# Audio file

2023 American Government Interviews.mp3

# Transcript

00:00:00 C4 Patino

The coronavirus pandemic in 2019 has had a profound impact on nearly every aspect of people's lives, from social interactions to work and education, with schools and universities around the world closing their doors to slow the spread of the virus, virtual learning became the new norm almost overnight. As governments and institutions struggled to contain the virus and minimize its impact, teachers and students found themselves in art chartered territory, forced to adopt to a whole new way of learning with online classes, video lectures and virtual exams. In this series of interviews, we'll be exploring the experiences of the individuals of CSMB class of 2024 who have gone through this transition to virtual learning during their freshman year. We’ll be asking them about the challenges they faced, the advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning, and how it affected their personal and academic lives in the context of the global pandemic. It is the hope that these interviews will shed some light on the impact of virtual learning during the pandemic and provide insight into how we can improve and adopt our educational systems in the face of future crises.

00:01:15 C4 Patino

Our first interview was conducted with Ben Schultz and Ethan Barr.

00:01:19 Ben Schultz

My name is Ben Schultz.

00:01:21 Ethan Barr

My name is Ethan Barr. We are both juniors, yeah.

00:01:24 Ben Schultz

So class of 2024.

00:01:27 C4 Patino

So did either of you guys find it difficult to stay motivated and engaged during virtual classes, and if so how did you deal with it?

00:01:35 Ben Schultz

Yes. Oh my God.

00:01:36 Ethan Barr

Yeah, definitely.

00:01:39 Ethan Barr

So like when you're a virtual, right, you're sitting there, you're in a chair or like some other couch or whatever you got. Right. And you have your laptop on your lap, right? And you have a video call with your teachers. And it's just. It's interesting because like you're sitting at home, but in school at the same time.

00:01:57 Ben Schultz

Yeah, you're surrounded by things.

That you want to do.

But technically can't.

00:02:01 Ethan Barr

Yeah, like for example, you could just be watching TV and like just look down at the camera every.

00:02:05 Ben Schultz

Yeah, yeah, yeah, I did that a couple times.

00:02:09 Ethan Barr

So yes, there is some challenges with staying focused virtual.

00:02:13 Ben Schultz

It is nice to roll out of bed at 8:00 o'clock and get on class at 8:05. But it's yeah, it was really hard. It was hard just to stay focused. It's hard to get anything done pretty much because when you're looking at your laptop for 8 hours a day and not moving at all, I mean I guess moving is an option but.

00:02:31 Ethan Barr

But you're at home too, so it's. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:02:33 C4 Patino

So speaking of bed, did you ever attend classes in bed?

00:02:38 Ben Schultz

I did not pay attend classes in bed, but I did just like skip a couple. A couple of my classes were definitely claimed to Minecraft.

00:02:44 Ethan Barr

Ohh yeah. For me personally, I slept in like bed every single day I was up, I got my computer on my lap, have a bowl of cereal. I was ready. I was set.

00:02:58 Ben Schultz

Yeah, I always got out of bed, but usually that just meant that I got out of bed, walked to the couch and laid down. A couple days I went outside, that was fun, but yeah.

00:03:08 C4 Patino

So how often would you say you were distracted during class?

00:03:13 Ben Schultz

85% of the time.

00:03:15 Ethan Barr

85 is a rookie numbers.

00:03:22 Ben Shultz

That’s funny. I thought that you were gonna say that really high.

00:03:23 C4 Patino

Ethan, rookie numbers? What's yours?

00:03:26 Ethan Barr

Like, that's like a solid like 98, something like that. I was focusing on school, right? But I'm in bed at the same time. Like you can't be like writing things down while you're laying down

00:03:39 C4 Patino

Ever fall asleep in class last year or…?

00:03:40 Ethan Barr

Not very often, not surprisingly.

00:03:42 C4 Patino

You definitely think that was a disadvantage of virtual learning, right?

00:03:46 Ethan Barr

I would say no, honestly. I mean well actually I’d say yes.

00:03:50 Ben Schultz

I didn't learn anything, but I sure had a fun year.

00:03:53 Ethan Barr

Yeah. It was a very fun year. Surprisingly it was very non stressful for me personally.

00:03:57 Ben Schultz

Yeah, yeah, that's true. There was not a lot of stress.

00:04:00 Ethan Barr

And also like we had the thing where there was our substitute teacher for PLTW, and that was basically, for me personally, the last period of the day which is more or less a free period for us, as long as we did our work.

00:04:13 C4 Patino

Do you guys think there were any advantages to virtual learning?

00:04:17 Ben Schultz

The low stress, definitely there is a lot less. I mean… I feel like generally in our junior class, there's not a ton of social pressure, at least not the kinds of things you'd expect from high school. There's there's not like rampant bullying or or nobody is really.

00:04:32 Ethan Barr

Yeah, that's true.

00:04:35 Ben Schultz

Made fun of for the things that they, I mean, you're talking to. You're interviewing Ben Schultz here.

00:04:42 Ethan Barr

You're right.

