Distance Learning Experience and Disadvantage Neighbourhoods in Toronto

Digital Divide

Economic factor: The economic ability to access digital resources

Technological proficiency: the knowledge of using digital resources

Critical thinking skills: identifying quality information and make good use of it
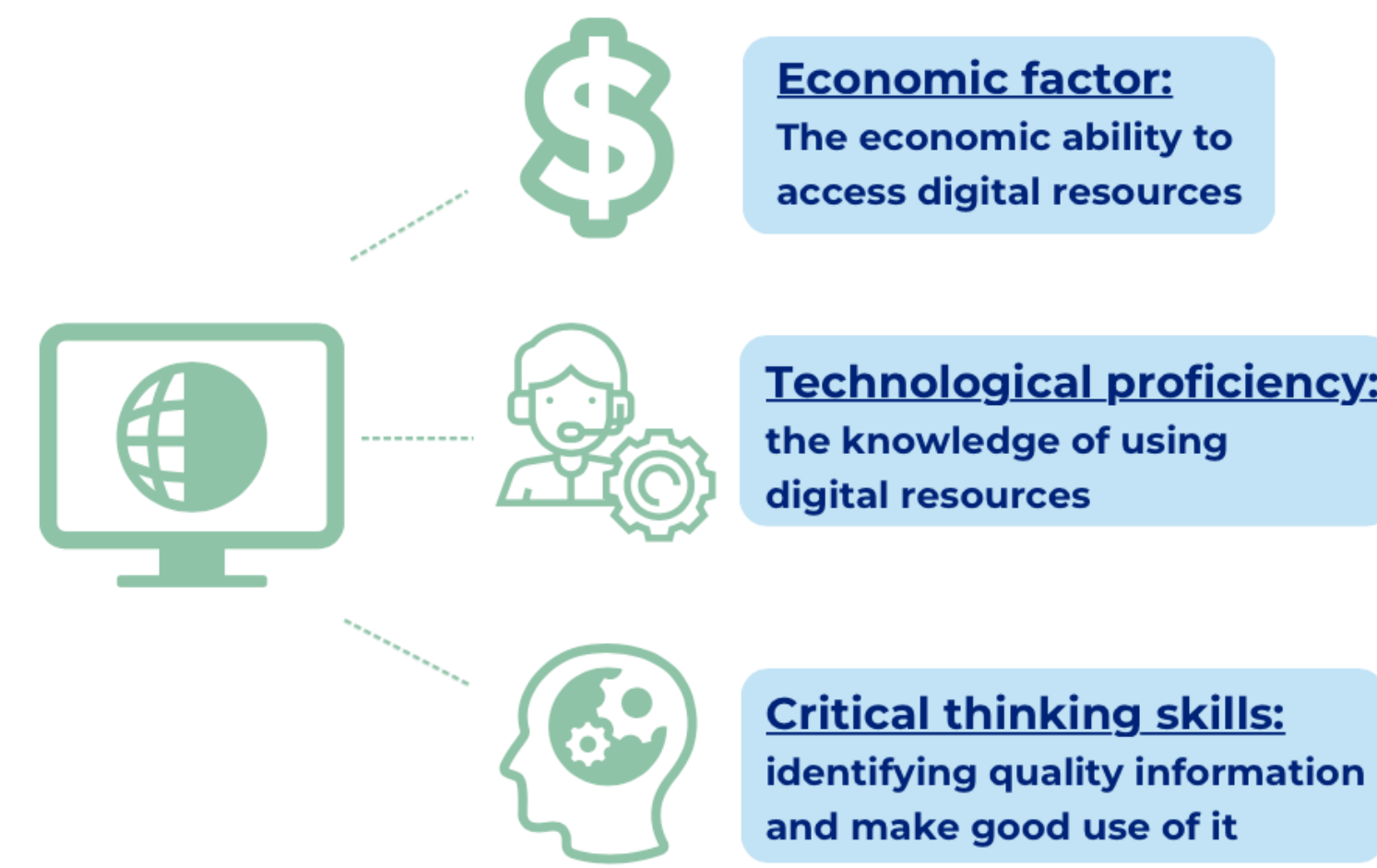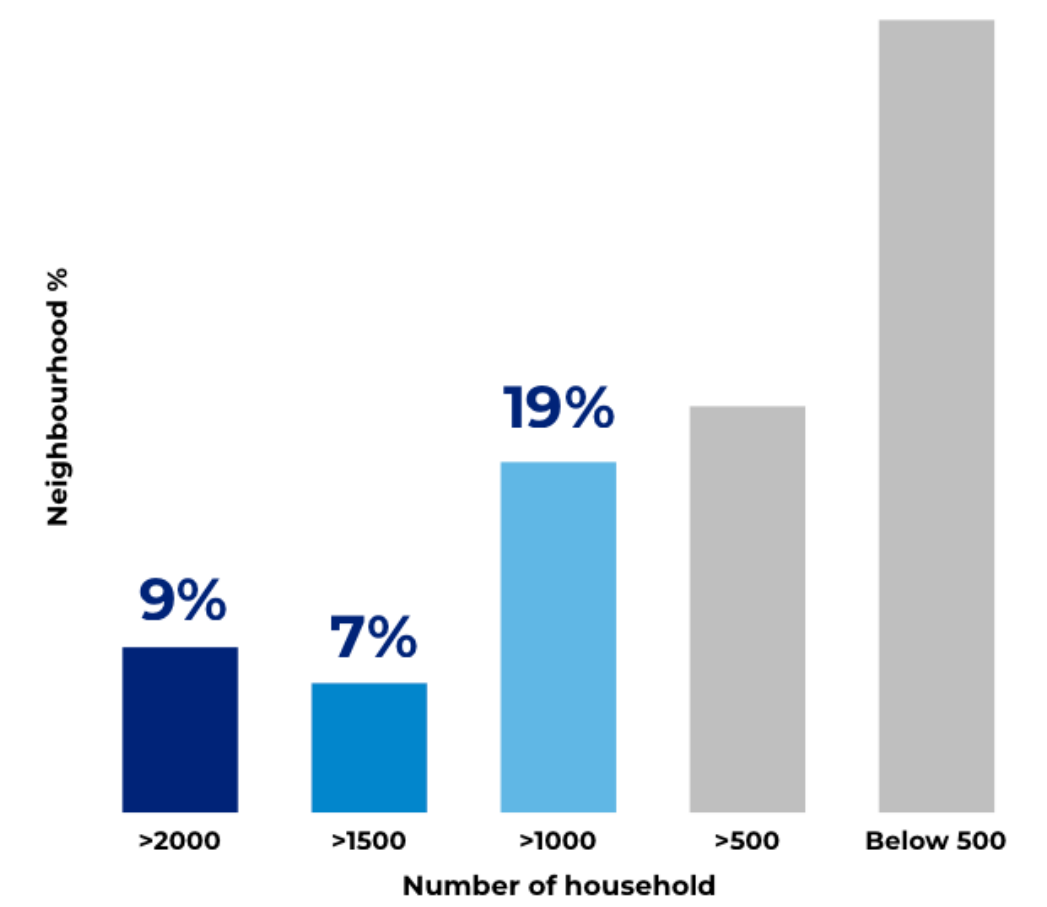
Low Income & Lifestyle

