Remote Learning Experiences at SSU: Leniencies and Collective Disconnect

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Background

• Studies investigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young adults have primarily focused on their psychological well-being and mental health (e.g., Copeland et al. 2020; Son et al. 2020)

• Limited attention has been to study how the transition to remote learning influenced college students and how students’ social positions shape challenges they face.

Research Questions

• What are the major challenges and unforeseen benefits for college students with remote learning?

• How do college students create a new way of life for them to embrace “the new normal”?

Methods


• Sample: 27 SSU students between the ages of 18 to 35

• Sampling: Snowball sampling

• Analysis: Grounded theory

Findings 1: Learning Leniencies

• A handful of students find remote courses helpful as there is more leniency to online test-taking and ability to learn at a self-pace.

• More understanding and personal relationship with professors.

  “Just being online has actually helped me. I just feel like, I’ve been more engaged with the class and being able to ask questions, maybe because I don’t feel exposed, I feel more shield in my home that I’m like, I can talk about it.”

  Hailey, SOCI, 34

Findings 2: Cheating, Feelings of Guilt, and Unfairness

• Several students shared their cheating experiences to achieve top scores on exams. At the same time, they reported feelings of guilt and a sense of not feeling deserving of their grades due to the aspect of cheating.

  “I think it positively affected my outcome, because I don’t feel that tests were as hard being online, which, of course is a good thing. But I don’t I don’t feel like we’re getting that in classroom environment where we’re bouncing things off of each other and then like having to come in.”

  Roddy, ANTH, 21

Findings 3: Collective Disconnect

• As a whole, there is the presence of collective disconnect in some form or another in relation to remote learning.

• Lowered class engagement contributes to the experience of collective disconnect where accountability to engage with peers are weakened and for some nonexistent.

  “Everybody else would to stay quiet, or wouldn’t say anything or don’t want to participate. People can easily just turn off their camera and like, not participate, you know they’re still considered to be involved”

  Eduardo, SOCI, 30

Discussion

• A majority of students reported improved grades and academic performance in a remote setting.

• Students also reported their frequent cheating experiences, leading to feelings of guilt and unfairness.

• Little class engagement, lowered self-motivation and reduced interaction contributed to the experience of collective disconnect among their peers and professors.

References
