

Pets on Zoom Make Classes Cute

Ginger Hood, staff writer

The transition to online learning at PVCC has been a challenging and confusing one for teachers and students alike. Many of PVCC's quarantine policies and resources have been based around the academic needs of students. However, it is also important to consider the social needs of students while self-isolating.

One thing I found helpful to my online school experience has been taking some time after online meetings for students to stick around and socialize with each other. Giving students optional time to connect, discuss points made in class, complain about the quarantine, and share stories with each other has greatly improved class meetings and general motivation to do schoolwork. It is a great practice for boosting the morale of classes that meet on Zoom.

However, my personal highlight of this social time has been my classmates showing off our pets to each other. It began when I missed a homework deadline for the birth of a kitten in my house, and it snowballed into each pet owner



**Sprocket, one of the frequently featured pets on Zoom.
Photography by Ginger Hood.**



**Sprocket all grown up.
Photography by Ginger Hood.**

after class giving a mini show and tell on their animals. I am not the only one who enjoys an after class not-so-national geographic special on quarantined pets – Jude Bolick (and her ferrets) enjoy this opportunity too.

“It’s very nice to see how everything has kind of shut down, but a cat is still having kittens,” Bolick said. “Everything is closed, but there’s still happy kitten land. Life goes on.”

This practice is not just enjoyed by those that have kittens or ferrets to flaunt – another classmate, Jan Newcomb, appreciates the furry friends. “I have a lot of anxiety, and I don’t have a pet,” Newcomb said, “at least I can still see pets in videos.”

Students who opted to spend extra time on zoom connecting with classmates seemed satisfied with their decision, especially after kittens became a regular occurrence.

Even the teacher behind the hang-out time, Dr. Tamara Whyte, appreciates the chance to fawn over quarantined pets. Whyte summed up the addition of animals to zoom meetings in seven short words: “The animals make us feel more human.”