

Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Students and Teachers Discuss Covid Online Learning

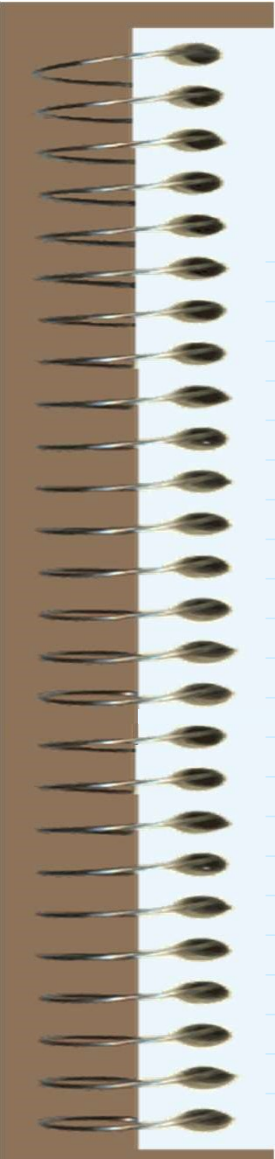
Jim Quirk
May 2021



OPEN WORLD
LEADERSHIP CENTER

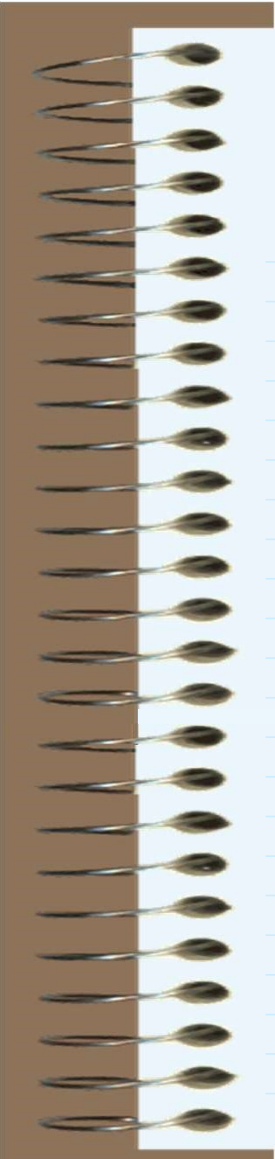
U.S. Congressional Office For International Leadership

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A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, resembling a spiral-bound notebook. It features a brown vertical bar with a silver metal spiral binding. The spiral extends across the height of the slide, with the wire looping through a series of dark brown, teardrop-shaped holes. The background of the slide is light blue with faint horizontal lines.

Huge parts of society and the economy
rushed online in Spring 2020 because
of the Covid-19 pandemic

One of the most dramatic changes was
in education – all over the world,
sending children (and teachers)
home for online learning

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a brown cover and a silver metal spiral binding on the left side. The notebook is open to a light blue page with horizontal ruling lines.

Today, two things

What did University students think?

What did K-12 teachers think?

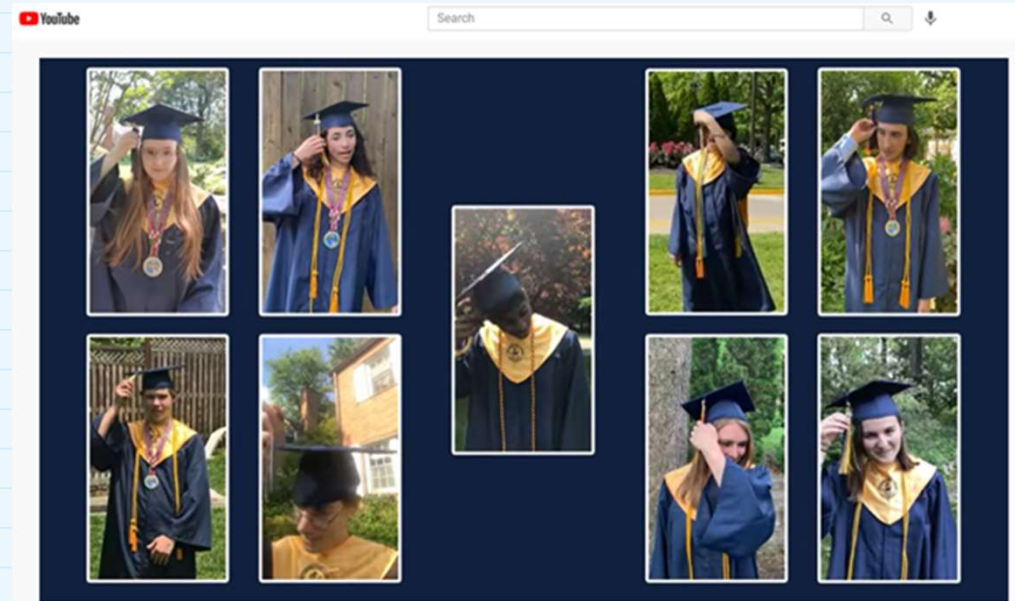
Links to the reports mentioned in this presentation

