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## **The Socio-emotional Context of E-learning in Teachers' Opinion**

### **Abstract**

The article presents the research results on the socio-emotional context of distance learning from teachers's perspective. The primary purpose of this study was to explore teachers' experiences in primary, secondary, and vocational schools as they converted their classes to distance learning, and in a broader perspective, indicate difficulties resulting from the mediation of personal contacts.

The main research question was: What are teachers' opinions related to relationships and their well-being connected with conducting remote classes? Based on the results of a diagnostic survey conducted in primary, secondary, and vocational schools in Silesia, Poland, it can be concluded that the well-being of teachers has worsened due to the need to stay at home and prolonged social isolation. The teachers also pointed to the deterioration of relationships with students and the loosening of ties in the classroom. The article ends with recommendations for improvements in distance learning.

**Key words:** remote learning, socio-emotional context of distance schooling, teachers' well-being, class relationship

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly created a new situation in every area of human life; it has also forced a change in the functioning of most educational institutions. For this reason, we are witnesses and participants of the transfer of

education from the real world to virtual reality. For students and many teachers and parents, the virtual world was already a tame space (safe, obvious), but until the pandemic appeared, it was only an option that we could use to a certain extent at work, for entertainment, or maintaining social contacts. Currently, this choice is impossible, and the compulsion to work online, in social isolation, affects many professional groups. In this text, the focus will be on teachers who have been particularly touched by remote work. Mediated communication has prevented teachers from fully fulfilling their professional role based on direct, constant, and interactive contact with students, parents, and colleagues. The ontological complexity of the teacher's professional role had to be simplified in the virtual space.

### **Remote education – opportunities and threats from the perspective of pedagogy**

Before the pandemic, e-learning and distance learning were not used very often in the Polish educational system. Distance learning popularized many modern methods and techniques of education. Teachers who previously reluctantly used the opportunities offered by e-learning, being forced to transfer their professional activity to the TEAMS, ZOOM, MOODLE, or other platforms, slowly adopted this unexpected change. They learned how to use new devices and new applications and “switched” to multimedia materials supporting the learning process. According to the principals and teachers, some methods can be successfully used in further, hopefully, stationary school work. According to principals and teachers, the main advantages of remote work, are the possibility of organizing remote meetings of pedagogical boards on an online platform, online consultations, the use of teamwork tools, e.g., for the joint creation of documents in the cloud, individual meetings with students, the sending of homework and the receiving of feedback on the online learning progress using the platform. As they and their students declare, teachers have acquired new digital skills and move more efficiently in the digital world, more and more often use communicators and social platforms to contact students and parents as well as improve the process of individual work (revalidation, corrective and remedial classes, compensation classes) (for example Plebańska et al., 2020; Pyżalski, 2020).

Apart from the inclusion of ICT in school education and school management, it is not easy to find other long-term benefits of obligatory distance learning. Students have lost the most by far. Starting with the restriction of access to education in general (equal, free and universal – according to Polish constitutional law), the

use of school teaching facilities, computers, libraries, teaching materials, access to individual support in the field of meeting special educational needs (this applies to both students with medical certificates or opinions of counseling centers, as well as those covered by psychological and pedagogical help) or even its interruption, ending with the lack of the implementation of the statutory task of the school, which is care (lack of access to the school canteen, care during lessons and day-room) (The Children's Ombudsman Intervention, 2021).

Consequently, distance learning increases social inequalities (Poleszczak, 2020). The researchers call these constraints straightforwardly a violation of children's rights (Turczyk & Jaskulska 2020), and The

The Children's Ombudsman has intervened in this regard (2021). These are "hard" arguments confirming that the educational system has failed to bear responsibility for distance education. On the other hand, students' deteriorating well-being, sense of loneliness, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and lowered self-esteem, especially in families with a lack of interest from parents or guardians, are at stake (Kozanski, 2020; Supiano, 2020). Being forced to spend most of the day in front of a computer or telephone that enables remote learning is exacerbating the problem of addiction to technology. According to experts (psychologists, psychiatrists), the experience of remote education is often traumatic for many children (Ghebreyesus, 2020).

The biggest problem of remote education, as indicated by scientific reports and analyzes, at the present stage of remote education, is no longer the lack of equipment and the low digital competence of teachers; it is the persistent lack of direct communication between the teacher and the class; which will be discussed in the following subsection; and the typically low competence of students to manage their learning (Bailey et al., 2009). Distance learning works well if students, apart from digital skills, are independent, motivated to learn, and manage their learning process responsibly (Yeh et al., 2019). These characteristics are called online learning readiness (see Bernard et al., 2004; Clarke, 2007; Hung, 2010). Three aspects of learning effectiveness can be derived from the research based on the nature of online learning. They are 1. students' online skills and efficacy; 2. the self-directness of their learning; 3. their ability to socialize and communicate online with others. Online learning readiness can be influenced by intervention; therefore, it is necessary to create favorable conditions and involve children and young people in activities that allow for maximum achievement in the current situation (Joosten, Cusatis 2020; p. 1). Students will only be ready to learn online if they find themselves in a positive relationship network and feel relatively safe using the Internet.

