**COVID-19**

Bella Brown

Department of English, East Carolina University

ENGL 1100 Foundations of College Writing

Dr. Cheryl Dudasik-Wiggs

Spring 2021

**COVID 19**

When Covid-19 hit in March of 2020, I, like many others my age, did not take it seriously and saw it as a prolonged spring break. We were excited at the thought of not having school for a week, unaware of the storm that was about to hit. It was not until we had to start attending zoom calls that I started to understand that this was going to most likely be long-term. I decided about a week after school was cancelled that it would be a good idea to stop working at my job for a while until I could decide whether or not it was the right choice to work through a pandemic.

About 2 weeks after in person school was cancelled, my family had to start the process of moving; right before Covid hit, my mother had just signed a yearlong lease for a house in Fuquay, which was about a 30-minute drive from where we were currently living. Throughout the first few weeks of the pandemic response in North Carolina we were consistently traveling back and forth between Fuquay and Apex to move all the boxes and furniture we had. We wouldn’t stop and go in anywhere during our trips, at most we would go through a drive thru for a quick meal while driving. However, during our trips the roads looked like as if life was normal; it seemed that daily life in Wake County continued with the virus spreading. Parking lots were filled with people going in and out of stores and restaurants, driving in cars with other people, while rarely keeping 6 feet between each other and wearing face coverings. It shocked me that so many people of all ages were not taking what I view as simple precautions for health; it felt like I was watching people leave a public bathroom without washing their hands. It did seem to get better as time went on, however I cannot stop myself from wondering what condition our state would be in right now if people took precautions in the first few weeks of the pandemic.

About a month and a half into the pandemic, Apex High came out with a chart to help guide students like me about what is expected of them during the pandemic. Almost everyone had to continue participating in classes through zoom calls or whatever else their teachers set up for them, except for the seniors. Seniors, like me, were able to either continue working to get a grade that will go to their GPA, or they could take the Pass/Fail option where if you were passing all your classes at the time the pandemic started you could opt out of a grade and get a Pass for your classes that would not go towards your GPA. Since it was about halfway into the second semester of our senior year and most of us had already been accepted or confirmed with a college, the vast majority of us took the Pass/Fail option. The last zoom meeting I attended was in early April, about 2 months before the end of the semester. Although this took away a great deal of my stress, it was this that set in the realization that life would not be returning to normal anytime soon; I wasn’t able to see my friends everyday like I did in school, I wasn’t able to work, or go out and have productive or fun days.

At that point in my life, it was exactly what I needed; I was going through a lot mentally and emotionally so having all that free time to myself and not having to worry about responsibilities, deadlines, or plans felt like a huge weight being lifted off my chest. While all my friends were upset about not getting a prom or graduation, I was ecstatic for not having to be forced to attend them later, and that I could easily isolate myself for as long as I wanted. Unfortunately, that feeling only lasted for so long. Each day started to blend, and life felt so bland. Every day I would wake up, feed my cats, play video games, make food while cleaning my living room and kitchen, play more games, make another meal, play more games, then go to sleep. I became incredibly bored of this nonstop routine only a couple weeks in but lacked the resources to do anything else productive or fun; I started looking not for things to do that I would typically enjoy, and instead look for what will pass the time the fastest so I could go ahead and sleep. Living through the day started to feel like another chore on my list that I had to do and took a great toll on me mentally. I went back to work in late June to try and restore my motivation and break the cycle, and it worked; I was getting social interaction, feeling appreciated by my bosses’, putting my time to good use, and getting paid for all of it. I was still worried about the risk of the virus but luckily my usual station was one with limited face-to-face interactions with customers and our restaurant was taking several different health precautions. If I did not go back to my job when I did, it would have been severely difficult for me to get through the next few months before college started. Through this pandemic I learned that although taking time for myself can feel great at first, but I try to live my entire life that way it will make life worse for me rather than better. In order to keep myself healthy and happy, I need things to look forward to and goals for me to accomplish.