

# Business as Usual: Reflections on Life as Mothers and Educators during a Pandemic

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic marks a major turning point in contemporary history that impacts people of all walks of life. In particular, teachers and those in the education field face several unique challenges regarding the balance of family and work obligations, coping with the stress of preventing infection, and helping students understand the multitude of events that are occurring simultaneously with the pandemic that include, but not limited to, the social justice protests, the 2020 presidential election, and the 2021 Capitol insurrection.

## Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to conduct a reflective study of our experiences as mothers, scholars, and teachers' during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As historians and practitioners of education, it is important to record our lived experiences in order to provide future generations of students, teachers, and scholars insight into how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the history of education in the United States

## Methods

Four reflections are organized into two major themes, which are *Life Changes and Shifts in Work Opportunities* and *Triggering of Past Events and Traumas*. Each of these reflections highlight how we maintained, by choice and by expectation, a "business as usual" approach to the responsibilities of parenting, teaching, and conducting scholarly research that continued throughout the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Major Themes

### Theme 1: Life Changes & Shifts in Work Opportunities

- Balancing working from home and taking care of children and household needs
- Keeping up with work responsibilities and taking care of sick child
- Job changes: Teacher to instructional coach at a new school Turning down dream job to put family first

### Theme 2: Triggering of Past Events and Traumas

- Anxiety raised from previous experience of trauma with children
- Struggling to deal with pandemic due to prior experiences of living through 9/11
- Questioning of whether the right choice was made or the best advice was given, both for students and own children

## Conclusion

While all four reflections share different perspectives from women in four different stages of their personal life and careers, these stories share commonalities. It is clear that we all feel the societal pressure of what mothering is supposed to look like while also navigating the male-dominated world of academia. The balance of commitment was also present for all of us. Author 3 is having difficulty finding the balance of giving her own children the attention they need while simultaneously giving her teachers the support that they need.

Through these narratives and the shifts that we have made, we no longer feel like we can separate being a mother and an educator. Instead, we all feel the pressure to be both the best mother and best educator at all times simultaneously because whether in a pandemic or not, life must go on--business as usual.

## Selected References

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