

TIMSS SA Newsletter



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Education in the time of a pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected education across the globe. Schools and educational institutions in many countries have been temporarily closed as part of the attempt to “flatten the curve”, delaying the spread of the virus. These closures have important consequences for the 2020 school year which may be felt for some time to come. However, these decisions were deemed necessary to protect the health of learners, teachers and parents. In order for schools to reopen safely, various preventative measures have been instituted.

In South Africa, schools and higher education institutions were closed from the end of March. Plans are underway to begin the phased return of children to school safely, beginning with Grade 7 and 12 learners.

This newsletter focuses on schooling in the context of Covid-19.

Getting Children Back to School Safely: What the medical experts say

On the 29th May, the HSRC hosted a seminar with presentations from three paediatric medical experts discussing the [Covid-19 risk levels for school going children](#) through three questions:

1. [Do children get Covid-19?](#) Professor R Masekela (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
2. [Are children Covid-19 super-spreaders?](#) Professor S Velaphi (Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto, University of the Witwatersrand, Covid-19 Ministerial Advisory Committee)
3. [How can we make schools relatively safe?](#) Dr M Archary (King Edward VIII Hospital, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Covid-19 Ministerial Advisory Committee)

The impact of school closures and making decisions about school reopenings

The impact of schools closures on education outcomes in South Africa

An article by Reddy, Soudien and Winnaar highlights the [impact of school closures on education outcomes](#), illustrating the patterns of expected learning losses due to school closures and disruptions.

What the shifting evidence on Covid-19 means for school reopenings in SA

Martin Gustaffson, from Stellenbosch University highlights the research that has been conducted in relation to the [reopening of schools](#) in South Africa.

Who should go back to school first?

A policy brief by Nic Spaul from Stellenbosch University explores the dilemma of which children should go [back to school first](#) in South Africa.

Reopening of schools: Bold leadership and planning required

Rule, Davids and Orkin focuses on the [reopening of schools](#) using data from the online multilingual Covid-19 Democracy Survey.

Are our schools ready to re-open and co-exist with Covid-19?



Using data from the August 2019 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) Standard Report and the 2018 School Monitoring Survey, we outline the difficulties some of our schools will face in [meeting the challenge of teaching and learning](#) safely during a pandemic.

Covid-19 and education around the world

School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: A rapid systematic review

This Lancet article presents a [systematic review](#) of what is known about the effectiveness of school closures and other school social distancing practices during coronavirus outbreaks.

Re-opening schools safely: The case for collaboration, constructive disruption of pre-covid expectations, and creative solutions

This article explores the factors that need to be considered in the [safe reopening of schools](#), calling for collaboration, constructive disruption of pre-Covid expectations and creative solutions.

Mitigate the effects of home confinement on children during the COVID-19 outbreak

This Lancet article discusses the mental and physical [effects of home confinement on children](#), and ways in which these may be addressed.

Framework for reopening schools

This document by UNESCO, UNICEF, The World Bank and The World Food Program provides a [framework for the reopening of schools](#) during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mapping the Landscape of STEM Activities in South Africa

A report by the HSRC, [Mapping the landscape of extra-curricular STEM activities for young children in South Africa, explored](#) initiatives for young children, in South Africa and internationally. The most common strength of these activities is that they are interesting, modern and fun; while the main weakness is the high participation fee which precludes many children from accessing these activities. Our recommendations therefore focused on ways to increase access.

Interested in using TIMSS data for research?

If you are interested in working with us on publications based on the TIMSS data, please [contact us](#).

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