

**Interviewee:** Anonymous High School Sophomore

**Interviewer:** Jackson Clements

**Date:** December 8, 2020

**Format:** Video Recording, Zoom

**Location:** La Crosse, Wisconsin

**Transcriber:** Jackson Clements

**Additional Transcription Equipment used:** Zoom audio transcription

**Project in association with:** University Wisconsin-Eau Claire

**Abstract:**

My interviewee wanted to remain anonymous, but he is a high school sophomore in the La Crosse county school district. In this interview we discussed how school has changed since COVID hit La Crosse. We talked about his school life as well as his personal and social life and the impacts of COVID.

**JC:** So hello I am with a high school sophomore student and his father and I'm going to read out the informed consent. They'd like to remain anonymous I have the father present just because since the student is a minor. I just want to make sure that the father knows what he's signing up for and I've gotten consent from both. So I want to thank you for your interest in participating in the important oral history project. This project is organized by the public history programming collaboration with the McIntyre Libraries Special Collections and Archives Department at the University Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Your participation will help us build a resource for future generations to understand the impacts of the Chippewa Valley and Wisconsin. So I want to thank you to our interviewee. And also I would like to just get a verbal consent from the father to make sure that this is okay that his student is conducting this interview. So again, I just have the father of the student just make sure that he also looked at the consent forms and just verify that he is okay with this student conducting this interview.

**AN Father:** I am okay with him being interviewed

**JC:** Thank you and if we are ready to go I will get right to the interview is that ok with you guys

**AN:** Yeah

**JC:** Thank you very much. So as a sophomore in high school has it changed a lot since last year or was last year kind of similar to whats going on now?

**AN:** It's a little bit different but I mean, as time goes on it becomes a little bit more uncertain on whats to come so. Our schedules change and adjust its different though last year was a little bit free a little bit loose, did you kind of do homework in class whenever you want. But now we have we actually follow a strict schedule like we were in school.

**JC:** Right. So how have you been dealing with all this craziness going on? Have you been doing okay at home or oh I mean the social part of it is kind of

**AN:** Dumb putting I guess, but I mean any other way I can still easily call up my friends or play games with the via games and we can still connect but otherwise its pretty much just the same. It doesn't affect anything else but my social life.

**JC:** So, socially have you been able to go out with your friends and do some of the similar things that you used to do before COVID or has it been pretty restricting?

**AN:** Um, whenever activities you know get bigger than 15 and it has affected but as far as hanging out with friends that's really changed a lot.

**JC:** Well that's good to hear. Good to see that you're getting some social interaction. So what is all this been like for you as a high schooler and you know you're a sophomore you know freshman year was on I think I believe half and half for you and now its full time online so how was it? How was it as a sophomore?

**AN:** Not bad. I'm not mad at all because this hasn't really affected me my first as a freshman and hopefully it won't affect my last as a senior. So really I've been fine.

**JC:** How have you been dealing with the classes are the classes going well or?

**AN:** They're a little bit hard because they try to jam pack the normal amount of content we would get in a single week and in just a couple of classes so that's been challenging. But since we get a lot of time kind of balance that out a little bit

**JC:** With all the schooling being online are you do you feel overwhelmed with it? Do you feel it manageable?

**AN:** I feel like I could be doing so much more

**JC:** How do you feel in terms of workload?

**AN:** It feels just about the same, like I said, they kind of condense everything but they also give you enough time to deal with that properly

**JC:** Right and have the teachers been pretty, not lenient but they've been willing to work with you since it is all online and it is a new platform for you and for them. So have they been willing to work with you if you have issues?

**AN:** Oh yeah, they have a couple thing they do to make sure that people get the right amount of help.

**JC:** Right. So enough about school. What have you been doing ever since this quarantine? Have you been living the life about the same, I mean we've been going out to do anything fun with friends? How was it how has that impacted your life in general?

**AN:** Um, well I mean I really like before this I love to watch movies with my family in the theater like new ones. You know you'd see trailers and you get excited, but I guess now its all been to whatever I can find in my house, which is kind of lame and boring, and I mean yeah that's about it.

**JC:** Okay, so overall has COVID really impacted you life considerably would you say?

**AN:** Um, not really. Um, ill come out of this fine I mean its not something I'll easily forget for sure but hasn't really changed my view on things although they have limited certain things that I can do doesn't really affect me severely

**JC:** So has anything good come out of COVID for you? Has there been kind of like a shining, you know, shining star that you've been, that you've gotten out of this where it could be an advancement in something or just something that you've actually kind of found enjoyable during all this?

