

## **Transcript of Interview with Anonymous Teacher by Mikel Baxter**

**Interviewee:** Anonymous Teacher

**Interviewer:** Mikel Baxter

**Date:** 11/16/2020

**Location (Interviewee):**

**Location (Interviewer):**

### **Abstract:**

I've chosen to submit this interview, because it captures the raw and real experience of an (almost) brand new teacher. Someone who has recently graduated (May, 2019) and barely dipped their toes into the teaching world. She has had to adapt to not only teaching a subject different than the one she studied for in college, but also navigating the trials of teaching in a pandemic world.

This 40 minute long interview that show cases the emotions and trials that a teacher has to experience. On top of issues like student engagement, and teaching unfamiliar material she has to ensure that she's accounting for all her students attending, both the ones physically and online, while juggling asynchronous and synchronous classes. One particular poignant quote "It's not that I'm trying to relax and be happy or anything. It's just trying to find downtime to just have energy" really sums up the energy of how the year has gone for this new teacher.

This perspective is important, as it shows the reality of how strenuous the pandemic education scene has been for educators, and the problems it's creating for students, as this person discusses. The pitfalls of technology that are harming rather than helping, and causing issues that might reverberate in the futures of the student's academic careers.

### **Mikel Baxter 0:00**

Alright, so we are now recording. Um, you've asked that you remain anonymous. But I would still I was wondering if you'd still give us a little background about your occupation and for the context of the interview.

### **Anonymous Teacher 0:20**

Currently- I'm currently a science teacher. Went to college to study history to become a history teacher. Just been working really hard to educate myself, so I can educate kids.

### **Mikel Baxter 0:39**

And when did you graduate?

### **Anonymous Teacher 0:42**

Um, may of 2019.

**Mikel Baxter 0:45**

And then you started teaching the fall semester?

**Anonymous Teacher 0:48**

That August, yeah.

**Mikel Baxter 0:50**

Okay. Um, do you want to give us your age, or not?

**Anonymous Teacher 0:58**

I'm 26. Okay.

**Mikel Baxter 1:00**

Okay. Um, when you were in school, what were your classes? Like, did you take classes online in person, or did you do a mix?

**Anonymous Teacher 1:09**

I did a mix. Sometimes- sometimes- I've even done like, all online for some semesters. There was one semester, I think that was the semester that I met you. I think it was five classes in a row on those single days, just so that I didn't have to commute.

**Mikel Baxter 1:31**

Yeah. And so what did you prefer? Did you prefer in person or did you prefer online?

**Anonymous Teacher 1:41**

I definitely prefer online It also depends on the professor because I had one professor where, I mean, he had a lot of good information. And I loved listening most of the time, but a lot of the time, he put me asleep, so but, you know, all of his work was online. You know, so I get it- I did all my reading, did all my assignments online for him, but I prefer mostly being in person for him.

**Mikel Baxter 2:16**

Okay. So, um, so let's- so did you ever have like a semester where you took them mostly in person, and then you switched to mostly online?

**Anonymous Teacher 2:29**

Yeah.

**Mikel Baxter 2:30**

Okay. So between those two semesters, what was the hardest change like going from in person...

**Anonymous Teacher 2:38**

To online?

**Mikel Baxter 2:39**

Yeah.

**Anonymous Teacher 2:40**

Losing the instruction. I like to be- I like to listen and watch a person. Um, that instruction is how I learn. Just reading it on my own, I get bored, I get distracted. I lose some of the content. And being online, typically, in college, it- it's more work than going to class.

**Mikel Baxter 3:11**

Right. So you took your classes pre-pandemic, and you- you have an idea of what it's like to take classes in line- in- and in person and now teach online and in person. So what do you think is the biggest challenge? What is- what are some of the biggest challenges teaching and like, the biggest- I'm sorry, the biggest changes from teaching in person to teaching online.

