

Change for Good

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Do you think that when people lived through historical events they were able to reflect on those moments and recognize the significance in real time? Were they just in survival mode, looking forward to things getting back to normal? Did they perhaps find solutions that made them reluctant to return to the old normal?

I wonder if through times of imbalance and rapid, forced change, humans find comfort and encouragement by recognizing solutions they find. Perhaps, in a crisis, necessary solutions become unplanned perspective changers, paradigm shifts.

I asked my grandmother once, a member of the Greatest Generation, if she felt like part of the “greatest generation” when she was living it.



She said:

Are you kidding? Dad lost the farm in '35 we were forced to move to town and he became a barber. Our neighbors lost everything and began moving to find any kind of work. By the time we were seeing light, here came the war. Every boy in my graduating class, including all my brothers, were shipped overseas. We were trying to make the best choices we could with the information we had.

No, we did not know how history would see us. We couldn't predict what the Future's view would be from years of distance. We only knew that we had to find our way, we had to solve problems and come together as a community. In the end, we made changes that we never changed back."(Neal, 2001)

In this time, will we make changes, that we will never change back? Will we embrace the gift of connecting students, teachers, and parents in new and transparent ways? Will we recognize that learning how to learn and challenging ourselves is true educational rigor? Will we embrace the idea that growth is messy?
Brian Sztabnik shares this definition of rigor in education:

Rigor is the result of work that challenges students' thinking in new and interesting ways. It occurs when they are encouraged toward a sophisticated understanding of fundamental ideas and are driven by curiosity to discover what they don't know. (Edutopia, 2015)

When we come back to school will our appreciation be changed, will our sense of community be different?

Our global interconnectedness is on stark display during this crisis and it will no doubt drive young people's interest in engaging with the world in new and innovative ways. At the same time, global competencies, such as recognizing the perspectives and world views of others, communicating ideas clearly and effectively with diverse audiences, exploring and understanding the world outside one's immediate environment and knowing how to take action to achieve desired change will continue to gain importance in the job market. (Butte-Dahl, 2020)



I propose that we, as a Learning Community, will be more connected than ever. That our students, families and teachers, through this rapid and unexpected time of change have, out of necessity, become natural practiced agents and advocates for their own learning. Technologies never explored before, are now integral forms of learning and communication. All members of the Learning Community are assessing, reflecting, acting and changing to make systems better and more efficient.

Jennifer Butte-Dahl shares her insight:

A culture shift is underway. Historians will no doubt look back on this time as the moment in which we moved into the virtual world more fully than we had at any moment before. This shift will spark opportunities that forever change the way young people take in information, interact with one another, and engage in the world. (APCOWorldwide, 2020)

When we do have the opportunity to come back to a school life with social presence at its foundation, my hope is that the lessons of this time transfer. As our schools emerge from our remote learning cloak, we as a Learning Community have an obligation to recognize positive shifts in our educational experience and keep them, while still embracing our grand appreciation for meaningful social connection. We will move forward in this time of history and forever value these revelations; challenge is healthy, learning is messy, and through change comes the most rigorous and authentic learning.

References

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