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History 129A

Professor Ruiz

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May 15, 2020

The Covid-19 epidemic, like those that came before it, has changed my life and the life of those around me. It has changed my academic, social and economic life in many ways. From my daily schedule to the way in which my family and I approach our finances has changed dramatically. The world has been heavily impacted by the outbreak of Coronavirus, my family in the United States has been affected just as much as my family living in Guatemala. There are many habits that have had to be adapted globally. For example, the use of face masks, social distancing and washing your hands extremely often. The world has changed greatly in a very short period of time. We have gone from a society that praises CEO's and movie stars, to one who acknowledges the importance of grocery store employees and janitors. Our life post pandemic will be different than it was, for a while the world will be a mess but we hope to make the necessary changes to create a society that is better than the one we had pre covid-19.

Media and Mental Health

One of the most horrifying things to do during this crisis is to sit and watch the news. Not only has there been much misinformation going around media outlets, but they intentionally make their news more alarming. Although it is true, the number of people who have become sick with the coronavirus has reached well over 1 Million in the United States and the number of deaths only rises, there have also been many people who have recovered. Instead of showing positive and negative sides such as the high numbers of those recovering, the media has chosen to dramatize the pandemic and spread fear and anxiety to the community. This pandemic is nothing to be taken lightly but I believe there is a more factual way to spread news. Personally, I love to stay updated on my community and the world, the way in which I have been doing this is by reading reports online and tracking the curve. Watching the news has always given me much

anxiety but lately it has turned unbearable, I am often too sad and mentally unstable to continue my school work and other activities from the way the news outlets are portraying the pandemic. The mental health of many people living in the United states has already begun to deteriorate due to being in quarantine and experiencing this pandemic. Hearing many people are dying and struggling in this time in a way that can be considered dramatized is only worsening the mental health of many Americans. I have personally struggled with mental health from a very early age, and this pandemic has made it very hard to sustain a healthy mental state. Both of my parents have also struggled with mental health in the past and Covid-19 has made it very difficult for them as well. News outlets do not report anything else anymore, there have been many cases of violence due to racism in the United states recently but none have been broadcasted heavily. I believe this also adds to the anxiety, specifically in brown and black communities. We are not only faced with the pandemic but also with the fear of being the targets of violence due to race.

Education

Transitioning to online school has been one of the most difficult things during the covid-19 outbreak. For the past three years I was accustomed to attend lectures physically and had created a schedule for myself which included work, clubs and free time. When I began to transition to online learning I thought it would mean more time to finish assignments and free time to relax, this was not the case at all. For the first two weeks of online learning I could not get myself to follow a schedule, I was sleeping in and staying up very late to finish readings and lectures and ultimately stressing myself out. It was not until the third week of this year's spring quarter that I began to have somewhat of a schedule which has helped me immensely. It is still difficult to focus on school work when I am at home quarantined with my family but I continue to improve

my study habits and am adjusting to online school. Unfortunately, this is not the case for my 10-year-old brother, for my brother and his 3rd grade class the transition to online school has been very chaotic. For the first few weeks my little brother was on vacation, his teachers did not assign online homework and he did not have the work books necessary to complete physical homework assigned by his teacher. Now his teacher was able to get workbooks to the students and has set up zoom classes, but many students are still not able to participate. Many students specifically those in low income households do not have access to Wi-Fi and computers and they have not been able to attend online classes, for others it is very difficult to complete assignments due to their parents not being able to help them in case they do not understand a lesson. For one reason or another it has been very difficult for students to continue to learn online. For my little brother, specifically it is difficult for him to sit through 5-6 hours of online school. He has lots of energy and would rather be outside riding his bike or playing soccer. It is a constant struggle getting him to complete assignments and spend time reading, considering that we have all the supplies and skills necessary for him to complete his school work. I have noticed that only seven out of his class of 25 students connect to the online zoom meeting, as mentioned before many students cannot access classes due to circumstances at home, this leaves me very troubled because I know this is the case for many low-income minority students across the United states. In the future, this will hurt our students, they will be behind their peers who live across town and are from wealthy families. I believe the education board could have handled this pandemic in a different way, maybe offering free Wi-Fi to families or offering over the phone tutoring for students.