Govt396.com/AFC/

Spring 2020 – What Students Want if University Begins Online

~150 high-school seniors - survey responses
Details at members.educause.edu/james-quirk

- good teaching
- live, engaging instruction
- classroom community
- * *connections* with
classmates and professors
- structure, guidance, flexibility



Turning of the Tassels, Covid-style <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jsg2PvHJRQE>

November 2020 – How was first semester?

*30 interviews of all-online first-year students,
totalling approx. 150 fall semester online courses*

Learning Environment

- “not in a learning environment”
or “home is a safe place” to begin college
- students know which profs are trying



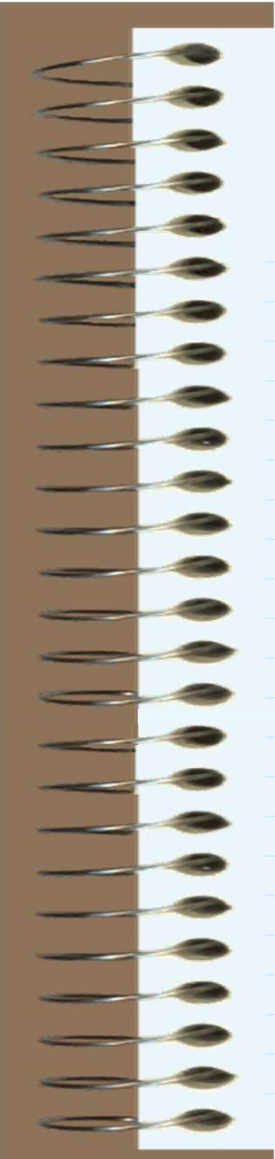
<https://educational-innovation.sydney.edu.au/teaching@sydney/protecting-your-zoom-classroom/>



Making Connections?

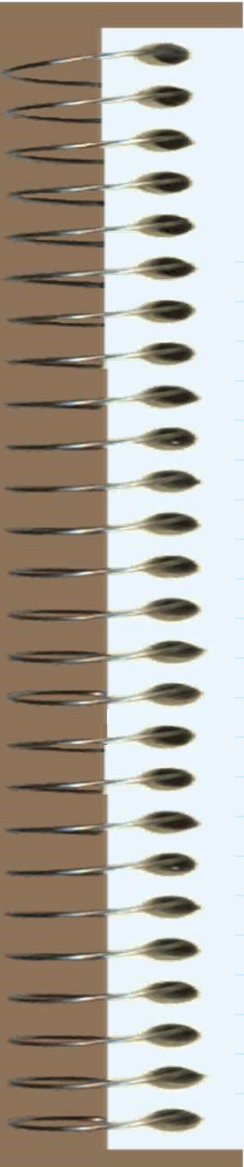
- most students making zero or very limited connections with classmates and faculty
- classmates as "co-workers"
- no separation between school and social
- Cameras – on or off?

Case Western, Fordham, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins, Loyola Maryland, Michigan State, NYU, Penn State, Towson, Glasgow (UK) , Ottawa (Canada)



Students' Advice for Professors – Part 1

- time zones matter!
- skip the busywork
- "teach!" – students “self-teaching”
- rapid, thoughtful feedback
- death by PowerPoint is real –
students want face time, activities –
and a real book
- spoonfeed me the details in the syllabus –
what exactly is due when?
- and then be flexible with everything



Students' Advice for Professors – Part 2

Break-out rooms and group projects

- “almost work, but not quite”
- Professors should not drop in –
let students do their thing

Cameras - students turn cameras

- on -- to hold themselves accountable
- off -- when not fully engaged



“I wish professors knew...