What we know about remote education before the pandemic does little to help manage the current situation (Pyżalski, 2020; Suspiano, 2020). There are several

reasons for this state of affairs. In pre-pandemic times, we used distance learning voluntarily. Schools and universities would supplement their offer with remote forms. Today, distance education has to be used by everyone, and the digital literacy levels of students, parents, and teachers vary greatly (e.g., Cortesi et al., 2020; Pyżalski 2020; Smahel et al., 2020). Another reason is acting in a difficult psychological situation, all of which are accompanied by a feeling of danger, fear of illness, and a state of deprivation of many psychological and social needs. The duration of mediated work and learning is also essential, which contributes to the growing dissatisfaction and weariness of all its participants (Arora & Srinivansan, 2020; Ghebreyesus, 2020).

### **Teacher and teaching in online reality – is it still education?**

Observations of remote education, which has been going on for over a year, show the concentration of both normative and instrumental efforts of the ministry, governing bodies, and principals on the didactic function of the school and overlooking their educational and protective role (comp. The Regulation of the Ministry of National Education of March 20, 2020). The tendency to reduce the role of schools and teachers to impart knowledge and implement programs (syllabus) is not a new problem; it is one of the most frequently raised accusations against the Polish educational system (e.g., Dudzikowa, 2004). Online learning has clearly revealed this weakness of the Polish educational system. So, we can talk about the remote transfer of knowledge, however, it is difficult to see the educational significance in the current way of education. A broad understanding of education can support the thesis: the school, besides the structure, has its own culture. That is why attending schools provides a wide range of experience, and it is educational *per se* (Bruner, 2006).

The basis of a constructivist approach to education, both in the context of didactics and upbringing, is the relationships built by the teacher and the student as a result of the many acts of direct interpersonal communication in the classroom. A school (classroom) is a group of people connected in the network of these relationships, and lessons are much more than transmitting, remembering, and testing knowledge. Physical distance, the lack of face-to-face interaction can result in the loss of interpersonal contacts (Kim, 2010; Suspiano, 2020) and completely change what we call 'everyday school life'. The ritualization of the day, duties and rules, playing and quarrels, difficulties, and overcoming them together are educational experiences that cannot be replaced, even by cutting-edge technology. Thanks to

participation in the school's everyday life, students get to know themselves and the social world, values, and the rules of social behavior (cf. Przybylska, 2018). Thus, during distance schooling, students' social, communicative, and moral competencies are at risk, especially in the case of children whose families do not adequately meet children's needs. The teacher plays an invaluable role in these processes. **Maintaining a bond, taking care of students, helping them overcome difficulties is a real challenge when the contact is so significantly reduced.** In remote education, the most important task is building and upholding relationships, emotional involvement, and a positive emotional atmosphere of online meetings (Arora & Srinivasan 2020; Turczyk & Jaskulska, 2020).

Although we regard students as the most sensitive element of the educational system, teachers are the focus of social expectations and formal requirements in the current context. The teachers, in front of the webcam, are firming up subsequent changes in the organization of classes, program content, requirements, and the organization of external examinations. They have found themselves in a tough psychological and professional situation. The pressure to implement the core curriculum, the limited possibilities of pedagogical intervention, difficulties in implementing educational, care, and support activities cause increasing frustration among teachers. They have to deal with technical obstacles, reluctance, often apathy or physical absence of a large part of their students, as well as a tricky, demanding parents's behavior from time to time. Teachers report difficulties, overload, feel a reduction in job satisfaction, or loss of passion for the job (Jaskulska & Jankowiak, 2020). In such conditions of limited agency, teachers try to bear the burden of remote schooling. Some of them focus only on imparting knowledge; others try to maintain contact with students and be supportive. I think that instead of receiving more and more unrealistic guidelines about covering the syllabus, they should get organizational and substantive support in order to make the best use of the online lesson time and cope with online job stress.

## Methodology outline

This report presents the results of a survey of teachers who, since last March, have been working remotely with short breaks. The given and analyzed data are part of the materials collected as part of a research project conducted at the University of Silesia in cooperation with the social environment. At the request of municipalities, the research team diagnosed the impact of the pandemic on education in public schools. The project's main goal was to identify the nature of the activities,

problems, and solutions used in remote education in a COVID-19 threat situation and, based on this diagnosis, to develop recommendations that could support education in similar cases. Students, parents, teachers, and principals of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools participated in the research. The selection of the research group was deliberate; based on agreements signed with education departments in the communities of the Silesian Voivodeship, with the questionnaires being sent to the institutions. Participation in the study was voluntary. The research, its procedure, and the manner of implementation were approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Silesia in Katowice in application no. KEUS.51 / 09.2020.

The researchers used Lime Survey to collect the data; with most questions being answered by Likert-like scales, although some questions were open-ended answers. The data was collected from December 2020 to March 2021. Out of 1,725 returned questionnaires, 998 complete answer sheets were selected for analysis in this study. The most significant number of surveyed teachers are employed in primary school in grades IV–VIII (516 people), 1st-degree industry school (136 people), technical secondary school (122 people), general secondary school (119 people), second-level industry school (93 people), other surveyed teachers indicated a different workplace (13 people). The vast majority of teachers have extensive work experience: 702 respondents are certified teachers, 98 are appointed teachers. The rest of the teachers are at the earlier stages of career advancement - 91 are contract teachers and 24 trainees. 83 teachers did not indicate the degree of professional promotion in the questionnaire. The subjects taught were not a variable in the research as not all teachers indicated it in the survey.

