in education in relation to the pandemic. As COVID-19 swept the world, schools shut down and transitioned online. Since 2020, education has undergone a fundamental shift. Teachers have acquired new skills and adopted new methods to teach remotely. Schools and districts have set up infrastructures and systems to support online teaching and learning. At Moreland University, our graduates have consistently reported that their work in our online [TEACH-NOW® Teacher Preparation Certificate Program](#) prepared them to transition into online learning successfully while maintaining high standards for academic rigor and student-centered learning. Candidates in all of our programs—including our [Master’s Degree Programs](#) in Education, Educational Leadership, and Globalization and Educational Research—work asynchronously in our online platform while attending weekly synchronous classes focused on building community and collaboration. In this way, they are accustomed to fostering a culture of community, high engagement, and academic success in online and hybrid learning environments. Students have learned from home on virtual platforms in both synchronous and asynchronous settings. As some schools began to reopen, hybrid learning opportunities were offered in which some students participated in physical classrooms while others attended remotely simultaneously.

As education slowly returns to in-person learning environments, teachers and school leaders have an opportunity to build on the strengths of the innovations in education that have occurred during this period. In the words of Maya Angelou, “When you know better, do better.” Educators, students, and families have learned so much through the pandemic. As the world enters the third school year to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is time to leverage our learning during this period to improve education for today’s students and future generations. The data collected in this survey helps identify ways to support teachers in response to their perspectives on the impact the pandemic has had on learning and social-emotional development. To this end, we recommend the following next steps in the pursuit of a compassionate and innovative response to the COVID-19 pandemic’s impacts on education.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS:

1. Provide Quality Learning for Teachers
2. Communicate with Families
3. Prioritize Social-Emotional Learning
4. Foster Collaboration

1. Provide Quality Learning for Teachers

Teachers must be acknowledged for, and supported in, the daunting task of facilitating learning recovery. It is essential to ensure that all teachers are well prepared and supported to meet this challenge. In the 2022-23 school year, teachers can use formative assessments to empower students to grow from wherever they present in their learning journey. The one-size-fits-all model will not serve all students. The more intentional teachers are with the student-centered choices they make in the classroom, the greater the impact they can have on learning. Three areas of relevance as we approach the 2022-23 school year are differentiation, targeted instruction, and frameworks that will allow for one-on-one and small strategy groups instruction. In our [TEACH-NOW® Teacher Preparation Certificate Program](#), we instill best practices and integrate educational technologies that support teachers in providing personalized learning experiences. Our modules on “The Learner and Learning in a Digital Age,” “Student Assessment,” and “Planning and Preparing for Learning” equip, enable, and empower teachers to diagnose student needs and responsively develop student-centered learning opportunities wherever learning may occur.

With 78% of primary teachers and 81.6% of secondary teachers from our survey indicating that students in their classes experienced a learning loss in this tumultuous time, there is a critical need for educators to be ready to support learners of all readiness levels in the coming school year. Teachers must ask themselves, “How can I provide targeted instruction to one or few when I have so many more students in the room who also need attention?” Teachers must be well versed in different models of student-centered instruction to create a classroom culture of metacognition whereby learners are aware of their own learning needs and encouraged to set goals.

In particular, students with special needs are at risk of falling increasingly behind without the support and services necessary to promote inclusive learning environments. 95.7% of Special Education teachers indicated that students experienced a toggle between online and in-person learning. While 81.2% indicated that students experienced learning loss, 83.3% indicated that students experienced a social-emotional development loss. At Moreland University, our [Master’s Degree in Education with Special Education Focus](#) prepares teachers to accurately identify students with special needs and use appropriate strategies, services, resources, and assistive technologies to design goal-oriented instruction and evaluations. Candidates focus on practical classroom applications for special education wherever learning may take place, evaluating behavior and education plans to design individualized education plans, and assessment of students with special needs.

