

Sarah Heavren 0:01

Okay, we are recording. The following introductory conversation and questions have been structured off, but not copied from, the suggested introductory script in questions provided by Indiana University as part of the Journal of the play COVID-19 oral history project. My name is Sarah Heavren and I'm here with Jenna Beatey. Today is February 1, 2021, and it is 4:31pm. I am coming to you from Howley Hall on the campus of Providence College, and Jenna is speaking from her house off campus. Okay, Jenna, I would like to review the informed consent that you signed for participating in the project. This interview will be part of a collection in the Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive as well as the Providence College Archives and Special Collections as stated on the release form that you signed. The Rhode Island COVID-19 archive is a public digital archive project created and maintained by the Providence Public Library and the Rhode Island Historical Society. In response to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the archive seeks to document and share the lived experience of Rhode Islanders from all walks of life during the global health crisis. Any audio or video recording of this interview and a text based transcript of the interview will be contributed to both the Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive and the Providence College Archives and Special Collections. Do you verbally agree to this?

Jenna Beatey 1:25

Yes, I do.

Sarah Heavren 1:26

Okay, I am briefly going to review the license on the release form that you signed. Under this CC-BY 4.0 license, the creator will retain the copyright to their work and allow uses such as Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence Public Library, and Providence College Archives and Special Collections to include the materials in the permanent collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society and Providence Public Library, and the public to have access to and share, adapt, modify and cite this work. Per the CC-BY 4.0 license, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence Public Library, PC Archives and Special Collections, and the public must credit the creator when making any future uses. De verbally agreed to this license?

Jenna Beatey 2:12

Yes, I do.

Sarah Heavren 2:13

Okay. Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

Jenna Beatey 2:16

No.

Sarah Heavren 2:17

Okay. Then let's get started. So, um, obviously, you're a student. But do you mind stating your major and like anything that you're involved in on campus or off campus? Like if you have a job or something?

Jenna Beatey 2:32

Yep. So I'm a senior elementary special education major. And I also am a student worker at the package room on campus. And as a senior in elementary special ed, all of senior year student teaching. Um, so I've been doing that last semester and a new placement this semester.

Sarah Heavren 2:52

It's exciting. Okay, so we'll definitely delve more into that. Um, where are you from and where are you living in relation to campus? You don't have to like, give your address, but just like, general proximity.

Jenna Beatey 3:04

Okay, I'm from Massachusetts and on campus. I'm, like, off of Eaton.

Sarah Heavren 3:10

Yeah, and I guess it's a little different. But, um, so as a student teacher, like, do you have any, any classes like on campus?

Jenna Beatey 3:22

No, so this whole year, last year, and this year, all of my college courses have been virtual.

Sarah Heavren 3:29

Okay.

Jenna Beatey 3:29

And I requested this semester for my teaching placement to be virtual.

Sarah Heavren 3:35

Okay.

Jenna Beatey 3:36

Because last semester, I started in person. But then, like, a week in the school, the district dropped me. They said, Sorry, we don't want any student teachers coming in. So then my cooperating teacher called me and was like, Yeah, sorry. Like, you're, unfortunately you're not working with me anymore. So then I didn't have a placement at all for three weeks of just doing nothing. So I was losing time. And then they found me an all virtual one. So I'm staying, luckily enough, I'm with that same cooperating teacher from my second placement and the students. So that's a positive.

Sarah Heavren 4:17

Yeah, that sounds that sounds really lucky.

Jenna Beatey 4:19

Yeah.

Sarah Heavren 4:20

Okay, so we're definitely going to circle back to that. But to get a chronological sense of like the progression of your experience with COVID, let's go back to March of last year, when all this

started. Where were you and like, roughly and like what were you doing when you found out over that over spring break that break was first going to be extended? And how did you react to that?

Jenna Beatey 4:47

Um, I was, I guess the extension, I don't remember exactly. But I remember I was actually coming back from spring break in Florida. I was on the plane about to get up, and I got the email. um, and I remember I was really annoyed and mad and like, yeah.

