

Lockdown has taught me how to live again

By Poppy Surplice, Intern at the Centre for Brexit Studies

The past few months have been challenging for University students like myself, swapping lectures and seminars with new materials and resources to complete assignments online. Although some students could argue that they actually prefer this new lifestyle of 'home tutoring', it has massively impacted on my social and practical skills in everyday life.

Lockdown for me has been a blessing in disguise. I have learnt so much about the world we live in and keeping a healthy mindset. Yes, I miss my family, friends and freedom, but being able to set myself targets and realise my self-worth has helped to develop me into becoming stronger as a person.

Each morning, my alarm goes off at 7:45am. I take a 5km run around my local park and appreciate the beauty of nature around us. During each run, I set myself challenges in my head to complete throughout the week whilst enjoying the break from social media. I then write these challenges down after my run, and systematically organise into order of importance.

Once I have done this, I then do a live workout at 10am each morning to boost my strength and keep a healthy lifestyle. I find doing my workouts in the morning sets me up for the rest of the day. I wouldn't be able to do this every day if life was still 'normal'.

At first, I struggled with the online lesson plans set by my lecturers. But all my lecturers for each of my modules have been great with feedback and communication, however it's just not the same as face to face feedback. We have been using Microsoft Teams frequently to ask for any help and guidance for our assignments.

Our class also has a running group chat to discuss and advise each other. It seems to me that many of my peers have also struggled with lockdown

because the teaching style online is just so different compared to lecture room teaching.

The course I'm on, Events Management BA (Hons) is all about 'experience', and a lot of the teaching planned to help with our assignments was to visit exhibitions and venues. Of course, all the trips were cancelled because of COVID-19, which impacted many of us doing our live event module. For example, one of our assignments was to produce a 'family fun day out' at a local care home, but this was cancelled in March.

I have now completed all my assignments submitted and ready to be marked, but with lack of guidance, I feel slightly worried. After getting firsts on all my assignments so far, I just feel anxious on the overall results of the current assignments. There is just so much uncertainty about the future.

Life as a student at Birmingham City University has taught me more about the real world. I'm coming to the end of my second year at University, and am now into my ninth month of interning with the Centre for Brexit Studies. Between University and my internship, the experiences have contributed to my growth as a student. Often, students are seen as lazy, but I believe my confidence and work enthusiasm has strengthened massively.

Unfortunately, for many University students, our placements have been post-poned or cancelled. In September 2020, I was meant to be taking a lifetime opportunity to work in Barcelona for a year, completing my work placement in a sales and event management role, but this was recently cancelled.

This was upsetting, as I could not wait for the freedom and new experiences I would be enjoying. But, I always look back at how lucky and privileged I am to be alive and healthy. Lockdown has definitely taught me to value my health, and hopefully, I'll get the opportunity to live in Barcelona again.

Most nights, I keep in touch with friends and family using Zoom. This has been a great way to communicate and have a laugh during these dark

times. Me and my boyfriend chose to stay at individual houses, so it definitely has been hard not being able to see him.

It has been just me and my parents in the house the last few months, and although there are times where I just want to be out with my friends, we have kept ourselves occupied. From playing Monopoly to creating TikTok's for fun and enjoyment. We also watch films each weekend as a family which we never would usually do. It's been fun to just spend time with my parents, and get to know each other better. Lockdown has given me the opportunity to enjoy the simple things in life.

During lockdown, there has been moments of both happiness and sadness. I have loved keeping myself in a healthy mind-set, and spending time with family. I hope when we do return to normal life, we'll never forget the lessons we learned during our time in lockdown.