**Anonymous Teacher 3:40**

Um, teaching in person, one of the things that changed this year is "Little Timmy, you need to put your mask on." And then starting to teach online, I have to learn how to do it. I have to learn how to convert my assignments. Um, some of my assignments that I give to kids are PDFs, and they don't know how to edit PDFs. And the district uses a certain tool for them to do that, but they've never had the training on how to do that. And so I'm answering a million questions- not a million, but yeah, I'm over exaggerating. I'm answering a ton of questions about, "How do I do this? Or how do I share this?" I just had a student email me. I said, "Okay, I'm gonna copy and paste this link." He wasn't paying attention. And I said, "I'm gonna copy and paste this link." And they're using Chromebooks, which I don't know how to use. So I copied it and I tried to paste it in the email to myself, so I would have an assignment. He didn't hear me and he sent the email, and it was empty. And a lot of my assignments that I get back from the kids are empty.

[unintelligible]

**Mikel Baxter 5:00**

Go ahead.

**Anonymous Teacher 5:01**

The kids just don't do them, or they don't know how to do them or whatever the case may be.

**Mikel Baxter 5:07**

So you're playing the role of learner because you're only about a year into teaching.

**Anonymous Teacher 5:15**

Yeah.

**Mikel Baxter 5:15**

Playing the role of teacher. And then you're also tech support for these for these kids.

**Anonymous Teacher 5:22**

Yes. Yes. Yes. And I can only answer so many tech questions. Sometimes they ask me a question. And I'm like "Guys, I just work here. Go ask somebody who knows. I don't know. I'm learning this stuff, just like you are." I wish we had the answers. And then I say, "As soon as you find out tell me so I can answer." Yeah.

**Mikel Baxter 5:46**

So.. So you teach online in addition to teaching in person, and then do you spend a lot of time on like, social media, and for those purposes we'll include Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, um...

**Anonymous Teacher 6:07**

Is that for personal or for professional use?

**Mikel Baxter 6:09**

For personal, or I mean both.

**Anonymous Teacher 6:11**

Okay. Oh, for professional, I don't use it at all. Because I tell- I'll tell the kids, "You are not allowed to add me as a friend until you're graduated from high school." And some of the parents do add me and I have... oh, I'm not going to go into that story. But um, so yes, I have a Facebook, I have an Instagram, I have a Snapchat, a Pinterest, of course. But I have those three for personal

use. For professional, not at all.

**Mikel Baxter 6:48**

And then do you watch a lot of streaming? Do you watch any streaming services like Netflix or Disney Plus or YouTube?

**Anonymous Teacher 6:56**

Netflix, Disney Plus, YouTube, Amazon Prime. What else, um, Apple TV, YouTube, Pluto TV. Yeah, I have- I use a lot of the streaming services.

**Mikel Baxter 7:16**

So since you're on social- since you use social media, and- and then you're teaching online, and I imagine you're doing a lot of recording or research or reading PDFs when they do get filled out or grading documents. So do you feel like there's a... it's called like tech fatigue? Or just tech tiredness? Do you- do you feel like it's an overwhelming amount of use of technology?

**Anonymous Teacher 7:48**

Yeah, um, the streaming services are my saving grace because they take me to another world. So when I get off work, and I come home, and I'm ready to relax, I'll watch TV or a movie or whatever it is. Facebook, I'm getting tired of Facebook. Snapchat, I'm getting a little tired of Snapchat. Email, I'm- I'm done with emails, and I'm so tired of them. The, [laughs] the biggest thing that really is a major frustration with teaching online right now in technology is opening up an assignment. And some of them have been turned in, but all they're doing is hitting the turn in button and not trying it. And then I just want to- I can't take a week, I can't take a day off of lessons to teach them how to use it and to teach them how to do it. And I've actually done that in the beginning, but they don't know- some kids didn't get that. So it's- it's mostly the thing that really bothers me. Yeah, I'm what I'm so tired of is my work computer, I stopped bringing it home at all. And I still get notifications for my work email. And I ignore those still, until I can't. And I notice how many there are and then I go through them, on the weekends. During the week, I'm always on my work email. Could be eight o'clock at night.

**Mikel Baxter 9:28**

Oh, wow.

**Anonymous Teacher 9:29**

Yeah.

