



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGELINA TRANWU

Freshman Angelina Tranwu attends an online Zoom class and takes notes in preparation for an upcoming test. Without being present in a physical classroom environment, teachers worry that students may lose the initiative to study on their own.

Teachers alleviate grading concerns

BY KELLY MA
NEWS EDITOR

Up until recently, the idea of learning from home was commonly idealized by students. Many believed that classes would be easier due to the flexibility with the learning environment, decreased workload, and grade inflation. However, the experiences of both students and teachers following their first semester of online learning depicted an image that proves otherwise.

Seeing an 55.7% increase, first

semester D and F rates spiked from 11.5% in the 2019-20 school year to 17.9% in the 2020-21 school year. Due to the decline in academic performance, teachers have made efforts to ease the difficulties of online learning.

Along with office hours, teachers addressed concerns about grades by granting extra credit opportunities and assessing students through more presentations and projects rather than tests. Math teacher Jessica Chow began accepting late assignments and believed that “assigning less work and grading easier was a must for this year.”

“It does not surprise me that

there are students who are doing worse than ever before,” Chow said. “Teachers need to keep in mind that this is not the ideal situation for anyone, so we should be lenient. I hope students know that simply telling teachers about their situation can change a teacher’s mentality about how they grade assignments.”

While some students felt that grade inflation undermined their efforts, others appreciated it because they struggled to engage in their learning through a virtual environment. Difficulties transitioning to an online learning system, as well as personal struggles caused by outside factors, inhibited

students’ education.

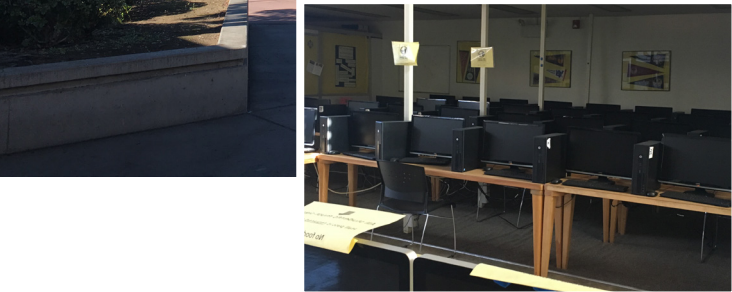
“I feel like I am just watching a tedious four-hour video every day, so it is much harder to concentrate and maintain the motivation to learn,” sophomore David Chau said. “I was scared that I would do poorly this year, so I am glad that teachers are making changes to accommodate everyone’s circumstances.”

Due to shortened instructional time, many teachers planned to cover less material this year. For many students, especially those planning to take AP classes, passing classes was not as important as receiving a quality education.

“The district advised teachers to focus more on the essential, core standards, so it is true that students may not be able to learn everything that they would normally be able to cover,” Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services Janet Lees said. “For me, learning is not only about learning every detail of the material, but being able to utilize and apply the information.”

The district will be reviewing semester grades at the end of this month. It will be discussing recommendations about providing students with the support they need to better engage in distance learning.

School remains under distance learning, reopening anticipated



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMY WU

After 10 months, the campus remains empty. The district is working in conjunction with Governor Gavin Newsom’s school reopening framework to determine when students will return.

The district enforced new hybrid-learning guidelines in preparation for reopening.

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The school will remain under distance learning through Feb. 26, prompting adaptation procedures along with insight over the process of hybrid-learning.

Earlier this month, the Board of Education voted to approve the extension of distance learning. There is not an exact reopening time frame.

“We have put together the infrastructure that will allow us to begin bringing students safely back to campus once the infection rate in the surrounding community is brought under control,”

superintendent Denise Jaramillo said. “When it is time for students to return to campus, families will have the option to remain on distance learning.”

Currently, the district has not outlined a definitive picture as to what life on campus will look like once students return aside from safety measures.

“Safety measures will include social distancing, the use of masks [and] PPE, frequent handwashing, a daily symptom screener before coming on campus, and a temperature screener upon arrival,” Public Information Officer Director Natalie Tee said. “Students will be in cohorts and seated six feet apart and will follow any other Department of Public Health orders and Los Angeles County Office of Education guidelines that are in place at that time.”

In consideration of the administration revising certain distance learning logistics, such

as the new bell schedule, students still find themselves experiencing pressing issues. Reflecting on her online school life, freshman Angelina Tranwu was among the many students who described their motivational barriers of distance learning.

“Sometimes going to school online feels like an option,” Tranwu said. “I imagined my freshman year to be filled with new friends, fun activities, sports, and clubs. Because of distance learning, the lack of social interaction affected my education and experiences in school.”

The district is pausing all-in person assessments along with drive-through services unrelated to food distribution or instruction. For now, it will continue providing meals, counseling, and academic support. It will re-evaluate all factors before deciding whether to continue distance learning in early February.