

“Emergency remote teaching”, digital disruption and a new (ab)normal: reflections on the impacts of COVID-19 on UK universities

PROFESSOR TOM CRICK

@PROFTOMCRICK
SWANSEA UNIVERSITY



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

IIMC WEBINAR: “DEALING WITH ONLINE AND BLENDED EDUCATION IN MODERN CHALLENGING TIMES” (5 MARCH 2022)

Committees

[UK Parliament](#) > [Business](#) > [Committees](#) > [Education Committee](#) > The impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services

The impact of COVID-19 on education and children's services

Inquiry

The inquiry will look at how the outbreak of COVID-19 is affecting all aspects of the education sector and children's social care system and will scrutinise how the Department for Education is dealing with the situation.

It will examine both short term impacts, such as the effects of school closures and exam cancellations, as well as

CORRESPONDENCE | VOLUME 8, ISSUE 5, E644, MAY 01, 2020

Considering inequalities in the school closure response to COVID-19

Richard Armitage  • Laura B Nellums

Open Access • Published: March 26, 2020 • DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30116-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30116-9)



Viewpoints/ Controversies | Published: 11 June 2020

COVID-19 as a catalyst for educational change

Yong Zhao 

PROSPECTS 49, 29–33(2020) | [Cite this article](#)

9540 Accesses | 1 Citations | 249 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Abstract

The massive damages of COVID-19 may be incalculable. But in the spirit of never wasting a good crisis, COVID-19 represents an opportunity to rethink education. The rethinking should not be about improving schooling, but should focus on the what, how, and where of learning. This article highlights some of the questions that schools can ask as they reimagine post-COVID education.

Explore our content ▾

Journal information ▾

nature > nature medicine > comment > article

Comment | Published: 27 March 2020

Digital technology and COVID-19

Daniel Shu Wei Ting , Lawrence Carin, Victor Dzau & Tien Y. Wong

Nature Medicine 26, 459–461(2020) | [Cite this article](#)

63k Accesses | 114 Citations | 175 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

The past decade has allowed the development of a multitude of digital tools. Now they can be used to remediate the COVID-19 outbreak.



Open Access | Published: 04 June 2020

COVID-19 and digital disruption in UK universities: afflictions and affordances of emergency online migration

Richard Watermeyer , Tom Crick, Cathryn Knight & Janet Goodall

Higher Education (2020) | [Cite this article](#)

6175 Accesses | 34 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION

INSIGHTS FROM
EDUCATION AT A GLANCE 2020

Andreas Schleicher



A framework to guide
an education response
to the COVID-19
Pandemic of 2020

Fernando M. Reimers, Global Education Innovation
Initiative, Harvard Graduate School of Education
Andreas Schleicher, Directorate of Education and
Skills, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and
Development



Stay Safe. Stay Learning:
Continuity of learning policy statement



Stay Safe. Stay Learning.



Remote Learning:
Rapid Evidence Assessment

April 2020

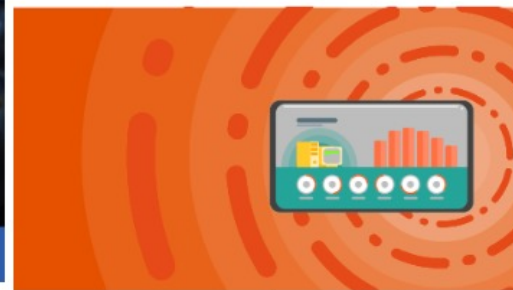


Guidance

Building a Taxonomy
for Digital Learning



USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY
TO IMPROVE LEARNING
Guidance Report



