



# PROJECT BRIEF

## 2020–2021 DLM Administration During COVID-19: Student Instruction and Assessment Experience

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### DATA COLLECTION

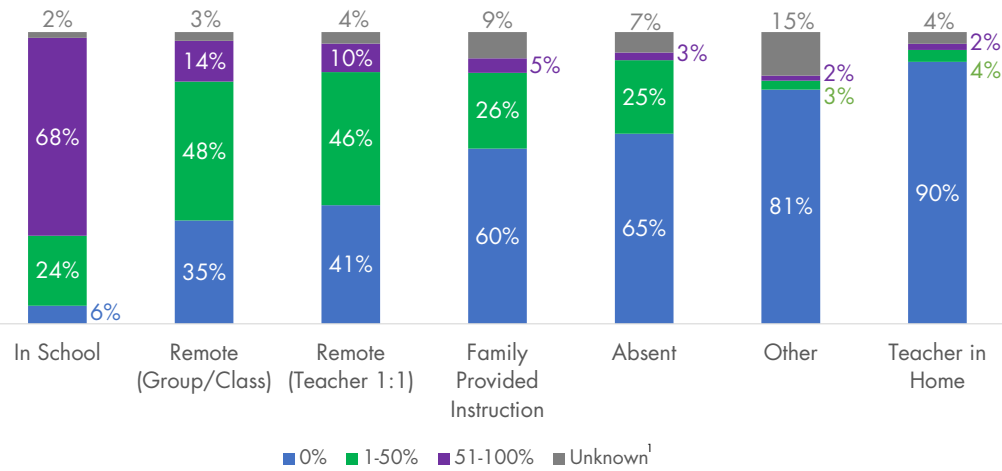
- » Teachers were invited to complete a survey about student experiences during the 2020–2021 administration of the Dynamic Learning Maps® (DLM®) alternate assessment.
- » The 2021 survey questions related to students’ instructional and assessment experience. Of the four survey blocks, one block had four available forms that are randomly assigned.
- » A total of 14,681 teachers (63%) responded to the survey for 39,661 students (51%).

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- » Most students spent at least part of the year receiving instruction in school and most students also experienced shifts in learning location (remote or in-person).
- » Results were mixed regarding students’ opportunity to learn during the 2020–2021 school year. Compared to prior years, students generally received fewer hours of instruction across topics. Results indicated that breadth and depth of instruction declined. However, student survey data matched across years indicated that 69% of students received the same or greater amount of instruction in 2020–2021 compared to 2018–2019. More research is needed to fully explore these results, which should be interpreted with caution.
- » Teachers reported a variety of factors impacting student instruction, including difficulties with remote learning and lack of consistency in school schedules and learning modes.

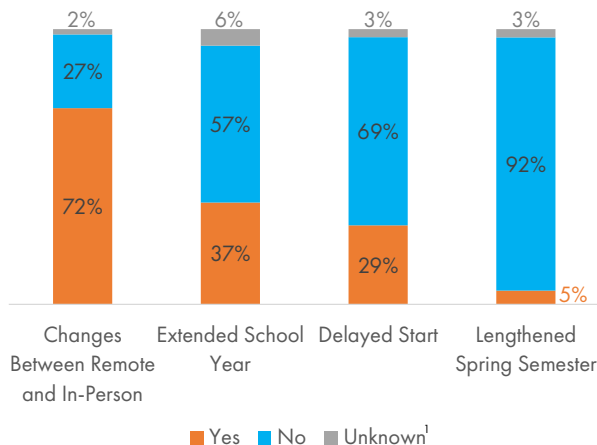
### INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

- » Teacher responses indicated that nearly 68% of students spent 51–100% of their time in school, and 6% of students did not receive any amount of in-school instruction.
- » Approximately 56–62% of students spent at least some amount of their time receiving direct instruction from the teacher while remote learning (either one-on-one or as a class), and 31% of students received at least some amount of in-home instruction facilitated by a family member.



### INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

- » Teachers reported 72% of students experienced at least one change from in-person to remote learning during the year.
- » Teacher responses indicated that 29% of students experienced a delayed start to the 2020–2021 school year while 37% of students participated in an extended school year through summer 2021. The percentage of students who typically participate in an extended school year is unknown.



<sup>1</sup>"Unknown" is a response option on the survey and not indicative of missing data.

## FACTORS IMPACTING INSTRUCTION

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- » Teachers were asked to report the most important factors impacting instruction throughout the 2020–2021 school year.
- » Teachers reported that factors impacting remote learning included student focus, inclination to work, environment in the home, support from parents or guardians, access to materials, and access to reliable technology and internet. Some teachers also noted that students who do not communicate using speech or students who are blind or have visual impairments had additional difficulties with remote learning.
- » Many teachers indicated that in-person attendance was the most important factor for student instruction, but some teachers noted that COVID-19 safety protocols, mask mandates, and social distancing practices impacted in-person learning.
- » Teachers indicated that switching from in-person to remote instruction greatly impacted learning, along with changes in schedule and routine, and absences due to school closures or quarantines.
- » Responses indicated that the physical health and mental health of students impacted instruction.
- » Teachers also noted that student behavior, motivation and engagement were important factors that impacted instruction.
- » Some teachers noted that instruction was most impacted by factors not related to COVID-19, such as a student’s disability, cognitive skills, and communication and comprehension skills.

## OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

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### Time Spent on Instructional Topics Per Subject

- » Teachers reported how long they spent on instructional topics in each subject across the whole school year. In all topics, data indicated a smaller percentage of students received more than 20 hours of academic instruction and a larger percentage of students received 0–5 hours of instruction in 2020–2021 compared to 2017–2018 and 2018–2019.
- » For example, for the English Language Arts topic “determine critical areas of text,” the percentage of students receiving 0–5 hours of instruction was 23.1% in 2018, 23.7% in 2019, and 31.4% in 2021. For that same topic, the percentage of students receiving more than 20 hours of instruction was 33.3% in 2018, 32.6% in 2019, and 25.2% in 2021.
- » These results must be interpreted with caution: in 202–2021 more teachers responded to each survey item than in previous years because the sample of teachers was spread over more optional blocks in the previous years. Additionally, sample sizes per subject varied across years because of the randomly assigned survey blocks.

### Breadth and Depth of Instruction

- » Results indicated that in all topics, there were small declines in breadth (number of topics for which teachers reported 6 or more hours of instruction) and depth (number of topics for which teachers reported more than 15 hours of instruction) from 2018–2019 to 2020–2021. While the mean number of topics for depth of instruction was considerably below the recorded maximum number of topics for 2020–2021, this was also observed in 2017–2018 and 2018–2019.

### Time Spent on Academic Instruction Per Week

- » Teachers also reported the average number of hours per week spent on academic instruction across subjects. Results were unexpected when compared across years. There was a decline in the percentage of students receiving 6–20 hours of instruction and an increase in the percentage of students receiving 20+ hours of instruction per week when comparing data from 2017–2018 to 2020–2021. More research is needed to explain this finding, which may be due to changes in survey response options to this question.

### Matched Data

- » To control for population differences across years, survey responses for students participating in both 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 assessments whose teacher responded to the surveys in both years were matched and compared. The matched data revealed that in 2020–2021 approximately 32% of students received the same amount of academic instruction, 37% received more instruction, and 31% received less instruction compared to 2018–2019. Some of the variation between years may be because students may have had different teachers in each year. Teachers also may have spent more time on a fewer number of instructional topics.

## ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE

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- » Teachers reported a vast majority (95%) of students took assessments in school and of students who did not take assessments in school, teachers indicated that there were very few disruptions to the standard administration experience (6%–11% of students).
- » Based on survey responses, teacher perceptions of students’ experience with the testlets was similar in 2020–2021 compared to 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 administrations. Furthermore, results also indicated that teacher perceptions of testlet content matching instruction in 2020–2021 were similar to perceptions from 2017–2018 and 2018–2019.