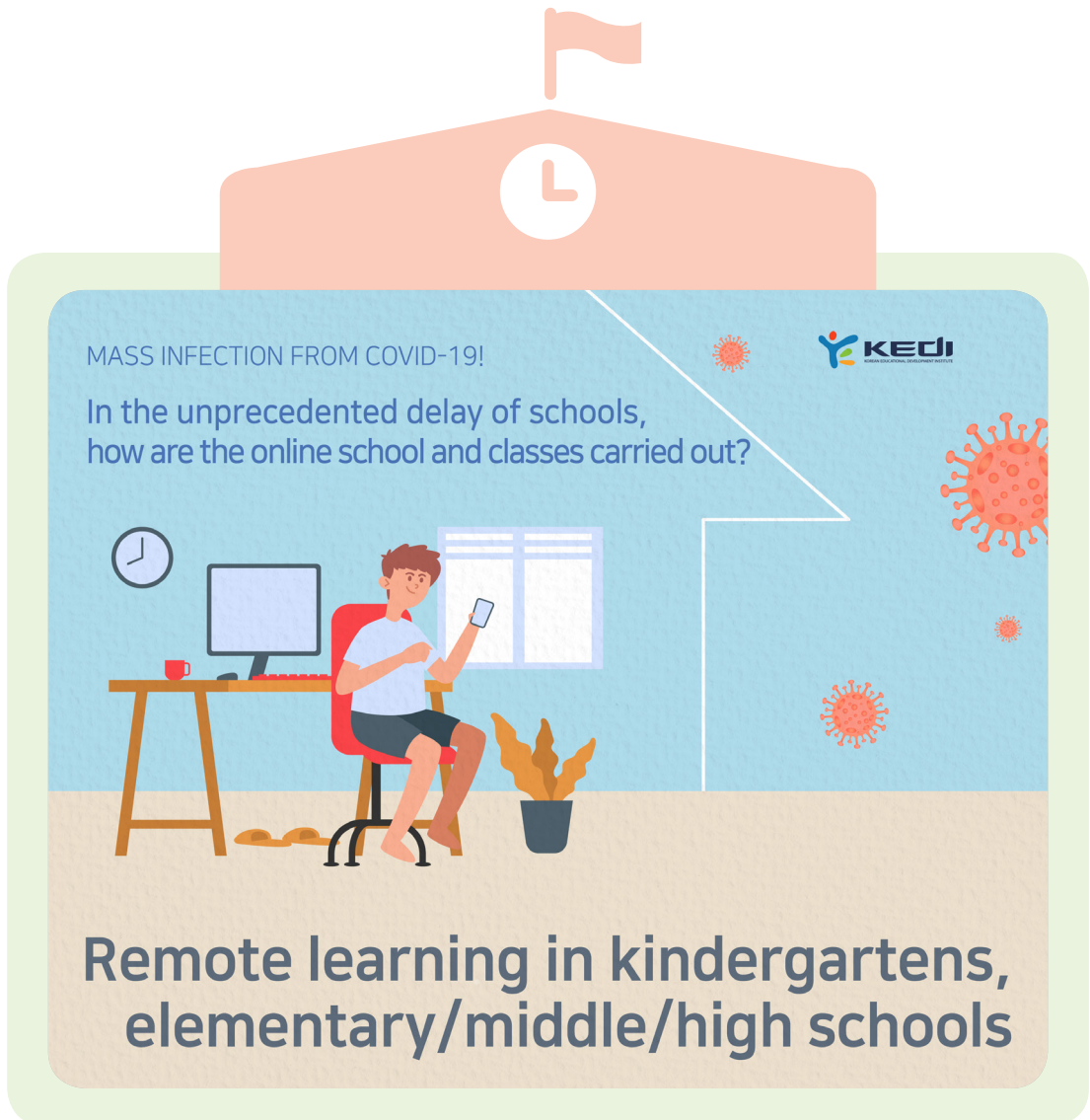


2020 October Educational Issues in Korea

Online learning during Covid-19 outbreak



10 October

Online learning during Covid-19 outbreak

 Korean Educational Development Institute Jee-Yeong Namgung

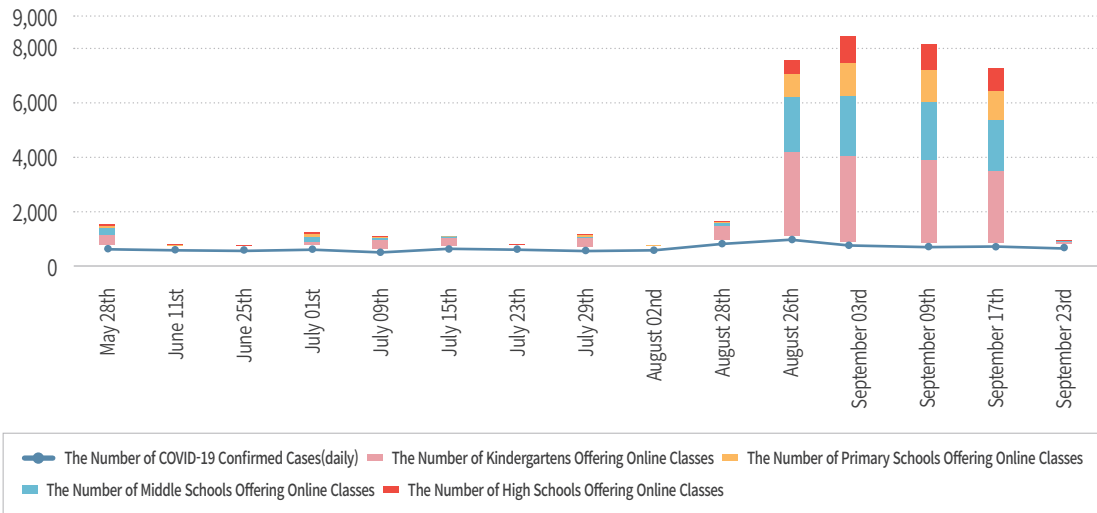
Impact of the COVID-19 on Online learning

The COVID-19 virus, first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei province of China, spread around the world, and Korea is no exception. Since the first COVID-19 case was announced in January 2020, mass infections have occurred in Daegu and North Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. As the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases has rapidly increased throughout the local community, pre-primary, primary, secondary schools decided to postpone the beginning of the school day which was supposed to March 1.