Based on the analysis of the answers, the socio-emotional context of distance learning from the teachers' perspective was described. The primary purpose of this study was to identify how teachers cope with remote work. I was interested in the experiences related to relationships with students and the well-being of teachers connected with conducting remote classes, with cooperation in a team of teachers, and in a broader perspective, difficulties resulting from the limitation of professional relationships and contacts imposed by online teaching.

To investigate the area of my interest, I asked the following research questions:

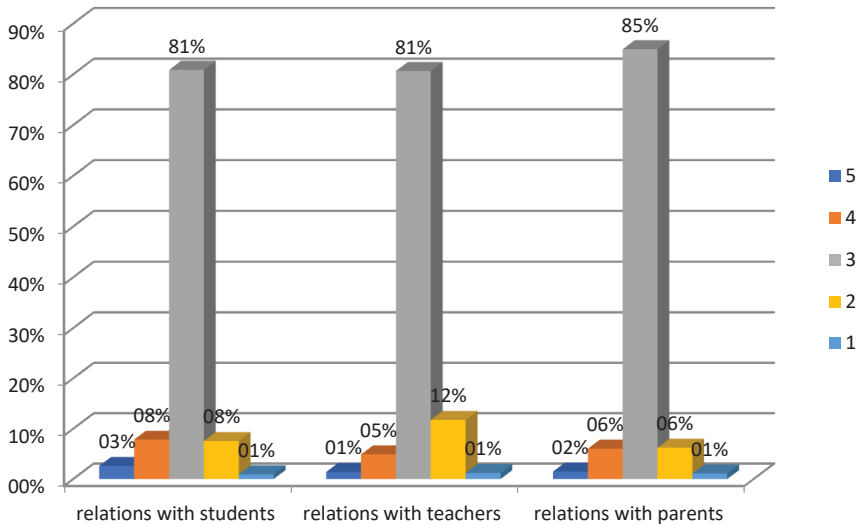
1. Whether and how, in the opinion of teachers, have their relationships with students, other teachers, and parents changed?
2. What is the well-being of teachers in the remote education period, and has it changed compared to the pre-pandemic period?
3. Which situations, in the opinion of teachers, affect their well-being the most?
4. What difficulties did they experience, and were they more frequent compared to the time before the pandemic?

## Data presentation and analyses

In the following parts of the text, the obtained data were collected in tables and presented in charts. The observed trends in the distribution of results were also analyzed, and conclusions were drawn regarding the well-being of teachers, their educational relationships, and educational problems within the context of distance work.

### Interpersonal relationships in teachers' perception

The noticeable feature of distance learning is mediating the relationship between all the subjects of education. Therefore, teachers were asked how they assessed and described their relationships with students, other teachers, and parents. The results are graphically presented in figure 1.



*Figure 1. Relations with students, other teachers, and parents in teachers' perception.*

Key: 5 – definitely improved, 4 – improved, 3 – without change, 2 – worsened, 1 – definitely worsened  
 Source: own research.

Almost all respondents declared that they did not notice any changes in their relationships compared to the time before the pandemic. Taking into account the lowest grades, a similar group of teachers perceives a deterioration in their relationships with students and their parents, slightly more respondents perceive a deterioration of relationships in the team of teachers. Several dozen teachers noticed

an improvement in their professional relationships; the progress was slightly more frequent in relations with students, and least with other teachers. These differences, however, are insignificant and confirm positive feelings about the relationship. The research by other teams in the first period of the pandemic showed a more significant number of teachers experiencing a deterioration in relationships. In the spring of 2020, as many as 1/3 of teachers indicated that they had worse relations with their colleagues at work (Ptaszek et al., 2020, Pyżalski, 2020). Teachers responded slightly differently to the statements related to maintaining relationships during remote education (Table 1).

*Table 1*

*Teachers' opinions about relations with students, school colleagues, and parents during distance education*

| Opinions about relations during online education                   | 5   |       | 4   |       | 3   |       | 2   |       | 1   |      |
|--|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|------|
| Most of all. I miss the direct contact with my students            | 815 | 79.1% | 145 | 14.1% | 50  | 4.9%  | 14  | 1.4%  | 6   | 0.6% |
| I have difficulty maintaining close relationships with my students | 136 | 13.2% | 254 | 24.7% | 326 | 31.7% | 233 | 22.6% | 81  | 7.9% |
| Distant education has changed the relationship in the class        | 202 | 19.6% | 403 | 39.1% | 277 | 26.9% | 128 | 12.4% | 20  | 1.9% |
| I feel that I have lost contact with my colleagues                 | 110 | 10.7% | 26  | 25.3% | 303 | 29.4% | 256 | 24.9% | 100 | 9.7% |
| I regularly discuss school matters with other teachers             | 236 | 22.9% | 406 | 39.4% | 206 | 20.0% | 140 | 13.6% | 42  | 4.1% |
| My work colleagues support me                                      | 437 | 42.4% | 450 | 43.7% | 106 | 10.3% | 24  | 2.3%  | 13  | 1.3% |

Key: 5 – definitely agree, 4 – agree, 3 – neither yes, nor no, 2 – disagree, 1 – definitely disagree.

Source: own research.