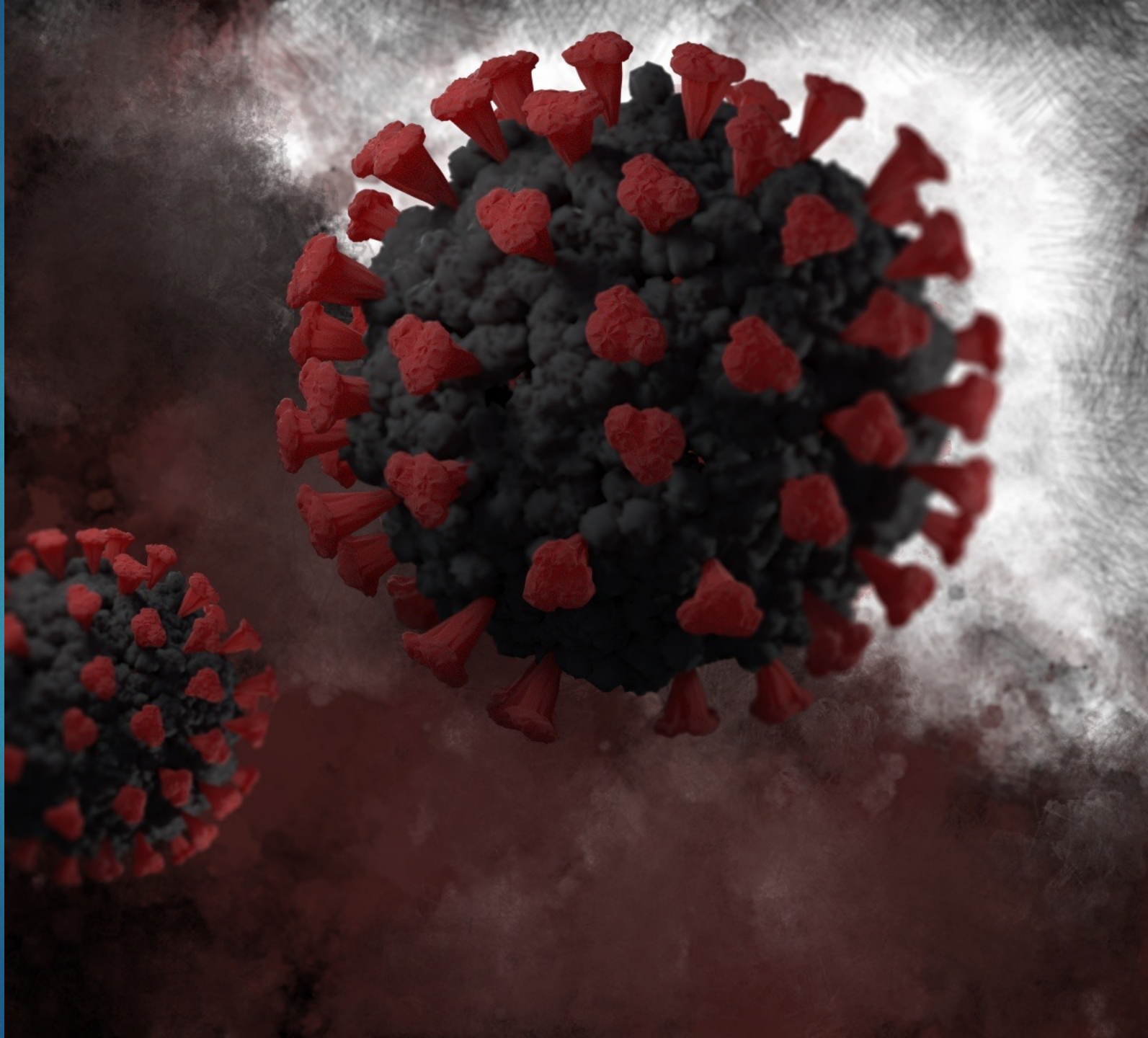
COVID-19 | Global Education Coalition | What we do | Stories & Ideas | Resources




Education: From disruption to recovery

Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions in an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