**Mikel Baxter 9:30**

So do you... in the kids, do you see any sign of tech fatigue? Because I'm sure- I mean, you're

teaching the generation that's grown up, not knowing what it's like to live life without the internet. So they can get cell phones as young as 10. But do you.. so now they're- they're learning online and then they're spending a lot of time scrolling through their social media, or whatever, which is fine. But do you- do you notice like a- an adverse effect on it? Like, is it affecting their eyes? Is it affecting them physically or mentally? Or do you notice anything at all? There's no real right answer, but just do you notice...

**Anonymous Teacher 10:13**

Um, okay. So I notice, because I'm me, and I'm observant. And I know that, you know, the blue light and the constant gratification, instant gratification of having your phone and your Chromebook. So I know the effect it has on- on a person, so I see them. But they are happy to have Chromebooks. They're so happy to have Chromebooks. But they're not happy to do their work on their Chromebooks. So I see the effect in their personality. I see the effect in their behavior. And all that just because I know what I'm looking for with them. And I'm passionate about them not having technology, which is kind of counterintuitive to the whole moving forward in the education system with the whole technology business. But actually, the technology does not help as much as you would think. Yes, they need to learn how to use it. But that's why we have computer classes. Yeah. So I think that the technology is actually hindering their education. And it's- it's not helping. But yeah- but basically, to answer your question, yeah, I see it because I know what I'm looking for. I know that the eyes get tired after the blue light, I know that there's some good, like the sunken eyes or the puffy eyes because I'm not getting any sleep, or I'm not able to sleep because the blue light too late at night. And they can't remember anything because all they have is Google it, you know? And so when it comes to assessment time, they can't remember the answers.

**Mikel Baxter 12:10**

Okay. So what has been your biggest challenge, learning how to teach online? Do you teach online? And I mean, do you teach all online- well, no, you said you teach in person. So I guess you teach a mix of both? Um, for your online, and I guess in person, what has been your biggest challenge this semester? And how have you overcome it? Or how are you overcoming it?

**Anonymous Teacher 12:43**

My biggest challenge with teaching this semester, I do have in class- I have kids that are called asynchronous and kids that are called synchronous. Synchronous means they join in on a Zoom, called async, they do everything on Google Classroom. So with the synchronous kids, that list is diminishing, for me, particularly. Because there were- a lot of kids came back. But with the asynchronous at the beginning, it was so difficult. I had to set it up, that was fine, figured that out. But then once I started to do the Zoom calls in classroom. I didn't get- I was one of the only teachers that there was a few of us, but I was one of the only teachers that didn't get a synchronous period, which means I had kids in person and online, and I had to try to figure out the attendance for all of them. And it took- it took, um, we have took maybe 20, 30 minutes in

the first week, and then it started taking 20 minutes because I have to look through all the people I had to do all this any other. And then finally I kind of just put your names in the chat if I don't see him later, you're not here because you're not listening to me, you know. So that was difficult. Another thing was trying to figure out how to upload assignments. I had a lot of struggles with- because we have a- there's- one of my favorite tools is Ed Puzzle. Ed Puzzle will take a YouTube video and let you insert questions into it. So I'll show it as a full group class thing and let all the kids tell me what the answer is. So it's basically are you paying attention? Are you learning this? Check for understanding type of thing. I loved it, and I love it still. And then I tried to upload it to Google Classroom, and I don't know how it goes wrong. What goes wrong? And it's been a struggle it was- it was a full solid week where I was ready- "Guys, I corrected the issue. Stop asking me this question." But it's how to upload assignments, how to check their assignments. Well, it is a difficult thing I finally figured out with my drive that I could get that way. But- and also my district wants us to do all kinds of different platforms and juggling everything. That's- it's a big deal. I'm juggling in class and going online synchronous, multiple platforms, grading assignments, uploading assignments, taking attendance. Yeah.

**Mikel Baxter 15:38**

It sounds like a lot. I mean, you're saying things that even I never considered. But, uh, I mean, you have to do it in person, and then online, and then figure out how to mesh the two and still teach the kids?

**Anonymous Teacher 15:55**

Yes. Yes. And the kids are not- the kids that are online are not learning. Some of them are doing the assignments, and they're going above and beyond, but I have more than three kids that aren't. I have the three kids that are doing work, and then the rest of them are not.

**Mikel Baxter 16:19**

So for- for context, how- how big are your classes? How many kids do you teach? In all of your classes total?

