

STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021

Here we are again, starting into another semester where things are certainly different and nothing seems normal. Everything seems more complicated. That's true for us too! If Talent Search and Upward Bound can be of help to you academically or in your college planning process, please do not hesitate to reach out. Leave a message at (UB) 814-393-2342 or (TS) 814-393-2071. Make sure to leave your contact information and we will get back to you quickly! Watch your mail for lots of upcoming events. Here's to life returning to normal! Be safe and stay healthy! - Rhonda

ETS helps you to succeed!

ETS helps you build your skills!

ETS provides opportunity!

ETS provides access!

ETS is FREE!

Educational Talent Search encourages participants to succeed in school, achieve rigorous curriculum, graduate from high school, and pursue postsecondary education. So, if you think you can't afford postsecondary education or your grades aren't good enough...think again! If you have the desire to learn new things, TS provides resources and opportunities to help you reach your goals!

ETS offers services to help YOU succeed!

These include:

Academic Counseling

Cultural Programs

Financial Aid Information

Study Skills

Economic Literacy

Goal Setting

Career Information

Academic Workshops

Career Assessments

Senior high support also includes: SAT/ACT prep (access to Method Test Prep), campus visits, FAFSA assistance, and postsecondary application assistance.

Upward Bound = Postsecondary Success

Upward Bound is an intensive program that works with students to succeed in high school, plan for college, become acquainted with a college setting, and enroll in postsecondary education.

Services include:

Assistance selecting a college and major

Application assistance (College, FAFSA)

Summer classes

Fee waivers (SAT, college application)

Social and cultural opportunities

Test preparation (SAT/ACT/Keystones)

Academic counseling

Career exploration

College exploration

Tutorial assistance

College visits

Study skills development

College class—bridge students

IMPORTANT

— Class of 2021

- Apply for financial aid as early as October 1
- File at studentaid.gov
- Filing is FREE
- Use your 2019 taxes
- File for 2021-22
- Call to set up an individual appointment if you have questions or need assistance

Zoom Fatigue: What It Is and Ways to Cope



I think it's safe to say that most of us have used some type of virtual platform this year. According to the article, "The State of Videoconferencing in 2020," Zoom had over 300 million daily participants and Google Meet had over 100 million daily participants. That's not counting other popular platforms like Skype, GoToMeeting, and Facetime. The increased use of virtual platforms has led to the phenomenon of "Zoom fatigue," which is defined as tiredness, worry or burnout associated with overusing virtual communication.

Here are some reasons why people experience Zoom fatigue:

1. When you are on camera, you might feel like you are on the spot and pressured because your appearance, actions and performance are being observed by everyone, including yourself.
2. Even though we are in an age of high-speed internet, there is often a delay or lag, which causes our brains to look for ways to overcome the lack of synchrony (real time action), which in turn, can make us feel tired, worried or anxious.
3. Technological difficulties like a frozen screen, spotty WiFi, trouble screen-sharing, and audio issues, are common and can cause stress.
4. We are easily distracted, and might have home environments that make it difficult to stay focused— little siblings, pets, family members, lack of privacy, and so on.

The good news is, there are some tips that can help you cope:

1. Hide "self-view" or ask if you can turn off your camera. If you're in a group meeting, check in with your camera on, and make sure your lighting is good and everyone can see you. Then either hide the view of yourself, so you aren't constantly aware of your appearance or ask if it's ok to turn off your camera (as long as you're not presenting.) Even just a short break from the camera can decrease your anxiety, and give you a chance to take a few deep breaths.

2. Mute your microphone. When you're not talking, put yourself on mute so that the group doesn't hear all your background noise, like the dog barking, your little sister crying, or other people talking. Not only will this decrease your anxiety, it will help the presenter and the rest of the group too.
3. Schedule breaks. If you are online for school all day, and then have a Zoom program in the evening, or a group video chat with friends, make sure you take breaks. Take time to stand up, stretch, get a snack or drink, or walk around a bit. Make sure your breaks aren't too long, so that you can stay on track with your schedule.
4. Check your devices before you're scheduled to be on a video call or meeting. Test your internet, camera and audio, and have a back-up device if possible.
5. Relax and let go. Sometimes you can have everything perfectly planned, and something still goes wrong. That's when you need to let go because sometimes there are things we can't control. Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone has bad days. And, sometimes the best thing we can do is let go and move on. There's always next time.

Even though Zoom fatigue is widely prevalent, intense, and completely new, we all need to remember that we are in this together. With a little grace, understanding and a plan to incorporate some of the tips above to help us cope, we can reduce our risk of experiencing Zoom fatigue, and we can even thrive in this world of virtual communication.

Can't wait to see you face-to-face!