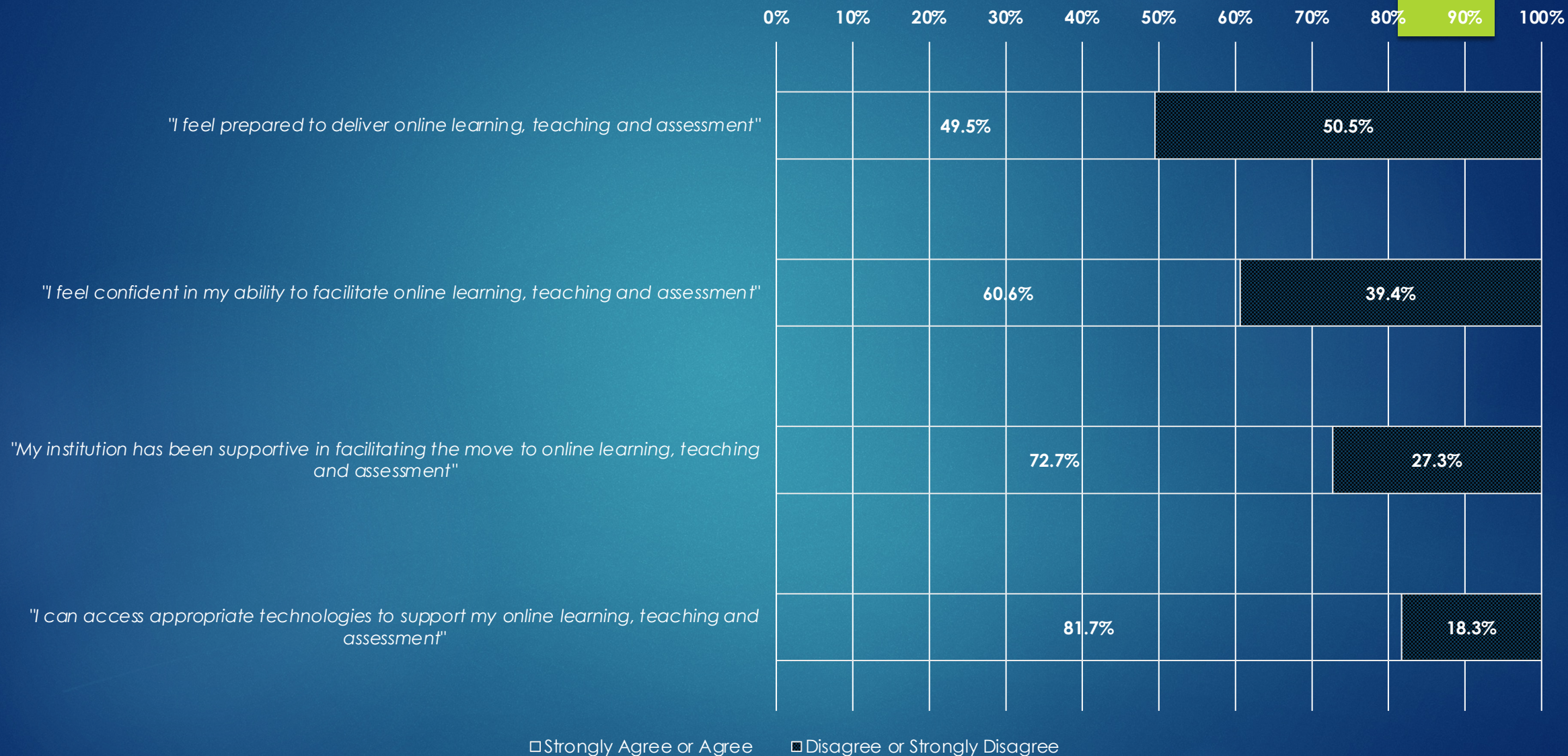
Drawing on
data from four
major empirical
studies over the
last 12 months,
consulting
+7000 UK HE
workers



A photograph of a person's hand gesturing while a laptop displays a video conference with six participants. The background is a blurred office setting with a