First of all, teachers lack face-to-face contact with students, and more than half of the respondents observe the loosening of contacts between students in the class. It is challenging to assess class relationships that are not seen in the interaction or that group relationships were not paid attention to under normal working conditions; it is probably this group of teachers, about a quarter of respondents who do not have an opinion and the rest of teachers do not notice changes in the classroom life. Teachers, when asked whether they experienced difficulties in establishing and maintaining relationships, provided different answers. A part of them feel



this difficulty to a varying degree, and some have no problems with maintaining relationships while working remotely. The factor differentiating teachers' responses may be their educational attitudes and the preferred style of teachers' work (cf. Przybylska, 2018). Teachers who prefer the personal manner in managing classwork are likely to be much more affected by relationship deficits during distance learning. Similarly, teachers for whom cooperation, a positive emotional atmosphere, and meeting students' needs are the primary conditions for didactic work feel the consequences of the lack of in-person contact much more. It seems that teachers who prefer the positional style in managing their work in the classroom, i.e., they do not enter into close relationships, do not expect personal interactions, cope better with the lack of contact with students in lessons (Bielecka-Prus, 2010). They also do not mind the virtualization of social space in classwork. One can go a step further and hypothesize that in extreme cases of positional style, teachers feel better in remote work because they do not feel obliged to maintain communication and activate an atmosphere of cooperation.

Given the relationships with colleagues, the teachers' responses are optimistic. The vast majority of the respondents feel supported by their colleagues, and maintain constant contact in professional matters with members of the teaching staff. When it comes to continuous personal relationships with other teachers, the answers were spread, apart from extreme indications (definitely agree and disagree), almost evenly. That is, a similar number of teachers do not perceive changes, feel, or do not feel a loss of contact. The differentiating factor here might be teachers' needs and expectations regarding teamwork, which were not included in the study. The extent to which the surveyed teachers feel "attached" to their colleagues from the teachers' room may also be substantial. Another factor that may impact maintaining relationships in the teaching community is the social response to the pandemic. Sociologists and psychologists point out that the health-threatening situation and the change in social life conditions increase sensitivity to social relations, a sense of community, and motivation to maintain close contacts, which have been broken by the restrictions related to the pandemic. Frequent contact by phone, e-mail, activation on social networks confirms this need (Marek, 2021).

### **Teachers' well-being**

Assuming that the change of the form of work and the state of epidemic threat is complicated, teachers were asked about their well-being. And just as teachers assessed the relationship with students and teachers rather positively, their mood worsened despite the lack of direct contact. This is confirmed by the data contained in the figure below (Figure 2).

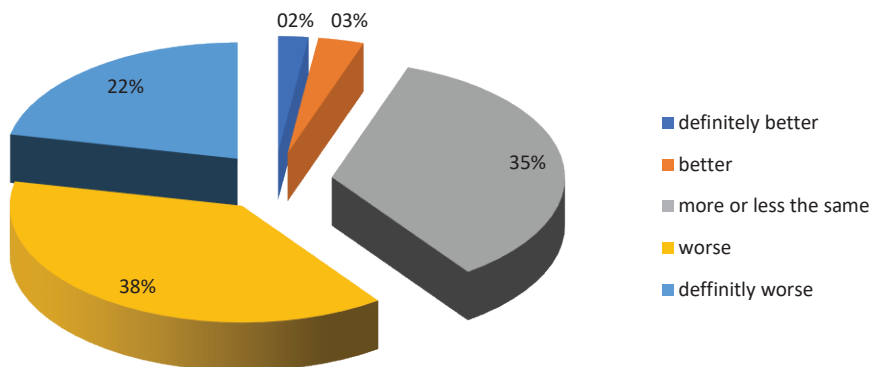


Figure 2. Teachers' well-being during the pandemic.

Source: own research. Mean – 3,23; SD – 0,9

In the study, teachers estimated their well-being with work compared to the time before the pandemic. On an estimated scale from much better (5) to definitely worse (1), the largest group of teachers indicated a deterioration in well-being, including almost a quarter of teachers who declare a significant decline in their subjective mental state. To deepen the analyses related to well-being, teachers were asked to define the intensity of experiencing emotions, commonly considered positive and negative (Figure 3).

