



Virtual Culture Building: First-Year Student Perspectives with Online Learning



Jim Quirk & Luis Alvarado

Spring 2020:

Survey of 150 High School Seniors
about what they want
if college begins online

Why IT Matters to Higher Education

EDUCAUSEreview

BETA
apsaEDUCATE

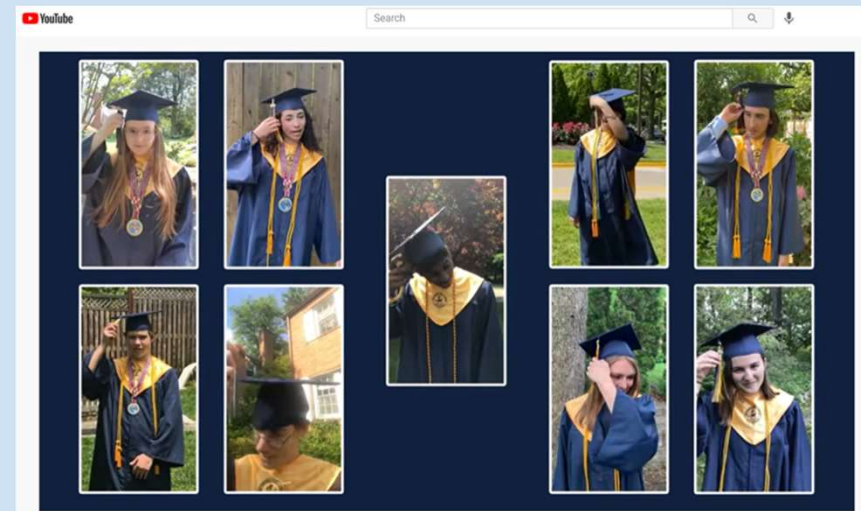
November 2020: So...How'd it go?

*These notes all at
govt396.com/AFC*

Spring 2020: What Students Want if College Begins Online

- good online teaching / prepared instructors
 - they recognized
 - they don't know what good online teaching/learning is, and
 - they don't know what good college teaching/learning is
- 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>

Nov 2020: So...how'd it go?

Interviewed 30 all-online first-year college students
- taking approximately 150 courses

13 from American University
17 from

Case Western
Fordham
Georgetown
Johns Hopkins
Loyola Maryland

Michigan State
NYU
Penn State
Towson
Glasgow (UK)
Ottawa (Canada)

Zoom interviews - began open-ended

- asked students if they had anything they wanted to start with

Followed with questions about

- teaching/learning
- connections with faculty and classmates
- what worked/didn't
- what do you wish your professors knew?

This is what the students said:



<https://www.amazon.com/American-University-Adjustable-Mask-Double-Reusable/dp/B08F3QT7HG>

Learning Environment

- some students have never been to campus
- students “not in a learning environment” vs “home is a safe place” to begin college work
- some tech/WiFi issues – students and professors



Making Connections?

- most students are making *zero or limited connections* with classmates and faculty – although some small classes are better than large ones
- classmates are "co-workers" – not friends
- no separation between social and school environments



https://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/facultystaff/images/KSB233_M_tout_3.JPG

Dos, Don'ts, and Reminders for Professors, Part 1

- morning classes difficult – esp in California!
- skip the busywork
- "teach!" – students “self-teaching” a lot (college, or online?)
- rapid, thoughtful feedback
- death by PowerPoint is real –
 give students some face time, activities - and a real book*
- spoonfeed me the details in the syllabus – what exactly is due when?
- be flexible with everything

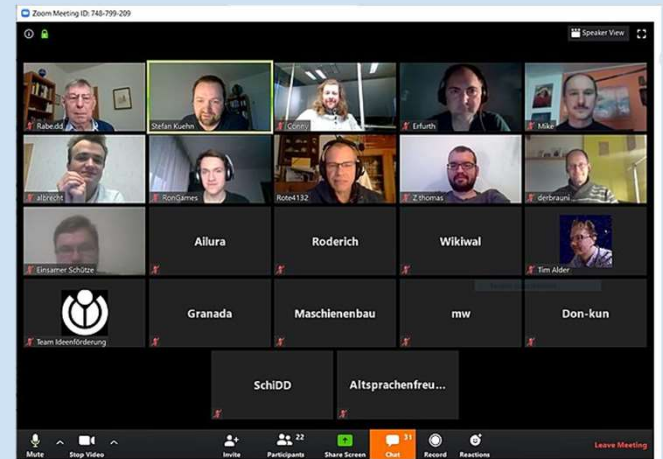
Dos, Don'ts, and Reminders for Professors, Part 2: Cameras and Break-out Rooms

-- Break-out rooms and group projects:

- “almost work; not quite” –
but no one solution and no easy solutions
- students disagree about what kinds of work to do, for how long,
and new vs ongoing groups
- but 3-5 students and peer review is good
- Consensus: Professors should not drop in
– let students do their thing

-- Students turn cameras

- on to hold themselves accountable
- off when not fully engaged
(but sometimes for bkgd/Internet)



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:162_-_Wikipedia-Stammtisch_Dresden_als_Videokonferenz_2020-03-28.jpg

“I wish professors knew...

- laptop burnout –
classes, friends, reading, writing: need breaks, need books
- if camera not on, very good chance not paying attention
- we [students] don't know what we're doing – online or in college
- require office-hours meetings – connections and acad guidance
- a number of students said they appreciate how hard some professors are trying - but they also have professors not interested in/committed to/good at this format
 - students want to make connections but don't know how

These notes all at: govt396.com/AFC

Connections are one of the key things students want
- with professors and with each other....

Luis will help us with some of this:

(Details on Luis Alvarado's presentation at
<https://www.american.edu/ctrl/conference.cfm>)

Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

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