wooden shelf and a potted plant. A solid green rectangle is in the top right corner, and a dark grey semi-transparent rectangle covers the right side of the image, containing the text.

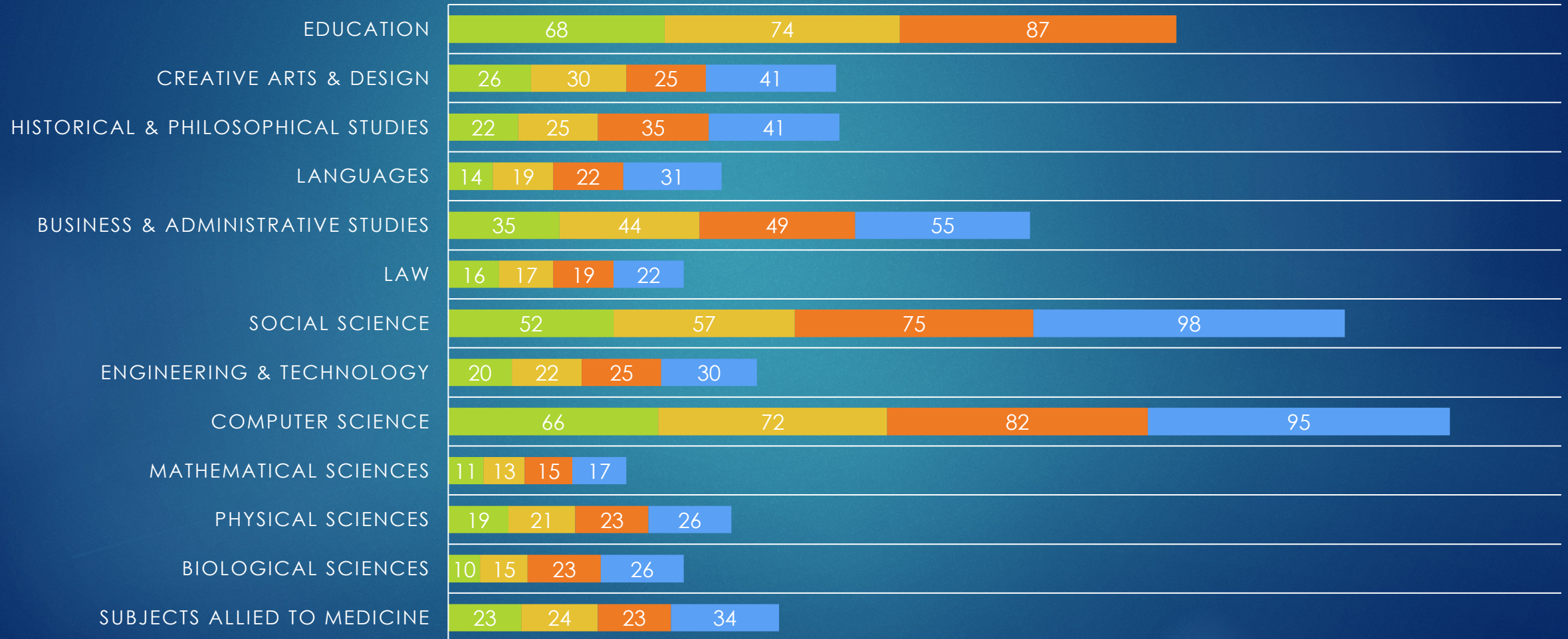
UK HE academic staff: Immediate perspectives on transitioning to remote working