**Anonymous Teacher 16:27**

Well, in- in class kids, my biggest in class group is like 20, either- either somewhere online, or it's 25, not 27. I think it's 25. It was like 27, but I think now it's 25. But some of those- some of that group is online, and some of them just don't show up on any given day, it could be one or two, just either they got a dentist's appointment, or they're going on a trip or whatever the case may be. That's my biggest class. Typically, it's around 10 to 15 in class. Those kids are learning because they get to hear it straight from my straight from my mouth. They get to hear some of the little jokes I tell, so that makes it easier. Like when we did density and calculating density. I saw- one kid, I told them two different ways. I taught them- I taught them I heart density and the density triangle. And one kid came up to me and he's like, "I don't know how to do this." I said, "Yeah, you do. We've learned it all week." And I said, "What about your triangle? Use your

triangle.” And he did. The triangle didn't stick with him. And so I said, “Do you heart density?” And he was like, “Oh, I drew a heart but- and break it. And this that and the other like, “Yeah, that's how you do it.” And so- so he was able to remember it that way. My kids online, I looked through all of their density work. And I mean, there was a density quiz that I couldn't take for a grade. But then I looked online, and I was like, “I most definitely cannot take this for a grade,” because it was not a successful assignment. They didn't learn. Without- when I uploaded extra support videos that the kids in class didn't get, I found a few instructional videos on YouTube, that were actually really good videos, but I doubt they've watched them just because I looked at their math and it wasn't correct. And that's coming- that's a lot coming from me. Yeah, a lot coming from me. Yeah. So it's the- I got kids in line who are- there kids in class who are struggling. They don't care. Some of them really just don't care. I've asked one of them. I said, “Are you okay- okay, with the grade you get? Because I have asked you now five times to start your assignment. I have also provided help for you.” She's was just like, “Yeah, I don't care.” I was like, “Um, so you're going to be accepting the zero?” And she was like, “Yeah, I don't care.”

**Mikel Baxter 19:02**

And do you think that's just- I'm sorry. And I just, do you think that just the kid being a kid, or is it a product of- of perhaps the district you're in? Or do you think it's related to pandemic induced stress?

**Anonymous Teacher 19:18**

I mean, three, I think it's all three combined. It was her, just some of those kids being themselves. The particular district that I'm in, and- and COVID just everything- every- just left and right. There's something new, something's happening, and they're all kind of just tired of it. It's a joke to them. It's really a joke. They don't understand it. They don't understand why this is such a problem. And if somebody says something, and uses COVID as a as an excuse, they just laugh. They think it's a joke. The main problem I'm struggling with is my online learners. They're not- this isn't helping them, right?

**Mikel Baxter 20:09**

So how- how are you going to adapt your classes if this is what it's going to be like in the future? Like, if we don't get a vaccine, let's say, until a year from now, right? So you're- so how are you going to adapt to teaching?

**Anonymous Teacher 20:30**

Right. Um, well, my online- or my district recently voted to stop online learning. So hopefully, when I go in Monday, almost everybody will get back, except for the kids that were recently exposed last week, so those kids will still be in quarantine, and probably be in quarantine into Thanksgiving break. So going forward, if this is a problem, I don't think we're going to offer a consistent asynchronous anymore. I'm, honestly, I'm crossing my fingers that we don't, but only do a synchronous, if a kid is quarantined. With that, I'm rolling forward in the future, I'm hoping



that, you know, they start off with me, or they have some time with me so they know what to expect, right. And that way, when I go online, and I can email them. My main problem, or my main concern, with this being a potential new, real or reality that I will- I will lose so much time with those kids, and they won't get that back. And if this is the new normal, you know, if this is the new normal, their kids are going to struggle even more than they have been. And I really don't want that to happen. I need to- I'm hoping that maybe over the summer, there will be some new PD or professional development for you know, teaching online for COVID and, you know, all that stuff. I'm hoping that I can gain some new insight on how to do this online because I'm sitting here thinking, "How on earth did our college professors, grade our papers, and put assignments up online," and I'm wondering if they just kind of slapped a grade, because that's a lot more work than what I'm doing right now. And this is already- this is already, you know, 'bout to break my back. So I'm honestly right now, with going forward, I'm hoping that I can learn more to make it better, because at this point, I don't have answers.

