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CHANGES AND CHALLENGES FOR EVERYONE

Among today's buzzwords are the terms, Distance Education, e - learning, Remote Education. Just a few weeks ago these terms were in limited use but now in the Education sector they have become high frequency words.



John Lees

Director-Teaching and Learning

In Turkey, the online Turkish school curriculum has been put at the heart of family life - kitchens have become classrooms, parents have become teacher assistants. In the meantime state teachers have become redundant, since the Ministry of Education introduced a centralised learning platform- though private schools are supporting the programme with additional materials. The international schools in Turkey who follow entirely different programmes have had to leap into the dark and quickly prepare on line education to fulfill the requirements of their curricula. It may be an American Board, the IB programme, or in our case the Cambridge International programme.



In Britain children have made these rainbows to put them in their windows as a sign of hope.

Teachers are not normally prepared to be so digitally dependent and do not easily become distance education broadcasters overnight, especially if they are camera shy.

Over the last few weeks we have launched our own programme and along with the novelty of it, we started to ask for feedback from parents, students and teaching staff resulting in a weekly programme, that may well take us into the summer months, if the government continues with school closure.



Thanks to a dedicated teaching team, your understanding and support, we will be able to complete this year's class work on line or in class, whatever the Ministry of Education considers to be sensible in the period of the pandemic. Our primary concern is for the



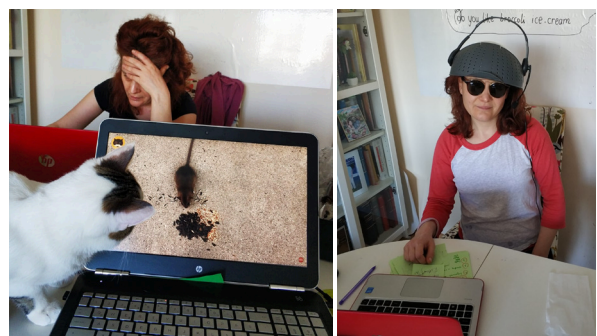
Dad challenges kids to draw him sleeping so he can have a nap 😊



health and safety of our population and we will follow all guidelines to ensure this.

At this time, we wish you the very best for quality family time, the good use of time for hobbies or pastimes... If patience is on sale anywhere, please be sure to buy a good measure of it!

In this issue of our school magazine, we look at the history of Distance Education from Mr. Olaf, and how to support education at home for younger children in an article from our School Counsellor, Ms. Özge. To get an account of what is happening in various parts of the school, we have reports from our Co-ordinators - Ms. Lesley, Mr. Jaime and Ms. Sarah. On a lighter note, we have a look at how teachers occupy themselves in their spare time. We also have accounts from two of our interns and an article from school administrator Ms Natalia, marking her first year living in Istanbul.



A SHORT HISTORY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION



Olaf Pasquier

from France has a degree in Contemporary Studies and a post graduate certificate in French language teaching. As a School Administrator, he is responsible for the secondary school library, assisting the Cambridge Officer and participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

The history of distance education is closely related to the development of communication technologies. We can split the history into 3 different periods - the first one would be following the establishment and standardization of the post office, mails and newspapers, the second period follows the invention of the radio, the telephone and the television while the third one is connected to the outcome of the internet.

POSTAL SERVICES and NEWSPAPERS

The practice of communication by written documents carried by an intermediary from one person to another certainly dates back nearly to the invention of writing. However, the development of formal postal systems occurred much later. The first documented use of an organized courier service for the diffusion of written documents is in Egypt, where Pharaohs used couriers for the diffusion of their decrees in the territory of the State (2400 BCE). The earliest surviving piece of mail is also Egyptian, dating to 255 BCE.

The first credible claim for the development of a real postal system comes from ancient Persia, with a documented claim by Xenophon attributing the invention to King Cyrus the Great in 550 BCE, who declared that every province in his kingdom would organize reception and delivery of post to each of its citizens.

It is followed by some traces of a postal system in India with the Mauryan Empire 322-185 BCE, as well as in Rome under Augustus Caesar.



A Post office on a postal route in 19th century Finland

Genghis Khan installed an empire-wide postal system named and by the end of Kublai Khan's reign there were more than 1400 postal stations in China alone. In the Islamic world pigeons were used, while in 1505 Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I established a postal system surviving the abolition of the empire in 1806.

In the UK, prior to 1840, letters were paid for by the recipient and the cost was determined by the distance from the sender to recipient and the number of sheets of paper rather than with a countrywide flat rate with weight restrictions. Sir Rowland Hill reformed the postal system with the 1840 Act and the introduction of the Uniform Penny Post, which led to the invention of a postal stamp.

The establishment in 1874 of the Universal Postal Union, including 192 member countries sets the rules for international mail exchanges and finalized the standardization of the postal system, which allowed the first distance education system to appear.

The oldest claim of distant education is prior to the 1840 act. In The Boston Gazette of 20 March, 1728, 'Caleb Phillipps, Teacher of the New Method of Short Hand' advertises that any 'Persons in the Country desirous to Learn this Art, may by having the several Lessons sent weekly to them, be as perfectly instructed as those that live in Boston, one of the first known forms of distance education.

In 1843 Sir Isaac Pitman provided the first example of modern distance education. Postcards with his new form of shorthand, known as Pitman shorthand, would be mailed to the students, who in turn would transcribe them and send them back for correction. The Phonographic Correspondence society was founded in 1846, which was the precursor to Sir Isaac Pitman's Correspondence College.

In 1858 at the University of London, the External Programme, chartered by Queen Victoria, was established. This provided access to higher education for students that might otherwise not be able to obtain an education for economic, geographic or family reasons.

A few years later, in 1873 the Society to Encourage Learning at Home was founded by Anna Ticknor with the intention to educate women through correspondence. Over the course of its 24 years history, more than 10,000 women received an education.

In 1888, the International Correspondence School opened in Scranton in the US and was originally designed for immigrant coalminers. It got increasingly

popular in the 1890'S and operated until 1996.

As in 1892, at the head of the development of distance education was the President of the University of Chicago, William Rainey Harper, who proposed satellite campuses to extend education further into the community, for those not able to join courses in the main campuses. He developed a system of smaller, local schools, enabled to provide higher education. He is considered one of the main academicians of the late 19th century.

TELEPHONE, RADIO and TELEVISION

By the end of the 19th century and after decades of experiments, an Italian engineer, Guglielmo Marconi, invented wireless telegraphy equipment in 1897, known as the first operational radio transmission system. Even if this system was only able to send electric signals and codes, it is credited with saving the 700 people who survived the tragic Titanic disaster. The first transmission of the human voice wirelessly is dated from June 1900 with the experiment of a Brazilian priest, Roberto Landell de Moura. As for the first radio broadcast, on Christmas Eve 1906, Reginald Fessenden played 'O Holy Night', on the violin and read a passage from the Bible.

In the early 1920's the development of radio allowed a new approach of distance education.