Headline findings

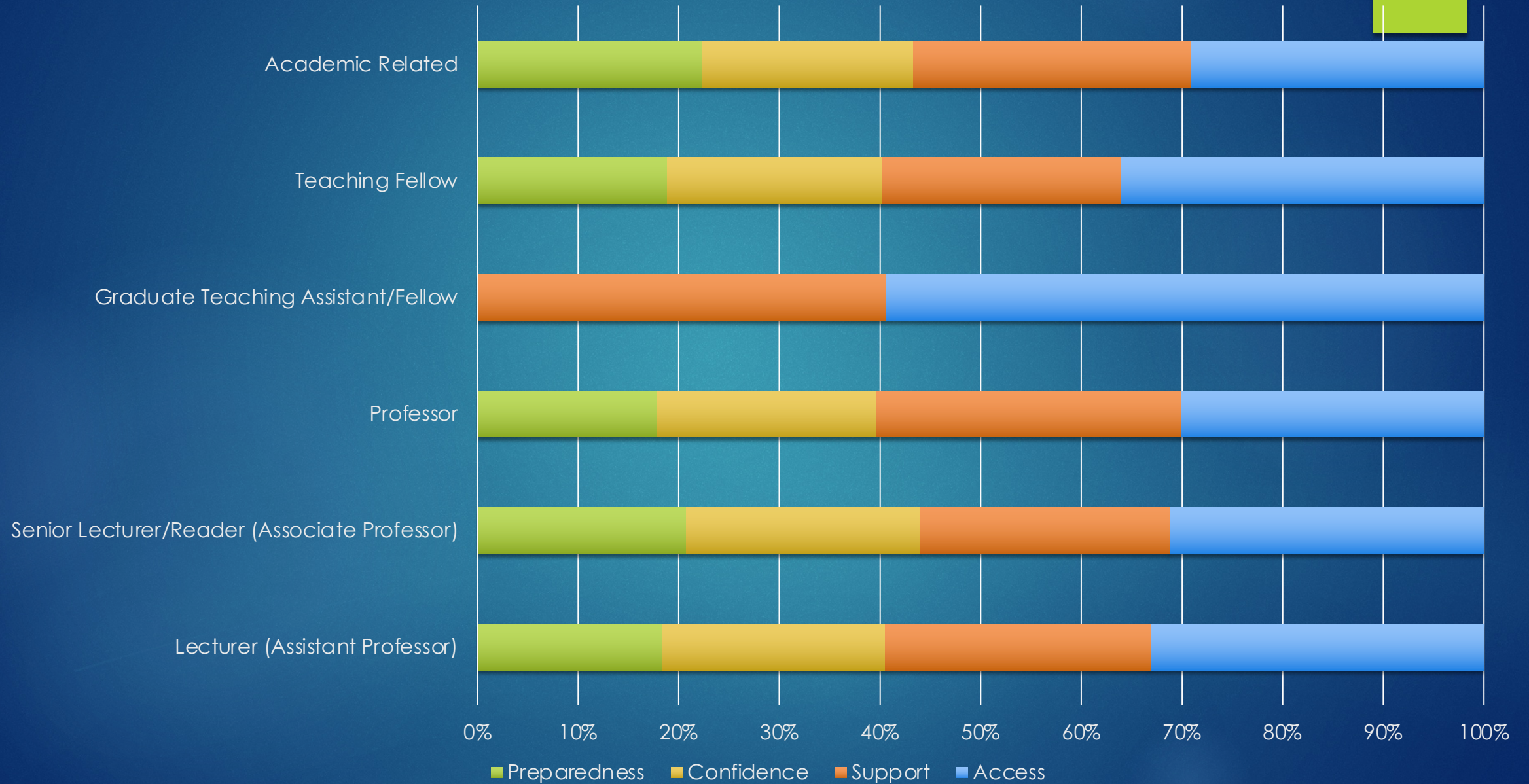


PREPAREDNESS, CONFIDENCE, SUPPORT AND ACCESS BY DISCIPLINE

■ Preparedness ■ Confidence ■ Support ■ Access



PREPAREDNESS, CONFIDENCE, SUPPORT and ACCESS by POSITION



Key themes

- ▶ Destabilisation of student marketplace in the UK:
 - ▶ issues of recruitment and retention; threat from private HE providers and edtech sector;
- ▶ Economic impact not only in terms of decreased revenue from tuition fees but other university services and by extension to local economies/national GDP;
- ▶ Deprofessionalisation, dumbing-down;
- ▶ Precarisation, jobs obsolescence, job cuts;
- ▶ Work intensification, gender inequality;
- ▶ Cessation of research:
 - ▶ impact on academic labour market (e.g. ECRs)
- ▶ Limited identification with digital affordances and digital practice.



HE academic staff:
impact on welfare,
health and wellbeing

“Pandemia”

Overview

International survey of N=2649 academics; n=1099 UK (65% female; 61% open-ended contracts; 66% from “research intensive” universities

Key Themes

- Crisis-management = creep of undemocratic forms of institutional governance; cost-cutting (disaster management); deprioritisation of research;
- Impaired trust in university leadership;
- Increase in labour casualisation; job insecurity;
- Rise in work exploitation and work-based inequalities;

Headline Statistics

84%: corporate response of universities has contributed to work related stress

85%: suffering from digital fatigue

77%: feeling demotivated

81%: major damage to the job prospects of ECRs

92%: changes to academics’ working lives as a consequence of institutional responses to COVID-19 have resulted in long-lasting impacts to health and wellbeing

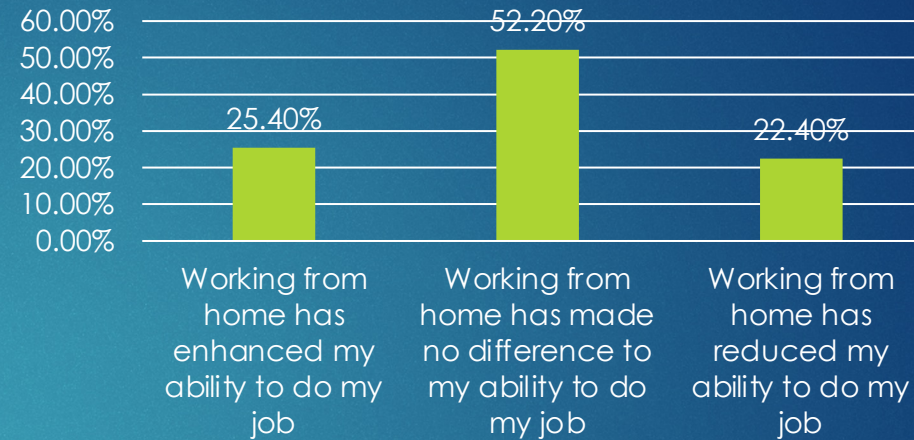
The background of the slide is a blurred office scene. On the left, a laptop screen is visible. In the center-left, there is a black and white mug. In the foreground, there are papers, a pen, and a paperclip. A dark grey semi-transparent rectangle covers the right side of the image, containing the text.