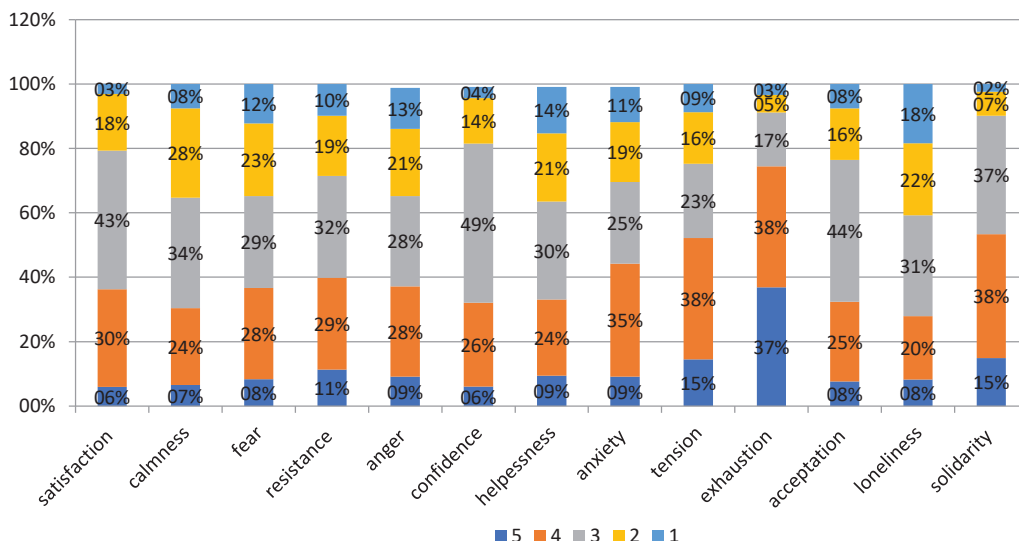


Figure 3. Emotional symptoms of teachers' well-being.

Key: 5 – very often, 4 – often, 3 – from time to time, 2 – rarely, 1 – very rarely.

Source: own research.

Analyzing the frequency of the occurrence of individual emotions, moods, and states, it can be concluded that negative experiences prevail. Most teachers feel exhausted; as many as 74.4% of teachers experienced extreme fatigue very often and frequently. More than half of the respondents claim that tension in remote work accompanies them often and very often. Slightly fewer teachers feel anxious and disagreed with the need to work remotely. Fear and anger also appear more often than most of the positive emotions indicated in the survey. If we refer to the positive feelings, the feeling of social solidarity was most often declared by slightly more than half of the surveyed Silesian teachers. About 1/3 of teachers stated that they had not lost job satisfaction, they felt confident in remote education, and accepted the situation and conditions in which they teach. In an open-ended question about feelings related to remote work, only five teachers commented on their emotional state and its reasons for a more extended time. They pointed to the uncertainty related to the epidemic situation, the fear of getting sick, the frustration of not being able to fulfill their duties satisfactorily, and the feeling of isolation that leads to uncertainty and even chronic anxiety. One teacher admitted that she is so frustrated with distance learning that she does not have the words to describe her fatigue and sense of meaningless work in this way. The lack of sense in the actions taken, in her opinion, is primarily an incredibly low effectiveness of distance learning in primary schools and the practically impossible educational impact. It is a pity that only a few such personal statements allow us to look at distance learning from the perspective of individual stories and experiences.

To sum up, the well-being of the surveyed teachers during remote education is mainly characterized by negative emotions and states that are often, or even very often, experienced. **Teachers report a subjective deterioration of well-being.** Polish studies from June 2020 (Ptaszek, 2020) and international studies (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020) also report on the situation related to a significant decrease in the well-being of teachers and other educational entities.

### **Difficult situations in remote work. Educational difficulties**

What are the reasons for the deterioration of the well-being of the surveyed teachers? In addition to the traditional stressors related to the relationship in the pedagogical group, with the head teacher and parents, the necessity to work remotely results in the emergence of new ones, e.g., increased social exposure, technostress, or the abuse of digital media (Brod, 1984). The surveyed teachers also indicated difficulties in using technology, forced to work many hours, or increased social exposure (This information comes from a part of the study not covered in this text). By analyzing the teachers' responses (Figure 4) in the described research, one can group the causes/sources of difficulties into those related to the

formal requirements of work and those resulting from the change in the form of interpersonal contacts.