In 1922, Penn State, which had already a history of distance education since 1892 and their correspondence courses for remote farms, was the first university to teach courses over the radio.

By the mid 1920's over 200 colleges and universities were granted broadcasting licences, opening the doors for distance learning.

The 1930's brought about the use of television. Three major universities, the University of Iowa, Purdue University and Kansas State University, began to experiment with what is known as 'tele-courses'.

By 1938, 200 schools, 25 state Boards of Education and countless colleges and universities were broadcasting educational programs over the airwaves.

Although television technology had arrived, most towns through the next two decades did not have television, only radios.

In 1948, the University of Louisville headed by John Wilkinson Taylor, teamed with the National Broadcasting Corporation to offer College by Radio, in which the entire program was taught completely over the airwaves. It entailed course material sent through the mail and weekly classroom discussions were broadcast.



Marconi watching associates launching an antenna, 1901

Sixteen years later, in 1964, the University of Wisconsin-Madison led by Charles Wedemeyer launched the AIM–Articulated Instructional Media Project, which utilised the latest technologies and within a year, in 1965, telephone courses were offered by this institution.

In 1968, over 30 years after the first tele-course was offered by Penn State, Stanford University created the Stanford Instructional Television Network which broad casted engineering lessons. This network is still in use today.

THE INTERNET

In 1969 a new type technology appeared with the ARPA net, created by the Department of Defense and was to become known as the internet and was to change the face of education.

In 1971, the Open University in the United Kingdom was created. An onslaught of similar schools followed suit throughout the decade and the use of modern telecommunication technologies for teaching increased in popularity. The University of Phoenix had its entire online curriculum opened in 1976.

The 1980's brought the first personal computer and made it available to the general public. The first satellite educational system, Learn/Alaska is launched and courses are offered through computer networks. At the end of the decade, in 1989, the World Wide Web was created after years of development. The Internet has been offered to the general public since 1992 by providers such as America Online, Prodigy and CompuServe.

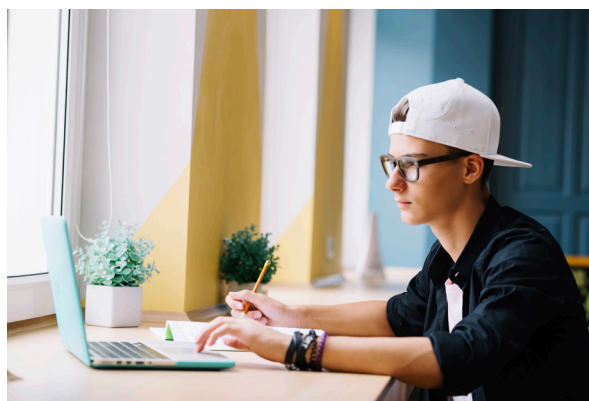
A few years later, institutions of higher education began to take advantage of this new technology and to provide courses online. By 1994 the Electronic University Network offered the first totally online PhD. program and by 1997, the CVU –California Virtual University, a

joint effort by several California colleges and created more than a thousand online courses.

The creation of Web 2.0 in 2004 allows interconnection among users instead of isolation. Web pages are no longer static. Bloggs, podcast and social networks came into being.

One of the most recent developments of Distance Education took place in 2012 with the MOOCs – Massive Open Online Courses. First introduced in 2008, it emerged as a popular mode of learning in 2012.

Taught as an online course with unlimited participation and open access via the web, in addition to traditional course material such as filmed lectures, reading and problem sets, it aimed at providing interactive courses with user forums or social media discussions to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants, as well as immediate feedback to quick quizzes and assignments.



The current pandemic is facing the world right now and which has led to the closure of schools in many countries has resulted in a new value for distance education. Literally millions of students and teachers are now using an alternative which maybe come the norm for many. Maybe this new experience will lead to a revolution of the education system.

e-LEARNING AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS



Özge Kanlı
Early Years and Primary
School Counsellor



INTRODUCTION

Around the world nearly 300 million children are out of school due to the coronavirus pandemic. As schools have switched to online teaching and learning parents are trying to deal with children's academic work, while keeping all members of the family in the house balanced both psychologically and physically. Emotions play a critical role in understanding the learning and performance of human beings. Considering the increasing role and impact of emotional factors in the e-Learning context, in this text I will try to summarize some information about the relationship between e-learning and its psychological background.

EMOTIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE e-LEARNING CONTEXT

Emotions are basic psychological systems regulating an individual's adaptation to personal and environmental demands. They are subjective experiences and multidimensional constructs with affective, cognitive, expressive, motivational and physiological components. Emotions have an effect on learning and achievement, mediated by self-regulation and motivation. I think the most important ability is self-regulation because it helps children to interact productively with their teachers and peers while managing their own responses.

But what is self-regulation?

Self-regulation

It is the ability to regulate and manage thoughts, reactions and impulses. It is essential for ongoing learning, educational success, getting along well with others and maintaining good health. Self-regulation abilities are important for children's transition to and participation in e-learning platforms. These abilities help children to learn concepts and to engage successfully in e-learning activities. Emotionally positive parent-child relationships contribute to self-regulation skills across early years. For example; parenting styles focus on children's autonomy within set limits and predict stronger self-regulation development in children.

What you can do to activate your child's self-regulation?

A combination of genetic and environmental factors shape the development of self-regulation abilities. Organized and predictable home environments provide children with a context where they can develop their self-regulation skills. Interactions between children and their parents and caregivers help children to understand their emotions and to regulate their behavior.



Talk about emotions with your child.

- When your child struggles with a strong feeling, encourage her to name the feeling and what caused it. Wait until the emotion has passed, if that is easier.
- Help your child find appropriate ways to react to strong emotions. For example, teach your child to take a break or get adult help when he/she feels overwhelmed. Say things like 'Let's relax' and 'I can help you if you like'.

Remember to be patient.

- Set a goal; goals make it easier for children to self-evaluate and understand the progress they have made.
- Practice self-control with games. There are many different games that help students work on their self-control skills! Jenga, Freeze, and Simon Says are just a few of them.
- Use literature. Picture books are a great way to introduce and discuss self-regulation skills at all levels.
- Discuss scenarios. Talk about real-life situations that encourage learners to stop and think about managing their behavior.

In addition, please keep in mind that you can send an email to me (o.kanli@istanbulint.com) to make an online appointment.

OUR EXPERIENCE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN EARLY YEARS AND PRIMARY SCHOOL



Lesley Gillon

is from Scotland. Apart from teaching the Reception Class, she is also the Early Years - Primary School Co-ordinator.

2020-what a year it has been! – Wait it's only April! As teachers we come across new experiences and new challenges on a yearly basis and it is our job to adapt and excel. However, this year has presented more challenges than your average school year.

In a world wide pandemic there is no one left untouched by the crisis. In the beginning it was easy to distance ourselves, but as time went on and the circle got smaller, we quickly realised that there was no escaping this. We all have to do what we can to continue life as normal as possible and in the best way we can.