**Mikel Baxter 23:03**

Right. You're kind of just flying by the seat of your pants.

**Anonymous Teacher 23:06**

I'm trying to make it. Um, and- and I've gotten to the point where everything I get- I get what I need done. I try to help where I can. I've even done Zoom, or I've set up a Zoom meeting, recurring Zoom meeting every day for tutorials, not every day, every Thursday for tutorials for my online learners, and I've posted it in- in Google Classroom, posted in remind. And so far, nothing, nobody showed up.

**Mikel Baxter 23:36**

So it's kind of like office hours, they can come talk to you or say hey, "Miss,-ma'am, how do I do this?"

**Anonymous Teacher 23:45**

Exactly. Yes.

**Mikel Baxter 23:51**

All right, these last couple questions will- will lighten it up a little bit because that was... I mean, that's concerning stuff that I never really considered.

**Anonymous Teacher 24:01**

Right.

**Mikel Baxter 24:02**

I mean, they're- they're losing semesters, in some cases of foundational knowledge and that's- that's rough.

**Anonymous Teacher 24:12**

Absolutely. Um, they're losing months... months at a time of knowledge that they could have that they're not going to be able to build on in future years. Honestly, what I teach- what I teach is the foundation for the rest of their education, and if they don't have that foundation, or at least some inkling or of a thought or a reminder of that foundation, they are going to struggle for the rest of their schooling. The kids is a main pri- our main concern with this but the teachers too, like the teachers I've heard stories so many teachers are leaving. So many teachers are either early retiring, or doing something else, trying their hardest to make ends meet. So it's mostly the teachers who are who really, really, really care and really want to stick through this. And there's teachers who really, really, really care that just can't do it, just can't- just can't make this work. But the teachers care, and that's why we're still here. You know, there's no incentive other than the success of the kids, and the kids, man, some of them come back, and I asked them a question. And then I have to remember, "Oh, wait, you were online, and you didn't do your work?" "Yes, ma'am. That's right." "Okay, well, let's see what we can do about that." And then I, you know, find a solution, and they don't end up doing it. It's- it's, um, it's not, it's not looking too bright. But for us- but we try to look positive. And we, you know, as long as we're there, and we're stable for the kids, they're happy.

**Mikel Baxter 26:09**

It's definitely probably what you did- not what you had in mind after you graduated last year.

**Anonymous Teacher 26:15**

Oh my God, no. [laughs] If I'd have been at my pinning ceremony, and they would have told me, "Okay, there's going to be a pandemic. Your schools that you are going to be hired at are going to shut down. And then you're going to do online teaching, but you all have to wear masks, and sanitize everything at all hours of the day." I would have said, "Excuse me, can I get a refund? Please? I'd like to do something else." No, I love the kids, though. But this is... urgh, I was not prepared. Nobody was prepared for this.

**Mikel Baxter 26:49**

No, I mean- I mean, your first full year of teaching, and it's just been absolute chaos.

**Anonymous Teacher 26:56**

Yeah, last year was my first year, but it wasn't even a full year. We shut down, Spring Break. We got out- we- we left for spring break. And we didn't come back. And this is going to be potentially my first full year. But who knows if enough people in my in my school have enough-

or if there's enough people with cases, positive cases, we might have to shut down. And then what are we going to do? We can't- I was listening to a person. She was telling me how over the shutdown, there was a law case or a lawsuit or something came up with a woman who had something in her background. And it was a problem. And I'm like, Yeah, but we were doing this from home. We're trying to make this work. But so basically, is we're probably not going to be allowed to teach from home. If we are quarantine so then that will add you know, further on to our year. And then how much are you gonna go? So we have a lot more questions than answers, but we go in every morning. Coffee in hand. [laughs]

**Mikel Baxter 28:07**

So... so how do you... it's- it's really hard to go back to my set of questions, but we'll try- we'll we'll wrap it up. But yeah, after a long day of teaching, after, you know, the weekend comes around, how do you relax? How do you go, "Okay, pandemic, not thinking about that. Teaching, definitely not thinking about that."