35% of neighbourhoods have **over 1000** low-income households with 0-17 years old children.

Low-income families experience a **10-20%** income loss in the pandemic.
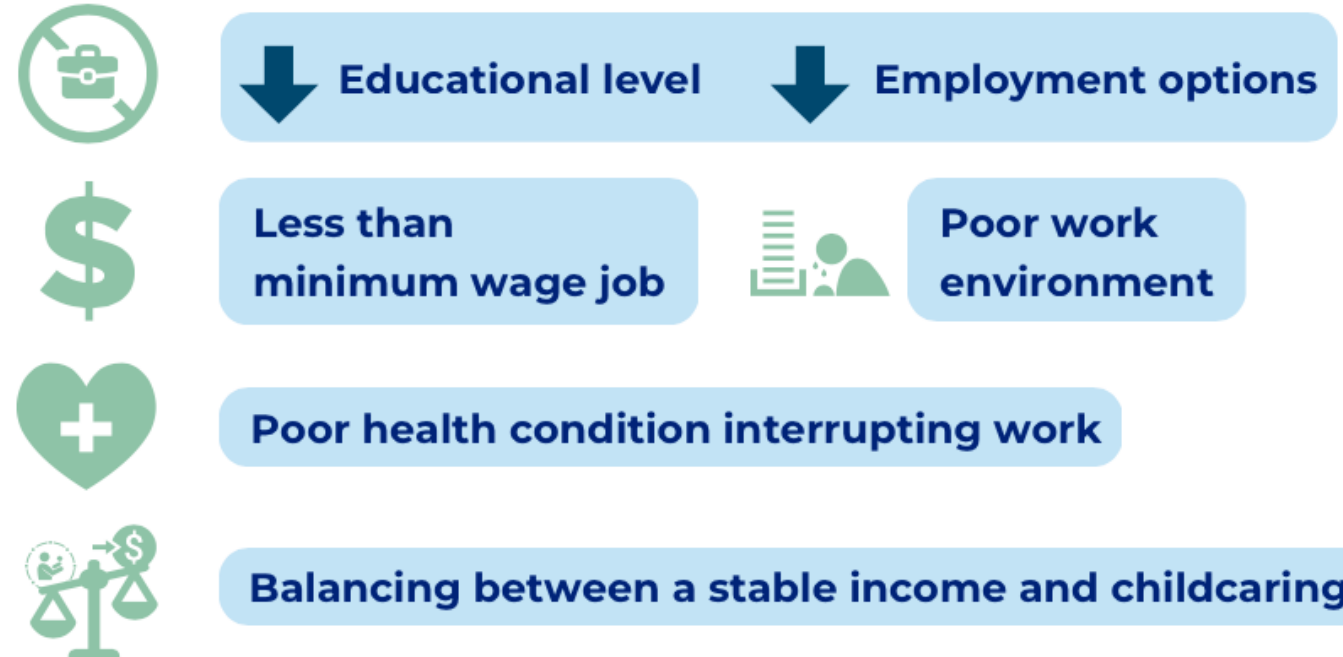
Low-income families suffer from:

