

MOVE BEYOND THE COVID CATCH UP NARRATIVE TO HELP STUDENTS THRIVE - EXPERT

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In September last year, an analysis of PISA 2018 data found that **93% Australian students believe they usually manage through the COVID-19 pandemic one way or another**, and a significant 86% said that when they are in a difficult situation, they can usually find their way out of it.

However, a parent survey released later that month painted a different picture, finding that 1.25 million Australian students **had fallen behind due to the school closures** triggered by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an attempt to bridge this disconnect, a study by the **University of Newcastle** looked at student achievement between 2019 and 2020 and found that there was very little difference in outcomes, challenging assumptions about 'learning loss' from the remote learning experience.

The research offers comfort to parents, teachers and school leaders, all of whom have been concerned about the impact that continued lockdowns are having on young people's outcomes.

NetSupport CEO, Al Kingsley, says the COVID-19 'catch-up' narrative is damaging, and schools should instead focus on how ed-tech can be leveraged to bolster student attainment without pressuring them.

He recently launched his latest book, titled: 'My Secret #EdTech Diary: Looking at Educational Technology through a wider lens.'

"The question of how to help students back on track academically has been a major concern for schools, teachers, parents and government officials post-lockdown," Kingsley told The Educator.



"However, the 'catch-up' narrative that has pervaded recently has only served to mount unnecessary pressure and stress on students, at a time where we should be doing all we can to alleviate student mental health issues, not add to them."

Kingsley says it is vital to now consider a solution, post-remote learning, which will serve help bolster student attainment and progress, without making them feel as though they are already fighting a losing battle.

"EdTech has already played a monumental role in the continuation of learning whilst schools were closed; there are many new lessons learned in terms of the greater role that technology can play in schools."