Sarah Heavren 5:12

So did you just, um, just go straight home?

Jenna Beatey 5:15

Um, yeah, we just went back home. And then I stayed there until my like, designated sign time to get my stuff from school.

Sarah Heavren 5:28

So, because we ended up learning online for the rest of the semester, how, like, how did that affect you, like as an education major, and like just adapting to online learning?

Jenna Beatey 5:40

Yeah. So I obviously got my first semester of special ed placement cut short, because of the pandemic. And so I didn't, I would just started getting into working with my one student, I picked him out and I was starting to do, um, like, um, I forget the word. I was starting to work with him, like seeing his progression for a certain, like test I would make up. So I just started getting his like background knowledge to start this whole project, because it was a project for the semester. And then obviously, we couldn't go back in. So then for that project, it was really confusing, and hard because we had to make up data and information about the students that we didn't get to learn about. So in then that whole semester, basically, I felt, um, I didn't like obviously experience it or learn much, because it's supposed to be hands-on and practical, but it was just tough and it was fake. And I tried to understand. But it was kind of hard. But then the other classes were fine. I don't mind learning through Zoom or anything. But the teaching part, obviously, was hard.

Sarah Heavren 7:04

Yeah, definitely. Did you feel more intimidated going into this year knowing you're going to be student teaching, having had that compromised experience last spring?

Jenna Beatey 7:18

Yeah, because I knew at some point, we would go into like a lockdown or something. But I didn't obviously know that it would happen a week into me actually going to the school. And it was at a point where I, I was still working with, um, the staff. The students hadn't come in yet. So it was intimidating the first time going in person.

Sarah Heavren 7:51

So what was your summer like? Did you work? Did you have any plans that you had made that were compromised or that you had to cancel?

Yeah, so I work, like I said, I work in the mailroom as a work study. And I was gonna do that over the summer. And while living at this house, that's off campus. Um, but I didn't because I think they only allowed a few students in, um, because I--I think that some did work over the summer. Um, so and obviously, because I was planning for that I didn't have a backup so I was unemployed for the whole summer. And I just really did--oh, I took, did I? I don't think I did. No, I didn't. I was gonna say something, but that's not true. Um, but basically, I was unemployed and I didn't really do much. I was in my house.

Were your siblings home?

Jenna Beatey 8:55

Yeah, my younger brother was he's in high school

Sarah Heavren 9:00

How was that?

Jenna Beatey 9:02

I saw too much of him on, okay, so I saw too much. I'm sure everyone. Most people had the same experience. I was with my family for too much. And it was getting like a lot. I needed space for obviously, it's, I didn't want just to stay in my room. But I couldn't go anywhere else. So it was frustrating.

Sarah Heavren 9:26

Were you hopeful about returning in the fall, like did you did you think PC was going to be able to make it through this semester? Are you hopeful about student teaching? Or were you kind of prepared for the worst?

Jenna Beatey 9:40

Yeah, I was prepared to I was prepared for what happened which is when they eventually pulled all the student teachers out, and they had us go virtual. Um, So I was prepared for really anything to go wrong and really have expectations. I was just happy that I'm living in a house off campus and with my close friends. And then anything that happened, I was like, okay, like, we'll work around it like, it's not a big deal, because we still have fun in here. And then student teaching, I was curious as to how they would do that. I was surprised that the department, um, was so keen on us going back in person, like some individuals that I had as professors were like, oh, like checking in on us every week on how our placement is going. They were like, oh, like, I'm like, we're really trying to get you back in there, like I'm so, this isn't verbatim, but like, they were, like, annoyed and frustrated that we can't just all go back out there. I forget the timeframe of like this. I think it was, um, in the middle of when I lost mine, my placement the first time, but I was surprised that they would want us back out there in the middle of the pandemic. Um, so I think that's why I chose to be virtual this semester. Because to avoid the back and forth. And also, I obviously don't want it, um, to compromise anyone or be compromised myself.

Sarah Heavren 11:28

So would you if you had the opportunity to go back student teaching in person? Would you have, have taken it?

