

## UNLOCKED POTENTIAL DURING LOCKDOWN FOLLOW UP SURVEY

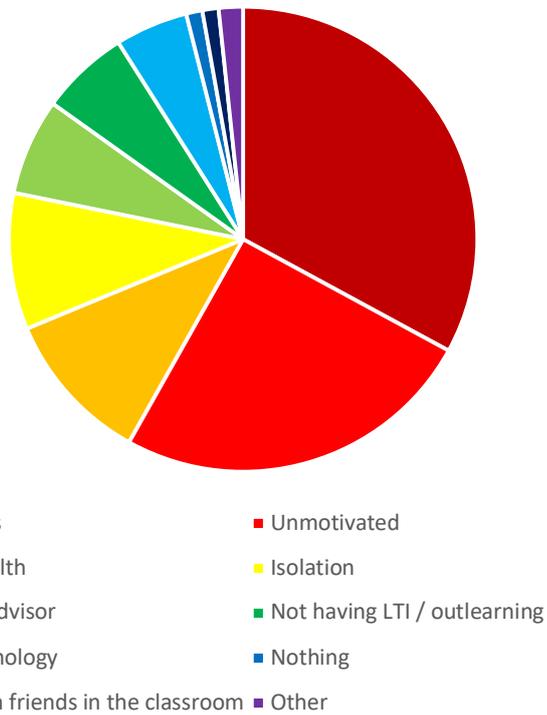
This report provides a summary of findings from a survey conducted with Big Picture students and advisors as a follow up to the “Unlocked Potential during Lockdown” report published in June 2020. Many students who had been engaged in Learning from Home during the pandemic returned to school during Term 2. Although things were far from being back to normal, this survey provided an opportunity to investigate any changes in the face-to-face learning environment immediately following the lockdown. A new normal appears to have been reached and a return to life exactly as it was prior to the lockdown seems unlikely at this stage. Survey responses were received from 184 students and 25 advisors. It appears Learning from Home was difficult for students from the perspective of not seeing their friends. However, the experience seems to have provided an opportunity for both personal and learning growth.

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## Student Survey

From the survey, it is evident that the majority of students (77%) felt relieved to be back at school. Despite the findings of the original survey indicating a successful transition to learning from home, 72% of students reported the lockdown had impacted their learning. This is consistent with 71% of students stating, if given the choice, they would prefer to work in their advisory rather than at home. The main difficulties experienced by students learning from home are related to being distracted (33%) or unmotivated (25%), making it challenging to maintain focus on a particular task. For others, the isolation (9%) and mental health issues (11%) associated with the lockdown made learning from home difficult (see Figure 1).

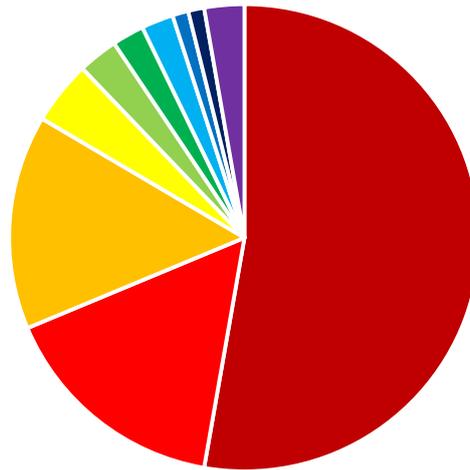
Figure 1: What did you find most difficult about learning from home?



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The flexibility (53%) and independence (16%) associated with learning from home were by far the most enjoyable aspects of the situation for students. Furthermore, some aspects of learning from home provided students with unique opportunities to spend time with their family (15%), learn new things (4%) and use different learning platforms (3%) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: What did you enjoy most about learning from home?

