



Opinion

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# Bandwidth Breakdown in Students and Faculty in the United States due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Protests for Social Justice

**Charlotte Brasic Royeen\***

Dean, College of Health Sciences, A Watson III Presidential Professor and Professor of Occupational Therapy, Rush University Medical Center, USA

\*Corresponding author: Charlotte Brasic Royeen, Dean, College of Health Sciences and A. Watson III Presidential Professor and Professor of Occupational Therapy, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, USA.

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## Opinion

The presence of the COVID-19 Pandemic [1] coupled with the more recent concomitant outbreak of protests for social justice after the murder of George Floyd [2] across major cities in the United States and internationally, has created a confluence of pressures affecting students and faculty in university settings. Not only have students and faculty had to cope with massive transformation of educational offerings to online versus onsite formats [3], but also they have had to further struggle with personal health risks regarding exposure to COVID-19, loss of family members, colleagues or classmates due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while continuing to navigate teaching and learning at high university standards [4].

The accumulation of these pressures results in what Verschelden [5] and Mullainathna & Shafir [6] consider to be a bandwidth issue. Bandwidth, as used here, connotes “the condition of scarcity [that] depletes mental capacity” (p. 7). This may also be considered as pressures that overrun the human brain beyond capacity. Given that American Journal of Biomedical Science and Research is committed to the development of science in the area of cognition and mental capacity, review of the concept of bandwidth and how current students and faculty may be lacking in bandwidth secondary to the pandemic coupled with pervasive social justice protests is an appropriate consideration for this journal. For, the effects are pervasive and long lasting. Because of these two events, we are all witnesses to one of the most significant occasions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As scientists, the contributors to this journal are committed to furthering science. Yet, we are also simultaneously challenged to

acknowledge and accept the bandwidth limitations of faculty and students created by these events. In order to do so, science must be coupled with ethics [7]. As such, the moral action of ethical consideration challenges us to provide support and acknowledgement that the human touch of caring projected out to students and faculty during this time is important. Even the simple act or recognition that bandwidth limitations exist due to current events (exacerbating the conditions of structural and cultural violence) is a “normalizing” [8] action that can offer solace and comfort to those affected.

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