Jenna Beatey 11:38

Um, not now. I mean, in the future, obviously, I want to have my own classroom. And I'm expecting this summer, hopefully to get hired at a school to be in person, at least for some instruction. But I think that is in the future. Not maybe not very soon. But eventually.

Sarah Heavren 12:06

Have you also had to, um, be studying for, like certain exams, like your teaching exams? Are those still on track?

Jenna Beatey 12:15

Yeah, so I have them the MTELs, which is the Massachusetts, um, licensure exams. I'm scheduled to take them this summer. And I'll be going in person at testing centers for that. So yeah, it's on track. And especially, so taking the exams, and then getting my initial license. And then I have to get my masters to get a professional license. And then I'm all set to teach officially.

Sarah Heavren 12:45

Sounds like a long process.

Jenna Beatey 12:47

Yeah, it does. But yeah, hopefully, at this job I'm applying to, they might offer me free masters while I work. And while I'm taking my MTELs. So hopefully it'll all happen in like a year and a half instead of three or something.

Sarah Heavren 13:04

Yeah, yeah, that would be good. Um, so how did you react to the outbreak in the fall that we had on campus? Um, like already the pandemic was affecting your student teaching so then how did, how did now the outbreak on campus affect you? Like did you go home at all? Did you stay in your house? What did you do to pass the time?

Jenna Beatey 13:28

I think because I live off campus. I, I mean, I wasn't too surprised. I was like, Well, duh, you're gonna have everyone come back and stay six feet apart. And wear masks, which is obviously good. But I was just like, Well, duh, like, no surprise, that sucks. But, um, but yeah, because I'm off campus in a house. I, didn't really affect me. Um, yeah.

Sarah Heavren 14:09

Um, were there certain, I mean, obviously, your student teaching has been greatly affected by all this. But have there been other things that you, you've been used to doing on campus or the things that you're involved with on campus that either look very different or that you've not been able to do, things that maybe you miss doing?

Jenna Beatey 14:31

I think just the different activities they would have, like even in the spring of last year, like bingo and things in McPhails's and all this stuff, and now it's online, which is so boring, like, obviously, like you go to these events to be with the people that go or to meet new people, whatever. So having it online was, obviously it was them trying to like bring the sense of normal and to still see people. But was that something that I miss that I haven't done this semester or this year obviously. Yeah, it's the only thing.

Sarah Heavren 15:15

Have you been able to really see people besides your roommates. I mean, you and I were roommates. And like, I still haven't seen you in a very long time.

Jenna Beatey 15:24

Right, no, I just see my roommates. And when I go to work, I see my co-workers and then random students who come in to get packages.

Sarah Heavren 15:38

Um, so you made it through the fall. So what was, what was winter break? Like? Did you, were you able to work at all? Did you, were you just back spending too much time with your family?

Jenna Beatey 15:51

Winter break? Why can I remember that all?

Sarah Heavren 15:55

It was about month ago?

Jenna Beatey 15:56

I know. Oh, my God, what do I do? Well, nothing. Obviously. I can't remember it. I didn't have work. Um, I just read a lot. And didn't really do much, saw, like, some family. Yeah.

Sarah Heavren 16:25

Um, so now here we are in the spring, and you're doing your student teaching all online?

Jenna Beatey 16:33

Mm-hm

Sarah Heavren 16:34

So can you, can you just like talk about that, like, what, what is your average day? Like, what does your, your average day look like?

Jenna Beatey 16:42

Yeah. So my, I don't know if this makes a difference. But my school is a, like a, um, like a private school. So their schedule, and all of my, my whole class and the teacher is distance learning. So the schedule, there's we meet in the morning for ELA, math, science, and like, lunch and stuff. And then the whole afternoon from like 12:30 till four is just a-synch time. So they have that long to do certain homeworks, um, or schedule to meet with the teacher for extra help.