00:04:43 Ben Schultz

So I'm the captain of shenanigans. But so it was. It was definitely nice. To have that year just kind of it was… very relaxing, maybe not good for for education… but very relaxing.

00:04:57 Ethan Barr

That's true.

00:04:58 C4 Patino

So how do you think your social life?

00:05:03 Ben Schultz

Um what social life? At least that year, yeah.

00:05:06 Ethan Barr

Are you talking like specifically freshman year or like in general freshman year?

00:05:09 C4 Patino

Yeah, for freshman year.

00:05:11 Ethan Barr

I mean, you're a freshman, you're just coming to school, you don’t have very much social life plus you're online.

00:05:17 Ben Schultz

Yeah, you don't even know.

00:05:19 Ethan Barr

Like there's the occasional like waving to people across the screens like other than that, if you have their number, you're golden.

00:05:22 Ben Schultz

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:05:26 Ethan Barr

But if you don't have their number, then you're just like.

00:05:28 Ben Schultz

Then you're toast, yeah.

00:05:29 Ethan Barr

Wow, you're a small circle on a screen. That's crazy.

00:05:32 C4 Patino

Yeah, I think you would have made more friends if you were in person?

00:05:36 Ethan Barr

I would say, yeah.

00:05:37 Ben Schultz

Well, I think just being around people, even if you're not trying to make friends, exposes you to those kind of situations.

00:05:45 Ethan Barr

Back to your previous question, there's some like advantages and disadvantages like some of the disadvantages you can't make like friends or like connections with other people because you're obviously part of the screen. But advantages would be like… Oh, what's up, Alia? Anyway, so advantages would be like you relaxed at home, but again disadvantages. Of course, being you can't talk to other people

00:06:09 C4 Patino

That concludes the interview with Ben Schultz and Ethan Barr. This next interview was conducted with Ricky Troung, another junior here at collegiate.

00:06:20 Ricky Truong

Oh, my name is Ricky Truong. I'm a Junior at Collegiate School of Medicine and Bioscience, of the class of 2024.

00:06:28 C4 Patino

What do you think were some of the biggest challenges you faced while having virtual classes during the pandemic?

00:06:34 Ricky Truong

I find it hard to like actually participate in class because I'm kind of like introverted, so I didn't really like talk. So it it was kind of like hard to like answer questions that the teacher would ask and I didn't really… find it… I found it difficult to unmute my mic and kind of talk and then when doing class work it was kind of hard to do the class work because I I could get easily distracted because I have my phone and laptop and I couldn’t only like focus on class.

00:07:10 C4 Patino

So you were easily distracted huh.

00:07:12 Ricky Truong

Huh. Yeah, you could say that.

00:07:14 C4 Patino

That what kind of distractions would you indulge in?

00:07:18 Ricky Truong

I would usually like watch some YouTube videos or like, you know, play some games, you know.

00:07:25 C4 Patino

You know any other people who might have done the same?

00:07:30 Ricky Truong

I… I think I do. I think I was doing it with some other people, so. And you would say that… uh… we were not productive.

00:07:44 C4 Patino

So this was fairly common across junior class then?

00:07:49 Ricky Truong

Yeah, I think I would say so. Not many people, people who did pay attention in class, right? But I I wouldn't say we were like fully engaged in the class, so. We didn't really learn as much as we should have.

00:08:04 C4 Patino

Uh huh. Do you think you were able to receive the same quality of education for virtual learning as you would have in person?

00:08:11 Ricky Truong

I don't think so because in person you have more social interactions and… though you can have teachers help you more often and that would result in learning more.

00:08:25 C4 Patino

Do you think there were any advantages to virtual learning?

00:08:29 Ricky Truong

Uh, you can, like some people are independent like myself. I didn't really like need to ask the teacher for help. And so the asynchronous learning time that we had really helped because I could be productive and have more time for myself as well.

00:08:47 C4 Patino

So how was your personal life before the pandemic?

00:08:53 Ricky Truong

I would go outside more often and have more social interaction with others, but after the pandemic I didn't really go outside of my house that much. I'd only go outside to like touch grass and… um… so yeah.

00:09:15 C4 Patino

So do you think you would have made more friends your freshman year if you hadn't?

00:09:20 Ricky Truong

I probably would have, maybe I don't really. I'm introverted, right? So I have it. I have a hard time talking to others, so I don't know if I would be able to make other friends, but I sure would be able to talk more to… talk to more people.

00:09:36 C4 Patino

So being an introvert, did you feel a lot of social isolation with virtual learning? Or were you fine?

00:09:43 Ricky Truong

I was fine because I normally talk to people I'm fine with talking to people like online through a computer.

00:09:51 C4 Patino

Through a computer, huh?

00:09:52 Ricky Truong

Yes, they're a computer because they don't need to see my face. So it's it's a lot easier to talk.

00:10:00 C4 Patino

That concludes the interview with Ricky Chuang.

00:10:03 C4 Patino

This next interview was conducted with Emily Matheny and Kit Roesch.

