

JOURNALING DURING ISOLATION: THE GOLD STANDARD OF CORONAVIRUS

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The rapid development of the novel coronavirus has dominated global headlines for the last months and has drastically changed our routines. The pandemic is gradually changing the face of the normalcy in various dimensions that we are witnessing daily. This highly infectious disease has emptied social institutions, caused mass unemployment, and mandated obligatory social distancing. While many schools worldwide have been closed, students are attempting to adjust to online learning. With tremendous challenges coming along, students should continue to record their experiences during the pandemic because our journals, told in simple words and pictures, will recreate the unique story of a world in pause for the future generations.

Amid this extraordinary situation of uncertainty and confusion, many are sacrificing their convenience for the well-being of their communities. When educational institutions decided to shift to remote learning, many students were anxious. Being homebound and isolated from fellow students caused anxiety, struggles with self-regulation, and fears of falling behind with the content. Not only did students cope with the challenges of remote learning, but they also dealt with COVID-19, gruesome news around the world, death statistics, panic-buying, and most importantly, fears for an uncertain future.

As the threat of this infectious disease is exponentially increasing, everyone is confused by how to continue their daily lives and adjust to this unprecedented reality. The sudden disruption that the pandemic has caused has greatly exacerbated financial instability as well. Since social distancing was mandated, there has been a fluctuating availability of the most basic household products such as food, cleaning supplies, and even medicine. This situation has not only affected the working conditions, but the practices being followed for education and connection around the globe.

The reliance on the internet and technological supplies for employment, educational, and social engagement have been emphasized during the social isolation as most individuals consider it crucial to create virtual communities. Globally, students are using technology as a platform to build social networks and receive lessons from their teachers as their online classes or extracurricular programs continue.

Amidst the chaos that this disease has caused, it can be surely stated that COVID-19 has completely transformed scholastic experiences. The dichotomy of freedom from regular school and the feelings of loneliness plague our time at home - isolated from society.

But why is it essential for students to write and document their feelings during an unprecedented time like this?

It is because what we are experiencing is bizarre and will be marked in history. Future studies and historians will look back to essays and journals that ordinary people are writing now to describe life during coronavirus. Jane Kamensky, a professor of history at Harvard

University, claimed that "diaries and correspondences are a gold standard" and that "they are among the best evidence we have of people's inner worlds." When future studies consider these writings, first-person sources and accounts will be extremely useful to re-create the reality we are currently experiencing: a life where the past had a certainty that the present no longer possesses.

At a time when the world is hunkered down, people should make an effort to have their voices heard and record their own history. Keeping a journal or recording unfiltered thoughts during isolation may be deeply therapeutic practices, but are also helpful for describing life during coronavirus to future generations. Personal stories or even short descriptions of our daily routines are powerful ways of recording history and marking a memory of our existence. Simple moments - funny, difficult, strange, or comical - may give the future an insight into the apocalypse that the COVID-19 pandemic has created.

In a time when unusual scenes play out in abandoned parks, empty supermarkets, and quiet streets across the world, documenting the reality that surrounds us is crucial in remembering this time in history. Written feelings, unfiltered thoughts, or even short notes can help to share experiences and build solidarity among all people, specifically students, who are struggling to overcome the challenges of online education and trying to recover from the reality of COVID-19. These writing pieces, as easy

as they sound, will be essential in mapping the history we are currently living.

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