So I'm only like, logged on to Zoom from like 8:30 to 12:00-ish, most days. Which is, which I mean, I can't change that, which is good. Because obviously, um, last time looking at the screen, and I can go to the mail room to work. And I, and it does kind of seem appropriate, like ELA lessons, math lesson, science lessons are all like an hour long. And I feel like, I'm with fourth grade. And I feel like for them, that's enough, or that's like their limit. Because then they start talking about random things and getting up and leaving and stuff like that. Um, and the students are all really good at technology, which makes sense, because they probably, like grew up with it, um, in their hands. So they all log on. And this semester I'm general education, so I'll be responsible for taking over a subject. So I hope to eventually work with, work on ELA. And, obviously, because it's online, I have to make presentations, on like Google Slides or something. And I'll probably use something like Kahoot, or like YouTube videos that are like songs or something to engage them while they're at the screen. And it's more challenging to think of fun, creative ways to teach online because you obviously have so many, like a limited number of resources. Whereas in person, you can use the whiteboard, and you can have them stand up and move around or get in groups. And, you know, use manipulatives like, passing the ball to speak and, and classroom management is totally out the window. Cuz like, they really have all the, they could just leave, I can't do anything about them just logging off. Or if they're watching TV, I can't. I can call their parent. I mean, not now. But like, if I was the teacher-teacher, I could like contact someone in their house and tell them hey, like, John isn't paying attention. I think he's watching the TV. But whereas like obviously in person school, that wouldn't be a distraction, and I would be right there to, um, get them back on track. Um, I forgot where I started with whole thing. But yeah, anyways, that's my experience.

Sarah Heavren 20:08

So do you think, um, because obviously, the way that you're doing student teaching is like, pretty radically different than what you've been trying to prepare for. So, do you think these adaptations are, like beneficial in the long run? Or do you think you're still having a compromised experience where you're gonna kind of know what to do if there's ever a global pandemic, again, which hopefully, there isn't. But, you know, once things go back to normal, you know, maybe you haven't had as much in person experience with adapting to that,

Jenna Beatey 20:43

Right. I think I don't have enough practice with classroom management. And I feel like this year would have been my time to set like, my, like, Miss Beatey's classroom management style in the classroom, apart from their, their full-on teacher. So that's something that I, me and my peers probably missed. And well, those that are distance learning, distance teaching. Um, but also, now that every school is, has Google meets or Zoom, I feel like, once everything's back in person, for the majority, this, this distance, this distance learning is like available, like snow days, I don't, or like, um, like, I feel like it's harder to miss a bunch of school, if the teacher can be like, oh, we'll just go online. If you have an appointment, you have to leave early. Okay, go online, at like, 2:30 to get that lesson in or something. So I feel like it's good, that I'm learning how to teach this way. But obviously, it's not what I expected or wanted, like, pre-COVID.

Sarah Heavren 22:21

Do you feel like the quality of your teaching has, has changed? You know, like, are the students, do you think the students are learning as well? Do you feel, uh I don't know, maybe like more helpless that maybe you can't connect with them as much?

Jenna Beatey 22:38

Yeah, I definitely think not only other students, maybe not super into it, or learning but I, even my roommate slash friend also distance teaching. We are both like, I don't want to teach, like I hate, like we--so it's just like a chore. Now, which is annoying, because obviously this is our career, and when we graduate and like, we do want to teach and everything and like it's our passion, but I think maybe it's because now we're taking all online college courses. And now we have this that it maybe mold like blends into the same kind of thinking of, Oh, I have class at 4:30 for two and a half hours, whatever. But, and then I think that part of me that feels that way. might sometimes seep into me teaching, like in my tone of voice or intonations, like if it's not as like happy and peppy to engage them. Also for the students, their point of view, like I said earlier, like distractions and having also students who their parents, um, work from home or they have younger siblings, like one student, he it seems before I knew what was happening in his house, it seemed like he was just not participating or he wasn't paying attention but it was because he didn't want to speak up because his baby nephew was asleep in like the next room. So things like that at home that we can't prepare for, um, might make students like less engaged in any lesson. Therefore they might not obviously they're not going to learn as much as was intended.