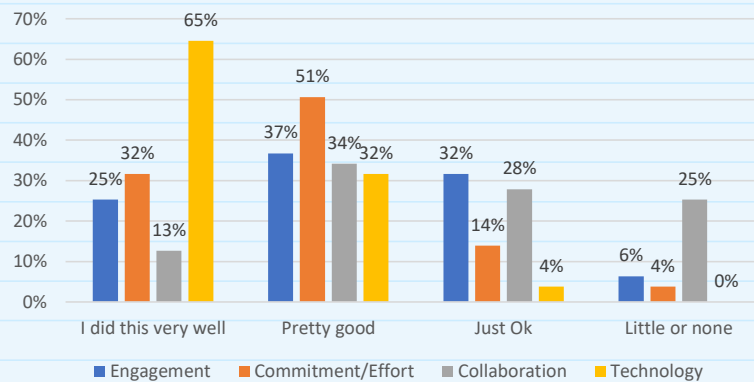
- we [first-year students] don't know what we're doing – online or in college
- make me come to office-hours meetings – I need connections and I need academic guidance
- laptop burnout – classes, friends, reading, writing, entertainment: we need breaks; we need books
- if camera not on, very good chance not paying attention - and camera-on students resent the camera-offs
- students appreciate how hard some professors are trying (not all professors!)

- *students want to make connections but don't know how*

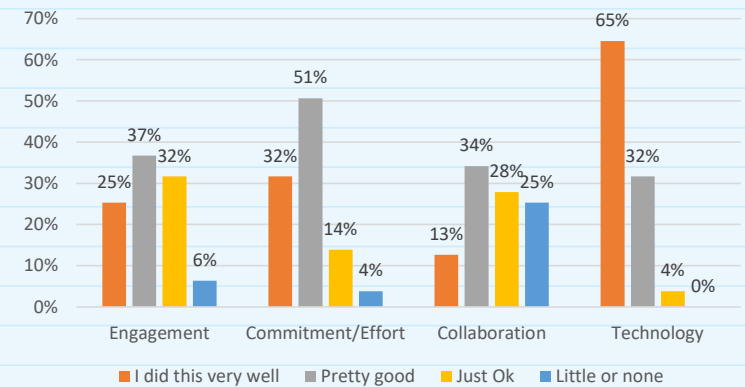
April 2021 – What are students saying now?

Survey: 90+ university students ≈ 900 courses from 2020-2021

I worked hard and had no trouble with the technology



But I wan't always engaged and I did very little collaboration





Some predictable comments from students

- Zoom / Screen Fatigue
- I had to get glasses
- Low motivation, low engagement
- Too much work; low interest
- Contagion – cameras on, energy & interaction – or not
- Too much work: too much screen time

But some students did better

- I learned how to do online learning
- I was committed to make the most of it
- I put my phone away and took lots of notes

*Is the work you are assigning
trying to make up for
lack of face-to-face classroom time,
or does it really enhance
my education?*

April 2021 – Online University Students Say:

Some professors are really trying

professors are learning new technology skills
and are aware of students' circumstances

**Other professors think they can just lecture
to black squares on Zoom and all is well**

Less than 60% of students said professors did
technology and teaching/engagement well

Less than 50% said professors offered good
assignments and assessments

That was University students

What about K-12 teachers? "What's one thing you want to talk about?"



https://www.army.mil/article/239150/fort_campbell_schools_celebrate_successful_opening

K-12 Teachers Survey – May 2021

50+ teachers wrote 80+ short or long answers

Teachers talked about

The amount of extra work

Pros and cons of technology

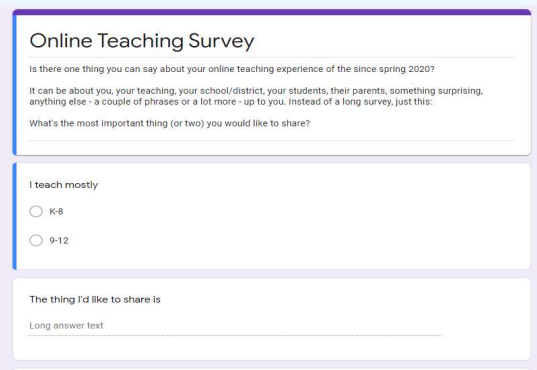
Missing the relationships

Trouble with their administrators

The foolishness of hybrid teaching

*"This was the hardest
I have ever worked
in my entire career"*

- Every Teacher, 2020-21



Online Teaching Survey

Is there one thing you can say about your online teaching experience of the since spring 2020?