**Anonymous Teacher 28:33**

Okay, so problem is faced here. Is that the- I don't know I. I think I was either talking to you or my mom about the self-care culture. Being toxic to teachers. Was I talking to you?

**Mikel Baxter 28:50**

Not me, No.

**Anonymous Teacher 28:52**

Okay, um, so I was reading something, and I've kind of been dwelling on it; you know how I dwell, and I kind of think about things for a while until you know, I'm done and I move on to another thing. But kind of dwelling on this about how self-care is toxic or this culture of self-care being the answer to your stressful job is toxic to teachers because especially now there's far more stress. And you're putting more stress on the teacher to say, hey, you need to relax find something that relax you well. Okay, so now I have to find something that's relaxing. Well, okay, what am I gonna do now that's even more stress, and it's toxic when really the problem is that we were just so stressed out, which I understand other- other professions have a high stress rate, but, man, this is one thing if I knew what I know now, I probably would have, I don't know, definitely going into librarian, getting a Master's as a librarian or something. But, um, so to relax- try to relax, um, I come home, I play with my dogs a little bit, make some food, whether it's queso or pasta or chicken or, you know, whatever a box or some chili mac, I don't know, whatever I have enough energy to make that night. Um, I'll eat that, watch some TV. I don't know if this is allowed, but have a drink. And you know, in the interview...

**Mikel Baxter 30:37**

You're an adult.

**Anonymous Teacher 30:37**

I am an adult. [laughs] I am. I certainly am. Have a drink until it's ready, it's time to go to bed. Now I have to go to bed earlier because I've moved further away from my district. So I have maybe three hours, once I finally get home to relax; it's s three hours, three hours of relaxing and so that you can get enough sleep in to make it the next day. And then the weekend. I try to piddle around the house, you know, do something to make myself feel productive. But then, like last Sunday, I didn't leave the couch until I necessarily had to. I- I stayed on the couch. I laid down. That was it. I was so tired.

**Mikel Baxter 31:24**

Became one with the couch.

**Anonymous Teacher 31:26**

I'm on the couch. We're you know, identical. [laughs] But yeah, um, so trying to relax is not really a thing. It's, for me, it's trying to find rest. So there's no, it's not- it's not that I'm trying to relax and be happy or anything. It's just trying to find downtime to just have energy because last-last week, Friday, I was like, "I gotta find energy somewhere because I cannot do this next week." Next week is a week before the break. It's gonna be crazy. We got kids coming back. No, no, no. So last week, I ended the week in a very, very bad way. But I'm hoping I had enough energy. I have enough energy now. [laughs] We will see.

**Mikel Baxter 32:19**

And see that's really impactful what you say that you're not even finding time to relax you're... because that implies that you're doing something fun. Something that you enjoy. You're finding time to rest. I mean, that's... that is wow.

**Anonymous Teacher 32:35**

Yes. Well, it's right to brighten my day to day, and I bought a bouquet of five sunflowers.

**Mikel Baxter 32:42**

Aww.

**Anonymous Teacher 32:43**

So I tried to- I tried to think, "Okay, what is going to brighten my day when I get off of work?" So I did that. And so for this week, I'll have some- some flowers to look at. But yeah- yeah, it's, um, I, my dad told me, "Get over it. Get over it. You're doing a job." And I was like, "Yeah, I am

doing a job. But I- I'm not really liking where I'm sitting right now.” But it is a stressful time learning new things is always stressful. And that's something we talked about in professional development that this year is everybody's first year teaching again, because we're learning so much. We're trying- trying to run around, learn all kinds of news- new ways of teaching, new- I mean, and teaching isn't either the only job we have, how to how to track data, how to get the kids to track their own data, how to teach the kids how to use the things online, sit in the meetings, but also, meetings have not been productive this year. I don't know why we have them, but you have them for some reason. Um, but yeah, it's, you know, take attendance. We had to find and learn a completely new way to take attendance, completely new way. And then it kept changing in the first, I don't know, the first month, it kept changing to try to find a better system. And now we're at a better system. But I mean, I have to take attendance every day, seven times a day. And I have to take it online, on paper. Yeah, so yeah, no, yeah. Just finding time to rest is the most important thing right now.

