Focus on Learning

Pedagogical implications of the COVID-19 crisis on learning
November 30, 2020, 7:50-8:50 p.m.

The COVID-19 crisis creates challenges as well as opportunities for education. On the one hand, public education is shrinking and the gaps between students are widening. On the other hand, the traditional divisions between teacher and students, between formal and informal education, and between hours of study and free time are blurring. All these call for a shift of balance between teacher-mediated instruction towards more self-learning regulated by the student.

However, in the home environment, it is harder for students to maintain their focus on learning. The competition for time and attention are much more challenging than in school. In order to successfully study in such a situation, students need to have personal responsibility and commitment, self-discipline, internal motivation, organizing skills and emotional resilience. These are the same characteristics and skills highlighted in the PISA framework and which they will need in adult life and in the job market.

Therefore, in order for more students to now be able to persevere and deepen their learning, they will need diverse types of platforms, contents, aids and pedagogies – ones which will arouse their interest and curiosity and enable them to cope with complex problems on their own and together with their peers.

Questions for discussion

1. Are middle school students mature enough for long-term self-learning? Will the answer be different for students in excellence classes and for different ethnic communities and localities?

2. What are the conditions for successful self-learning of mathematics and the sciences in middle school? Is it realistic for self-learning to happen at scale, or should we plan to support it with mentoring by an adult and with social learning with friends?

3. Which unique platforms, contents, tools and pedagogies are necessary in order to assist students' self-learning?

Participants

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Background material for the discussion

In preparation for the discussion, it is recommended to read the '2021 Update' of the foundation and background materials prepared especially for this meeting.