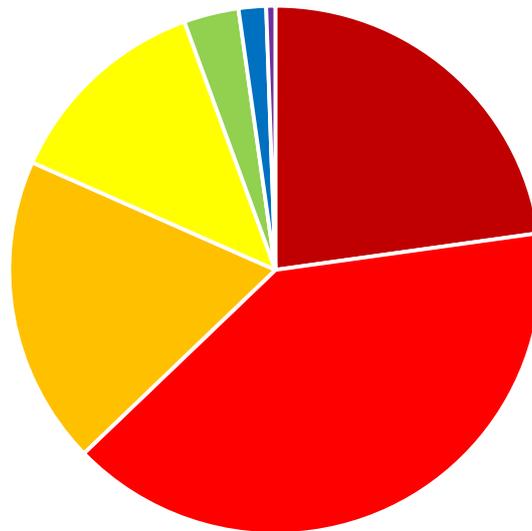


- Flexibility
- Spending Time with Family
- Using Different Learning Platforms
- Nothing
- Nap time
- Independence
- Learning new things
- Comfort
- Less distractions
- Other

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Given the main difficulty for most students learning from home was associated with distractions and motivation to complete work, it seems reasonable that the best thing about returning to face-to-face in their advisory for most students was 'working in the advisory' (40%): *"Everyone seems more confident using technology and everyone seems to be more motivated to get things done"*. Students reported they have greater access to technology and resources (13%) are more productive (3%) in their advisory. Many students obviously were pleased to be back with their friends, and also their advisor (23%) in a *"connected community of learners"* (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: What is the best thing about returning to face-to-face in your advisory?  
(not including seeing your friends again)

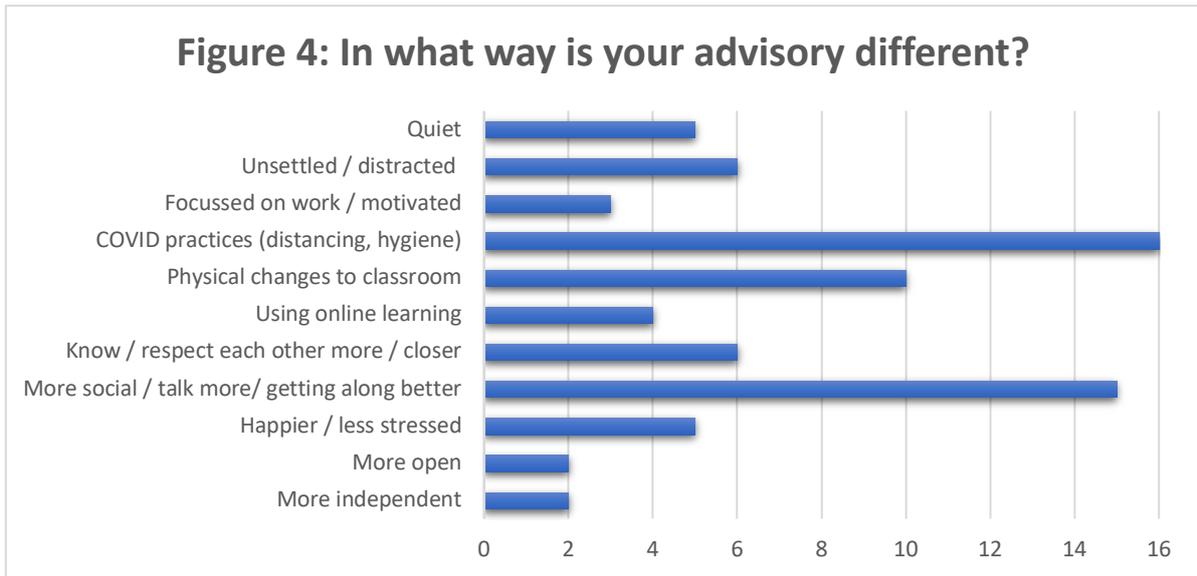


- Seeing your advisor
- Working in your advisory
- Better than being at home
- More access to technology and resources
- More productive
- Nothing
- Back to normal

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The majority of students (65%) stated that their advisory was the same upon their return compared to prior to the school lockdown. However, some interesting insights were provided by students perceiving differences in their advisory following the school lockdown. Most significant is the enhanced connectedness between students. The time apart appears to have strengthened their bonds and increased their ability and willingness to communicate and engage with each other (see Figure 4).