Watch your mail for important information about upcoming events including:

- Upward Bound Summer Academy
Bridge Application
Student Application
- Talent Search STEM opportunities
- FAFSA Completion
- SAT/ACT Method Test Prep
- Keystone and PSSA Information

#CouchPotatoEducation

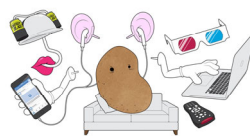
We have all too quickly had to switch gears and adapt to learning from home. There are many struggles— from technology issues to organizing a workspace and timeframe, to concentrating on school-work. While at home, it is easy to get distracted by household activity or to fall into couch potato mode. Our homes are typically places of leisure with less structure than our in-school schedules provide. Let's face it, it is difficult for some of us to learn from home, especially if we are kinesthetic (hands-on) learners. Here are some tips to make the best of at-home learning.

ENGAGE WITH LEARNING

Do your best to stay engaged with the learning process. Make sure you have all of the materials you need at hand, so you aren't continually distracted trying to find things. Being present and focused on "school time" is the most difficult hurdle to cross.

WORK SPACE

Now more than ever, it is important to find a comfortable workspace. This can be different for every student depending on other people in the house, etc. Find a place where you are comfortable and work with the least distraction. You can create an office area/study space in your bedroom, at the kitchen table, in a home office, or anywhere there is some available space.



MANAGE YOUR TIME

This is perhaps the most important thing you can do to ensure success. Create a daily schedule to study at the times that work best for you. Schedule the times you must be online and the times you are working on your own. It is important to identify daily "work hours" and to build a routine. Try these tips:

- Use a timer – set up specific times for each class
- Take regular breaks – grab a snack, go for a walk, play with your pet, just relax for a while
- Give yourself something to look forward to every day – plan a walk with your dog or time to socialize with your friends
- Define a clear starting and ending time. When you are done, you should pack up and have the rest of the day to relax

COORDINATE GROUP CHATS

Use Zoom, FaceTime, or whatever app it takes to communicate with fellow students. You can create study sessions, or just have open discussions to ask questions and better understand assignments or concepts.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR TEACHERS AND GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Your teachers and counselors are there to help. You can email them, and/or set up a time to have a virtual session. It is important while learning online to reach out to your teachers for help. They can better define the assignments and clarify their expectations. They can answer your questions, and help you to better understand the material. They can even help with the technology involved, or they can have the IT department contact you.

CONTINUE TO SOCIALIZE

It is easy to feel like you are alienated from socialization while learning from home. It is important to continue to socialize outside of the "school day."

Keep in touch with your friends through social media or by phone. You can even spend time with your friends— just wear your mask.



STEPS TO STAY SAFE AND STAY WELL

- ⇒ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds
- ⇒ Stay 6 feet apart
- ⇒ Cover your nose and mouth with a mask
- ⇒ Avoid crowded indoor spaces
- ⇒ Stay home and isolate when feeling sick
- ⇒ Routinely clean and disinfect

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>

Attention: Seniors, Juniors, and Sophomores



Method Test Prep is a self-paced course that prepares you for the SAT or ACT. Evaluations, lessons, and full length sample tests give immediate feedback and explanations. The best part is once you have an account, you can use it until you graduate.

To set up your account, contact your UB or ETS counselor.

Best news yet? The account is FREE –\$150 value.

Considerations for Taking the SAT or ACT in a “Test Optional” World

COVID-19 has created all kinds of havoc and forced cancellations. In response to the hurdles students were facing due to these cancellations, many four-year colleges decided to go “test optional” for Fall 2021 admission (and possibly beyond). Colleges are handling the submission of SAT or ACT scores in different ways, so make sure you know exactly how the colleges you are interested in are approaching it.

So what does “test optional” mean? If a school is truly “test optional” they will let you decide if you want to submit your test scores. If submitted, the school will take SAT or ACT scores into consideration, but may focus on other parts of the application more. “Test blind” schools will not consider any scores, even if you include them in the application.

Preparing for the SAT or ACT can be time consuming, but could pay off big in the end. Here are some reasons you may want to consider taking the SAT or ACT even if your school is “test optional”:

- If you do well, your scores could benefit you financially. Some schools award merit scholarships based on SAT or ACT scores.
- Without these scores other parts of the college application will become more important. GPA, essay, awards, references, and extracurricular activities will have more significance. So if your GPA isn't what you hoped, a great SAT or ACT test score could make a difference.
- Many scholarship applications require an SAT or ACT score to be submitted.
- Certain specialized academic or athletic programs still require test scores. (Although there have been recent updates to NCAA Division I and II.)
- Many colleges exempt students from introductory classes if they have performed well on SAT or SAT II exams.
- If you qualify for a fee waiver, why not? Not only is the fee for the test waived, but you get four additional college application fees waived too!

Bottom line is “test optional” means it is your choice to submit SAT or ACT test scores. If you have a high SAT/ACT score, then you can (and probably should) submit it. If you do well in academics and have other strengths/talents, but do not do well on standardized tests, “test optional” could be a benefit for you.