On March 13 it was announced that schools in Turkey would be closing for two weeks. We would have one week to prepare before the distance learning programme began. Little did we know what was coming next. We began by preparing work for the students to continue their studies from home. Then it quickly became apparent that this was going to last much longer than one more week. Everyone was staying at home, watching the news everyday, watching the situation worsen all around the world and gradually seeing Turkey reaching similar levels- it was nothing short of scary. It was later announced that schools would be closed for an additional month!

As a school, it became our mission to come up with a system that would allow us to continue



educating the students in the most effective and beneficial way, considering that both children and teachers would be in their individual homes. We began by creating a schedule that would emulate the normal school schedule as much as possible, beginning at 09:30am and ending at 15:45pm.

Meanwhile; as we put the schedule into practice the teachers were working harder than ever behind the scenes. The teachers were not in the classroom; the children were at home, but expectations were still the same. After much research from our extremely capable interns, the methods and platforms

were decided and would be standardized across the Primary level.

Relying solely on the internet and our ability to adapt, teachers began preparing themselves for a whole new world of teaching.

Removing ourselves from the practices that we have become accustomed to, we began creating content that would allow students to learn the curriculum, keeping in line with the academic yearly plans. It was no longer an option to be there physically and so it was essential to replicate that practice as much as possible through the use of video. We are no longer teachers in the conventional sense of the word but more like Youtubers, creating videos on a daily basis and uploading the lessons which allow the children to learn in a similar way to physical classroom teaching, although under the most unusual circumstances. Class work is assigned using a platform which allows the assignments to be completed under teacher supervision, and group chats have been opened to ensure a constant stream of communication throughout the school day.



Ms. Nadia's home style filming station for Early Years and Primary Art classes.

This may sound surreal to many people and like nothing we could have ever imagined. Although the new system has come with many challenges, it has also been rewarding in a number of ways. It has challenged teachers to evolve and learn new skills. In some cases, trying our best to become a master in new online programmes, so that we have the ability to guide our students and their parents to also use these new tools, in a beneficial way for all. Opting for a positive outlook wherever possible is the best way to keep our heads up and get through these tough times, in order for everyone to come out stronger on the other side of this crisis.

We have had to keep in constant contact with our students, their parents and our colleagues on a daily basis to ensure the programme can run as smoothly as possible. This situation is not only new for us but it is new for the entire world, and so I feel that there is a sense of comfort to be had in the fact that we are not alone. This issue is effecting every person on the planet, every teacher, in every country in the world. Therefore, there is a sense of community, a sense of support. Whether it be from companies providing their services for free, for example online teaching resources which enable us to



Early years students home-school classroom.

do our job from home at no extra cost, or large book retailers providing access to online books, for parents to continue reading with their children.

An interesting aspect of online teaching in the lower levels, is the realisation that we are not only teaching our students but their parents too. Imagine a classroom filled with the watchful eyes of parents, it would be a daunting thought for any teacher. However, this has now become our new normal. I have heard on occasion the passing judgment of: "How nice it must be for teachers at this time to have a holiday". In reality, there is no holiday for anyone for a while... We as teachers appreciate that this is a difficult time for everyone involved, especially the parents of our students who have had to adapt to supporting their child or children through their studies, in a way they have not done before. I hope that parents also have found appreciation for the work that goes into providing this knowledge for their children on a daily basis. We are communicating daily with the families and I personally have discovered a deeper development of relationships and in some cases even friendships with the parents, as we continue to support each other through this difficult time.



As time goes on, it is growing in possibility that this new way of teaching may continue for longer than we anticipated. We have made it our goal and mission to provide a fair and stable teaching environment for everyone involved. I feel that we have achieved this by being open, honest and understanding with



each other. As a school we produced feedback forms for all parents and teachers in order to ensure that everyone is heard, changes are made where necessary and we as a community are doing everything we can to make this a positive and enriching experience -that we will be sure to never forget.



If I can take anything away from this experience, it is the realisation that under pressure human beings can do amazing things. We have proven that we can adapt and evolve to meet new challenges. We can support each other when times are tough and do what we can, to make sure that we will come out of the other side of this pandemic better teachers, more educated in a variety of ways. And as long as we stay positive and stand united we can not only get through this difficult time but look back on it as a moment in history, when we had the chance to prove that we were capable of things we never knew possible.

DEAR CORONA

Dear Corona Virus,

I consider you not so dear but I will be polite. Because my parents told me that you are not going anywhere yet. So I need to learn living with you.

I have some questions for you:

First of all, why did you have to go to the UK? I wanted to go there and now I can't. At least for a while.

Apologies if I am being rude.

Second of all, what's your favourite season? I like fall because the leaves start changing colour and it looks nice.

I also wonder when you will go back to your home.

What I want to tell you are the following.

I hope some doctors find a cure soon to fight you.

Honestly I do kind of like you because my mom doesn't need to go to work and she stays home.

Best regards,

Ada Kulacz, Grade 3A, 24 April 2020

~~Dear Corona,~~

Normally, this is how I would start a letter to somebody. But, in your case, "dear" is not appropriate. You are a life destroyer! A killer that takes away our dearest ones, for which I will never consider talking to you.

Still, I have this daily challenge and I have 3 questions for you:

1. Why did you destroy 2020? Are you happy about it?
2. Do you have a family? Do you know how its to lose someone in your family?
3. Are you going to do this until next year of school?

My father went to China in January, what if you have infected him?

I loved watching the UEFA Champions League, but no, now I can't watch because of you!!! Now I can't meet or talk with my friends from school. I thought 2020 was gonna be a great year, because I thought my favorite football team would get in the Champions League, UEFA Super Cup and the Europa League.

Half of the world is isolated because of you! We can not travel, not going to school (I am a little happy about it), meeting friends and family, going vacation and so on.

If you are not leaving soon, believe us: we will catch you and vaccinate you directly with disinfectant and keep you in sunlight until you will die!!!

Your enemy forever,

Tudor Barbulescu, Grade 4A, 27 April 2020

DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL - A PERSONAL JOURNEY



Jaime Carbonell Díaz

is a trained teacher from Spain. He holds a Bachelor's and Master's in Education. He teaches Spanish as a Foreign Language and is also the Academic Co-ordinator for the Middle School.

With our school remaining closed longer than initially anticipated, I knew that I would not have any problem with the use of online tools since Middle School teachers use it almost every day, in the form of Google Classroom homework and projects etc, but as a teacher with more experience with physical environment lesson than online lessons, I probably would have the tendency to make a straight connection between what I am used to do in a physical classroom and what I have to do for online teaching.

Therefore, I started to think how these 1 to 1 lessons could be adapted to a larger number of students and a larger number of hours, having to consider that I wouldn't be teaching at school. After reading school policy for distance teaching, for me, the solution was 5 simple principles that help me out while setting my teaching routine. Once you read them, you will realize these are not revolutionary, they'll probably seem like common sense.. but often common sense is in short supply.