- Lacking healthy food
- Poor housing & Unsafe neighbourhood
- Inability to pay bills
- Lacking access to services

Neighbourhood with Children Living a Low-income Household

Neighbourhood %

>2000	>1500	>1000	>500	Below 500
9%	7%	19%		

Number of household

Low Income & Unemployment Rate

↑ Low-income households   ↑ Unemployment Rate

Challenges low-income population face in employment:

- ↓ Educational level
- ↓ Employment options
- Less than minimum wage job
- Poor work environment
- Poor health condition interrupting work
- Balancing between a stable income and childcaring

The Relationship between Low-income Households and Unemployment Rate

● Number of low-income households   ● Unemployment Rate (%)

Number of low-income households (0–4K) / Unemployment Rate (%) (0–12)

Woburn, Thorncliffe Park, Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown, Guildwood, Runnymede-Bloor West Village, University
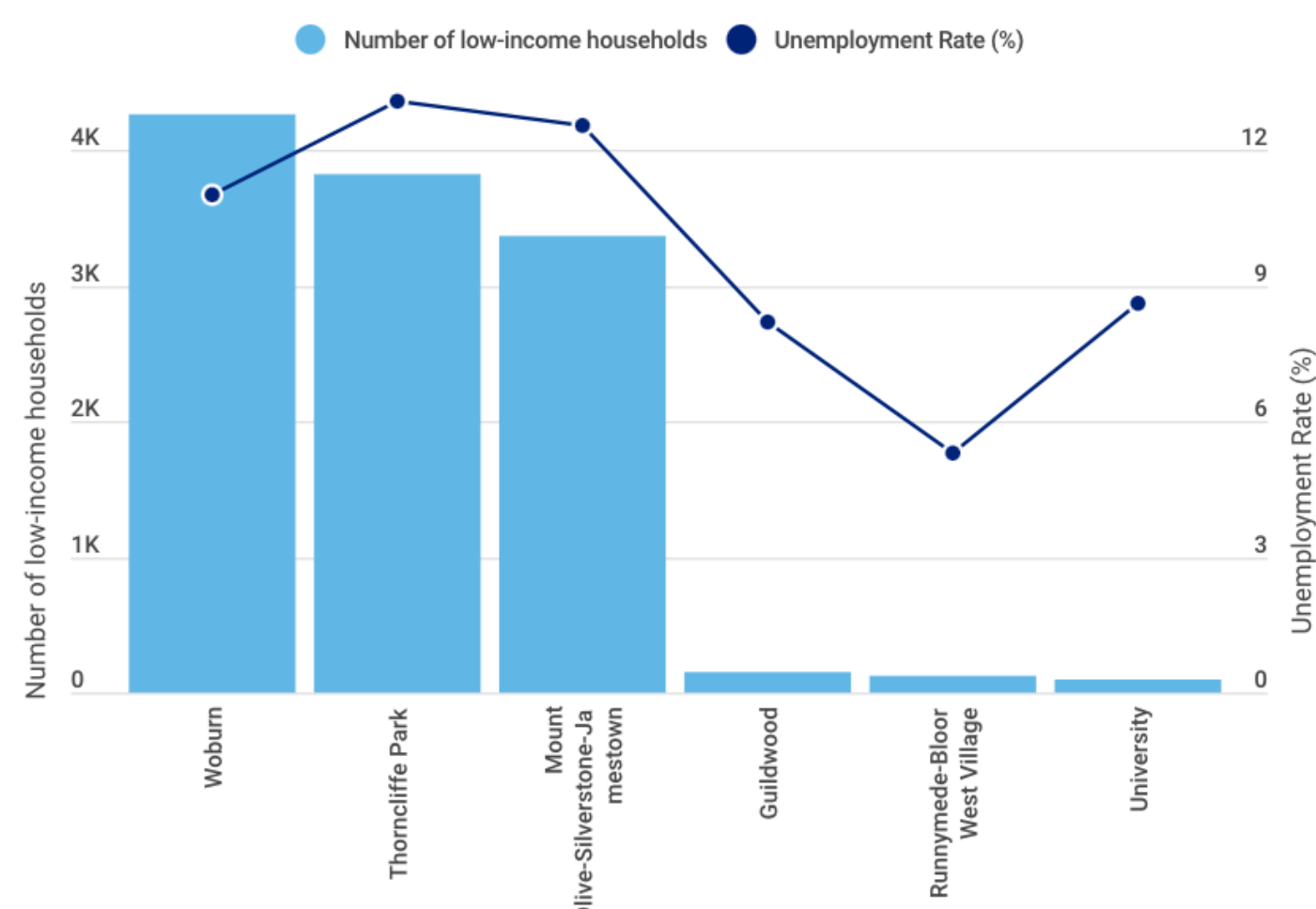
Low Income & Education Level