To assure the students' opportunity for education, all secondary schools started online classes on April 9 for 9th and 12th-grade students. Online classes for other grade students of primary and secondary schools are also started on April 16. It was the first time for Korea to offer online classes for all primary and secondary school students at the national level. After May 20, schools tried to reopen the offline classes starting with 12th-grade students, however, as patients among students and teaching staffs have grown, many schools continued to operate online classes.

The current status of the number of schools providing online classes in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in Korea is as shown in Figure 1.

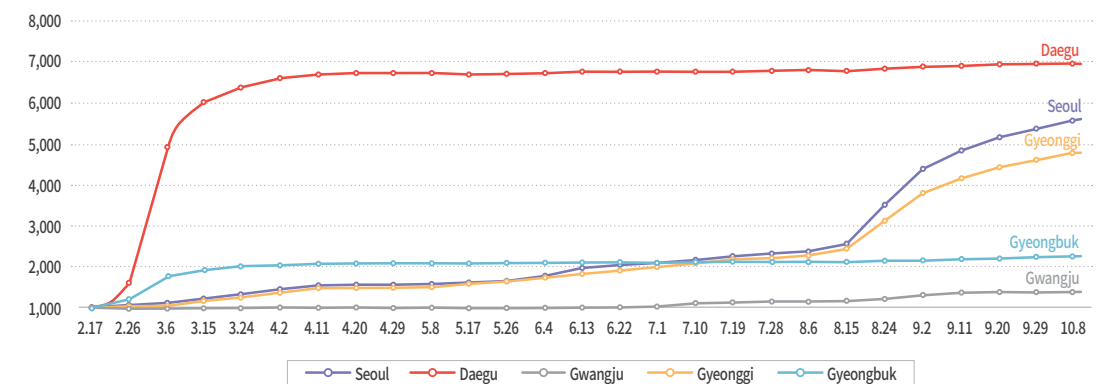
[Figure 1] Number of schools providing online classes in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in Korea



