March 12th, 2020 was like any other school day. The day was spent listening to lectures, taking notes, and completing our work. For me, the day was filled with excitement because the scholar bowl team was hosting our annual tournament, and I was going to be moderating. This event, which I had spent so much time working on and preparing went off without a hitch. The attending schools enjoyed the competition, and I had an amazing time moderating. Unknowingly, this event would be my last sense of normalcy.

As we were cleaning up and preparing to head home we learned that the school district decided to cancel school the next day as an abundance of precaution due to the rapidly spreading COVID-19. At the time, this sounded amazing as it added an extra day to our spring break that started the next week. I spent that spring break catching up on much-needed sleep and spending time with my friends. This relaxation was soon met with the cancellation of all in-person teaching for the rest of the school year.

Online teaching provided many new difficult challenges that made learning increasingly difficult. My home didn't provide the same environment that was applicable to learning like school. Due to this, I found it increasingly difficult to find the motivation, and the drive to get on to zoom calls and to get my work done. This lack of work caused my grades to drop and my emotional state to worsen even though I had more free time for myself. All this coalesced in the middle of April when I realized how far behind I was and how far my grades had dropped.

I finally found the energy and motivation to convince myself to sit down and find a way to be able to get my work done at home. I was able to learn much-needed study habits and tools needed to better situate myself for distance learning. I learned the importance of keeping a constant sleep schedule and waking up when I normally would for my classes. I learned the importance of showing u to Zoom's to ask questions rather than trying to catch up by watching videos. I began to catch up in my classes and finally got my grades up back to being A's.

Throughout this experience, I had multiple down days where I found myself unable to get out of bed to get even the simplest work done. Though part of this was my own mindset, finding

the experience of distance learning lackadaisical and boring. The work that was given seemed like busywork rather than anything that would be teaching us any new material. This lackluster work can be attributed to some of the lackluster efforts that were given to said work.

For future virtual classes, school districts should implement a more entertaining curriculum to increase activity with their students. This type of curriculum also allows for better bonds to be built between students, their teachers, and their peers. This curriculum could see more games such as Kahoots, and quicker lessons to better adapt shorter attention spans that many students will experience at home. However, schools should be stricter on the amount of late work they allow students to turn in. Students shouldn't be allowed to turn in an entire month's worth of work at the end of a semester and expect it to be worth full points.

This type of teaching however comes into conflict with the lack of technology and internet access that occurs in more rural and economically poorer regions of the state. Though this can be diminished with increased funding and internet infrastructure, like what occurred over the summer, there will always be a portion of students that won't have the ability to access these technologies. For these students, greater communication efforts need to be made to keep in contact with the student and the parents, rather than just mailing a packet of work and expecting it to get done. With proper training, funding, and effort we can allow for an easier distance learning experience that I and many others faced this past spring and this continuing school year.