**HE professional
service staff:**

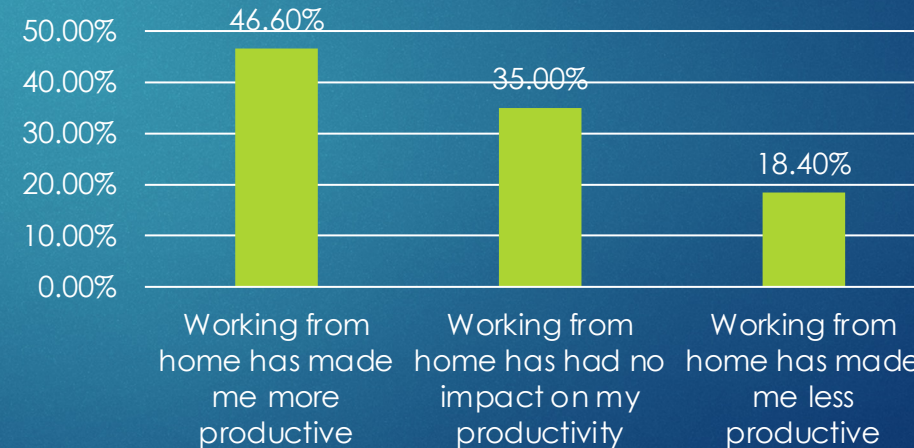
**Work experiences
under COVID-19**

Impact on work ability and work productivity

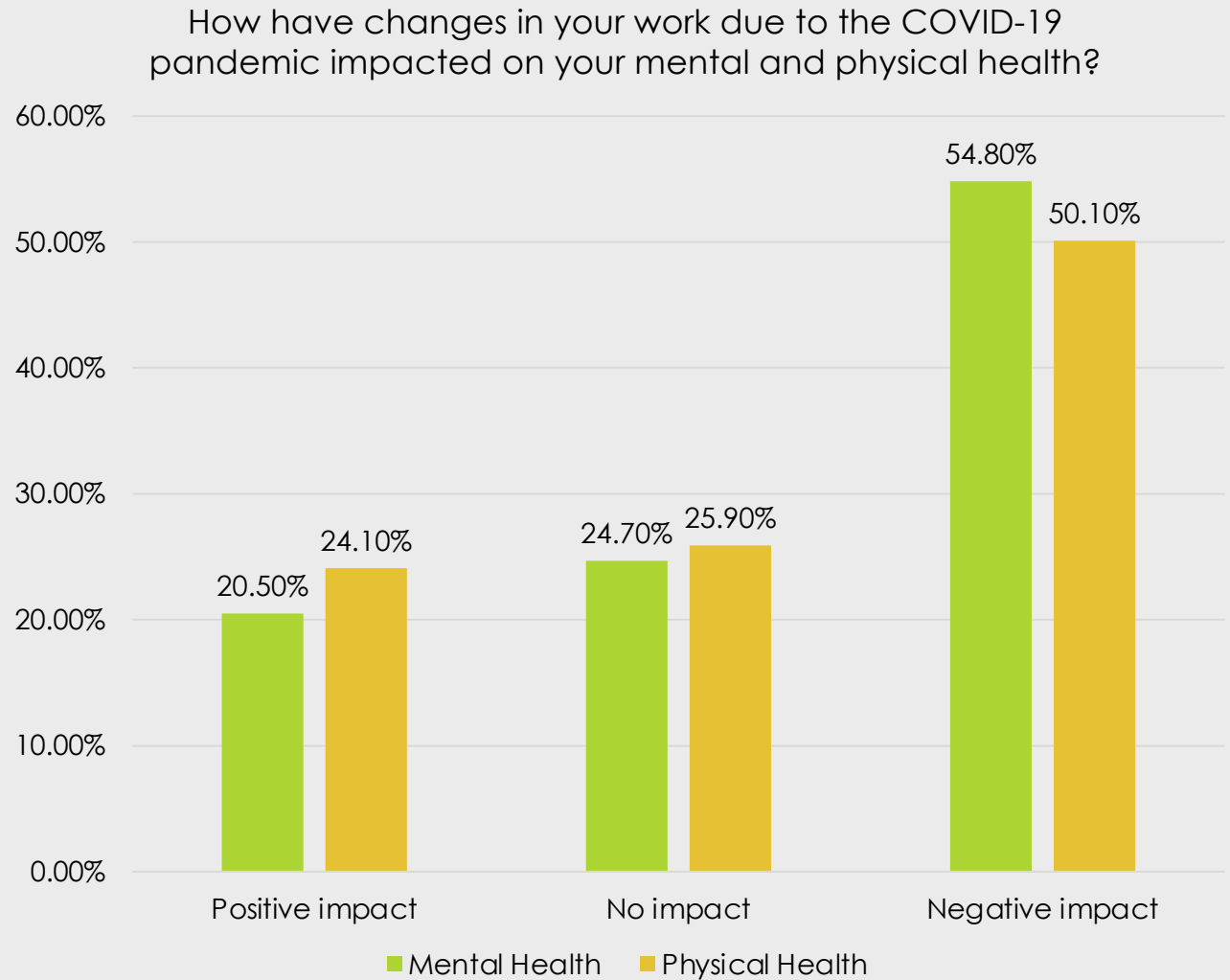
How has working from home affected your ability to do your job?



