



How ready were schools, teachers and students for distance learning in Europe? Evidence from large scale assessments for primary schools

Marjeta Doupona, Melina Tinnacher, Vasileios Symeonidis, Heike Wendt

*Institute for Education Research and Teacher Education,
Faculty of Environmental, Regional and Educational Sciences,
University of Graz, Austria*

Challenges to distance learning around the world have been widely discussed ever since the start of the pandemic in 2019 and a lot of small-scale research has been conducted to reveal the changes that occurred in the schooling systems. Large-scale assessments in that regard can be considered as a baseline- assessment to learn about the readiness for distance of schools, teachers, students and their families in terms of available digital infrastructure, experiences and attitudes. Some policy reports (IEA, 2020a, IEA, 2020b, IEA, 2020c, IEA, 2020d, European Commission, 2020) have already made use of indicators to describe the situation, but being rather selective in their use of countries and indicators, and in parts lacked theoretical framing. Building primarily on the theoretical models proposed by Eickelmann, Gerick& Koop (2017), we systematically review the readiness of teachers, parents, students and schools for distance learning at primary school level in Europe. We do so by drawing on data from both the *Trends in Mathematics and Science Study* of 2019 (TIMSS, ncountries=30) and the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* of 2016 (PIRLS, ncountries=26). Country comparisons will be performed using the IEA-IDB Analyzer (IEA, 2020). On the basis of our analysis we can show substantial differences in terms of readiness in different parts of Europe. We will discuss these results with regard to challenges to distance teaching and learning. However, the data of all large scale assessments were collected before the pandemic, so distant schooling was not foreseen at such large scale at the time of designing the surveys, which may limit the interpretation of the results.

Keywords: distance learning, large-scale assessments, ICT use, socio-economic status, school factors, reading

Reference:

Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). (2020a). *Measuring global education goals: How TIMSS helps*. <https://teachertaskforce.org/knowledge-hub/measuring-global-education-goals-how-timss-helps>



Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). (2020b). *Declining trends in reading attitudes: were students prepared for literacy at home in the pandemic?*

<https://www.iea.nl/sites/default/files/2020-09/IEA%20Press%20Release%20PIRLS%20World%20Literacy%20Day%208.9.2020.pdf>

Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). (2020c). *Did Young People Already Expect a Pandemic? Surprising Insights from IEA Data.*

<https://www.iea.nl/sites/default/files/2020-05/IEA%20press%20release%20ICCS%20Expecting%20a%20Pandemic.pdf>

Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). (2020d). *More Than Half of Classrooms Were Too Full Before Coronavirus: IEA Delivers Important Reminder to Policy Makers.*

<https://www.iea.nl/sites/default/files/2020-05/IEA%20press%20release%20TIMSS%20Class%20Size.pdf>

European Commission. (2020). *Educational inequalities in Europe and physical school closures during Covid-19.*

https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/fairness_pb2020_wave04_covid_education_jrc_i1_19jun2020.pdf The European Commission's Science and Knowledge Service. Joint Research Centre.

Eickelmann, B., Gerick J., Koop, C. (2017). *ICT use in mathematics lessons and the mathematics achievement of secondary school students by international comparison: Which role do school level factors play?* *Education and Information Technologies* 22, 1527–1551.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-016-9498-5>

IEA. (2020). *IEA International Database Analyzer (Version 4.0).* [Tools | IEA](#)