

ONLINE LEARNING DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

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“Education is the best Legacy.” This is a quote that I always have at the back of my mind. I came from Nigeria, a country with a high value for education. I did not have a hard time blending in with the American system of education. I made sure to use every resource offered at my school. It was all going well for me until the sudden interference of the pandemic. It was like a tornado hit without warning and ruined everything.

It took a while for my school to decide how we were going to move on with learning. Other schools commenced online classes immediately, but my school was lagging behind. My teachers recommended that I catch up on my missing work while I wait for word from the school district, but I already turned in all my work while we were still in the school building. Finally, after a month of silence from the school district, my principal announced that online learning would commence for my school.

There was one problem I had with how my school wanted to move on with the learning. It was only going to benefit students with bad grades. It was a system put in place to help students with bad grades get higher grades. As a straight-A student, I was not required to attend any of the classes. Nonetheless, I had a conviction to attend the classes. I knew that at the end of the day, no knowledge is a waste. My teachers also recommended that I attend the classes as they would be teaching new material from the curriculum.

Online learning commenced on the 4th day of May 2020. It would eventually come to an end on the 12th day of June 2020. On the first day of the online classes, I logged in, and lo and behold I was the only one to attend among all my classmates. It was not a good experience for both me and my teacher. My teacher waited to see if anyone would attend, but no one did. These were students that the online learning system was put in place for. I was not that surprised. They hardly came to class even when they were in the school building. Thankfully, this only happened in my first class. People showed up as I moved from class to class.

After a while, even fewer people showed up to class. I was also discouraged after about three weeks. It was fun doing all the work from the school district, and broadening my knowledge, but for the last week of the online learning, I did not show up to any of the classes because my grades were really good, and I just wasn't assimilating anything new. Also, due to the civil unrest because of the tragic killing of George Floyd, all the teachers at my school just wanted to have open discussions for students to talk about how they were feeling and the impact of the civil unrest on their mental health and physical health. I was not interested in any of that.

In conclusion, it was a sad experience for me. I thrive in a physical classroom environment more than in an online classroom environment. My experience with online learning during the pandemic and the civil unrest has been discouraging. I hope it never happens again.

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