1. Be present in class. Good teaching requires you to be in the classroom with your students: explaining, guiding, asking, illustrating, answering questions... I used to do all this before and after every lesson when teaching in person. Now I might not be able to do it face to face, instead, I have created an alternative timetable when I am available (as well other teachers are)



during certain hours just for this matter and with online tools such as forms or Google classroom, I can give an individualized feedback to my students any time they need it.

2. Be Yourself. The best part of teaching, in my opinion, is the opportunity that it gives us to share our passion for our subject, and watch understanding dawn on the faces of the kids. I

personally enjoy the performative aspect, since I have a unique teaching persona - different from the person I am within an adult conversation or in a Departmental Meeting. But how to put this in an online classroom? The solution, be creative. Record a video of you talking could be a great idea, bring role plays to online lessons, drawing explanations... all this helped me avoid the essence of my teaching style.

3. Contents organization. I tried to make everything as handy as possible for the student. With the experience I have learnt over the years, I realized that sometimes as teachers we have a tendency to believe students can read our minds, and so, will be able to do everything in the way we want, with no effort because "I can do it, how can they not? Therefore, I try to think from a student's perspective, while organizing course materials. Students have access to a lot resources from a lot of different subjects, just trying to figure out where to go or how to access readings, videos, discussions, or quizzes might consume much of their mental energy and leave no time for the content itself.

4. Explain Your Expectations. I have to admit that my first lesson was not as good as I would have liked. And it has a simple explanation - my expectations did not match with the context. When you're standing at the front of a classroom and you assign a task, a paper, or a project, you don't simply hand out written instructions and not say a word about the assignment. It should be the same for an online lesson using as many methods as you need (videos as a support, audios, external sources, examples...) and the most important for me is to make them work in groups, so they can help each other. It is also important to remember the previous point and don't go to the other extreme and create pages and pages of material that students won't bother to read. I try to provide as much meaningful support as I

can, so that students don't have to guess what I want them to do.

5. Feedback during and after the session. I do follow the recommendation for lesson break down (20 + 20 min) but I make an extra division for my "teaching time". During these 20 minutes I try to get all assignments understood by ALL students so the last 5-10 min are more like a feedback session. By feedback session, I mean giving students an explanation of what they are doing correctly and incorrectly. However, the focus of the feedback in this part of the lesson is based essentially on what the students have to do and what they have understood from my explanations or their classmate explanations. After each session there is another feedback session (already arranged with students), when I provide feedback by answering to the following four questions on a regular basis

- What can the student do?
- What can't the student do?
- How does the student's work compare with that of others?
- How can the student do better?

With these 5 principles in mind I have been teaching, since we started our distance learning practice. I have always believed that crisis is not a bad word but a synonym of opportunity, for us, an opportunity to revise everything we are as teachers: our methodology, our ideas, our approach, our classroom management control... it's learning that helps you to grow and improve from day to day. So for me, it actually is more like a blessing - the fact we had to use a new concept of teaching.

LIFE IN THE TIME OF CORONA



Sarah Küçük

is from Scotland where she graduated from university and did her teacher training as an English Language and Literature specialist. In addition to teaching she is the High School Academic Co-ordinator.

It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Much of the world in the spring of 2020 is battling on a daily basis with a virus that knows no boundaries, while others are finding the restrictions put in place to keep them safe are resulting in a freedom to break old moulds and explore new ways of doing what they already thought they did well enough.

For the most part, apart from a few unfortunate exceptions, the students and teachers of Istanbul International High School have fallen into the second category. Within the space of a week or two, we all had to reinvent ourselves as virtual teachers and students, and try to carry on what we had already been doing for over 6 months, but now in a new medium.

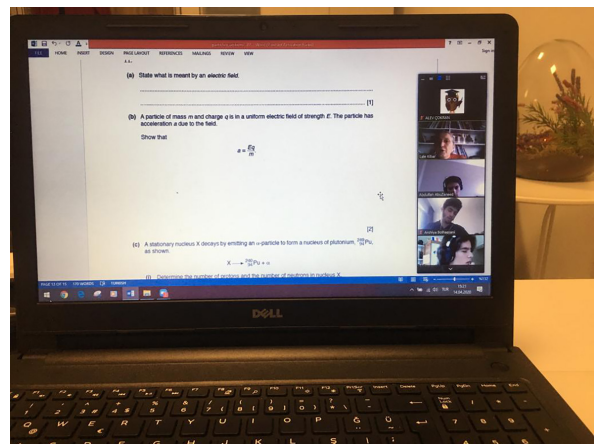
We have just finished our third week, and, luckily, the overall consensus has been very positive. If the first two weeks were a trial

period, with teachers assigning and teaching like there was no tomorrow, we have a calmer balance of work and home life. We all realised that sitting in front of a screen for hours on end is not healthy for any of us, especially at a time when good health and its maintenance is the priority. Productivity in times of a pandemic has to have its limitations. In the counselling sessions we all listened to the students' concerns and adjusted our lesson and homework schedule accordingly. Instead of regular double lessons with homework on top as the norm, now it is one lesson plus a short assignment for the next slot, and one homework assignment per subject per week.

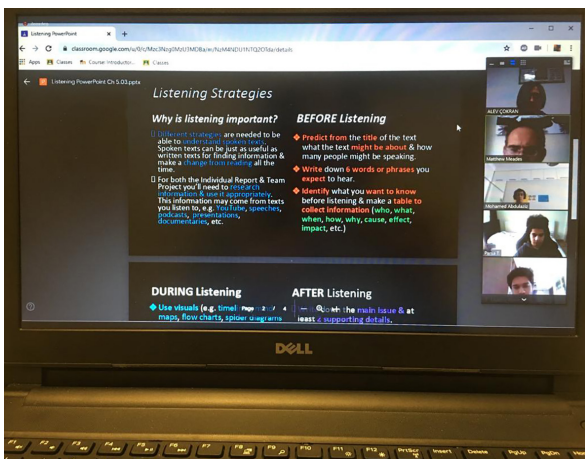
Grade 9 classes have plenty of new material to get through, but we no longer pretend we can push the students at the same pace as before, and have slowed down as a result. Many have sleep issues because of looking at a screen all day and not getting exercise or fresh air outside, are looking after siblings, as well as dealing with house hold chore sand parents who want to spend time with them in the evening. We want school work to be a positive, structured focus for them during the day, not an over whelming burden.

Grades 10, 11 and 12 were expecting to be finished with classes by the end of April and to be sitting their Cambridge exams in May and

June. The cancellation of those exams, though not a surprise considering the circumstances, was still a shock to everyone who had worked so hard for 1 or 2 years on their courses. The biggest question was what would happen next, and we are still getting up dates from Cambridge clarifying things as they themselves work out a strategy. After the most recent update, things are now much clearer, and it's possible to see this group of students as actually luckier than those of previous years as they will get certificates without having to sit any exams! Cambridge schools around the world will work with the organisation to make sure each student gets the fairest grade so they can continue with their education in the smoothest way possible.