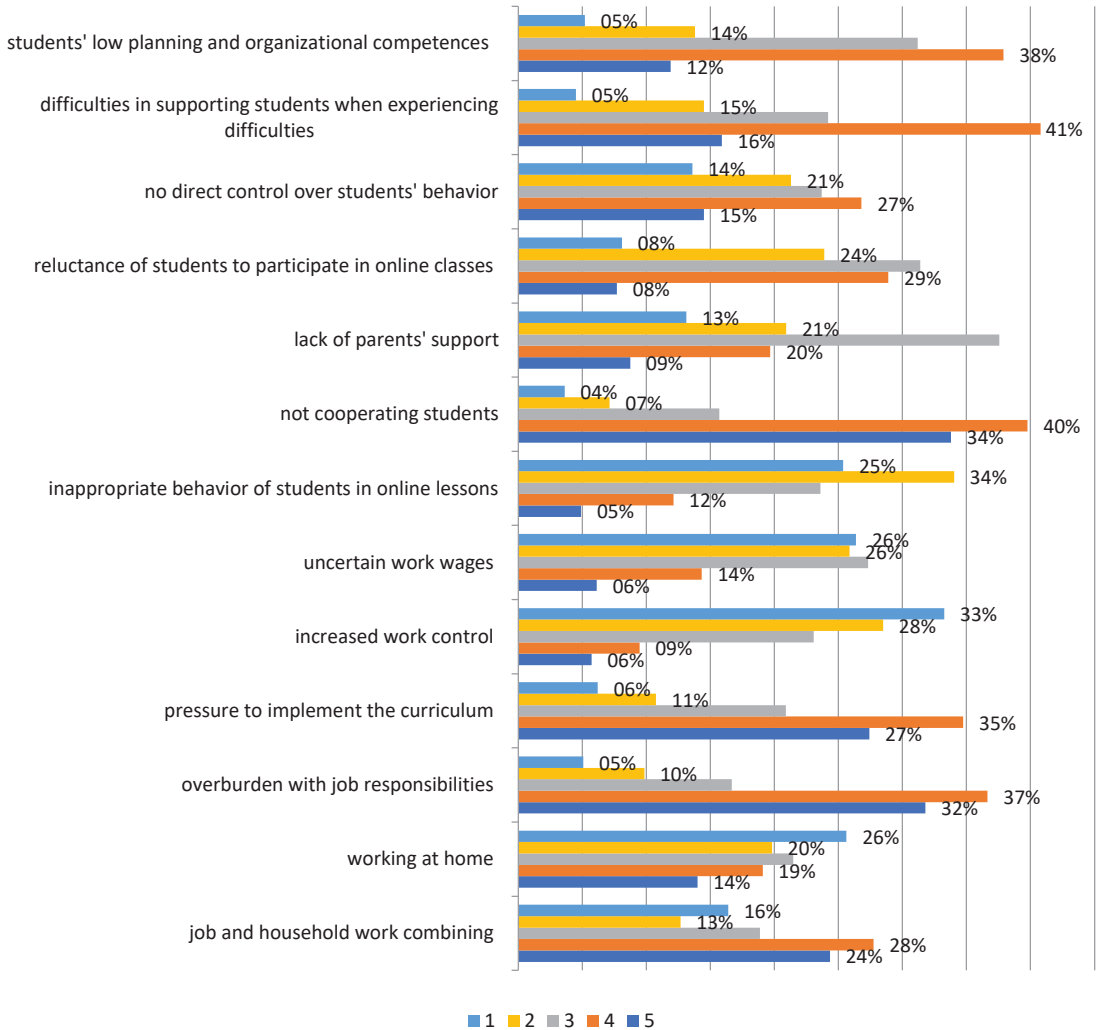


Figure 4. Causes of teachers' deteriorating well-being (including educational difficulties).

Key: 5 – very often, 4 – often, 3 – from time to time, 2 – rarely, 1 – very rarely.

Source: own research.

Referring to the first group, the primary source of lowering the well-being of teachers was the burden of professional duties, which were multiplied along

with the necessity of a quick transformation of the classroom to the conditions of the virtual space. Almost 70% of the respondents paid the greatest attention to this factor. Some of the teachers who commented on this closed question wrote: 1. [too] many hours of preparing materials for their work with/for students, 2. searching for and learning to use new methods of working with the technology, 3. the need for individual contact with many students and their parents who were unable to cope organizationally and substantively with the preparation and participation in classes.

The emphasis on implementing the core curriculum is the most significant legal and organizational problem of a remote school. This problem was repeatedly commented on by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Children's Ombudsman, and from the perspective of the actual possibilities of implementation, teachers. Responsibility in this regard rested entirely on their shoulders; 2/3 of the respondents very often or often feel worse because of this. Another and most frequently indicated source of difficulties is the need to combine household duties and professional work. More than half of the respondents pointed out that they very often or often experience difficulties in running and preparing for classes due to the need to divide their attention all day between work and home activities. In such a situation, the parent's responsibilities turn out to be particularly burdensome; the presence of children whose nurseries, kindergartens, and schools have been closed is a vital stress factor for the surveyed teachers. Also, staying at home in the presence of other household members (partners, other family members) harmed the well-being of almost every fourth teacher.

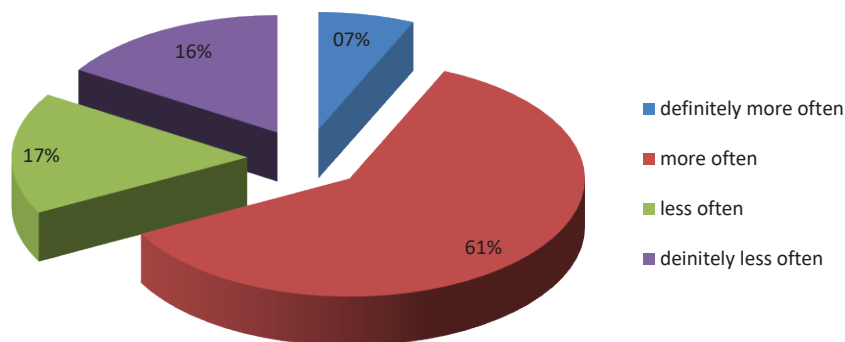
Considering the second group of causes described by teachers as being subjectively aggravating, one can pay attention to the deterioration of social relations during remote work, the attitudes of students, and, less frequently, parents. In the opinion of the surveyed teachers, students lack the readiness to learn online, as was mentioned in the theoretical introduction to the research, is a major cause of concern. Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the respondents see the problem of students' dependence on the teacher in the preparation for classes, and difficulties in planning and organizing work. In addition, teachers point out the lack of students' motivation to participate and be active in online lessons, including avoiding the use of cameras and microphones, explaining the lack of presence and activity by constant problems with the Internet connection and equipment. According to teachers, a severe source of anxiety and malaise are educational problems generated by the lack of direct contact. According to the majority of teachers, remote work makes it impossible to react quickly and help students in a difficult situation.

Another problem is the inability to exercise control over behavior and interactions in the classroom. Teachers less often "complained" about students' inappropriate behavior, which is probably related to muting microphones and turning

off webcams during lessons, or the absence of students. They are also somewhat satisfied with the cooperation with parents, although many often or very often feel the lack of support from parents, a significant part of whom are unwilling or unable to support students in such a difficult situation.