**Mikel Baxter 34:24**

If you could take your skills you learned from taking your own online courses and turn it into advice for your kids. What would you tell them about taking online classes?

**Anonymous Teacher 34:45**

Well, one thing I learned taking online classes was how to find the answer myself. And so that's what I've kind of been doing in the last week. Actually last week or two weeks was [audio skips] ...question for me about an assignment. I say, “Find it, you find it, you tell me.” Of course I'm there to, you know, correct any misunderstandings. But the last two weeks, I've really kind of gotten fed up with holding their hands every step of the way. I've got kids, every single question that come and ask to make sure it's correct. That's not how this works. You need to find it, and you need to find the confidence in yourself to know that you're doing this, right. So that's something that I'm trying to do that I had to learn. You know, ‘cause doing school online was so different than going. I mean, yeah, I did credit recovery in high school because I was a terrible student in high school. So I did do online schooling in high school, basically. But going into college was completely different. The structure was different. I miss Blackboard, I miss Blackboard so much. Um, but for them, the main thing that I want them to do is learn, especially if they're at home, and that they can't get my instruction because some of them don't want to do synchronous. They don't want to join in all the Zoom calls. They don't want to wake up before four o'clock in the afternoon. I don't know. I don't know. But for them, my main focus right now is learn how to find your answer, learn how to teach yourself because clearly what we're doing, or what you're doing right now, because I upload enough, I think I upload enough to teach them. And I've asked other people, “Is this enough?” And they say, “Yeah, this is enough.” Um, clearly, it's not working for them. So I want them- and I want them to be able to answer their own questions. And if they have a thought, or they need to find an answer, whether it's about their own personal beliefs, their own thoughts, you know, how to make- how to make mac and cheese from scratch, “I've- all I've got is some noodles here and some milk and some cheese, how do I make mac and cheese from this?” “Well go find it, you'll find it.” You know, it's a survival thing.

And I want them to be able to do that. And that's something that I've been trying to work on more this year than I did last year. So that's one thing that I'm- I honestly can't remember the question, but I think because I ramble. I'm sorry. I ramble. Um, you know, answering their own questions is something that I want focus on.

**Mikel Baxter 37:43**

Alright. Well, you've given me more than enough of your time. And a lot of insight, and I want to say thank you for letting me speak with you. And thank you for contributing to this archive because I feel like it's a- it's a, it's a unique perspective that you bring having been a student, you know, not that long ago yourself, and then turning around and teaching in this. You know, before it was like, "Okay, I'm choosing to take online classes." And now it's like, "No, you have to take online classes."

**Anonymous Teacher 38:23**

Yes, you have to do everything online. Oh, I tell the kids all the time, "I miss research, I miss doing research papers, I miss writing, I miss, you know, spending 36 hours to find two quotes that I could use in my 16-page paper. I miss that." And they're like, "Ew." You might think this is funny. One of them- or not what one group, one class period said- I don't you, they just came in all wild and crazy. And I said, "Uh-uh, we're not doing that today. You're not going to do that. You're going to come in quietly as you do every day. And if you do not, I'm going to expect essays from each and every one of you. And you better believe that I expect college level and not MLA either. MLA is easy. I want Chicago."

**Mikel Baxter 39:14**

Oh my god, Chicago. [laughs] That's just cruel.

**Anonymous Teacher 39:19**

They were like, "What's Chicago?"

**Mikel Baxter 39:19**

Oh, winter is coming you poor sweet summer children.

**Anonymous Teacher 39:25**

Right. So they just police themselves, they're like, "I don't wanna write essays." And I was like, "Good, I scared them enough." [laughs] You know, that was- I get some jokes in.

**Mikel Baxter 39:38**

I'm glad we could end on a happier end.

**Anonymous Teacher 39:42**

Yes, absolutely.

**Mikel Baxter 39:44**

But thank you again, and we appreciate your contribution to the archive.

**Anonymous Teacher 39:51**

Absolutely.

**Mikel Baxter 39:52**

And I will talk to you later

**Anonymous Teacher 39:55**

Okay.

**Mikel Baxter 39:57**

Thank you. Thank you.