

Online Learning: Is it more Helpful, or Stressful?

By: Riley Yates

Picture sitting in your dark bedroom, only waking up to join a class, to leave two minutes later because you don't care enough. Think about waking up every morning to do the same thing; Zoom, work, Zoom, work, sleep, sleep, eat, and just to repeat it all the next day. This is the reality of some people's lives during all of this. Online Learning changes lives sometimes for the better, and sometimes for the worse. People don't care anymore when they think the teachers don't take attendance. People don't show up for the fear of being the only person on. This is what our world has come to, this is what it's like for some to be part of online learning. For some, this is the best thing, and to others, it's a living nightmare. Think about what this is doing to others, we all are losing things, and we all are gaining things too: Teachers are losing things like the fear of not seeing their students, kids are losing the actual learning experience, while others are gaining everything they never got out of school. While online schooling helps some students, for others, it presents a whole new bag of challenges, ones that may be hard to overcome.

Some kids like online learning more than others, some kids think that online learning is a blessing in disguise. Different people have different views on this subject. For example, introverts (someone who is shy, and likes to keep to themselves without speaking up.) love online learning because it can give them a chance to speak up if they want without all eyes on them. Zoom has a feature to turn off your camera, and this to some is like heaven. Introverts love this feature because it allows them to be present without others staring. One thirteen-year-old girl has very strong thoughts on the topic of Online Learning. This young thirteen-year-old girl is in love with online learning, it gives her a chance to, well you'll see. "I am 13 years old, I don't miss all of the hardships of school, I don't miss teachers that yell, boring lectures, kids fighting in the hallway, talking out of turn, ruining classroom materials, that what happens at my school every day. You may think I'm joking but I'm not, you would think I was in 3rd or 4th grade, but I'm actually about to go into high school. I've been online learning since March 23, I love online learning so much more than actual school, during this time I am able to work at my own pace, and not be interrupted by other students, or teachers." This quote talks all about how a young girl loves online learning, she finds it extremely helpful because she is able to work at her own pace, without her teachers always being there, and how she is able to not get distracted by kids who are fighting, kids who are talking during class, all of the things your peers do that is distracting. When someone who is so young talks about the effects of online learning, you can only picture what the effects are on someone who is a teacher.

Teachers aren't very happy with online schooling; they work more hours than ever, they don't get to see their students. Half of the time most students don't even show up to their Zooms, and we don't necessarily, as students, think about how the teachers feel, we only think about what we don't want to do, and what we don't want to show up to, so next time someone doesn't show up to a Zoom, think about the teachers. The struggle isn't just for students, yes they are having problems, but the teachers are having the same problems; wifi shuts down, Zoom crashes, all the same problems, but everyone thinks they don't have problems, but here is some evidence saying that they do. These groups of administrative staff are from Sydney Australia, this survey was taken right in the middle of online learning. "The Gonski Institute surveyed 1,876 teachers, principals, and school support staff from government, Catholic and independent schools and found 59 percent had observed a decline in students' readiness to learn. It found 43 percent of teachers and principals believe digital technology enhances teaching and learning activities. However, 84 percent said digital technologies were a growing distraction in the learning environment and 78 percent of teachers said they had seen a decrease in the ability of students to focus on tasks." Another reason that teachers aren't really happy with online learning is that they really miss their students, although the students miss their friends, and teachers, they don't think about how much their teachers miss them. This quote shows what different types of teachers think about online learning as a whole, While it is hard for students to keep it together and stay focused, imagine being a teacher with two kids who you have to take care of. "Monday morning, my wife and I got our kids up and ready for the first day of distance learning in the Minnesota school system. By 8:30, we had completed first-period science and had shifted to second-period PE. There I was, lying on the floor watching the assigned exercise video, planking for 40 seconds, as my uber-flexible son planked next to me and giggled. My daughter was upstairs happily chatting with friends, and my wife was on a conference call, and my emails from worried students -- I'm a college adviser -- were piling up. My head swam, my son laughed and the fit woman on the video said we could relax for 20 seconds. Then our home internet cut out for 10 minutes." This quote is talking about how this specific teacher can't control everything, from his kids to his wife, to the wifi, and when it cuts out. When your internet cuts out, it is next to impossible to get onto a Zoom call until that is back up. With people all over the country using Zoom, it is bound to crash at different points. This is tough for everyone, including teachers, but with no internet, they also have to worry if kids are cheating.

Online Schooling is really challenging for some people, which forces them to cheat and go online for answers or use home devices such as Siri or Alexa. Kids now with Covid-19 think it is fine to just cheat, that they won't get caught, but the teachers know kids cheat, and the teachers at some of the bigger schools have ways to figure out if their students are cheating. "Children are too often turning to Siri for answers to questions and becoming distracted with computer games at a time when the COVID-19 crisis has meant they need to be more immersed in digital learning than ever before." This quote is talking about how the teacher knows kids are cheating, there are many different ways of figuring it out, such as kids with failing grades before the quarantine who now are getting 4's all of the time they know something is up. The bigger

tests such as the Advanced Placement tests have a “Cheat Proof” method to the exams “ One particular challenge for schools can be catching impostors – companies willing to complete classes – masquerading as students. Vendors have risen to the challenge by offering equally sophisticated tools. Colleges can track keystrokes to identify typing patterns for a particular student, track a computer's IP address, and even require biometric identification through iris or fingerprint recognition.” This quote is showing that they have methods of seeing if you're cheating, not everything you do at home is going to be checked, but there are definitely some things your administrative staff is going to check.

All in all Online Learning isn't all it's cracked up to be. It's hard to work with something new, and most people think new things will be easy; sometimes they are, and sometimes they are not. For some people Online Learning is easy, and for others, it's a whole other bag of challenges.