New-arrivals challenged by remote teaching: Creating solutions during the COVID-19 pandemic

# Details

## Year

2020

## DOI

10.26203/2kxf-8b43

## Issued

2020

## Language

English

## Volume

27

## Issue

2

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Education in the North

## Publisher

School of Education at the University of Aberdeen

## Place

Aberdeen

## Topics

* Learning
* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Access, inequalities and vulnerabilities
* Other

## Sample

Four teachers of the Swedish language in Swedish for immigrants (SFI) language learning programme (students aged 16 and up).

## Implications For Educators About

# Abstract

Ensuring access to equal education is more complex than adopting remote teaching approaches. International reactions to Covid-19 included closing physical schools and moving teaching online. This has created learning challenges for newly arrived refugees and immigrants, and teaching challenges for their teachers. On 18 March 2020, language teaching for post-compulsory school-aged refugees and immigrants moved to remote teaching. This paper investigates this move. Through semi-structured interviews, we investigated how teachers attempted to assure equal access to these language courses and their perception of their students’ experiences of this shift. We found that many of the teachers’ students were inexperienced computer users. We also found that the teachers perceived that their students’ feelings of isolation from society increased, and that this in turn reduced their abilities to access the education being offered. Remote teaching is not sufficient on its own to support the social function of these courses. However, the interviewed teachers are highly creative teachers. For example, they kept trialling combinations of a wide range of communication possibilities including visiting students at home and holding outdoor meetings. In these ways they created an instantiation of agency that may have encouraged students. These actions suggest avenues for future research and potential ways of ameliorating the educational challenges created by the sudden move to teaching online.

# Outcome

"[R]emote teaching is not sufficient to fully support the education and social function of SFI courses. At the minimum some degree of face-to-face teaching and group conversation is necessary to maintain student engagement and motivation for learning Swedish." (Authors, 226)