Sarah Heavren 24:44

So are you able to with like your experiences learning online then kind of like put yourself in your student shoes and understand like what works, what doesn't work? Like are you able to transfer your, your like professor, you as a student experience into like you as a teacher and your students' experience?

Jenna Beatey 25:08

I think, a little part of it. Because as a student going to marathons at night, I am just thinking about dinner and my friends are right next to me because they're in the same class. So it's that distraction. But it's also different because they're in fourth grade. So their distractions are going to be different and their on--and they're in the classroom for like multiple hours at a time. But also, at least my class in particular, they're all, they're all friends. And they'll all like talk to each other about I now Among Us was a huge thing during lunch bunch. During lunch break, they would put in the chat like the code. Like all the students are very friendly with one another and want to stay on Zoom to hang out with everyone, because they can't hang out with friends in person. Um, so I think I do have a better understanding as to how they feel. And yeah, but I think it's just, it's just different, distraction-wise.

Sarah Heavren 26:24

So to turn it a little bit back more on like you personally, um, have you been in isolation or quarantine at all? And I mean, you don't you don't have to answer that. You know, that's totally up to you.

Jenna Beatey 26:37



Like right now?

Sarah Heavren 26:39

Like just throughout any of this like, have you, have you gotten COVID? Have you been in close contact? Have you had to like go to the hotel downtown?

Jenna Beatey 26:47

No.

Sarah Heavren 26:48

Oh, that's good. Congratulations

Jenna Beatey 26:50

Thank you. I mean, I know, like my friends and family have had it, but I wasn't close contact.

Sarah Heavren 27:00

Did you say your, your family had it?

Jenna Beatey 27:02

Yeah, my sister got it. That's okay. For me to say you can keep it. I don't care. She's fine.

Sarah Heavren 27:11

Okay, that's good. Glad to hear that. Yeah. It's only going down in history.

Jenna Beatey 27:19

Right. She still makes jokes about she's, yeah. Okay, whatever.

Sarah Heavren 27:24

All right. Well, yeah. Um, how are you coping with your pod? That's, that's the big thing that you always hear from Dean Sears and administration is stay with your pod. So is that, like, are you happy with that? Do you enjoy your pod? Has that been like, a socially fruitful experience? Are you, are you enjoying your living experience?

Jenna Beatey 27:47

Um, mostly, there's been some, um, yeah, mostly and over winter break some of us made like a wicked long, like bucket list for last semester. And it's all things like themes that we can dress up as for dinner together and movies to watch and activities, like games and stuff that we can make, um, and play, like, on weekends and weeknights, to, like, have fun, because half of us are student teaching all day or going to work for the rest. And that we want something fun and like an activity to do at the end.

Sarah Heavren 28:37

That's nice. So like, do you think you guys have gotten closer through this? Or you're trying to get closer at least?

Jenna Beatey 28:46

Yeah, definitely. Because not only are we obviously bonding through the shared of annoyance of COVID and how, I mean, I am not too sentimental that I don't think it like ruined my senior year or anything. Like obviously, I want everyone to be safe. So obviously, I don't mind all the restrictions and rules and everything. Um, and then I think like with the list and the planned activities, and like, um, games and little outings and stuff, we like scheduled time to hang out and do fun things.

Sarah Heavren 29:32

So you mentioned senior activities. Are you like, you know, we missed Senior Ring Weekend. We missed a lot of other senior things. Are you, like have you, have you come to terms with that? Are you okay with that, are you, you know, don't really have super high expectations for...?

Jenna Beatey 29:51

So yeah, I didn't have high expectations. And also I am fine with it all being canceled or put on Zoom. Like the ring thing, I will totally skip out on all the activities to just walk up and get it and go back home. Um, I mean, of course, that would have been like a fun dance and picture time to hang out with friends and other people I haven't seen. But I think I'm, I've come to terms with it like what you said. And I'm fine. Very low maintenance, I guess with senior activities.

Sarah Heavren 30:34

That's, that's, this is a good year to be that way. Um, have you discovered any new hobbies or pursued any new interests?