It can be about you, your teaching, your school/district, your students, their parents, something surprising, anything else - a couple of phrases or a lot more - up to you. Instead of a long survey, just this:

What's the most important thing (or two) you would like to share?

I teach mostly

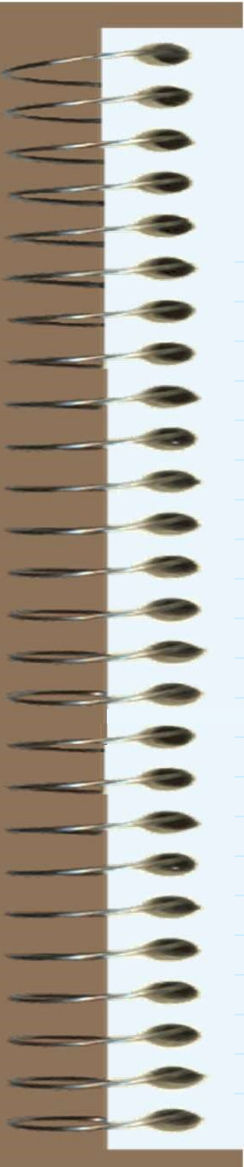
K-8

9-12

The thing I'd like to share is

Long answer text

Representative Comments →



Effort, Lessons Learned, Relationships

Many teachers talked about the amount of time they dedicated to moving everything online and doing a (sometimes very) different kind of work

"There are some very useful things we can be doing with the technologies, but online learning is not going to replace classroom learning"

"The relationships are what I love about teaching, and they are not the same online"

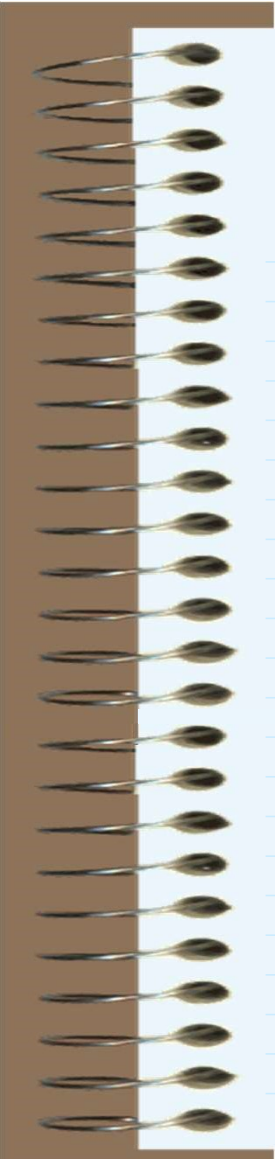
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Format, Admin, Lessons Re-Learned

Hybrid – "It is just unworkable to teach children online and in the classroom at the same time"

"School administrators have forgotten what it's like to be a teacher"

"Going online forced me to think about my content and my assessments, and what I learned will make me a better classroom teacher next year"



**Some K-12 teachers also talked about their students
in very positive ways**

"For most students, distance learning is a sub-par educational experience"

- low student energy and engagement
- easy and tempting to cheat

But teachers admired students' flexibility and maturity:


- students were kinder to each other
- more "independent learning"
- students could see what teachers were doing
and why they were doing it

And when they could not go,
students discovered how much they liked school



One student's personal experience:

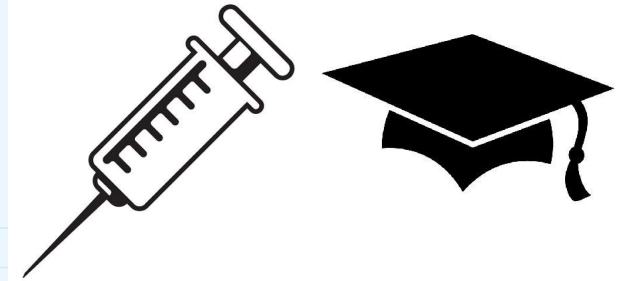
Meaghan, 9th grade

 2minuteEnglish

What have we learned?

Covid Online learning...

- Difficult and disappointing – but possible
- Takes special kinds of effort –
from the instructor and from the student
- Screen fatigue is exhausting – physically and emotionally
- All simultaneous with health concerns, bad economics, isolation, more
- Revealed that online learning opportunities, if very well done,
can be useful a modality in post-pandemic education
but cannot broadly replace in-person learning



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