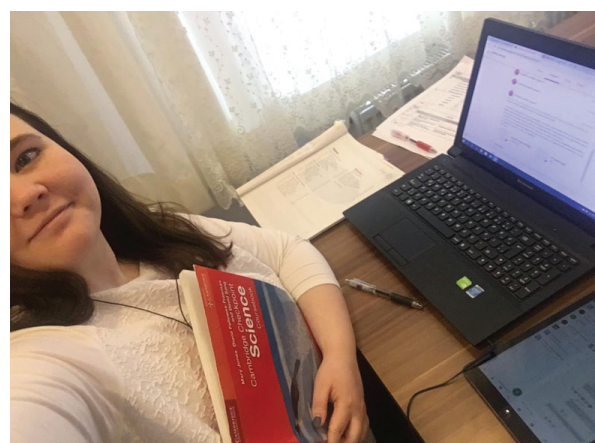


Overall, though, as I said at the start, this has been a surprisingly positive time for us. We have seen that we can adapt and move towards a future that most likely will be very different to the past we have known. Older staff have shown the determination to jump into the daily use of new technology, and teenagers have proven that they can be reliable and dedicated even outside of regular school and all the chivvying that goes on there. In fact, many students, especially those with organisational issues, are performing better than before.



We are cooperating well so far in this new educational reality. Let's hope our small success will be reflected in finally emerge from our confinement and come face to face with our next challenge: defining the next 'normality'.

We were planning on giving a 3rd exam and, if the schools open again in May or June, we may still be able to do this. To this end, we are continuing revision lessons with these grades. At the moment, nearly all students are enthusiastic and responsible, attending lessons online and submitting their best work. Our only concern is how long we can keep them motivated, especially with Ramadan starting on April 24th, and the prospect of the lockdown being extended indefinitely. We are reviewing our situation on a weekly basis as everything is so uncertain.



DISCURSIVE ESSAYS ON THE PANDEMIC FROM STUDENTS IN GRADES 9 AND 10

'It is the worst of times, it is the best of times.'

The corona pandemic arose to present the world an immense challenge, which was initially countered with a world-wide lockdown; a partly successful action to prevent the uncontrolled and exponential spread of the virus, of which, to this day, it hasn't been found its vaccination nor cure.

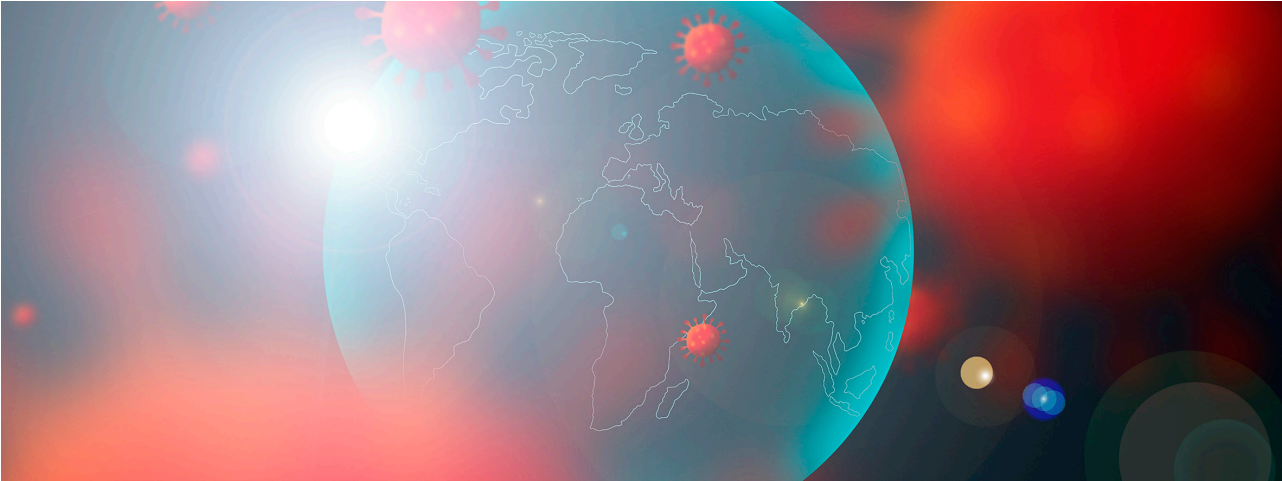
More and more voices are requiring an end of the lockdown. The new situation brought significant changes with a lot of restrictions for the whole world. Yet, nobody knows precisely what the consequences of ending the lockdown could be. In the current situation and experience many of us are facing for the first time we are "caged birds" like in Maya Angelou's poem, who sing fearfully for freedom without knowing of its meaning. Without knowing what wilderness or threat we may face once the bars are unsealed again.

Supporters of the opinion demanding the finale of the lockdown argue that the restrictions on individual freedoms are too intense. Backing this perspective, in some countries such as in Turkey, certain groups of people (younger than 20 or older than 65) are forbidden to leave their houses and have to bear the restriction of complete lockdown and the never-in-a-life-time experienced excessive boredom joined by the oblivion of what it is like to freely move your limbs on a sidewalk .

Furthermore people who need to leave their homes for the covering of basic needs, wants and food supplies are obliged to wear masks along with latex gloves. Education all around the globe has been shut down, restricting billions of students mentally and physically. As well as a majority of stores and shopping centers worldwide being closed, any human being that lives on earth at the moment simply does not have the opportunity for any entertainment nor face-to-face socialisation occurring outside 4-walls.

Moreover the general economy also suffers great losses and it can be seen that lines on certain statistics and graphs tend to sink and not rise. Many companies have registered or even closed short-time work and with that the production of economic goods has decreased significantly worldwide. Unquestionably, unemployment has risen; In the United States alone, 10 million new unemployed people have emerged within the past four weeks of the clash with the virus.

On the other hand, those who oppose this view would argue that the lockdown has resulted in obviously preventing the exponential spread of the corona virus and thus not only preventing illness but saving many lives. A further important counter-argument is that there is still



no vaccine nor medication for Covid-19, meaning that the danger is still acute and the challenge of controlling the numbers is too large for any government of any financial strength to handle. It is therefore appropriate that the lockdown should be maintained until the adequate medical solution to the pandemic is discovered. Therefore the restrictions are only temporary and reasonable. In the context of the conflicting legal goods of human life versus human freedom, the legal goods of human life predominate.

The restrictions have likewise improved people's social behaviour. Forgotten and neglected values such as charity and caring for each other have suddenly gained enormous importance. In addition, the loss of lessons was compensated for by the use of digital media, achieving to decently fill in the educational gap that the lockdown has caused. The new way of semi-digital and semi-independent learning also enabled students to improve their self-discipline and with the lockdown and the associated restrictions, people have become aware of the value and importance of their freedoms, which have been taken for granted resulting in a generally more self-conscious and sufficient society.