※ Source : Ministry of Education(May.28-Oct.8,2020) Data on Offline school classes. <https://blog.naver.com/moeblog/Real-time data steaming with COVID-19 situation>. <https://coronaboard.kr/>

In Figure 1, the blue area shows the change in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (daily), and the bar chart shows the number of schools offering online classes. Measures have been put in place to minimize the classroom density in the capital region since May 28. And in early July, as the number of patients in the Gwangju region increased, the transition to online classes was carried out until mid-July. However, as the mass infection was spread on a national scale since august, all of the schools in the capital area started online courses and non-capital region's schools have held both online and offline classes minimizing the classroom density. Figure 1 shows the changes in the number of schools where have shifted to online classes with the changes of COVID-19 circumstances⁴⁾.

4) Accumulated COVID-19 cases in Seoul, Daegu, Gwangju, Gyeonggi and Gyeongbuk(2020.2.17~10.10)



Source: Real-time data steaming with COVID-19 situation. <https://coronaboard.kr/>

E-learning on higher education

Colleges and universities are also taking measures to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Table 1 shows the response to COVID-19 of higher education institutes since September.

[Table 1] Response of Higher education to COVID-19

(Unit: number of university, %)

Period(*)	COVID-19 cases in Korea (per week)	Full-Online	Depend on 'Social distancing measures' (**)	Mixing Online and in-person	In-person only for experimenter practical exercises	Full in-person	Total
1st week. Sep(08.31.)	1610	144(43.4)	80(24.1)	69(20.8)	37(11.1)	2(0.6)	332(100.0)
2nd week. Sep(09.07.)	1045	196(59.0)	41(12.3)	55(16.6)	39(11.7)	1(0.3)	332(100.0)
3rd week. Sep(09.14.)	838	132(39.8)	44(13.3)	72(21.7)	83(25.0)	1(0.3)	332(100.0)
4th week. Sep(09.21.)	623	104(31.3)	47(14.2)	81(24.4)	99(29.8)	1(0.3)	332(100.0)
1st week. Oct(10.05.)	521	87(26.2)	44(13.3)	92(27.7)	114(34.3)	5(1.5)	332(100.0)

* Data are collected every monday(322 colleges and universities in total)

** Social distancing-Step 2: Combining in-person and online, Step-3: Full-Online(E-learning)

※ Source :e-journal of higher education(Sep.3,2020.) <http://www.dhnews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=128136> Ministry of Education(Sep.10, Sep.24, Oct.8, 2020.) Data on the in-person classes in schools and the response of higher education, [https://blog.naver.com/moeblog/Updates on COVID-19 in Korea](https://blog.naver.com/moeblog/Updates%20on%20COVID-19%20in%20Korea). <https://coronaboard.kr/>

As the nationwide spread of mass infection occurred during the fall semester, especially in the metropolitan area, many universities operated full-online courses. The Ministry of Education also recommended universities to utilize online classes until COVID-19 crisis is resolved. The data on the full-online courses of higher education in Korea is as shown in Table 1. As the confirmed cases had increased in the first week of September, more universities accelerated the shift to online in the second week. The number of patients has been on the decrease since the third week of September, so the number of universities offering online courses has decreased. More than half of higher education institutions had offered online courses until the second week of October(56.3%). The proportion of those which run online courses until the third week of October is 19.5% while 10.3% of universities are not setting an end date for an online course.

In Korea, education authorities and schools are trying to improve school education by introducing online classes in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and this approach can lead to a foothold for the future education system. Besides, it can be an opportunity to confirm the possibility of online classes as a useful way to replace in-person classes when disaster strikes. However, there are still some challenges for online teaching, such as the IT infrastructure(e.g., network environment, digital devices, learning contents, etc.); lack of digital literacy capabilities; insufficient support for the disadvantaged student; and concerns about the deepening educational gap. The improvement of the online education system should be made from the perspective of preparing for future education and for disasters that may occur in the future.

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