When I typically think about high school performance, I think of measurable outcomes like grades, attendance, and class rank. Now that I am decades removed from days filled with pencils, papers and teachers' looks— it occurs to me that high school is a rich educational setting offering critical learning opportunities not reflected on the dreaded report card. I conducted a poll of the TRIO staff to collect data that would reflect our shared high school experiences. I challenged the poll participants to identify tools that they felt began to develop in high school. The results are in—

1st Place

Reputation cultivation (how we see ourselves and how we want others to see us) was the clear winner. Making the connection that our actions impact how we are perceived is a powerful lesson. Your reputation is a critical tool in successful adulting. It begins to take root during the high school experience. Relationships formed are intense in terms of emotion and create a rich training ground for valuable life lessons. As you mature and become more independent, you become conscious of the impact of your actions on the present and future. I bet that you have heard the expression, "You are the company you keep." That means your behavior and your associations present you to others. The company you keep is a part of the picture being painted, and although it's not the entire picture it can be a significant part of what is perceived to be true about you. High school is an intense time of relationship building and it makes sense that reputation cultivation is a powerful lesson. Your reputation and self-image influence future connections and opportunities.

2nd Place (Tie)

Accountability (Personal /Academic) is woven throughout the HS process of skill acquisition. A homework assignment may challenge you to answer review questions at the end of the chapter, but the written answers represent only a portion of the learning. In turning that assignment in, you are also learning a deeper and more lasting lesson about responsibility and accountability. Critical seeds to creating habits/patterns of accountability are hidden in those end of chapter questions and in every other assignment. If you are only connected to what may seem to be unnecessary information, then you are missing the big picture. Education is not simply about the details; its bigger picture agenda is to connect you

with action patterns (accountability). Few tools are more critical to a successful adult than the ability to be accountable.

2nd Place (Tie)

Tied at second is **Developing Social Skills** (Building Relationships). I trust you are seeing a pattern connected to preparation for effective adulting. Increased independence can leave you vulnerable. You can experience all the complications of relationships for the first time and your desire to be safe in relationships intensifies the learning. Relational skills are critical to life during and after HS. Many of you have indicated that this missing relationship piece in the distance learning school structure is the most distressing factor you are facing. That makes sense, as your genetic drive to be social drives you to be connected.

3rd Place

Once again true to the adulting pattern, **Leadership, Resilience, and Empowerment** are essential in the adult world. Whether an introvert or extrovert, you will be challenged to find your strongest, most authentic voice in earth school (life after high school). High school is one of your early opportunities to find your empowered voice. For example, you are given an assignment to read three chapters of text over break. This is secretly Leadership, Resilience, and Empowerment training. I guess, you could plug into the surface value of the material being absorbed and that is highly valuable, but there are other lessons hiding. Several types of people emerge from this assignment when classes resume. One is the student that connects to the material and is prepared to review it in class understanding that the patterns created are those of resilient, empowered leaders.

High school is a magically complicated time— emotionally charged— yet filled with challenges and possibilities. You not only have opportunities to learn Spanish II or Algebra, but to develop habits, patterns, and strategies for success.

Here is my challenge to you— the next time you look at your report card or review a test, look beyond what is in front of you. Consider the lessons hidden beneath the grades and comments, and honestly reflect on the values, habits, and lessons from your high school experience.

Reframing “2020”

2020 –number often representing vision, clarity, and perfect sight.

Now that 2020 has ended, the number is represented by words such as travel bans, shutdowns, vaccines, and wildfires. It is easy to focus on what 2020 has taken away and prevented us from doing. The year placed restrictions on everyone’s lives and forced us to navigate situations that we never thought we would be in. Daily interactions with friends and family went from physical to virtual, a context that made it difficult to function “normally.”

So, let’s reframe our perspective of 2020. What did 2020 give us? 2020 gave us a chance to re-evaluate how we operate in our social, academic, and professional worlds. 2020 gave us the opportunity to reframe our perspective. Whether asynchronous, synchronous, or a combination of the two, high schools stepped up to the challenge of educating students in an unprecedented time and in unprecedented ways. You too made informed decisions and learned to navigate various academic platforms, which continue to serve you as you transition from high school to college. Instead of looking back on 2020 and sighing, give yourself copious credit.

Although ideal for some and not ideal for others, the prevalence of colleges offering courses or full online programs is a reality of college life after 2020. Don’t let the increased prevalence of online offerings deter your postsecondary goals. Instead, focus on what lessons from 2020 you can put into practice.

Having trouble reframing your perspective? Let’s go back to Kid President’s 2013 Ted Talk, *I Think We All Need a Pep Talk*. In the “pep talk,” Kid President references Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Not Taken.” Frost closes the poem with, “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.” Kid President goes on to interpret the two roads metaphor as an opportunity to take the path that leads to “awesome.” He states, “We were made to be awesome. Let’s get out there!” To quote our Upward Bound Counselor, use what tools 2020 has equipped you with and “put them in your toolbox.” Among those tools you will find ingenuity, problem solving, and resilience. The key to utilizing and implementing the new additions to your toolbox? Reframing. Capitalize on the gains from the past that will propel you into the future. Work forward to focus on your strengths and utilize your tools to work through your deficits.

Reference:

SoulPancake (2013, January). *I think we all need a pep talk*. TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com/talks/kid_president_i_think_we_all_need_a_pep_talk.



TRiO

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