Considering the different points of view and the supporting evidence I think we have to find a compromise. We must not restrict people's freedom too long or too extensively, nor should we take the latent dangers of the Covid19 lightly and lift the lockdown completely. In my opinion, we have to reverse the lockdown step by step and, with every step, appeal to everyone's personal responsibility. Every citizen of our planet should be informed that it is in our own hands and our own duty to generate **"the best of times"** from this situation. **"Not one will mind, neither bird nor tree, if mankind perished utterly"** as Sara teasdale mentions in **"There will come soft rains"** ■

Arif Sam, Grade10, 25.04.2020

'It is the worst of times, it is the best of times.'

The future is a puzzle to everyone at the moment. The pieces are everywhere and not everyone can find them. Some people would contend that it is the best of times because the world is able to breathe, animals are free, nature is still continuing and there is less reliance on spending money for fun. Other people would think that it is the worst of times. If we, people, take a look around us and all the recent changes and impacts in the world right now, it is almost impossible to have an optimistic perception of the upcoming days.

On one hand, this pandemic is the best of times. Many impacts were made in everyone's lives. For instance, valuing our health has become a big deal. Being healthy has been taken for granted for a very long time. It is deranging how a virus can appear from something so small to spreading everywhere, taking so many lives. Improving our surroundings and the environment around us has become a usual thing during this pandemic. It is visible how many people seem to be cleaning their gardens, rearranging furniture, exercising, washing cars and much more. In addition, being in this pandemic has made people realize that money does not need to be spent on new clothes or new shoes every week. Along with that, the outdoors are being more appreciated and taking a walk outside in the fresh air seems to make people happy. During this crisis, it is seen that nature is also still carrying on just because it can. Besides, wildlife and nature will remain untouched and undisturbed since us, humans seem to affect it with our choices. 'And not one will know of the war, not one Will care at last when it is done. Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree, If mankind perished utterly;' It is almost as if the world does not revolve around humans and that nature would not notice even if there was a war or the human population was to vanish in one blink of an eye. Despite all, life is being lived, everything is continuing, nothing is stopping and it certainly is, not, the end of the world.

On the other hand, it is not the best of times. This pandemic has affected our environment drastically. Besides all the positive impacts and advantages to this calamity, there are negative impacts. The effects of this crisis are bad news to our ecosystem. In addition to this, less fuels are burnt, traffic decreased greatly, less carbon emissions and decreased air pollution and that is a good thing but this does not mean it will remain like this. All these current outcomes are most likely temporary. Humans have been isolated from their loved ones and their lives have been put on hold. Many industries have been strongly affected. For example, unemployment has risen and hospitals have become overtaxed. A heavily affected industry is travel. Airports closed and most countries set restrictions on travel. Meaning, people are not able to purchase flights for work or to return back home. Thus, these placed restrictions have caused airlines to lose a lot of revenue. With reference to "Caged Bird", the poem compares and contrasts a free bird with that of a bird imprisoned in a cage. We, humans, are the caged birds with our wings that clipped and feet that are tied while the free bird is nature and the earth.

Despite all wrongs, this is a good time. We can all learn new things, get closer to our family, try new hobbies and simply, make the most out of it. In the end, we are all going to end up talking about this years from now!

Taking everything into consideration, there are many valid arguments why it is the best but also the worst of times. I think once this period is over, nothing will be the same. Although things seem to be looking slightly better. My prediction is that this pandemic will end after a long time and it will take a while going back to normal again. ■

Sara Aboamied, Grade10, 22/4/2020

The Coronavirus pandemic arrived at the most unexpected of times and became a “grave of dreams” for some while an “orange sun ray” for others. This continuously spreading virus getting more serious everyday has allowed people to come to important realizations. Making this experience become one of their best and most memorable moments in their lives, while it has brought dreadful memories for others.

The Coronavirus has left everyone in no other choice but to make sacrifices in their lives. We could never have known the happiness and power such small things could bring to our lives until it no longer did. We cannot greet each other the same way, see each other face to face the way we used to and “claim the sky” the way we once did. This means people around the world have to be careful with their hygiene. The pandemic has taken a heartbreaking number of 208 thousands lives. Everyday and hour we are checking the number of cases, deaths and recoveries and make sure our loved ones are safe. This ongoing cycle has ultimately made stress and fear a daily part of our lives. Putting people in depression as they are longing for the day we can all eventually step out of our houses. It is reported that in April of this year the USA had 57% of 18 and 34 year olds suffering from depression and anxiety amid the Coronavirus outbreak. These reports of depression are rising all over the world, it is as though while we are running away from the virus outside to protect our health we are only pulling ourselves into another health problem.

Nevertheless, as people all over the world have been in quarantine isolated from what the

world outside has to offer many of us have been able to look back on the things we took for granted such as just meeting a friend or a short walk outside. All in all has made us more thankful people. Moreover, the pandemic has changed the lives of animals and the environment for the better! Animals are wandering in cities, carbon emissions in the air have decreased and the water in Venice is now clear. It is safe to say that the Coronavirus has brought our planet miracles and hope for a better world. Changes we could otherwise not see. Finally, We have learned the importance of staying home and not putting people's lives at risk. This has allowed us to become more thoughtful and generous.

Moreover, the Coronavirus has brought with it both miracles and “a scene of maniac confusion”. As much as this time has brought us a chance for a cleaner planet in addition to us becoming more thankful, stronger and closer with our family, I cannot get over the number of people who have lost their lives during this difficult time and the anxiety staying at home brings, wondering everyday if my family in another country is alright, I was always used to my dad telling me that he was always a call away now I keep thinking when I'll be able to see him again. Therefore I believe that it is the worst of times because despite becoming a stronger person this time has brought me the fear I could never imagine feeling in this beautiful yet somewhat cruel world.

Thus, I've come to think that people will now pay more careful attention to their hygiene and be thankful with things they once took for granted including our planet. I also believe that we will all overcome this virus and continue our lives even healthier in the near future. ■

Ceren Arıkan, Grade 10

HOME SCHOOLING

'It is the worst of times, it is the best of times.' Discuss in relation to your experience of home schooling during this pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic that has been going around the world has been forcing all countries to go under quarantine, causing schools globally to make students do home schooling. Some students say they very much prefer it this way, and that it's even better. On the contrary, I say it is not. In my opinion, it is much better to go to school than to do home schooling. This is because it would be easier for students to focus on the class better as the students would have no distractions from their external environment.

Home schooling is not preferable because at home, most students tend to lose their focus at home as there are countless possible distractions that can occur at home. Some might have families visiting them and are stuck there due to the pandemic, others might get overwhelmed by the sudden increase of workload. Furthermore, students are not bound by school rules anymore. They are much more free to do whatever they want, and some might be looking at other things while in a boring class, as some would do at school, for example looking at their phones. Another distraction are mainly occurring to students who are older siblings. Unquestionably, there are many big brothers or sisters who regularly help their little siblings with their school work at home. But because those little siblings also have online schooling, they instinctively go to their elder siblings, who have class, for help.



This can be a major distraction to those students and deprive them from fully being aware of their class. Most students also look at their homes as a place to 'chill' and relax, rather than doing work, and this makes it a lot harder for them to try to do their homeworks, as the workload piles up due to the lack of classwork that is usually done at school.

