



## The COVID Comeback: Six Tips for Helping Your Students Excel

Wow, who saw *that* coming?

As “remote learning for a few weeks” turned into “see you next semester” turned into “maybe next fall ...” educators like you took the initiative and the hard steps needed to keep your students’ education moving. Distance, virtual, remote, or hybrid learning, no matter the name, was basically the only way to deliver instruction to students in the time of global lockdowns and isolation. More than 65% of U.S. K-12 parents polled said their children participated in online learning ([usafacts.org. Dec. 11, 2020](https://www.usafacts.org/Dec-11-2020)). And while there remains a very real need for increased access to both internet service and technology (computers, tablets, software) worldwide, there is no doubt the situation would have been even more dire without the online learning that was available.

So, you did it, and you did it well... with many of you saying that the digital solutions used by your schools were critical and helpful (Oliver Wyman Market Study, 2021).

As we—hopefully—head toward the end of the pandemic and into our new normal, how do we get our students back on track and address any learning loss they might have experienced? How do we keep them moving with confidence and enthusiasm? How do we incorporate our new tools with our traditional methods?

First things first:

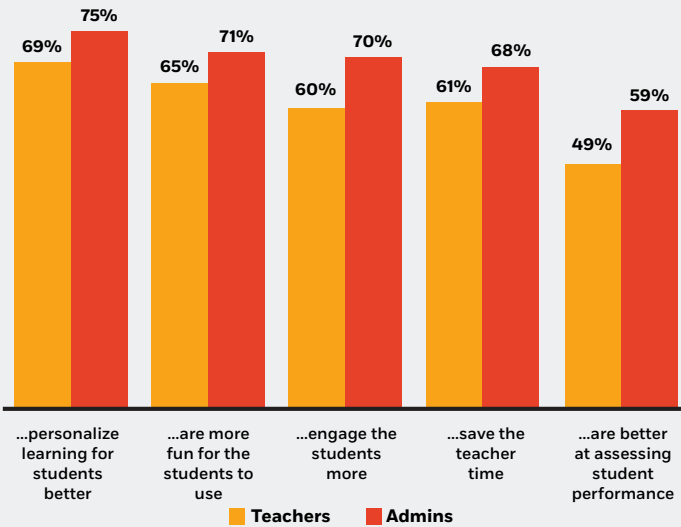
### 1. Celebrate Your Students

Your students, every one of them, have gone through an educational experience that no one else has ever gone through. They’ve been stuck inside, away from their friends, missing milestones like sports seasons and spring musicals, battling disruptions and distractions as they try to engage and learn—virtually. [Honor that.](#) Whether it’s personal notes, online shout-outs, letters to parents/guardians... find ways to show how proud you are of them, and celebrate every accomplishment you can think of. They did it!

### Agreement with various statements comparing digital to print materials

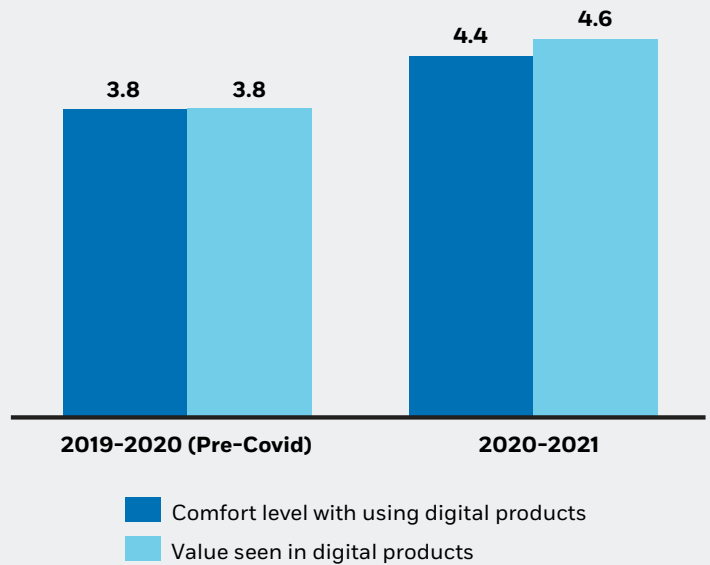
% of respondents answering "Agree" or "Strongly agree"  
(N=186 teachers, 253 admins)

In comparison to print materials, digital solutions...



### Comfort with and value of using digital solutions

Average teacher score 1-5 (1=very uncomfortable/no value, 5=very comfortable/significant value), N=186



## 2. Celebrate Your Success/Survival/ However Many Days Closer to Retirement You Are Now

You did it too! You don't need to be reminded of what you went through, but as we start to come out the other side of this incredible challenge, give yourself a mental high-five. Or an actual one. Celebrate your accomplishments, and know that there are kids, parents, and people all over the world who [appreciate](#) and [are in awe](#) of you. Take what time you can to take care of yourself.

## 3. Use the Tools That Kept Your Kids Engaged Then, They'll Keep Them Engaged Now

The best online tools allowed students to work at their own pace, while teachers could easily keep tabs on their progress and intervene when necessary.

In addition, the most successful online tools were those that drew students in, engaging them and making them want to do/learn/explore more.