Jenna Beatey 30:43

Oh my God. Thank you so much for asking! Yes! Okay, my friend just taught us, um, me and two other friends, so four of us how to knit. Um, I've been trying, my mom has been getting me to learn. But it hasn't been going well. But, um, I officially learned and I'm, and I'm in almost halfway done with my first scarf. I'm so excited.

Sarah Heavren 31:11

Yay, that's so exciting.

Jenna Beatey 31:12

That and reading. It has really, um, knocked down my screen time on my phone. By like hours.

Sarah Heavren 31:20

That's really impressive.

Jenna Beatey 31:22

Yep. Thank you.

Sarah Heavren 31:23

Because everything is just on the screen right now. That is so impressive.

Jenna Beatey 31:27

Yep.

Sarah Heavren 31:28

That's that's very "teacher" of you.

Jenna Beatey 31:30

I know, it's very grandmother of us. Though that's fine.

Sarah Heavren 31:34

That is fine. That's, that's great. That's awesome.

Jenna Beatey 31:36

Yeah.

Sarah Heavren 31:37

Um, so overall, what would you say is the greatest challenge that you've faced through all this?

Jenna Beatey 31:46

I think, um, adapting to the new world of, I mean, wearing mask I got over, like, that's normal, um, annoying, but whatever. And then I think, like gatherings and like, like, if I see, like, a really big group, I'll be like, Oh, my God, like, they're not supposed to do that, or, like things obviously, that we wouldn't have thought of before. And like, people going to Disneyland, all this stuff. So I think, um, reworking how I see, like social groups and normal things.

Sarah Heavren 32:35

Do you think it's gonna take a lot to, like, reassimilate into that? You know, especially like, once you get into your own classroom, like having students back and like having them crawling all over each other? And all that?

Jenna Beatey 32:49

Yeah, I think they'll, it--I think it'll be a little weird. Like, if I, when I have my own classroom and students like, sharing, like snacks, or drinks behind my back. Um, even like, without, even having the desks, like closer in little groups, without like plexiglass and stuff. Um, that might be a little weird. But I have a feeling I'll get used to it, obviously.

Sarah Heavren 33:25

Um, what would you say are the things that have kept you grounded through all this? You know, there's been a lot of like, radical change and uncertainty. So, like, your friends, your family, certain, certain things that you do to like, calm yourself down or reflect?

Jenna Beatey 33:43

Um, I guess yeah, my friends, and how inside our house, it's like, um, like, not like COVID. Like, obviously, there's no masks because we're the same pod and we're hanging out and doing things in our house that we would be doing without COVID and everything. So I think having that is really good for, um, remembering that, like I still have fun things to do this semester. And with everything going on. I think that. Friends and, yeah.

Sarah Heavren 34:39

Are you optimistic about the future, like now, we have news of the vaccine coming out and being distributed? So do you feel like we've kind of, we're getting to the peak of this mountain that we've been climbing and that, you know, things things will get better, and we'll be able to you know, see each other?

Jenna Beatey 35:01

I mean, I sure hope so. I guess we'll see, um, how the vaccine affects people after it. Um, I mean, yeah, I know that this will all end sometime. I don't know when obviously, I'm not sciency. But yeah, I'm hopeful that it'll be over at some point. I will leave it to the smart people and those involved to tell me when that is and to help.

Sarah Heavren 35:40

Is there is there anything else you want to talk about that we haven't covered? Or do you have any advice or positive messages to close this out?

Jenna Beatey 35:50

Oh, my God, advice or positive messages? Um, maybe like what you were saying with the question about, um, staying grounded in it. And I think focusing on obviously, the positives in your life at the moment, and the things that make you happiest and that can, if you're super, um, glued to the news and COVID and everything, just like take a step back to focus in the present and in your pod and doing fun things and enjoying that moment. Yep

Sarah Heavren 36:28

Yeah that's great. I like that a lot.

Jenna Beatey 36:33

Yeah.

Sarah Heavren 36:33

That's so important. Okay. Well, thank you, Jenna, for, for doing this, for talking with me. And, yeah, so Jenna Beatey, everyone.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>