A study by Centrum Cyfrowe (Ptaszek, 2020) shows that the worsening mental state of teachers results from similar premises. In this study, teachers declared that during the pandemic, they experienced more significant than usual stress resulting from their profession and the need to take on the frustration of students and parents. Teachers felt lonely, without any institutional support, negatively assessed, and exposed to contradictory and changing expectations of pedagogical supervision, students and parents. Other distance learning researchers also draw similar conclusions. According to Polish and international researchers, the deterioration of the well-being of all remote education participants is related to the lack of digital hygiene (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020; Marek, 2020; Ptaszek, 2020; Pyżalski 2020).

The summary of the described and partially analyzed data on the deteriorating well-being of teachers and its causes will refer to the question about educational difficulties in the perception of teachers. As shown by the data presented so far, remote work is less didactically effective (difficulties with implementing the core curriculum, low activity, and cooperation on the part of students). Considering the data from figures 4 and 5, the last one in the article, there is no doubt that the remote form of fulfilling the obligation to study is not conducive to implementing the school's educational tasks.



*Figure 5. The frequency of experiencing educational problems in the opinion of teachers.*

Mean – 4,19; SD – 1,26.

S o u r c e: own research.

This problem is noticed by most teachers who experience educational difficulties more often than before the pandemic. The feeling of difficulty (or perhaps

educational helplessness) translates into a generalized negative assessment of remote education. In this aspect, the presented research leads to similar conclusions as the reports of other research teams, which I referred to in the article: long-term distance learning leads to a deterioration of the relationships and well-being of all educational entities and is likely to contribute to disruptions in the emotional, social and intercultural development, especially of younger students. It also changes the nature of relations in the classroom and school, which, if such a form of education was used over a longer period of time, the school would cease to be a community based on relationships and a sense of bonding among parents, teachers, and the most affected group, students.

### Summary and conclusions from the research

The study, the results of which have been presented above, allowed us to capture the socio-emotional situation of distance learning during the COVID 19 pandemic. Based on the results of a diagnostic survey conducted in primary, secondary and vocational schools, it can be concluded that the well-being of teachers has worsened due to the need to stay at home and prolonged social isolation. The teachers also pointed to the deterioration of relations with students and the loosening of ties in the classroom. There were no significant differences in the perception of e-learning between teachers working in different types of schools. The assumptions were confirmed that e-learning could not replace direct contact with students and interaction in the classroom and school in the surveyed teachers' opinion. The implemented extraordinary solutions related to the organization of school activities during the pandemic did not sufficiently ensure that the needs of either students or teachers were met. As an essential link in the educational system, the task of the school is not only to guarantee access to learning but also education, which is understood as supporting students in their physical, emotional, intellectual, moral, and social development (Educational law, Act of December 14, 2016). The condition for the school to fulfill its educational function is direct contact between the educator and the pupil, participation in the class and school community, and mutual communication (interpersonal communication). **Online lessons, although they can be instructional, sometimes even more attractive thanks to the use of technology, do not meet the *sine qua non* conditions of the educational relationship.**

Limitations of the study include the method of gathering data. In the project, we could not directly talk with teachers about their experiences, so we relied upon their opinions. Consequently, further research should adopt, apart from quantita-

tive, a qualitative approach to find out what the teachers really think about the socio-emotional context of distance schooling and their everyday experience when working with distance learning. It would be possible to get to know the teachers' idiographic histories about combining working and daily life. I hope that the research has given the first bit of insight into teachers' experiences and will help researchers better understand the dynamics of distance learning and the longer-term consequences for students, teachers, class relations, and the school community.

If remote learning turns out to be a necessity in the coming months, it is essential to consider the ways of maintaining relations between students, conducting educational activities, and in the field of psychological and pedagogical support. Of course, not only in distance learning, but it is also essential to carry out activities supporting the development of emotional skills, especially such as dealing with aversive feelings (sadness, anger, apathy, and loneliness). The solutions in this area applied so far have proven to be completely insufficient, and parents of children indicate anxiety resulting from isolation (Kozński, 2020).

The lengthening of the time spent on remote schooling is undoubtedly a threat to a person's physical and mental well-being; it also exposed the weaknesses of schools as such, especially those connected with the organizational and financial aspects; but also and more importantly, with the core curriculum. Although the research reveals the negative consequences of remote work for the well-being of teachers and students and the *de facto* educational relationship, I would like to end the above research report with optimism. Referring to Winston Churchill saying: "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste" and the concept of Erik Eriksson, that a crisis can have a positive impact. If constructively worked through, complex situations lead to new personal competencies, a better understanding of oneself and the social situation, or simply new skills (Brzezińska, 2004).