Fighting against a whole slew of new distractions, those online games and simulations built students' confidence and marked and celebrated their progress, however incremental. Gamified learning has been around for some time, but last year encouraged more classrooms than ever to adopt it. Games and simulations that are "game-like" but have clear outcomes and goals for students and teach required skills helped keep students engaged—and still can.



The tools you used for online teaching can also be used in-classroom, whether as supplements or replacements for the usual instruction, or as resources to help students get back on track.

#### 4. Use Teaching Tools That Work for *All* Students

Differentiated instruction was important before the pandemic; it will be even more important as we move forward. Students who were doing well under normal circumstances might now be experiencing issues and learning loss, while students who already experienced challenges now have more. Maybe they need a little extra help, different materials or processes, or just extra time to learn according to their needs. Thankfully, many online learning tools make it easier to deliver individualized instruction and rewards for effort and progress that can help every students' ability, confidence, and motivation soar.

Adaptive and individualized instruction will be even more important as we move forward. Students who were doing well under normal circumstances might now be experiencing issues and learning loss, while students who already experienced challenges now have more.

#### 5. Embrace and Keep Using the New Technology (And Try More)

The good news is that many products that saw you through remote learning can help your students catch up, keep up, and continue to grow. And your comfort level using tech is likely higher than ever before. Things like virtual conferencing, file sharing, mics, and smart cameras will probably be part of the educational landscape going forward. And it makes sense. Hybrid and remote work look to be the future, so moving beyond “what works now” toward “what will serve students going forward” entails more technology, not less.

#### 6. Expect and Accept That There Will Be Bumps—Lots of Different Bumps. Many Bumps.

It's not as easy as “getting kids back in school,” or “getting them learning again...” every facet of everyone's life has been disrupted and different for more than a year. Part of teaching is helping students grow into happy, healthy adults. Teaching involves developing the whole child, so students not only learn how to solve equations or to explain photosynthesis, but also how to build relationships and manage emotions. Those emotions will probably be in full force and unpredictable. Support your students' growth by incorporating [social-emotional learning competencies](#) into your daily routine to help them manage their emotions, attitudes, social skills, and academic performance.

Products that let kids go at their own pace will serve you well right now. Expecting students to perform the way you hope, or as they “used to,” will only lead to frustration on both ends. With the understanding that things are just harder now for everyone, let students settle in, find their groove, and navigate this strange new world. Online products are available that meet students where they are and allow them to feel more ownership over their own learning, get their confidence back, and help you monitor and guide them as they move forward.

Speaking of moving forward, remember “celebrate your students?” Do that. Celebrate learning successes that in the past didn't seem like much. Celebrate things like birthdays, attendance, attitude, cooperation. Let your kids know you've got their backs.

**We've got yours.**



## Innovative math and science online solutions

### Gizmos online simulations get students hands-on with STEM.

With Gizmos virtual labs and simulations, a science teacher was able to keep that “ah-ha” moment alive for her students during remote learning. One student said, “I love Gizmos. Of course, I would rather do actual labs, but given the current situation it’s the best alternative, and I love it. I hope to continue using Gizmos because it is user friendly, all the directions are on there, and it’s fun. They help me understand the material more and improve upon it.”



Learn more about their success [here](#).

### Reflex helps all students master their math facts.

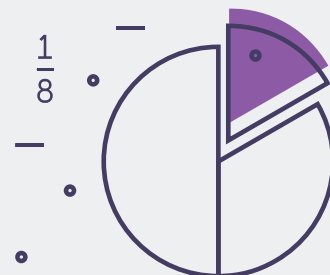
Full of games that students love, Reflex makes it easy to build kids’ math fact fluency and confidence. “I am in a low socio-economic area. Kids at my school are very transient so they are super far behind. After using this program, my students are so good at their multiplication and division facts—the best I’ve ever had! I just had my first student reach 100% fluency. And I have many more that are above 70%. They have to get a GREEN LIGHT every single day! And they do!”



Learn more about Reflex [here](#).

### Make fractions finally make sense with Frax.

Adaptive and game-based, Frax is a more effective, more fun way to learn fractions. One teacher using Frax found, “Students are gaining a strong foundational understanding of fractions. They seem to be understanding fraction concepts and can discuss them, which is new. I have not had students understand fractions this well, this early.” And another, “The shift in knowledge from my students who were really behind is surprising. Frax really worked to patch really big fundamental holes.”



Learn more about Frax [here](#).

### With Science4Us it’s never too early to learn science!

Literacy-infused lessons help introduce science to grades K–2. “When I walk down the halls, kids grab me by the legs and say, ‘we’re going to science!’ I was amazed because I hadn’t heard that enthusiasm from students before. Science4Us shows students how fun learning science can be. Every day, my job is to inspire students to believe in themselves. Science4Us shows them that they can do science.”



Learn more about Science4Us [here](#).



**ExploreLearning believes every student can succeed in math and science given the right support.** Our adaptive, game-based digital programs help students learn by doing in ways that are both fun and effective—and build the critical skills (and confidence!) they need for lifelong success in STEM. [Contact us to learn more.](#)