**AN:** Um, I'm not sure um. I guess I've had more time to practice some skills that I learned from school and I don't know. I think it's definitely the shining star for me would be the time I do with my family. I got a lot of it since I'm at home and I guess being away from school. I mean I'm not a very like entirely social person so kind of being in my house and in school every day kind of relief.

**JC:** So if you were back in school what social activities would you be doing?

**AN:** Well, I mean we'd be all around the lunch table telling each other what we did in class and stuff. But I mean, yeah, you just get to see your friends what they're doing in class, and I guess its easier for learning.

**JC:** So has COVID taken away any like extracurricular activities from you that you would have been doing at this time?

**AN:** Um not entirely, I don't do any sports but you know um I did hear that my buddy is running so kind of running cross so for me no but um for sports players I think it has a lot.

**JC:** There any other hobbies or other things that you used to do and it doesn't have to be as a sport if can be a club or band, choir? Any of the other extracurricular activities that isn't a sport has those impacted you at all?

**AN:** Um, yeah. Um, I mean I used to play pep band for the basketball team, the football team and I mean its not something major, its something just fun that I get to do I get to play and then watch the game. So, I mean, I guess that's been affected because now I see a lot of sports being played.

**JC:** So are you still playing? Are you still practicing for because who know when this will be over? That they might come back in the spring or next year, have you been practicing to keep up for when they do come back?

**AN:** Yeah, I have and they make sure that we do as well because its not something like I said that they kind of let loose still kind of they want to replicate the idea of school, except you know without the social part of it.

**JC:** Hmm. So how has that been for you with because obviously its all virtual, so how was playing virtual been for you?

**AN:** Its been all right um some tools have been made available to us to allow us to not exactly normal but kind of play normal and practice on to the point where we can get better just as if we were in regular school.

**JC:** So I'm going to a little more about these virtual band sessions, because obviously you know they instructor is not going to have everyone play at once because that would just feel like that would just be information overload. And so do each of you play individually for him and show your progress or how does that work with the individual sessions?

**AN:** Right now, we submit a mix like sometimes he'll say okay go off and practice this part because we still get pieces, um, so he'll say go practice, you know, this group of measures by yourself or there's an app called upbeat where a lot of us can record and then sync it so it can play together as if we were all together, playing band, so its really a mix. But those are the most common things.

**JC:** Nice, and what instrument are you playing right now that you're focusing on?

**AN:** French horn and trumpet

**JC:** Nice, very nice. Which one's your favorite?

**AN:** Trumpet

**JC:** Trumpet your favorite

**AN:** Yeah its easy to play

**JC:** Easier to play that's good to hear you're getting some social interaction at least with your teachers on and it sounds like your getting enough social interaction with your friends as long as its under 15 people. So how many people have do you know have either had COVID or you've heard that someone has had COVID? Is it pretty significant or is it kind of a small number, where you can count them on one hand?

**AN:** I'm not sure I've heard people have gotten it from school, but no one close to me, none of my friends or my family

**JC:** Well that's good to hear. So what about family life for you? How has family life been?

**AN:** Well, its been nice because I've been able to see my brother more which was pretty cool. Um, its lonely around the house, my mom works, my dad works a little bit so its nice to have a full house again.

**JC:** So are you home alone for the majority of the time?

**AN:** Oh no me, my dad, um usually see each other a lot but I mean, I'd say at least half the day.

**JC:** And what do you usually do for that half of the day?

**AN:** Well do school or do school work. If it was a rare case occasion on the weekend I'd play video games with friends or I'm going to call

**JC:** Nice. So when its not school time so mainly on the weekends what would you say your life is, is it pretty wide open or I mean obviously with all the restrictions that are put in place restricted in that sense. But is it still pretty wide open to what you are capable of doing?

**AN:** Pretty much yeah, pretty much

**JC:** So what would you say is like an average Saturday and Sunday for you?

**AN:** Uh, I wake up, I eat breakfast, I shower, I usually try to finish my schoolwork on Saturday and then I have the whole day wide open to me and then Sunday I sleep in for however long I want and repeat.

**JC:** Nice. So what is one thing outside of the house that you've been kind of doing to just get out of the house or I mean it could be anything, but is there something that you do commonly that just to get out of the house because what I've been hearing so far is that you're trapped not trapped, but you are in the house a lot? So is there any activity or something that you'd like to do just to get out of the house?

**AN:** Um, the go on white on this. I go on walks, I bike sometimes and if I noticed my parents were making a trip somewhere like the store or to make an errand run I'll go with them just to get out to see what the outside world is like.