Although remote education raises many doubts and negative emotions, if we (scientists, teachers, parents, education dissidents) analyze our experiences and draw conclusions, it may help in developing valuable solutions for education. Those solutions will stay with us for longer and improve the quality of education in any form, including face-to-face. What conclusions about the socio-emotional context of online education can be drawn? Based on the teachers' research, daily observations of the remote school reality, as well as UNESCO recommendations (Doucet et al., 2020), the most important indications are:

1. maintaining relationships with students during lessons and during individual meetings, supporting relationships in the class, e.g., by sharing time on an e-learning platform, or organizing a video meeting. Having conversations with students on everyday topics, asking about their well-being, while introducing elements of humor and fun in the classroom can play an important role in maintaining bonds in the classroom and improving students' mood;



2. reformulating the curriculum content, goals, and priorities of the curriculum so that the requirements for teachers and students are realistic; taking into account educational goals, especially those related to emotional and social competencies;
3. pedagogical supervision, in particular, monitoring the work of teachers, especially in the field of adaptation processes for students with special needs;
4. enabling and encouraging active participation of students in online learning;
5. supporting teachers in developing digital competencies and providing generally accessible digital resources of materials and teaching aids;
6. guaranteeing students their rights and conditions for safe use of the Internet;
7. prevention programs against growing virtual aggression, depression, technology addiction;
8. supporting teachers in developing their teaching competencies, using learner-centered methods. A generally accessible base of teaching materials would certainly be useful;
9. supporting teachers, helping them to strengthen their own socio-emotional and communication skills;
10. transferring psychological and pedagogical counseling support for students, parents, and teachers to remote interventions.

The above recommendations are an open-ended list; they will not become obsolete when the pandemic is hopefully over, and we return to a new normality. They will remain important because they refer to the essence of distance learning and the nature and sense of education, and finally, the ontology of teachers' activities.

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Irena Przybylska

## **Spoleczno-emocjonalny kontekst e-learningu w opinii nauczycieli**

### **Streszczenie**

W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań nad społeczno-emocjonalnym kontekstem kształcenia zdalnego. Głównym celem badania było rozpoznanie doświadczeń nauczycieli pracujących zdalnie, a w szerszym ujęciu trudności, które wynikają z zapośredniczenia kontaktów osobistych. Główny problem badawczy opisywanego projektu to: Jak nauczyciele spostrzegają relacje z uczniami i innymi nauczycielami oraz jakie jest ich samopoczucie w związku z prowadzeniem zajęć na odległość? Na podstawie wyników badania diagnostycznego przeprowadzonego w szkołach podstawowych, ponadpodstawowych i zawodowych na Śląsku można stwierdzić, że samopoczucie badanych nauczycieli pogorszyło się ze względu na konieczność pozostania w domu i długotrwałą izolację społeczną. Nauczyciele wskazywali również na pogorszenie stosunków z uczniami i rozluźnienie więzi w klasie. Artykuł kończą rekomendacje dla praktyki kształcenia zdalnego.

**S ł o w a k l u c z o w e:** nauczanie zdalne, kontekst społeczno-emocjonalny zdalnej edukacji, samopoczucie nauczycieli, relacje społeczne w klasie szkolnej

Ирена Пшибыльска

## **Социально-эмоциональный контекст электронного обучения, по мнению учителей**

### **Аннотация**

В статье представлены результаты исследований о социально-эмоциональном контексте дистанционного обучения с точки зрения учителей. Основная цель этого исследования состояла в изучении опыта учителей в начальных, средних и профессионально-технических училищах, поскольку они преобразовали свои классы в дистанционное обучение, и в более широком смысле, указывают на трудности, связанные с посредничеством личных контактов. Главный исследовательский вопрос был: Что такое мнение учителей, связанное с отношениями и их благополучием, связанным с проведением дистанционных занятий? На основе результатов диагностического обследования, проведенного в начальных, средних и профессиональных школах в Силезии, Польша, можно сделать вывод о том, что состояние учителей ухудшилось из-за необходимости оставаться дома и длительной социальной изоляции. Преподаватели также указали на ухудшение отношений со студентами и ослабление связей в классе. Статья заканчивается рекомендациями по практике дистанционного обучения.

**К л ю ч е в ы е с л о в а:** дистанционное обучение, социально-эмоциональный контекст дистанционного обучения, благополучие учителей, отношения в классе

## **Contexto socioemocional del e-learning en la opinión de los profesores**

### **R e s u m e n**

El artículo presenta los resultados de la investigación sobre el contexto socioemocional del aprendizaje a distancia desde la perspectiva de los profesores. El objetivo principal de este estudio era explorar las experiencias de los profesores en las escuelas primarias, secundarias y vocacionales a medida que convertía sus clases en aprendizaje a distancia, y en una perspectiva más amplia, indicar las dificultades resultantes de la mediación de los contactos personales. La principal pregunta de la investigación fue: ¿Cuáles son las opiniones de los maestros relacionadas con las relaciones y su bienestar relacionados con la realización de clases remotas? Sobre la base de los resultados de una encuesta diagnóstica realizada en escuelas primarias, secundarias y vocacionales en Silesia, Polonia, se puede concluir que el bienestar de los profesores ha empeorado debido a la necesidad de permanecer en casa y el aislamiento social prolongado. Los profesores también señalaron el deterioro de las relaciones con los estudiantes y la flexibilización de los lazos en el aula. El artículo termina con recomendaciones para la práctica del aprendizaje a distancia. Palabras clave: aprendizaje a distancia, contexto social y emocional de aprendizaje a distancia, bienestar del profesorado, relaciones en el aula

**P a l a b r a s c l a v e:** aprendizaje remoto, contexto socioemocional de la educación a distancia, bienestar de los maestros, relación de clase