



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE POST COVID ERA: Series XI





School Name: Michigan State University
Year: Junior
Major: Supply Chain Management
GPA: 3.8

Q: What is your typical school day like?

I have both synchronous and asynchronous classes so it really depends. I had thought a lot of them were going to be synchronous because my university didn't necessarily want online learning, they wanted remote learning, so they wanted to line everything up as closely to the original schedule as possible in order to really get that in-class feel. But a lot of my classes have actually moved towards a more asynchronous setting. so my schedule has actually gotten a lot more flexible. Basically, they'll just tell you what's going to be due at the end of the week. There are certain classes I have to show up for, but other than that it's really up to you to track your assignments and get everything done.

Q: Since you said that you have more of a flexible schedule do you prefer that over your synchronous classes?

Yeah, I think it's nice but I also think it's definitely harder to keep track of stuff. A lot of people need things like a calendar or a planner to make sure that they actually get everything that they need to get done, done. It's definitely harder when you don't go to classes and have a teacher who's constantly reminding you when things are due. But apart from that, it's actually kind of nice because you don't have to worry about commuting time and you're just a lot more in control of your day.

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Q: Are you at all worried about keeping up with your classes since it can be kind of difficult with a fully online schedule?

I don't know if it's just me being paranoid, but what I'm doing is every week, I will go through all of the syllabuses again and make sure that I write down every week what is going to be due. That way in my planner there is a page that will show what I have to do. It is hard to be motivated. A lot of times you will be sitting through a really long lecture and because you're home, it'll be a lot more distracting.

Q: Is it a little more tedious having to do everything from home rather than being on campus?

Well, classes just started for me so the most tedious thing right now actually is buying e-textbooks. My school is using McGraw-Hill Connect so there are a lot of outside resources that we need to sign up for and keep track of. Sometimes with those resources, things stop working and there are setup issues that you really wouldn't have in person. It is kind of a pain. I know two of my classes pushed back their schedules a bit to allow time for this, so it does take a little more time.

Q: Have you experienced any technical issues at all?

Yeah, there was a lot actually. One of my classes, for some reason McGraw-Hill offered the wrong textbook or charged too much, so the kids who bought the wrong one had to get refunded and we had to wait for the right price to be put up. Or some of our ebooks would come with a code to do homework on another site and the e-code wouldn't be working.

Q: How have your professors been through this whole experience, have they been helpful?

Yeah, I think they try to be as helpful as possible. A lot of them say that when it comes to technical difficulties to contact their IT department. They get on their email and send us reminders just to keep us on track and make sure we know what our resources are. And there are still office hours and TAs.

Q: Has your university provided any resources for its students.

I really don't know. I know on campus we have campus-wide internet and things like that. I know they did refund housing but apart from that, it hasn't been much.

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Q: Have you at all been able to connect with your classmates?

It is harder just because everyone does go into the online class and just kind of sits through it. For the synchronous meetings some people do talk in the chatbox but apart from that, some kids are trying to make group chats for the entire class so we can at least help each other out so that's kind of helpful. A lot of clubs are trying to go virtual, so with clubs and labs and stuff like that, you can kind of talk to people. Things with the larger group meetings like Zoom or video chat, it is really hard to talk to anyone or get to know anyone.

Q: I'm assuming then you haven't really been able to meet anyone?

Yeah not really. So right now my college experience is basically living off-campus, I volunteer somewhere so that's in person. But apart from that when it comes to school, it really just is whatever group chats there are. It's not really like friendship, it's more just helping each other out.

Q: Is this at all lonely for you then?

Kind of, not really. I'm more of an introverted person so it's okay. I would rather not be surrounded by a bunch of people who are like partying and stuff.

Q: How has your college life been affected then since you're no longer able to do a lot of college activities?

I guess for me it almost went the opposite direction. Because a lot of things are online now, I found some clubs that are meeting online through Zoom, I can definitely just jump online and make friends.

Q: With your current workload is there something you wish your professors or university would implement in order to help you out as a student?

I think one thing that is helpful that I saw one of my professors do, is send out a survey. Basically, the survey asked what your learning style is, your availability, if you'd rather work in groups or by yourself. I think my professor is using this as a way to pair up people for group projects so that they are better able to make time for each other or if they're in the same time zone. That definitely makes it a lot easier especially with people's schedules being all over the place.