Low-income neighbourhood: **2 in 10**

High-income neighbourhood: **6 in 10**

...have a bachelor's degree/ above

Low income affects students because:

- Unable to afford extra learning resources
- Have less study time due to part-time work
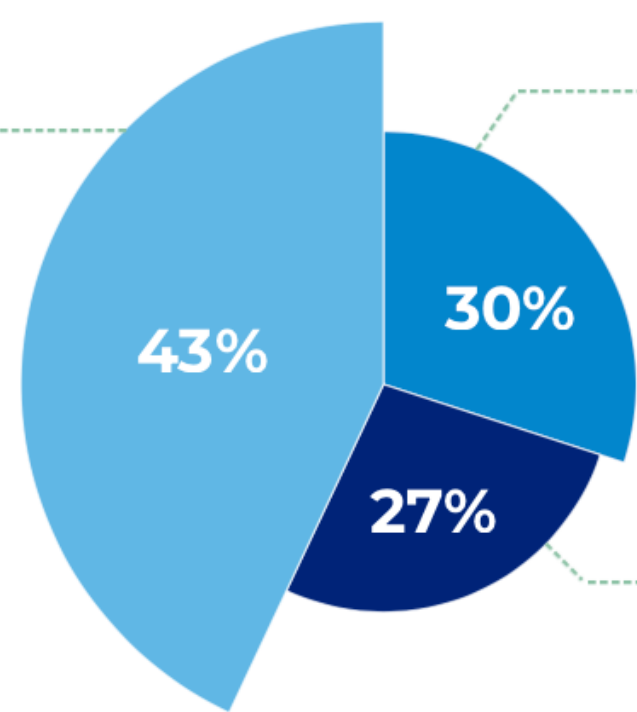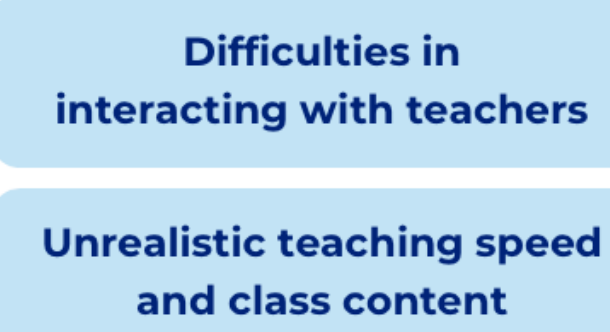
Challenges in Distance Learning

Students and parents have identified **3 main challenges**:

Adapt to online class:
- Difficulties in interacting with teachers
- Unrealistic teaching speed and class content

