

Samantha Henriquez

Professor Rossman

Senior Capstone

29 April 2020

### The Impact of COVID-19 on Students and Teachers

The Coronavirus has struck our world in ways we've never imagined before. Once the virus became prevalent in our society, measures by the government began taking place. This led to closures of schools throughout the United States and other nations to prevent the spread. Other enforcements would come into place like stay at home directives and the need for social distancing. With schools and college campuses closed everywhere, the alternative to continue with students' education was moving online. These changes happened within a span of days, leaving little time for students, teachers, and professors the time to adjust. The distance learning method has not been a straightforward process. Students are being impacted by the pandemic of COVID-19 and the transition of traditional classes to online classes.

The COVID-19 outbreak began in China and while the government closed schools they came up with an emergency policy called "Suspending Classes Without Stopping Learning". In this article which discusses the procedures of this system, the policy allows students to continue learning with the help of online resources but it notes suggestions to better implement this policy. Some of the various difficulties faced with online learning were the fact that online teaching programs would overwhelm and crash, the efficiency and quality of the classes being offered, the issues teachers and students faced at home, factors like technology and internet connections, and

teachers having no experience with online learning (Zhang et al. 4). Many of these issues are similar to what Americans are struggling with. A lot of students may argue they are not receiving the same education as they would in person. Some students do not have the access or complete availability to technology. There's students who have special needs or learning disabilities and need the presence of someone to help them. Some students are not in ideal living situations or environments that put an extra strain on them. Many people have temporarily lost their jobs due to closures and so many more circumstances that burden students and educators alike. According to Zhang et al., "long-time online teaching can have a negative impact on students' mental and physical health." Spending all this time at home can lead to physical inactivity but also impact mental health because of being away from many loved ones or friends and may lead to instances of cabin fever. Some suggestions offered by the article are, offering equipment to the teachers and students, training teachers who may be inexperienced, following up with more research about online education, and offering counseling to students. There are some schools in the U.S. that are contributing similar solutions but the problem is it's not given everywhere, so a lot of students are left to resolve things on their own to receive their education.

Many students are facing the challenges of mental health issues due to the Coronavirus and online learning. According to Araújo et al., "Although temporary school closures as a result of health crises and other emergencies are not new, the global scale and speed of the current educational disruption are unfortunately unmatched and, if prolonged, may cause psychological pain and suffering at different levels.". Many people are questioning when exactly are schools and universities going to reopen. The fear of the unknown instills anxiety into people, especially in this time we do not have a definitive answer of when things will return to normalcy.

Depressive symptoms can result under these times due to the need of social distancing.

According to Araújo, loneliness may increase which can negatively impact education because it can lead to psychological issues. There is still more research that needs to be completed on these matters because it is a current situation but it is safe to say students are feeling the impact.

Online education options have been available for students for years throughout colleges. There's some who opt for this choice because of its convenience and flexibility. These online classes allow for students to work on their assignments on their own free time for those with busy lives. Those classes were also created in advance to fit the standard of an online class. This seems to be the major difference. The online education during the Coronavirus is a more difficult process. Professors and teachers have had to format classes created in a traditional sense and convert into something accessible online with continuing to offer the same level of education. They managed to do so with such a short notice as government officials made the decision to close schools without an advanced warning. With everyone having to shift from in person classes to online classes the question begs, is there a difference in a student's ability to learn from these two different formats? According to a research article "Face-to-face or face-to-screen? Undergraduates' opinions and test performance in classroom vs. online learning", states that students preferred face to face versus online classes because they were able to focus more efficiently and the fact it allowed for more feedback (Kemp and Grieve). The study noted that there wasn't much of a difference in academic performance. The thing that needs to be considered is the current state of our world. Online classes could possibly not differ in general but during this global pandemic there is a possible shift in students' ability to learn and focus.

The main aspect of being able to complete online learning is having the available technology and resources. While people's use of technology have been increasing over time, there is still a gap in which individuals do not have the access to it. The United Nations news revealed some startling statistics that half of all students out of classrooms which is about 830 million globally, do not have access to a computer and on top of that more than 40% do not have internet access ("Startling Disparities in digital"). Students are struggling with the online structure and some students are having difficulties even receiving their education due to technological factors. Student Alex Belyaninov from Purchases College said, "I'm not a big fan of using Zoom, I'm the kind of guy who prefers to learn in a classroom. It's been difficult to say the least to adjust to everything. It feels like there's no structure in that sense." There are still many individuals in the U.S. that do not have the software or internet stability to complete their online education. With professors and teachers having to transmit their classes online there is a struggle as well. Many have never taught an online structured class and are not comfortable with the technology. Shifting the classes pretty much overnight has been a challenge for many because you want to make sure students are still receiving that quality education. Professor Ricciardi who is in the Arts Management Department at Purchase college stated, "there's uncertainty and so professors feel very overloaded because teaching a class online is very different from teaching a class in person and to have to pivot in the middle of the semester really requires a lot of work. And so a lot of us have felt we've been working so hard and on top of that what we care most about is students' and their wellbeing and their learning. The demands on us in terms of that increase because anytime there is a crisis students are going to need a lot of support. I think professors feel overloaded and that's compounded by what might be happening

in their personal life.” This has not be a very stable process and not much time for planning was given but we do need to make certain we accommodate those who need access to internet, technologies, and other stresses with online classes.

It’s difficult to say when this virus will subside and determining when the whole world will return to usual, including opening of schools and college campuses. An article called “Teaching and Learning After COVID-19” by Inside Higher Ed, made several predictions on what will occur in colleges after the virus. It states students and professors will have a mutual understanding that tools like Zoom and other platforms are complements and do not replace in person learning. Many people miss the connection of being around people and being more easily able to communicate with professors and peers. Schools will be more prepared if something similar were to happen again. I think there will be more preparations and measures taken place with online learning. At this time we can not particularly say when our education system will return to normalcy but there is an obvious impact within students and the transition of classes.

Link to Podcast:

<https://soundcloud.com/samantha-henriquez-645225293/senior-capstone-podcast>

### Works Cited

Araújo, Francisco Jonathan de Oliveira et al. "Impact Of Sars-Cov-2 And Its Reverberation In Global Higher Education And Mental Health." *Psychiatry research* 288 (2020): 112977. Web.

Kim, Joshua. "Teaching and Learning After COVID-19." *Inside Higher Ed*, 1 Apr. 2020, [www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/blogs/learning-innovation/teaching-and-learning-after-covid-19](http://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/blogs/learning-innovation/teaching-and-learning-after-covid-19).

Nenagh Ekemp, and Rachel Egrieve. "Face-to-Face or Face-to-Screen? Undergraduates' Opinions and Test Performance in Classroom Versus Online Learning." *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (2014): 1278. Web.

"Startling Disparities in Digital Learning Emerge as COVID-19 Spreads: UN Education Agency UN News." United Nations, United Nations, 21 Apr. 2020, [news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1062232](http://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1062232).

Zhang, Wunong et al. "Suspending Classes Without Stopping Learning: China's Education Emergency Management Policy in the COVID-19 Outbreak." *Journal of Risk and Financial Management* 13.3 (2020): n. pag. Web.