Unemployment and its effects on the community

Unemployment is not uncommon in the age of coronavirus, I have seen many families lose their jobs and struggle to make ends meet. In particular one of my close friends and his family have all lost their jobs. Unfortunately, they live paycheck to paycheck and did not have any savings to sustain them through this pandemic. They have struggled so much to pay their rent and put food on their family table. My friend's family represents many families in the United states during the time of covid-19. Many have lost their jobs, and are scared of applying for financial aid due to immigration status or other legal reasons. My family and I have been very fortunate, my dad is an essential worker whose job is very consistent and my mother is a nanny who was being paid weekly. I was also fortunate enough to continue receiving work study, this allowed us to continue living very comfortably in the beginning of the pandemic. Unfortunately, my mom's employers have recently lost their jobs therefore leaving my mom unemployed as well. My family counts on my mom's employment very heavily and we have gone into a state of urgency. My mom has applied for unemployment and is saving as much as possible if she is not able to receive aid. I am applying for as many scholarships and financial aid opportunities as I can, but it has proven to be very difficult. We are fortunate enough to have two people in our household still receiving income, but we never imagined that we would be in this situation. Coronavirus has changed our economic lives and the lives of thousands of families in the United states.

How the future will be different

Many things have changed in 2020, one of them being the way in which nurses, grocery store employees, janitors and exterminators are treated. They are now considered to be essential workers. This word has been used a lot recently because that is what they are, we as a society are

not able to function without them. We have made commercials, billboards and hundreds of videos thanking them for their service. This is a big change from life before coronavirus, these jobs were often treated as low level jobs and those who possess them were not treated with as much respect as they deserve. We hope that after coronavirus and in the future those with these essential jobs are compensated for their work in the community. When we begin to transition to post coronavirus life, essential workers need to be paid and treated correctly. Essential workers are often paid minimum wage and not given health insurance. I hope we have learned how important they are to our communities and treat them as such. A very necessary trend that I believe will continue is the use of face masks, similarly to Asia the use of face masks will continue well after the coronavirus. People will want to continue taking precautions. Similarly, teaching children the importance of washing their hands will be heightened. As young children, we were all taught how to wash our hands but schools and families will take this a step further because of this experience. We can only hope the future is different in a positive way, many people continue to say they just want life to go back to how it was pre covid-19, they do not realize we as a society have many things that need to change. Things such as universal health care, fair pay for all and respect for all members of our society need to be prioritized now and continue post covid-19.

How it relates to other topics from this class.

Covid-19 has not been the only epidemic in history, epidemics can be traced as early as the 18th century. When the ships from Castile landed in the Americas there was an outbreak of smallpox and syphilis. Similarly, to covid-19 this pandemic spread by travel from one continent to another,

and people coming in contact with each other. The pandemics of the 18th century was very deadly similarly to coronavirus. As professor Ruiz states, Sickness killed more people than the Castilians ever could. (Ruiz, (April 30,2018) We can see many similarities between the pandemic of the Americas and covid-19 one of them being that death is not the only thing we are facing. Although we are all scared of becoming ill and passing, there are many other fears we are facing. In "The siege of Tenochtitlan" it states, "A great many died from this plague, and many after died from hunger." Many natives of the Americas faced other conditions due to their pandemic, they were not able to feed themselves and died of hunger. This relates greatly to the situation of the United states many are sick with the virus but others are experiencing other affects. Similar to Tenochtitlan many American cannot provide food for their families, others are experiencing mental health problems due to the virus and so on.

The coronavirus has impacted the entire world in one way or another, we have all had to make changes in our lives for the greater good of the world population. This virus is causing distress in more ways than anyone could have ever imagined. We are losing loved ones, having financial difficulties and trouble adjusting to our social distancing rules. It will take a very long time to bring the world back to normal, all we could hope for is that the new normal is a step forward from the old one. That we as a global nation have learned we must look out for each other in these difficult times and treat all members of our communities with the respect they deserve.