Motivation & Distraction
- Blurred distinction between study and rest

Access to online class & Technical issues:
- Limited/ no home internet or no suitable devices
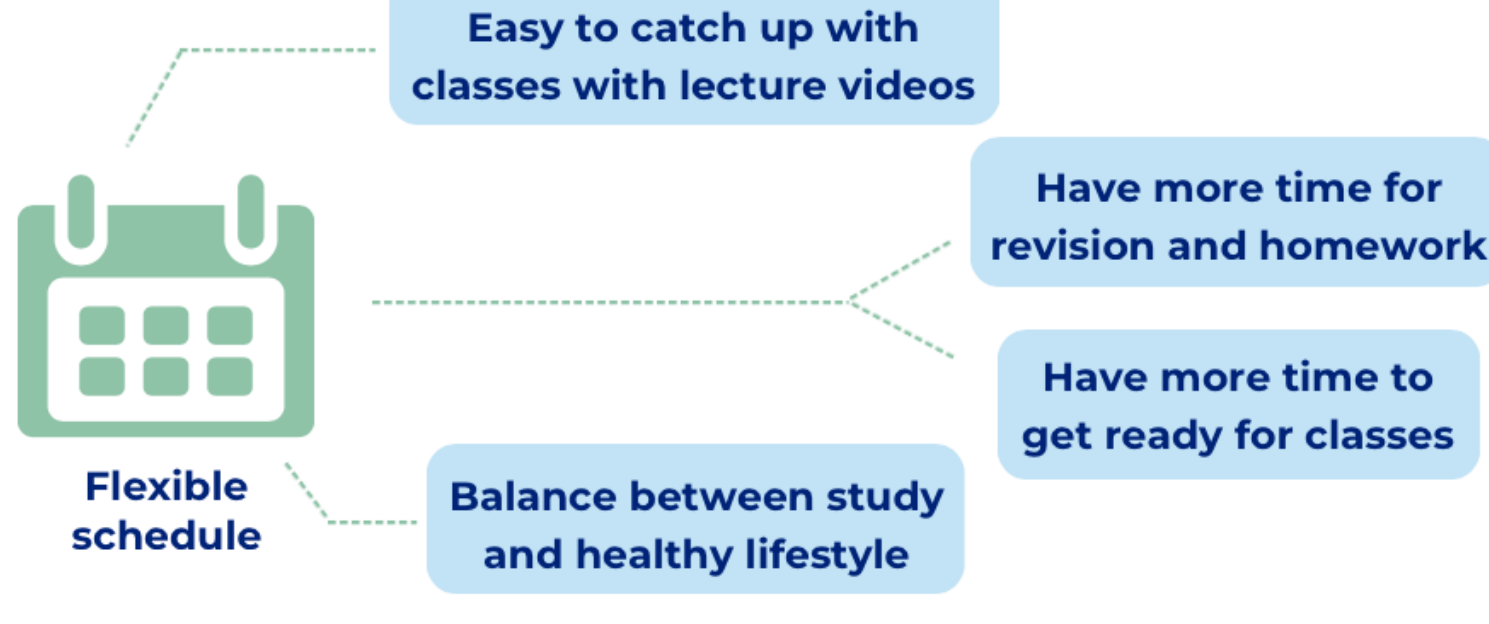- Technical failures disturbing learning

43%   30%   27%

Opportunity in Distance Learning

Some have found distance learning beneficial:

Stress-free learning environment
- No peer pressure
- No bully
- No social anxiety

Flexible schedule
- Easy to catch up with classes with lecture videos
- Have more time for revision and homework
- Have more time to get ready for classes
- Balance between study and healthy lifestyle

Adapting to Distance Learning

Parents deal with distance learning differently:

