

# Thriving During School Closures: Challenges, Blind Spots, and Solutions



bridgeprep™

[bridgeprep.com](http://bridgeprep.com)

With COVID-19 sweeping across the globe, life as we know it has come to a stop. Businesses have shut down. People are isolated. The economy is suffering. But that's not all. With the pandemic wreaking havoc across 212 countries and territories, 87% of the world's student population is out of school. As a school administrator or parent, things aren't easy for you. You're asking questions like:

- How do you approach the coming school year?
- What are the top proven ways to deal with the challenges of distance learning?
- How can you keep students focused on their studies and future during this unprecedented time?

In this ebook, we'll look at the main challenges and blind spots parents, educators, and school administrators face as schools continue to be suspended. Then, we'll explore solutions that address the biggest problems standing in the way of students' learning progress.

Ready to get started?

## The Biggest Challenges That Stand in the Way of Student Progress During Lockdown

---

As a school administrator or parent, these challenges aren't new to you. However, they've gotten even worse in the face of indefinite school closures.

### Summer Slide

---

The term **summer slide** was coined in 1996 when researchers noticed how students forgot portions of what they learned in the past school year over summer break. The phenomenon was most noticeable in younger children who forgot how to read and write, but it was also present in elementary level and high school students.



The problem is that with **a third of humanity** under lockdown, the summer slide has begun early. Students have been out of school since the beginning of the year. In many countries, the date to reopen schools has been pushed further and further out.

Under normal conditions (before the COVID19 crisis), students were estimated to lose **20-27%** of what they learned in the previous school year. If this continues, this loss could be significantly higher.

## Online Environments Generate Anonymity

Even in face-to-face meetings through Zoom classrooms, it's not easy for teachers to pick up behavioral cues from students. Also, sharing emotions with them becomes difficult. The result is the feeling of anonymity and students disengaging or participating only minimally in online classes.

## The Challenges of Distance Learning

Students who are used to learning in a classroom setting find it difficult to adjust to distance learning. Here are a few reasons:

- ▶ They lack peer support. Peer interaction is essential in giving students a sense of community and personal connection.
- ▶ Time management becomes difficult. For students learning online, the lack of a concrete schedule means time wasted and tasks accomplished at a slower pace than usual.
- ▶ Motivation is at a minimum. It's not easy to be at home 24 hours a day. Without in-person support from teachers and peers, students can feel lethargic, uninspired, and even depressed.
- ▶ Lack of structure: Students in many cases have to figure out the when, where, and how of their study arrangements.



# Common Blind Spots Administrators and Parents Face

---

To keep students in top condition, it's important to take note of and find solutions for these common blind spots.



## Students Losing Sight of the End Goal

---

Across the country, lockdown practices have caused a surge in depression and symptoms of mental illness. For example, a survey in 2020 showed that 70% of participants met the criteria for mental illness (compared with just 22% in 2018).

And it's not only adults who are suffering. Teens and young adults feel the same (if not more) pressures of being isolated, distanced from friends, and cut off from the activities they love.

As a result, it's not a surprise that their motivation drops, and they lose sight of the end goal of their studies. They no longer feel determined to gain the skills and knowledge for a bright future career.



## Lack of Resources

---

Tech issues are becoming less of a problem nowadays. However, this doesn't mean that every single student has access to enough resources for a flawless learning experience.

What's more, some students don't have the full range of digital literacy and skills to make the most out of online learning.

Also, educators struggle because they don't have enough resources to prepare their students for a career. Due to the constraints imposed on schools due to lockdown measures, it's difficult for teachers to access enough learning materials to guide and train students for the future.

# Solutions: How to Keep Students Thriving During Lockdown

---

The good news is there are actionable steps you, as a school administrator or parent, can take to keep students learning and growing even before schools open.



## Focus on Planning with a Career Map

---

As early as the 6th grade, students need to get started building their [career map](#). This becomes especially important today, as more and more teenagers are losing sight of the bigger picture.

Let teens go over an interest inventory. This allows them to match their interest with different potential careers. Of course, keep in mind that their interests can change over time.

Prepare students to plan out their career or entrepreneurship. Give them guides on how to focus on their passion while creating a roadmap towards the life they dream of living in the future.

Use the right tools for planning a career map. It's a great idea to invest in ready-made software products geared towards helping students plan their future at an interactive level.



## Prepare for the Upcoming School Year

---

While the reopening of schools seems distant, it's best to prepare students for it as early as now. Slow but steady progress will lead to better results when classes open once again.

- Make sure students don't suffer summer slide by continually giving them access to review materials from the previous school year.
- Invest in the right tools. There are excellent tools and software out there created to give students the confidence and critical skills to prepare for either a career path or entrepreneurship.
- Keep students motivated. Make sure they keep in touch with friends, enjoy their favorite hobbies, and keep physically fit and healthy.
- Partner with subject matter experts or highly specialized companies to get best-in-class service.
- Allow students some time to work on their passion.

## Get Ready with a Contingency Plan

Of course, things won't always go as planned. Even with the best roadmap and tools in place, issues will arise, and it's up to you to prepare for them before they come up.

The best thing you can do is to come up with a contingency plan.

- List down the top risks students learning from home face. Also, make sure to list the risks they'll face once schools reopen.
- Organize your list based on priority. Keep the high risks on top and the low risks at the bottom.
- Create a contingency plan for each risk. Remember to share the plan with educators and parents.
- Invest in comprehensive tools for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Do research. Find out how neighboring districts and even other states are forming their contingency plans.



### How to Keep Students Focused When Learning is Disrupted

These times are unprecedented for learners of all levels. As a parent or school administrator, no doubt you're feeling stress and pressure as you face the disruption of learning as we know it.

However, this is also a time to re-evaluate and deal with issues that were present even before the COVID-19 crisis. For example, you can take student motivation to another level by inspiring them to plan their careers or entrepreneurship journeys as early as now.

The great news is there are ready-made tools and software that help you make the journey towards excellent education and a successful career easier for students. At BridgePrep, you can get career and entrepreneurship courses and tools that give students the skills and confidence to thrive in any learning setting.

**Contact us at [www.bridgeprep.com](http://www.bridgeprep.com) to get more information on how our tools can help your students succeed and reach their learning, career and entrepreneurship goals**