



# “Remote education”/“homeschooling” for SAP- students - a lesson to learn?

INSA 2022  
Making Waves to Advance School Attendance

Dr Trude Havik, University of Stavanger, Norway

Dr Jo Magne Ingul, Regional Centre for Child and Youth Mental Health and Child Welfare Department of Mental Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Norway

# School during the Covid-19 pandemic

- Schools closed from the middle of March 2020
  - Remote education/homeschooling (various digital solutions, tools, and skills)
  - No national guidelines existed for teachers about how to conduct this

# Why this study?

- No common agreement whether homeschooling” is an optimal intervention for students with school attendance problems (SAPs)
- Opportunity to investigate this more closely
  - Remote education/homeschooling given by parents or teachers, is not similar
- Norwegian teachers’ in-depth experiences during school closure due to the pandemic, focused on students with SAPs (prior to the pandemic)
  - Absence from school without documentation more than two days in the last two weeks before schools closed; more than 15 percent undocumented absence since Christmas; or both

# Sample

- Teachers having one student in their class with SAPs (chose one student when answering)
  - Students in grade level 5 - 10 (age 10–16)
- N=248 teachers (75% female)
  - Teachers from all 11 counties in Norway
    - 8 - 45 teachers from each county
  - 71.8% were main teachers and 28.2% were subject teachers
  - The number of lessons per week they taught the student varied from 1 to more than 21 lessons a week
- Their student
  - 27.4% primary school students (grade level 5–6)
  - 72.6% lower secondary school students (grade level 8–10)
  - 107 girls and 141 boys

# Some results

- 20.2 % of the students did not participate at all
  - Increased with grade level
    - Related to decreasing parental involvement?
    - Need for stronger cooperation between school and home
      - Some did not do work until the teacher contacted parents: Inform and instruct on how to help the child with schoolwork at home
- Motivation and emotional problems (e.g., anxiety/depression) most frequently SAP-reasons
  - Motivational issues related to schoolwork; difficult to get started with schoolwork at home
  - Emotional problems: reduce emotional symptoms in the short run: easier to concentrate and increase quality of life

# Teachers' experiences during this period

## **Negative (107) comments:**

- Not connected to web-based solutions, did not answer or participate/attend
- Do less or no schoolwork
- Lack of motivation, see no point in participating, given up on school (including those who dropped out completely), lost the student
- Lack of structure and help at home
- Passive, do not know what to do, need more help, structure and adaptation
- «Turned around the clock», including playing computer games

# Teachers' experiences during this period

## **Postive (89) comments:**

- Participate more and did more schoolwork (a lot more/slightly more), more motivated and positive
- The teacher had more time to help and talk to the student
- Did like their peers (all had homeschooling)- no different than their peers
- More relaxed, safer, quiter at home, no anxiety at home
- Get more help at home

# How to use and integrate these experiences when schools reopen

- Concerned of the importance to attend/partly attend immediately when schools reopen
- Early plan the re-entry in close cooperation with the student and home/other services
  - Main themes: digital/hybrid solutions, individual students' needs and the importance of social interactions
  - **Digital/hybrid solutions (54)**
    - Increased digital skills
    - Digital teaching/lessons at home in addition to partial attendance
      - When absent for lessons/days or as part of the adapted plan
      - More flexible school: integrated in the students' plan for gradual reintegration
        - Reduce stress and engage the student more; encourage the student to participate more



# How to use and integrate these experiences when schools reopen

## **Individual students' need**

- Individual adaptations and structure (59)
- Know the students' challenges for SAPs better (13)
- Cooperation and involvement with parents (17)
- Cooperation with others (12)

## **The importance of social interactions**

- Relations with teacher and school (35)
- Importance of peers (9)

# School return for SAP students

---

## Both easier and more difficult (30)

---

Explained by the variation of students and different individual challenges

## More difficult (106)

Lack of structure and routines at home, attractive and pleasant to stay home, difficult transitions (59)

Lost social interactions and academic learning (23)

Other (7)

No further explanation (11)

## Easier (50)

Miss social parts of school or the school itself (23)

Get a new start after the period of homeschooling (16)

Use of digital solutions at home combined with attending school (9)

Other (1)

No further explanation (17)

# Conclusion

- Not recommended as an intervention for all SAP-students: depend on the reasons for SAPs
  - Positive in the short run for some: might reduce symptoms of emotional difficulties
  - Negative for students with a lack of motivation for schoolwork - and for older students (less parental involvement)
- Findings indicate a variety of teachers' experiences, and most of them believed school return will be more difficult for SAP students
- These experiences might be helpful for school return, suggesting:
  - Need for more varied and flexible interventions by using digital solutions to a greater extent
  - The importance of tailored adaptations
  - Involve home and parents and promote close home-school cooperation
  - The importance of close relations between teacher-student and between the students

# Final conclusions

- Findings might be useful for professionals who are concerned of SAPs and planning interventions
- These findings might make waves, by using teachers' insight in how to promote attendance for students struggling to attend school
  - E.g., use a variety and flexibility of intervention and digital solutions, either as a part of students' plan for gradual return or when students are absent from school

# References

Havik, T. & Ingul, J.M. (2022). Remote Education/Homeschooling During the COVID-19 Pandemic, School Attendance Problems, and School Return—Teachers' Experiences and Reflections. *Frontiers in Education*. DOI:10.3389/feduc.2022.895983

Havik, T. & Ingul, J.M. (2021). Does Homeschooling Fit Students With School Attendance Problems? Exploring Teachers' Experiences During COVID-19. *Frontiers in Education*. DOI:10.3389/feduc.2021.720014