- *“We are all way happier to see each other and I think we appreciate being here more”, and*
- *“Everyone’s a lot closer and humorous and happy, and have good, flowing conversations”.*

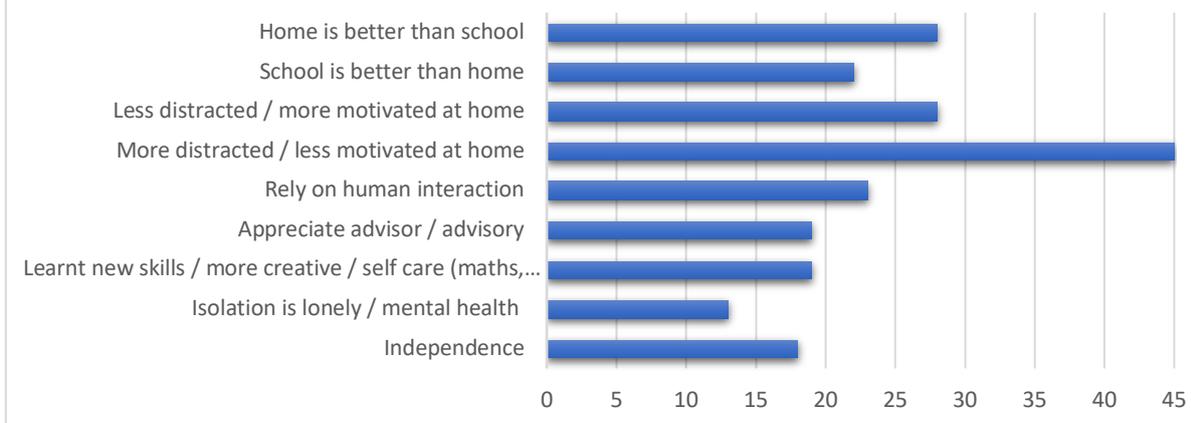


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The diversity of responses shown in Figure 5 is indicative of the influence of personality on the preferences of students. Some students prefer home, some school; some are less distracted and more motivated at home, some at school. The experience does appear to have had a positive impact on the personal growth of students. Findings show students did take the opportunity to self-reflect during the lockdown. Time away from school brought about an appreciation for their advisor and advisory (“time in the advisory is valuable”) and for interaction with others previously taken for granted (“I will miss my class when I graduate”). Students also took the opportunity to be creative and learn new skills during the lockdown, and also developed an awareness of personal skills and attributes they had previously not explored.

- *“I learnt that there can be better options for doing things, there’s not always just one way”,*
- *I was learning so many different things that interest me. I had time to learn a new language, and improve my skills in in music and art”,*
- *“it was important to attend online check-ins to feel connected”,*
- *“I discovered I could drive myself to complete work efficiently and effectively if I gave myself breaks and did some form of physical exercise daily”,*
- *“I have great time management skills and persistence”,*
- *“If I try hard enough, I CAN motivate myself”,*
- *“I’m actually not that bad at maths”,*
- *“I’m not as much of an introvert as I thought I was”,*
- *“I learnt a lot of things, such as independence and self-management. I already knew what these were but now have a better understanding of them”, and*
- *“Now, if I need help, I figure out as much of it as I can first, and then try three more times because when I was at home, if I got stuck, I couldn’t quickly go to my advisory teachers. I had to let it actually play on my mind for a bit before I got the answer and then knew how to work it out.”*

