



Why Public Schools Should Continue To Use Remote Learning



This is a quick, simple post. It's late Tuesday night and my kids need a bath—and, well, this isn't complicated: public schools in the United States need to continue to use remote learning in the 2020-2021 school year.

I know it's not that simple. As I wrote late last week in [Teachers Are Suddenly On The Frontlines In The Fight Against COVID-19](#), teachers are now in a kind of morass. As COVID-19 rages in the United States with no signs of easing up soon, Donald Trump and Betsy DeVos have recently begun an aggressive push to open school buildings in the fall.



While the negative effects of remote learning have been well-explored, few things are all bad. We've mentioned that the [long-term effects of remote learning](#) have some benefits. **Mark Siegel**, Assistant Headmaster at Delphian School, talked about how remote learning can give parents a closer look at what their children are actually learning.

"There's a potential benefit, too, in that many parents now have a chance to better and more fully understand their children's education—what they're being taught and how they're doing in basic subjects. After going through all this, they might feel more confident taking the reins of education in their children's lives. And as parents reclaim the role of teacher, at least to a degree, children might look again to their parents for direction and knowledge."

Again—I'm just exploring one side of this. There's simply so much to consider. But while I do believe that re-opening school buildings in the United States in the fall of 2020 is dangerous in terms of COVID, this post isn't about the epidemiology. Rather, it's about the existing momentum—in lieu of the often significant failures and shortcomings—that's been created with remote learning so far.

So, a few statements.

7 Reasons Schools Should Continue To Use Remote Learning In The United States

I. The near-future of learning is almost certainly [blended learning](#)—a mix of digital and face-to-face instruction.

II. By moving to remote learning, schools have had to take stock in resources—and resource deficits—necessary to meaningfully integrate eLearning in pursuit of remote learning.

III. This process has forced curriculum (what's being learned), instruction (how it's being taught), and supporting resources (e.g., Zoom and Microsoft Teams) to be designed—and re-designed—to work together.



IV. This process has been slow and clumsy and likely resulted in ‘learning loss.’ But ‘loss’ compared to what? Being in a safe physical space—one that won’t likely exist for 6+ months?

V. In that respect, it’s possible to consider what we’re doing as part of an ‘implementation dip’—a temporary loss before a larger gain.

VI. Of course, no one knows what will happen in the future with COVID-19 or with remote learning and its long-term effects. I am not championing it as particularly effective or innovative. What I’m suggesting is that we’ve already experienced the loss and have begun to adapt.

And considering that the near-future of learning is likely blended, it just might make sense to continue down this path even if school buildings can safely re-open in the fall (which seems unlikely). These buildings can still support students who need the support of these spaces and the resources of the schools and the socialization of their peers—it just doesn’t have to look like the school they remember.

VII. I know this is all unlikely to occur but I thought it should be said: The near-future of learning is blended and we’ve spent a century developing the brick-and-mortar spaces.

Maybe we can spend another six or eight months developing the digital ones, too—and not as an aside, but as the focal point of a more personalized learning experience.

