STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE POST COVID ERA:
Series III

School Name: UCLA
Year: Junior
Major: Economics
GPA: 3.6

Q: I want to start by asking what your typical school day looks like to you?

First and foremost being at home, it's a lot of instruction, a lot of online lesson plans, a bit of group work. In the fall semester it's a lot of lesson plans, lectures, talks with instructors, taking tests every now and then. It's the same thing. A lot of midterms, quizzes, finals, things like that. The only difference is that it's a little bit more on your own and a little bit more isolated, so you really have to make time for yourself and you really have to create your own schedule.

Q: I know a lot of people tend to struggle with online classes because like you said it is really relying on yourself and you need to have that self-discipline to go through with it. Would you say that you find it hard to follow your schedule and make sure that you're keeping on top of your classes, or do you prefer this in place of actually going into a classroom setting?

I kind of like both ways I guess. I think the other way is a lot more collaborative, this way is kind of a little easier. I don't know. I guess for me, I can kind of go both ways. I guess I have my introverted side and I also have my extroverted side. I definitely like collaboration. Working on your own, it's a little bit more, you can kind of concentrate or whatever, but you definitely need that person to person
interaction and maybe it's just the way that I was raised. Other people don't necessarily need that but I think for me I kind of just have a background of being social in class and having a friend and stuff, so I think people are kind of missing out on that.

Q: I know a lot of people have been saying that they feel really disconnected from the whole class. How would you say the actual lectures are, are they engaging to you? Understandable?

Yeah, I think I definitely find them understandable and gauging. I think perhaps a little bit less so. I think that when you're in person, the teacher can kind of feed off of you, can kind of feed off of other students, and can make it more of an

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interactive experience. You feel that it's more towards you and you kind of feel like the attention is on you always. Kind of more engaging and I think when you're kind of doing it on your own, when you're listening to lectures online, It's a little less engaging. You're feeling like the teacher's just kind of doing his job and just putting the information out there. You don't necessarily think that is directed towards you at all which I think is a bit of a problem. You definitely don't get as much as if you were in a classroom.

Q: How are the classroom sizes right now? Are they typically around 30 to 40 students?

I think it's half of the class per session.

Q: As far as when you have your online class, what do you usually find yourself doing during those calls? I understand you're taking notes, paying attention as much as you can, but are there times when you just kind of put your attention somewhere else and kind of just zone out for a moment?

I think I definitely zone out, that's a common thing now, but I mean it would be the same really in a class. I definitely feel like there's a sense of laziness kind of going on, I kind of can't pay attention and things like that you know. Just being at home all day you know, with this whole coronavirus, you can't just go out. It's just a lot of anxiety, a lot of tension, so I think that that's kind of tough and that's kind of hard on people aside from their school work. But I mean I think you need that kind of interaction with other people so I think that's the tough part. I find myself kind of I guess, zoning out. I feel like there's less of an authority person above me. I feel like it's more I kind of have to do the thing you know, keep track of my schedule in the appropriate way. I think that there's less of an authority person kind of watching over me, someone saying you have to do this or someone on my side saying like you know we know you. It's kind of easier to slack off, it's going to be easier to feel more alone during the process.

Q: And have you tried reaching out to any of your classmates like if you needed help for an assignment or whatnot, have you tried talking to them at all?

We've had group projects last semester. There's like open chats that you can talk to them on there. I kind of personally do it. I think it's very Interactive. I kind of need someone there, I want to. I'm kind of like a social guy too so I want people there just to chat with and kind of check up on, maybe discuss like notes and kind of go back and forth about what exactly is going on. There's a little bit of that but I haven't gotten to a point where it's getting to be a massive thing. It's definitely getting there I think. It's a little weak on that right now.

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Q: A few other interviewees had said if they tried reaching out to other students it's been kind of blunt, not necessarily as welcoming as when it's like you're asking someone for notes if they sit next to you in class. Would you agree with that?

I would probably agree with that. I think that it's kind of definitely like that. I think it's getting to a better place, it's all becoming like virtual talk interactions but it's getting there I believe. I think this is a great introduction, but nowhere near where it needs to be.

Q: When you take classes in person, you know you have your commute to class, and then also you have free time in between classes to go you know maybe to hang out in the lunch hall or the library. How is it for you having to study, do your homework, and all of the things from home?

That's probably the toughest part. The idea of college from childhood is trying to create these college experiences. College is a very social place, you kind of want to have a job, you want to do the whole you know dating thing, the whole friends and social group thing. Get invitations to parties and stuff, but I think that's definitely deteriorated. Everyone is going to college right now, they're kind of upset about that and that's kind of a tough thing. I would say that it definitely does take away from the experience.

Q: Have you seen any silver linings with these online classes that you've been taking? Are there any benefits to it?

I think it's definitely more non-interactive. I don't know, I think it's kind of progressing towards being your own person, having your own responsibility and kind of watching over yourself. It's aiming more towards a lonely type of existence so I think people that are lonely or not very interactive can accomplish a lot. I think it also brings out the type of creativity in the individual where you are able to think your own thoughts, kind of being in your own head but also kind of with other people. But that's the kind of a silver lining that I see.