**JC:** Mm hmm. Are you surprised sometimes when you step out into the light? Are you surprised of certain things being there or not being there

**AN:** I don't know I mean I really sure it seems like the world just goes on the same which kind of makes it weird feels like that everyone's cooped up in their house, but the same time the world is moving just the same

**JC:** So you would say that the world has changed obviously but it hasn't changed a whole lot?

**AN:** Right right

**JC:** That's interesting, um lets see, so with COVID would you say that this has been a good experience like obviously its not a good experience but a good learning experience for you as I mean you went from in person class to now virtual. Would you say that experience has been good?

**AN:** Oh

**JC:** I guess the real question is do you prefer in person classes or do you prefer virtual classes?

**AN:** Again, hard to say. I almost forgot what a in person class felt like, um, but I mean I don't know. I really can't say they both have their trade offs and their benefits. Sorry, I was gonna say that, I think I like virtual its nice because I get more time with people.

**JC:** Hmm. Uh what would that be your main benefit of doing virtual classes is time with people I guess?

**AN:** Oh yeah, I'm sorry I meant family, sorry.

**JC:** Your family okay that's okay.

**AN:** Yeah, yeah I mean

**JC:** So what would be the main benefit of virtual class not looking at the family aspect of it just virtual, what would you say some of the benefits are?

**AN:** I get more time to work, meaning I get more time to do things around the house or with friends.

**JC:** Okay, so what would be some of the negatives of virtual class that you've experienced so far?

**AN:** Um, it can have its short spikes of stress for me. Um, sometimes will absolutely load the week with work and that can be stressful, but I think that said.

**JC:** So speaking of stress, how have you been dealing with all of this? Is there an outlet that you go to, to just kind of relieve some stress or just get away from all the school work all the COVID things that are going on?

**AN:** Yeah, either I talk to friends or listen to music stuff like that.

**JC:** What would you say your favorite genre of music is

**AN:** Uh, classic rock I think

**JC:** Classic rock, heck yeah. You have a favorite song?

**AN:** Uh no there's too many

**JC:** Too many, nice. So music and talking with friends are your main outlet, but on a personal note for you, how have you been dealing with you know mental health has been kind of a big issue on the rise. How have you been dealing with that?

**AN:** Um.

**JC:** Yeah I guess how have you been dealing with you mental health during these times?

**AN:** Uh, I guess just sucking it in so I can get in, um, I don't know so

**JC:** So when you say sucking it in, does that mean you're holding it in ?

**AN:** Yep, just biting my cheek?

**JC:** Waiting for the dam to break or?

**AN:** Not necessarily, I know its as if, like I'm biting my cheek and moving on, you know, like this is going to pass and I'm not really too worried about my mental health because I don't think this is going to be forever, you know.

**JC:** So mental health wise, you're doing good would you say?

**AN:** Yeah yeah, I'm doing okay.

**JC:** Doing okay. Well I'm glad that you're doing okay and not suffering from any of the mental health issues because I'm sure I've been talking to some of my other friends and it's been kind of rampant right now, just because everyone's cooped up but I'm happy to hear you were doing well and that you are not really suffering from any mental health issues at the moment. So alright um lets see, so with COVID I guess obviously you're a sophomore so you're thinking about maybe getting a job because I know for me around sophomore, junior year of high school is when I was really starting about thinking about getting a job. Would have you been looking into getting a job and trying to excel or just make a little money or just excel as a person? During this time have you been looking?

**AN:** Oh no, I've been really bust with schoolwork, and things outside of school that have been taking my time and I really don't think I'm this is the time to get a job I think. Anything that's not a um, essential business is kind of suffering a little bit and I really don't want to do. I feel like those essential businesses or whatever are really fast and I really don't want to throw myself into a kind of I mean I feel like it'd be a high stress situation. If you were to look at like fast food and stuff like that. I haven't thought about it at all.

**JC:** Mm hmm. So have you been doing any chores or jobs around the house to maybe make a little bit of money because you were saying earlier that with online classes that you have a little bit more time on your hands. SO have you been doing other things around the house to maybe earn a little bit of money.

**AN:** Um, no not really. I don't really need the money right now. So I mean I have been doing chores to answer your question.

**JC:** Okay.

**AN:** But not really to get money

**JC:** Just to help out the family

**AN:** Indeed

**JC:** Well I think that is all the questions I have for you, and I want to thank you so much for conducting this interview. It's been very insightful and I'm happy that you agreed to do this

**AN:** No problem at all

**JC:** Alright, so thank you so much again and you have a wonderful day

**AN:** You too.