

The Pandemic Had a Devastating Effect on Our Children

The lockdowns during the pandemic have proved to be more devastating for education than many realize



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Since the beginning of the week, I am finally spending [time in classrooms again](#). I missed it. Until now, I have mostly been filling holes at my school. The year is ending soon, after all.

One of the subjects I teach is maths. And I am doing tutoring on the side. This week made me realize something. The pandemic and the lockdowns have had serious consequences for the students.

Especially for their educational competencies.

At First, I Thought My Tutoring Students Were the Exception

I had a bit of a hunch, that this was the case. Many of my tutoring students struggled with very elementary maths competencies. Most of them reported that it has gotten worse during the pandemic. The parents for the most part

confirm this.

What I met in the classroom surprised me. Almost all students seemed to struggle with basic stuff. Tenth-graders, that failed to do basic arithmetics and algebra. That sort of stuff.

Speaking with my colleagues confirms that many have fallen behind during the pandemic.

Online Learning Is Not Suitable for Every Student

When the lockdowns started, every school scrambled to make things work. That was the case in every country. Even in Denmark, where I was teaching in March 2020.

Some fared better than others. Germany made a tragic figure. I only learned the full extent after moving back and starting to teach here.

The truth is that online learning is not a suitable model for all students. No matter what the tech-gurus try to market us. Some students are very capable of working on their own. They have good self-discipline and are capable of organizing themselves.

Many are not. Especially, if they have some neurodiversity or other challenges.

There is another decisive factor. Preconditions are vastly different in the students' homes.

During the first lockdown, this was very evident among my Special Needs students. Some were living in care homes, where the pedagogical staff was ready to assist at a moment's notice. Others lived in 2-bedroom apartments and had to babysit their smaller siblings. Because mom and dad were essential workers.

Some had access to decent internet. Others had no internet at all. Or at best a lousy connection that was not stable enough for video conferencing.

Those, who already struggled before the pandemic were completely thrown off. The less privileged they were, the worse it got for them.

Did We Lose a Generation During The Pandemic?

To say it like this is a bit of a stretch. But I fear that the consequences for this generation [have been profound](#). It hurts me to know, that their education had to suffer so much, which will have a lasting impact on their future.

From this, we should learn an important lesson. The lockdowns did not only save a lot of lives. They have also caused a lot of suffering.

This does not get registered in any statistics. Balancing this out is not as straightforward as it seems. As usual, the true picture is not black and white. It is solid grey.

Today, all our 10th-graders wrote their final math exams. Most of them had already given up on the idea of passing them.

May their future be blessed anyway.