00:10:08 Kit Roesch

I'm Kit Roesch. I'm a junior.

00:10:11 Emily Matheny

I'm Emily Matheny. I'm also a junior.

00:10:14 C4 Patino

So during your freshman year, did you find it difficult to stay motivated and engaged during virtual classes, and if so, how did you deal with it?

00:10:26 Kit Roesch

For me, being virtual was great. I like to work at my own pace and typically that tends to be a faster pace. So I liked that I could get my work done quickly and then move on with my life.

00:10:38 Emily Matheny

Yeah, I was very similar. I came to Collegiate after being home schooled through 8th grade, so I was very used to, you know, working at my own pace. And so I'm normally very responsible person to manage my time effectively and so I… I felt like… um…The the self-paced was easier for me to get my work done that way.

00:10:59 C4 Patino

So do you think that the sudden shift of virtual learning affected your personal and academic life in any way?

00:11:07 Kit Roesch

I think that having freshman year be virtual really allowed me to like, take the time to kind of ditch the middle school attitude, fake persona vibes, because I feel like in middle school there's a lot of, like people telling you who you should be and what you should do. And just having a year to kind of figure out… like a bit more about myself and who I was as a person allowed me to come into high school like… being the person I wanted to be and let me set up academic like strategies and plans that could be beneficial in my future.

00:11:47 Emily Matheny

For me, I don't feel like it changed a whole lot as it was… as I said it was similar to my middle school experience. It was honestly a a nice transition into public school. So it didn't… It wasn't a huge change for my academic or personal life.

00:12:04 C4 Patino

So do you think that the quality of education that you received was at a similar level to what you would have received if you were in person?

00:12:14 Kit Roesch

I think that virtual learning definitely comes with its challenges. I think specifically not having a teacher for one of our classes freshman year was a struggle, but that wasn't necessarily related to COVID. And I think that teaching in a virtual environment is just harder than it is in person and in terms of like levels of class engagement, because I feel like a lot of people are happy to be in school existing, but not a lot of people are happy to turn on their cameras and talk and do all of that online the same way they are in.

00:12:51 Emily Matheny

I know that for me, since we were virtual, it was harder to connect with teachers, which then made it harder for me to reach out when I needed help or ask questions when I needed to, and that overall I feel like harmed my experience, my education a little bit, but not significantly.

00:13:07 C4 Patino

So both of you felt that it was lacking the one-on-one aspect.

00:13:11 Kit Roesch

Yes, absolutely.

00:13:11 Emily Matheny

I would agree with that.

00:13:14 C4 Patino

So did either of you deal with any social isolation that came from virtual learning?

00:13:20 Kit Roesch

For me, I was lucky enough to have my best friend living next door and we decided pretty early on that we were going to make a bubble, so we didn't have school together, but we hung out every day for lunch and I got to hang out with her a lot. And our relationship definitely flourished as well as the relationship I had with some of my old middle school classmates who came to Collegiate because we were able to text and hang out and call each other a lot. And that was nice.

00:13:49 Emily Matheny

I also had a group that I got together with the first semester of freshman year and that was honestly more interaction than I normally had in the school day so. Yeah, and yeah.

00:14:02 C4 Patino

Do you think you would have made more friends with people in the junior class if we had been in person?

00:14:08 Kit Roesch

I feel like the more you surround yourself with people, the more likely you are to become friends with them, but I don't think that my ability to make friends was hindered when I came back sophomore year just because of the sheer number of people who were also not in person and in general we have a really nice class so it was not hard to like fit in and make friends and the friend group that I had like near the end of freshman year is different than the friend group I have now. So I don't think so.

00:14:39 Emily Matheny

Yeah, I feel like freshman year was such a unique experience that, you know, I was one of the few people who had my cameras on. And so I connected with other people who had their cameras on. And so I just made friends with people who I don't know that I would have become friends with in any other circumstance. But some of those relationships relationships have lasted till today.

00:15:00 C4 Patino

So one last question, how did you feel about virtual learning before and after the pandemic?

00:15:06 Kit Roesch

Before the pandemic, it was one of those old new experiences I get to do basically nothing all day. And then I quickly became bored with that. But lucky for me, Internet hacks, and Netflix, and all of the streaming services of today had my back.

00:15:25 Emily Matheny

I think for me, like I said, it was just I didn't know what else to expect.I've never gone to school and so I didn't really think anything of it. I knew that it wasn't normal, but for me it was, and now I have more of a idea of what school is like. And I do miss that social interaction when we have to go virtual for whatever reason.

00:15:48 C4 Patino

That concludes the interview with Emily Matheny and Kit Roesch. All of these students had different perspectives on their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. All of them cited a lack of engagement and one-on-one teaching in classes and initial distraction from school work. But they were able to improvise, adapt and overcome socially, whether that was through increased online interactions through games like Minecraft or becoming closer to already existing friends, and academically by taking the initiative to do work independently, without the additional help a teacher provides at school. Thank you for listening to these interviews on the virtual learning experiences of these individuals of the CSMB class of 2024 during the COVID-19 pandemic.