**Figure 5: What did you learn about yourself during the lockdown?**

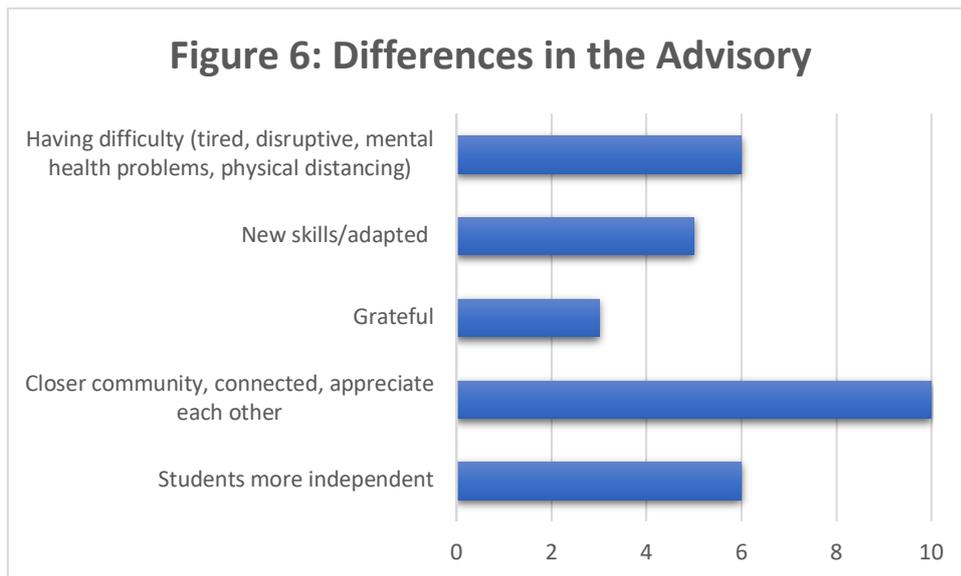


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## Advisor Survey

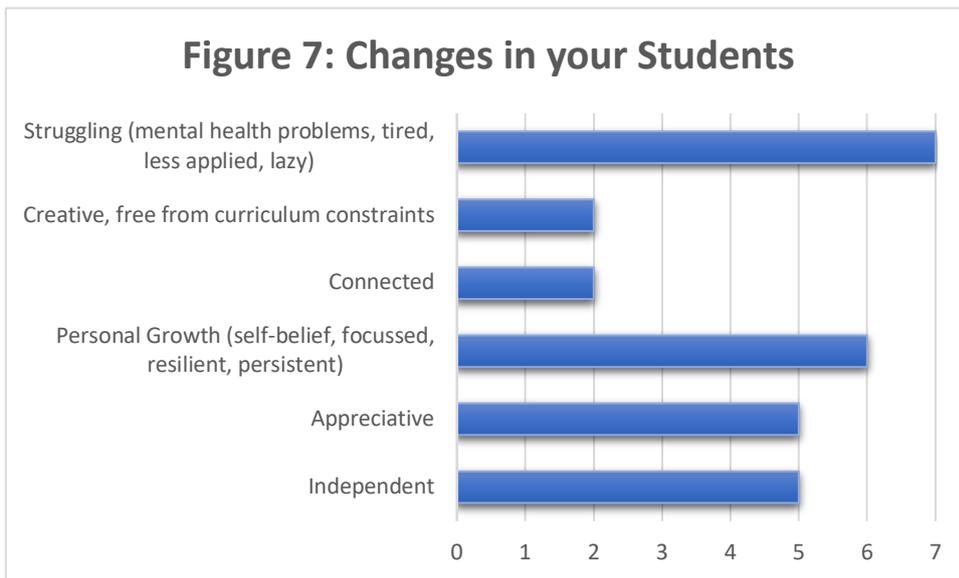
The original survey revealed the dedication and commitment required by advisors to successfully transition students to Learning from Home during the lockdown. The majority of advisors felt satisfied with their ability to contribute to the learning (88%) and well-being (68%) of their students during the lockdown. The potential of the Big Picture design for learning to support students learning from home was evident in the original survey. However, 76% of advisors reported the lockdown impacted their students' learning. This is reasonable given the unavoidable challenges associated with the situation, particularly in relation to the discontinuation of LTI's, the impact on students' final year and some students' difficult circumstances at home (as noted in original report). It is therefore not surprising that 96% of advisors were relieved to have their students back at school "I think they all missed being in a community of learners".

Even after a relatively short time in isolation, advisors reported marked differences in their students and the advisory as a whole. Most notably, the connectedness between students in the advisory appeared to be strengthened by the experience: *"There is a lovely connection between them all in response to having been through something challenging together"*. Furthermore, students had become more *"self-regulated and organised"* and *"taking more responsibility for, and initiative with, their learning"*. Some students, however, will need support and time to adjust to the "new normal", with the advisory providing them with the opportunity *"to talk and discuss current issues"* (see Figure 6).



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These differences in the advisory were supported by advisors' impressions regarding changes in their students after learning from home (see Figure 7). Once again, it was evident that some students have struggled with the lockdown. Importantly, it shows also that students have undergone significant personal growth during this time and have developed confidence in their ability to “*maintain responsibility for their learning outside of a school setting*” and “*survive together*”. The experience has enabled them to “*appreciate face to face connections*” so they have become “*more enthusiastic about being at school and engaging with their advisor and their peers*”.



A final note of concern raised by a small number of both students and advisors was that there were fewer students attending compared to before the lockdown. The fear is that they may have “lost some students due to the long period of absence”. This presents a challenge for advisors, particularly given the situation is still relatively unpredictable.