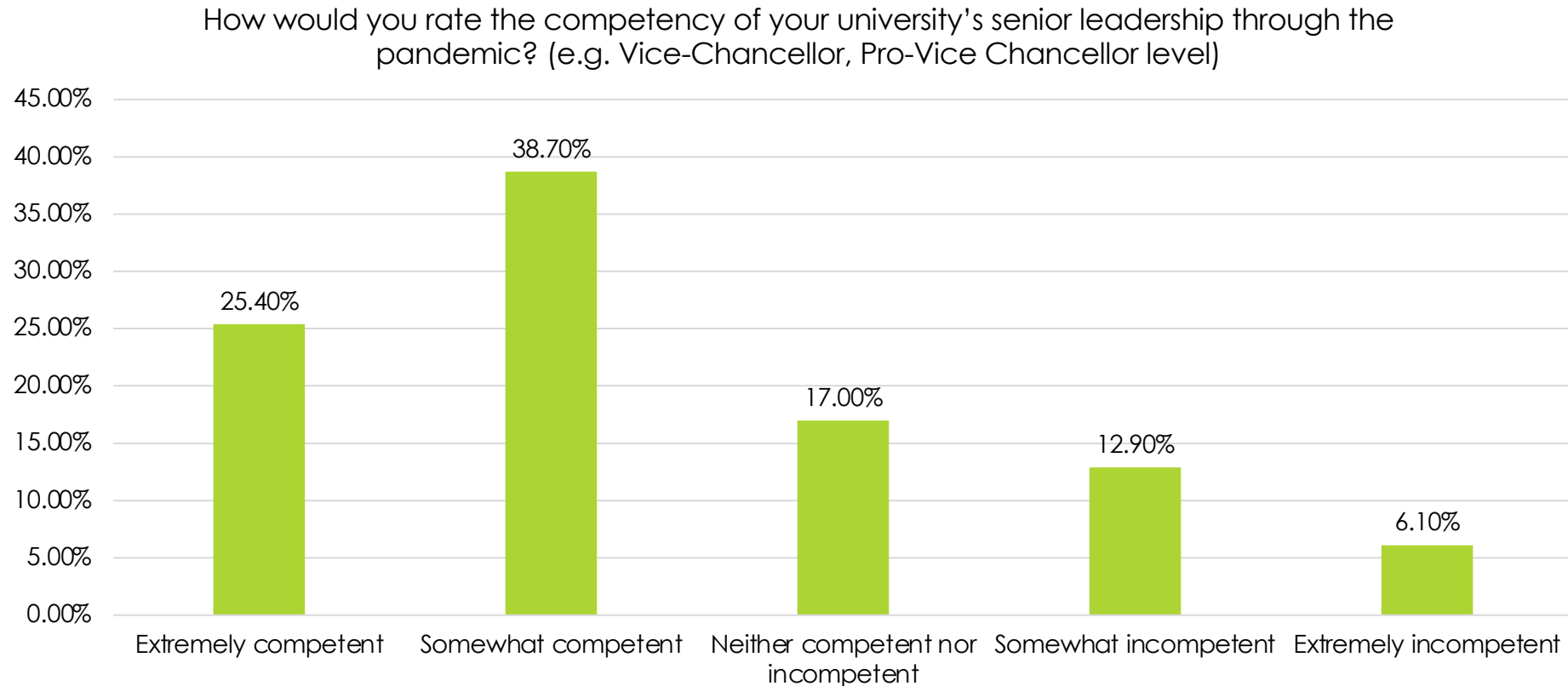
How has working from home affected your productivity ?



Impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing



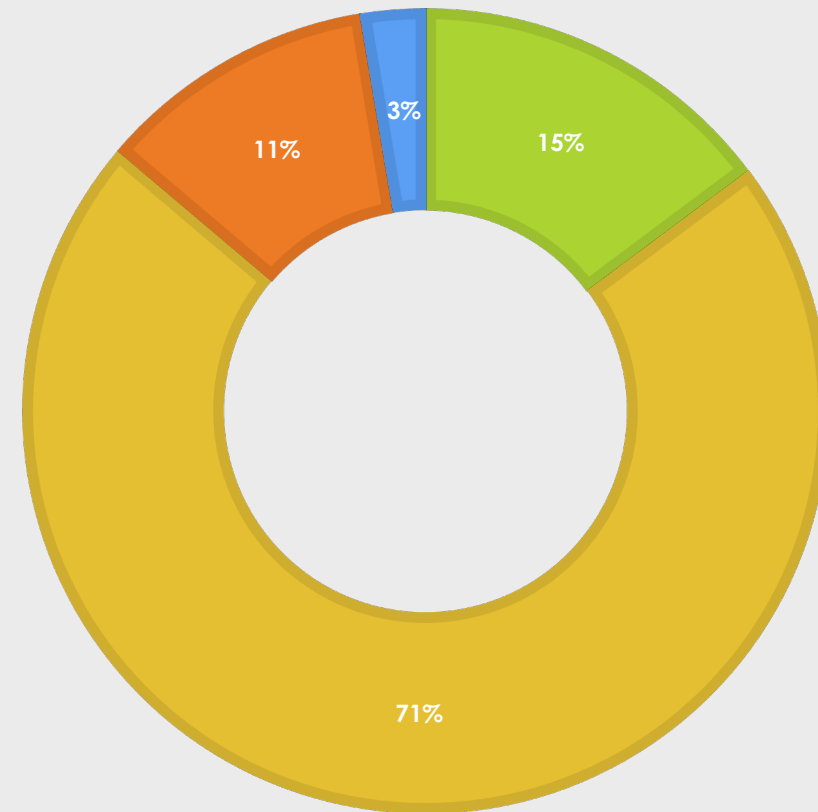
64% of respondents rate their university's senior leadership through the pandemic as: COMPETENT



A longer-term shift away from campuses?

IN THE FUTURE WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERRED MODE OF WORK?

■ Exclusively home-based ■ Blended ■ Exclusively campus-based ■ Other



The future of learning?

- ▶ The COVID-19 context has clearly not gone away, but has shifted — **a new (ab)normal?**;
- ▶ Rethinking/refreshing/resetting: **what/how/where of learning?**
- ▶ Impact across different settings, disciplines and domains;
- ▶ Renewed focus on digital pedagogy and practice (infrastructure, faculty, pro services, students, society?);
- ▶ Investment in professional learning/development;
- ▶ More criticality needed on widespread application of edtech;
- ▶ Wider policy context: post-COVID economic recovery, increased focus on “digital”, future skills demands.

More reading

- ▶ Watermeyer, R., Shankar, K., Crick, T., Knight, C., McGaughey, F., Hardman, J., Suri, V.R., Chung, R. & Phelan, D. (2021). 'Pandemia': A reckoning of UK universities' corporate response to COVID-19 and its academic fallout. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2021.1937058>
- ▶ Watermeyer, R., Crick, T., & Knight, C. (2021). Life in "pandemia": UK university staff perspectives on work during COVID-19. QAA. Available from: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/news-events/blog/life-in-pandemia-uk-university-staff-perspectives-on-work-during-covid-19>
- ▶ Crick, T., Knight, C., Watermeyer, R., & Goodall, J. (2021). The International Impact of COVID-19 and "Emergency Remote Teaching" on Computer Science Education Practitioners. Proceedings of IEEE Global Engineering Education Conference (EDUCON'21). IEEE Press, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1109/EDUCON46332.2021.9453846>
- ▶ Crick, T. (2021). COVID-19 and Digital Education: A Catalyst for Change?. *ITNOW*, 63(1) <https://doi.org/10.1093/itnow/bwab005>
- ▶ Watermeyer, R., Crick, T., Knight, C., & Goodall, J. (2020). COVID-19 and digital disruption in UK universities: afflictions and affordances of emergency online migration. *Higher Education*, 81, 623-641 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-020-00561-y>
- ▶ Watermeyer, R., Crick, T., Knight, C., & Goodall, J. (2020). forced shift to online teaching in coronavirus pandemic unleashes educators' deepest job fears. *Nature Index*. Available from: <https://www.natureindex.com/news-blog/forced-shift-to-online-teaching-in-coronavirus-pandemic-unleashes-educators-deepest-job-fears->
- ▶ Watermeyer, R., Crick, T., Knight, C., & Goodall, J. (2020). Academic lives are in transition. *Wonkhe*. Available from: <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/academic-lives-are-in-transition/>

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of our wider team of researchers including:

Professor Richard Watermeyer (University of Bristol, UK); Dr Cathryn Knight and Dr Janet Goodall (Swansea University); Professor Kalpana Shankar (UCD, Ireland); Dr Fiona McGaughey (University of Western Australia); Dr Joanna Hardman (University of Cape Town, SA); Dr Venkata Ratnadeep Suri (Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, India); Dr Roger Chung (Chinese University of Hong Kong); Dr Dean Phelan (Maynooth University, Ireland) and Margarida Borrás Batalla (University of Bristol) in addition to funding provided by the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)

Diolch yn fawr/thank you!

Professor Tom Crick MBE

thomas.crick@swansea.ac.uk

<https://proftomcrick.com>

Twitter: @ProfTomCrick