Nevertheless, there is without doubt no possibility of those distractions occurring in school grounds. Schools are physically made for students to be more comfortable and easily focused on their studies as it is made to have the most suitable environment for studying. The burden of workload is not felt as it is unconsciously set in the students mind that it is definitely expected that they have to do this amount of work at school, and lesser amount of work at home. Schools have rules that make sure students do not get distracted or distract themselves from school work, for instance the rule of not having phones out during lesson hours. At home, they can simply hide their phones away from the camera and not pay attention in class. School also, in a way, manages and balances the amount of work and the time management of students during school hours, and many students are simply unable to apply these at home by themselves. The quote 'it is the best of times' relate more to

the students without these problems, as they will usually say that it is much better for them to be at home, just because they don't have to go to school and they can proceed with their work even at home, because by simply going to school to 'study' is considered a bore or a burden to them.

In brief, I think it is much better for students to go to school physically, even if it is bothersome to get up and out, as school is literally physically made to have the most suitable environment for students to study. But unfortunately due to the pandemic, there is no choice but to do home schooling as it is the next best decision. In the future, most students will most definitely adjust themselves to the new online class schedules, but there is also the possibility of them getting so used to it that it might also take time for them to revert back to the normal schedule once the pandemic is over. Another possibility is that the students might get extremely bored and then just realise how they are 'free' during this home schooling period and find some 'cheats' or 'hacks' they might be curious to try, in which I hope none of them do. ■

Amni Hanni, Grade 9

A pandemic. That is what the world is dealing with. This is a type of virus that has taken the lives of more than 200,000 people. The Coronavirus has no boundaries that is why within months, the entire world is under lockdown. As vast populations shut themselves in their homes, as factories come to a halt and as traffic reduces, nature is evolving. That is the good part. Meanwhile, the worst part is how badly the economies of different countries are being affected as nations struggle to cope with the situation.

There are several negative impacts of this virus. From large businesses to small businesses, all are being affected. Workers are not able to earn from their products since there are no buyers available or the country is not allowing them to sell. As a result, whatever they produce is automatically going to waste. Because of this, these workers cannot earn enough money to perhaps provide food for their family. Therefore, economies will need time to recover. In addition, one of the scariest parts is that life is not going to go back to normal in an instance. People are going to be scared to go out and enjoy life as before. Fear will be a part of our lives. As long as there is no vaccine, we have to maintain social distancing. As well as fear, masks and gloves will also stick with us for now. Furthermore, this affects our mental health as well. We are not able to take in fresh air, see our loved ones and socialise. These things are important since humans are social creatures and will reduce our social skills.



On the other hand, while humans are caged in their homes, nature walks free. Lakes and rivers, which were once polluted, are crystal clear. Wildlife animals such as lions have stepped out of their hiding and made their way to roads, dolphins take over clean waters and the air becomes clean. In Maya Angelou's poem "Caged Bird", she writes about a free bird in contrast to a caged bird. Currently, humans symbolise the caged bird longing to have freedom while the free bird symbolises nature that is thriving. The caged bird, or in this case humans, can only hope to be free one day while we sit back and watch our mother nature healing. Nature does not only consist of animals and plants, but also air. Carbon-dioxide emissions and other pollutant gases emissions have reduced numerously making air quality hundred times better. The ozone layer is also recovering. This is a phenomenal step towards reducing the risk of global warming and saving our planet.

Knowing that the outbreak of this virus has given us a moment to think and observe how nature is flourishing once again, it is also temporary. Once factories open again, the gases will once more accumulate the atmosphere. Therefore it is certainly not the best times, these are worst times. I believe this

because looking back at historical evidence of similar pandemics like this, we know that no pandemic lasted less than a year. They lasted for more than a year. Even now a vaccine is promised but when will it be available worldwide? No one knows. This can have such a devastating effect on the economy that a recession can occur. The entire world can be in economic decline, not to mention the unemployment rates, which will most likely increase. Worst of all, our mental health is the most important aspect and right now it is badly being affected and is not healthy at all for everyone.

No one knows what
the future holds for this world.
But I think that everyone will
learn from this pandemic
that if swift measures are taken,
much of the damage can be
prevented and lives can be
saved. ■

Alizeh Imran, Grade 10

The human race is going through a pandemic that we have never seen the likes of in a hundred years. People are quarantining to keep themselves and others safe, the governments of the world have closed businesses temporarily. The world is odd to say the least, however there is no denying that the Covid-19 pandemic has changed our lives, for the better and for the worse. People might consider this lockdown time as feeling like they are imprisoned, just wanting to go outside, which is understandable. However some people are treating this with positivity, as they develop skills. This pandemic, while it sounds scary and it is, still has some good side that people might focus on.

It might be the best of times for humans, they can work on themselves, improving their lifestyle, improving at their jobs, or students wanting to improve academically. We can use this time effectively to improve. This lockdown is preventing people from going to their jobs, less cars, less factories, so less greenhouse gases. This contributes to making the earth healthier, Carbon dioxide emissions have decreased massively during this pandemic, ecosystems are being restored. This reminds one of a little old short story called "There Will Come Soft Rains" where even after humans die and disappear, nature goes on, animals and plants live on. Also, this pandemic has brought people around the world together, to motivate and uplift each other through art.

The dark side of this is as clear as day. Firstly, people are locked down in their houses, which really brings down their motivation to do the more important jobs, around the world! This

has just brought down the output of businesses. People are not working as they would in normal circumstances. The world economy currently is basically close to shutting down, oil prices are plummeting, currencies are deprecating. This is because people are demotivated cooped up in their houses, which brings in mind the famous poem 'Caged Bird', it shows how the caged birds, or now, people that are locked in their houses, lose their motivation. This shows how people need their out doors social life to stay sane. The shutting down of businesses will definitely harm the world after this is over, the world will need time to bounce back from this.

Now, people sure are confused coming into this pandemic, not just because of the mysterious virus, but also because of the question, 'Should we look at this from a positive or a negative perspective?' This is a bad time and taking the situation as is, people clearly are very frustrated with the state of being locked in their houses, working from home is not as productive. Services are shut down, the people cannot be free basically. People are trying their best at this estranged phenomenon. Yet, this is a strange time, and a bad one at that, but is the worst of times. People struggle and are paranoid about taking a simple walk, daily life is no longer a thing, people are stressed, paranoid and bored, the sooner this ends the better life will be.

In a nutshell, this pandemic can be the best of times, people can try to improve and pollution is down, however there is no denying that this time is a bad time for everyone and people would prefer normal life back. People are bored, and they would give anything to go back to the routines they complained about. This a lesson for all governments in the world for the future, spend more on research, and less on weapons. People will remember this time like none other. ■

Omer Hussein, Grade 10

In this era, which was wished to be the best in the history of development, a pandemic has taken over the world and our Land is taking an unusual rest ,which it has never taken before. Even the world's biggest superpowers are unable to prevent the disease making its way in their state. In this unpleasant situation, each and every face is veiled with a mask of helplessness and despair. Life seemed pretty meaningful when the countries went to lockdown but the true meaning of existence is progressively fading away. Apart from the positive side of this situation the world is forced to imagine ;the negative side overweighs the inverse side.

