Distance Learning: My Experience

Over the past several weeks students across America have been forced to adapt to a new normal, a way of life that includes going to school virtually from home. At first, this new way of teaching seemed super cool and appeared to be much easier for the students. Many students loved the idea of jumping out of bed and doing school work in their pajamas for just 20 minutes. This new way of teaching students is known as “distance learning.” Distance learning has brought some benefits but before schools make up their minds about using it going forward, consider some of these important reminders.

We are a generation of kids who already spend too much time using technology. Why would we want to spend several more hours a day in front of a computer screen? Why would we want to be isolated from being with friends and teachers we see on a daily basis?

A normal classroom setting gives students the opportunity for human connection and interaction with each other and their teachers. Distance learning also counts on the fact that technology has to be in place and working 100% of the time and we all know that glitches happen daily, making it hard to connect on time, connect at all, or even turn in school work.

Most middle school students that attend classes in a traditional environment tend to be more motivated than those learning in a virtual environment. Why you may ask? Because they tend to have support from their parents. They count on their parents to wake up on time . They count on their parents to provide them a ride to school or get outside to catch the bus on time. In a traditional classroom, students are also motivated by competition when answering questions or telling stories in front of other peers and teachers.

Distance learning also makes teaching hard for the teachers. Teachers have to rely on technology just as much as students. Teachers do not have full control of their classes because it is impossible to see what is going with every student. Students can be completely distracted doing other things and teachers might never notice. Group discussion also tends to be very short and many students seem to hold off from asking questions in a virtual setting.

I miss my friends. I miss my teachers. I miss my school. I miss walking the hallways and laughing or high fiving my buddies. Distance learning might have its place but not in middle school. This is our only time to still be kids before the real world starts to creep in. Save distance learning for the college kids.