2. Communicate with Families

Another area of action is equitable family communication. With more than 20 individual comments connecting back to family engagement, or approximately 10% of all comments, data from our survey highlighted the need to foster family engagement as a lever of academic support and social-emotional learning. As indicated in the results of the present survey, educators have learned that lines of communication through equitable internet access have been essential for student success during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were many places around the world where equity initiatives were inspiring, removing barriers so that all students have had access to virtual learning environments. Even teacher-family meetings were completed remotely through video calls. Increased access to communication tools and resources is a new lens through which to reimagine education! In our [TEACH-NOW®](#) module, “Managing the Learning Environment,” candidates in our program plan and practice highly effective family communication so that they are ready to build relationships of trust and understanding with stakeholders at home.

Communicating with families also opens the door to increased opportunities for intensive learning support outside of the classroom. After-school programs and tutoring opportunities create personalized learning experiences for students who may need additional support. In our module, “Student Assessment” in the [TEACH-NOW®](#) program, candidates prepare to set learning goals with families of students who face academic challenges or barriers to learning. By sharing data on student learning and achievement with families, teachers can create clarity around the additional tools, resources, services, and other supports outside of the classroom that would foster learning recovery. Open communication with families is key.

3. Prioritize Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is an area of high priority as the world seeks to emerge and heal from the collective trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers around the world who completed our survey indicated that social-emotional learning was of critical concern. While 79.4% of respondents overall indicated that students experienced a measurable learning gap, 83.3% of respondents agreed that students experienced a developmental gap. According to our data, the impacts on social-emotional development appear to be greater. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), social-emotional learning empowers learners of all ages to, “...acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others,

establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions” (CASEL, 2022). Educators, learners, and families alike would benefit from access to meaningful social-emotional learning opportunities after the collective trauma we have all experienced.

While learning loss has been the focus of most discussions during this return to in-person learning, students’ and teachers’ social-emotional needs are of equal importance. There is recovery work to be done in both academic learning and social-emotional learning. As comments in this survey indicate, teachers feel pressured to get students “back on track” with intensive remedial learning. For this reason, there is a danger of social-emotional learning being deprioritized or ignored completely. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us that we must weave social-emotional learning into the classroom and school community. At Moreland University, we integrate social-emotional learning across all of our programs and, in particular, in the clinical-practice portion of our [TEACH-NOW® Program](#). In alignment with the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards integrated in our “TEACH-NOW® Teacher’s Certification Program Clinical Rubric,” teachers in our program create lessons to address the developmental needs of their students which they apply in the classroom and review together with their cohort, instructor, and mentor. We understand that teachers must prioritize the social-emotional wellbeing of their students in order to promote their learning and achievement.

4. Foster Collaboration

As a final point, teachers and school leaders around the world came together during this tumultuous time to learn, grow, and reflect both local and global communities. That type of collaborative focus and intentionality must continue. Teachers can create professional learning networks (PLN) with colleagues who teach the same grade level or subject area. In this way, educators can pool strategies, talk through the challenges from a solutions-based perspective, and create actionable plans to support students. The cornerstone of community and collaboration at Moreland University is our cohort model. Whether in our [TEACH-NOW® Teacher Preparation Certificate Program](#) or any of our [Master’s Degrees programs](#) for teachers, researchers, or school leaders, candidates in our programs work with 10-15 educators with whom they meet weekly, collaborate, and build community. From the first live virtual class when educators meet synchronously with their new colleagues, the cohort community is established...and it endures. Teachers create lifelong connections which they bring with them throughout their careers as they change schools, move around the world, and step into leadership roles. Teachers are more successful when they learn with and from one another with the guidance of our faculty. Cohorts are at the heart of learning at [TEACH-NOW®!](#)

Data from our survey indicates that social-emotional development has suffered a significant setback with 60.8% of respondents selecting a developmental loss of a year or more, approximately 10% more than learning loss of a year or more. Collaboration with peers in the classroom has been curtailed due to the challenges faced by 94.5% of respondents who indicated that their students experienced a toggle between online and in-person teaching during the period from March 2020 to present. In terms of collaboration among learners, many students learned how to collaborate virtually with peers in meaningful ways through the integration of educational technology. Continuing to use tools to foster student collaboration within and beyond the school walls will serve students in the development of valuable dispositions. ■

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