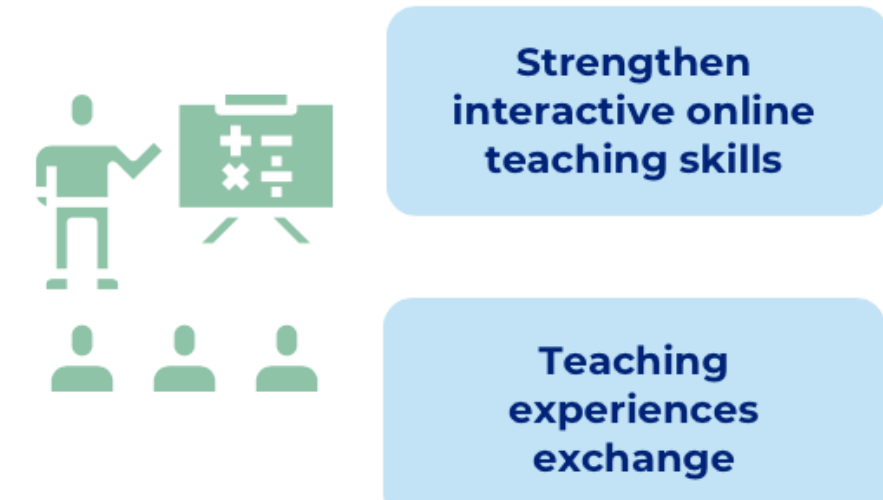| Higher Income Parents	Lower Income Parents
High possibilities to work from home	Low possibilities to work from home
Flexible schedule / Can help their children between work	Less flexible schedule / Unable to help their children between work
Organise additional learning activities for their children	Help their children with basic schoolwork
Stay at home and take care of their children	Seek help from family members for childcaring

Recommendations

Reforming education and digital learning readiness:

Organise teaching workshops:
- Strengthen interactive online teaching skills
- Teaching experiences exchange

Offer tutoring programmes:
- Help students keep up with their learning progress

Open schools for students in needs:
- Open schools exclusively for students:
  - with no supervision at home
  - with no/ limited internet
  - with no digital devices
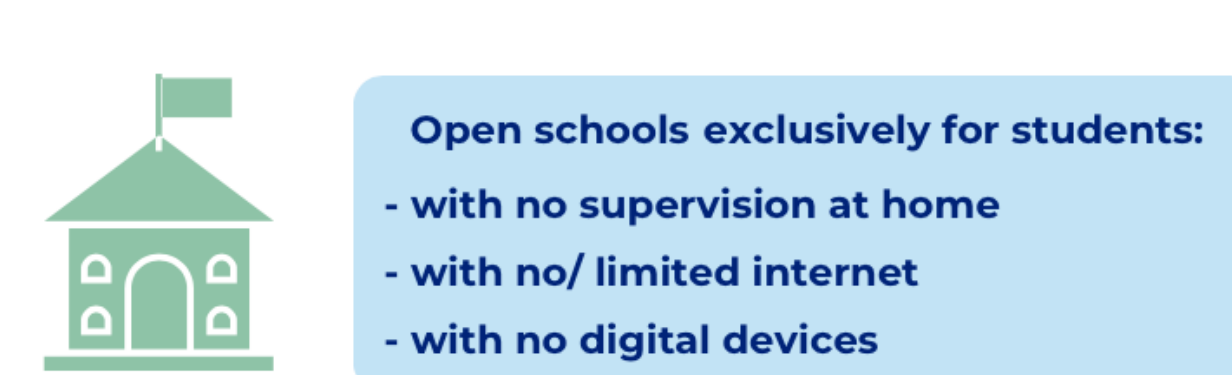
Keep learning platform up to date:
- Understand learning platform users' needs
- Enhance service stability
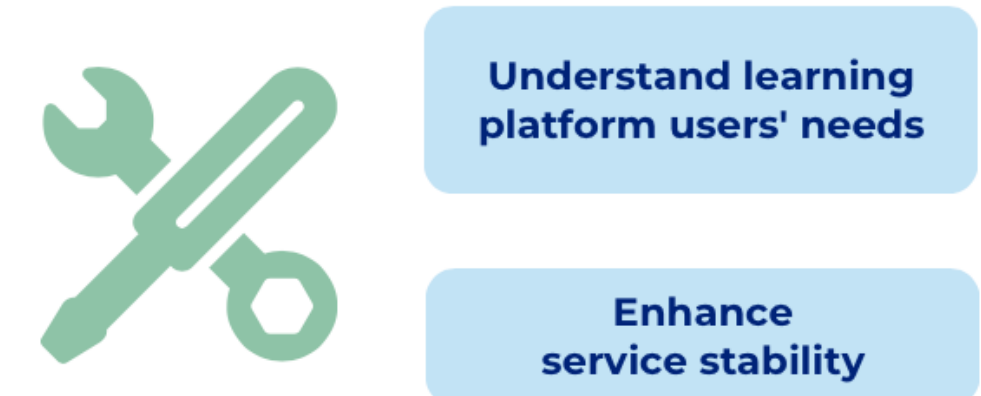
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Researchers:
Ana Garcia Cano   Binkitha Eliz Mathew
Jane Nok Yan Ng   Retnajith MV