"It is the worst of times", this is how a part of the human population describes this prevalent and communicable disease, which has affected almost 10% of the human population. Besides economic problems being faced by various countries, today's major concern is survival of the people who earn on a daily basis. They are suffering due to the rare means of earnings left after the countries went to shutdown, which has worsened their status and standards even more. It's not even a problem for the rich because they already are surviving in a good way. The matter of concern should be the world. Even the busiest of the streets are seen with barely a single person walking on them. Humans who were friends are now afraid to shake hands, prioritising their safety over everything, Isolated in their houses "like a caged bird, singing for freedom". This pandemic has clearly shown how helpless humankind is in front of nature. The mitigation measures of



lockdown has resulted in a very very low economy. This verse of the poem relates completely to the situation "But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams, his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream" Until the situation gets better, all of this will result in nothing but the sacrifice of millions of dreams throughout the world.

"Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree, If mankind perished utterly", These two lines of one of the famous poems explain how nature is unaffected by mankind and their existence similar to what's happening now. Even in the toughest of times where every single street is empty, Nature continues to work and even in a much better way which could have never happened if it was dependent on the dwellers of the land. It's unquestionable to highlight the widely known fact in the world that "Nature is healing", which is obvious. Even if we look out of your window, we don't see those trash cans and chips wrappers on the road side; it's because we, humans are not involved in the environment nowadays. The pollution levels have dropped a lot. In China, the world's biggest source of carbon, emissions were down about 18% between early February and mid-March. The present mood of our planet has taught us to

renew our focus on our local environment and help the needy generously as one should do for their brother. This has given us a break from all the worldly matters to spend time with our loved ones, who we barely talk to in our busy routined life. Though isolated but all this has given us the time we always complained for. It has given us an opportunity to appreciate the things we always took for granted, inshort another interesting life to live.

Mankind has always been ungrateful for what they already have either health, money, food or anything. Knowing the fact that the world is not at its best but it's not at its worst either. If there is an economic decline contrarily it's balanced by the healing natural beauty throughout the world. Nothing remains forever nor will this stressful time. Taking in account the effects of this prevalent virus, I believe that it's not a good time for mankind, thousands of people are dying. Furthermore, our heroes (doctors and nurses) are risking their lives to save people, the education system is being disturbed and not everyone can afford to study. But all of this is a matter of shame for humankind, watching nature grow and blossom without its interference.

For the people who support my opinion, they should know that it's us who have to bring everything to normal, it is our responsibility and for that we have to keep ourselves and everyone around us safe. If we succeed there's nothing that can prevent us revealing our best selves to the Earth. This is a test we all have to pass with unity and brotherhood. "Where there is unity, there is always victory". Even the worst of the time passes when we aim to strongly face it. ■

Aysha Hashmi, Grade 10

The global pandemic sent millions of people around the world home. Without question, many bonds between family members and friends have undergone a stressful test in this period of time. While many see this as a curse, time may, in fact, reveal the blessing in disguise. As people continue to stay at home, nature, on the other hand, is thriving in our absence.

Without doubt, the pandemic has had a negative impact on humans. Bonds and friendships are being put under test in the unusual and stressful circumstances of self-isolation. This leads people to being exposed to previously unknown sides of their fellows counterparts' personalities, which can lead to the deterioration in friendships and result in conflict.

In these circumstances, it's important to remember that a bird that stalks down his narrow cage, can seldom see through the bars of rage, as quarantine does have a negative effect on many people's mental wellbeing. And more on some than on others.

On the other hand, some people have made conflicts rooting from the current circumstances a deepening point for their bonds during the period of self-isolation.



And while some birds whose wings are clipped and feet are tied found resort in singing as their only way of expressing their sorrow, the pandemic became a period of creative blossom, as more people around the world gather on social media to share their feelings of their experiences through poetry. In addition, for many people the period of self-isolation presented itself as an opportunity to reflect internally and find connections to their soul and the surrounding world in the absence of the bustle of the daily rush.

On the contrary to the human sufferings, nature thrives in our absence. The emissions of greenhouse gases have dropped to their lowest figures in years, and poisonous fogs have cleared even over the most polluted towns of the planet.

Images captured across the world speak Teasdale's lines "not one would mind, neither bird nor tree, if mankind perished utterly" into existence, as wildlife begins to wander into cities.

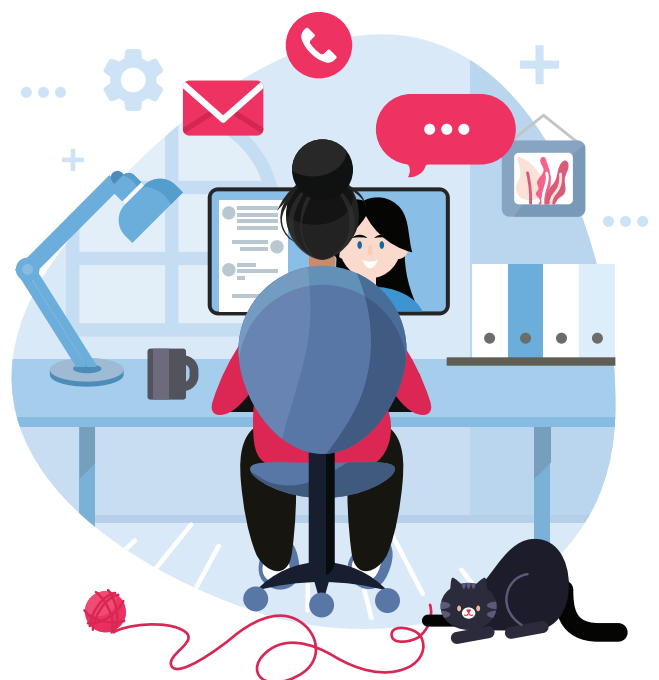
In conclusion, the pandemic is showing that perhaps humans are the real virus on Earth. It's evident that nature is better off without human disturbance. As spring herself, when she awoke at dawn, scarcely realized that we were gone. Nature is blooming outside man's window into life, and it will continue to do so even if man does not exist.

While on the other hand, some people are at a low point in their lives right now, this can be the right time to reflect upon one's existence.1 ■

Roman Gadzhiev, Grade 10

The end is here, but is it good or bad? As the pandemic caused by Covid19 (the coronavirus) continues many people are forced into having different opinions about this pandemic however they are split on both good and bad.

Naturally we should discuss the negative aspects of the pandemic first so that you can be aware. Firstly the virus is known to be sometimes lethal, meaning we are in the midst of a possible extinction level event as there is currently no cure and day by day the virus is only spreading faster and reaping more victims. Another point to notice is that the virus is forcing people to quarantine themselves and this causes a struggle for many types of people ranging from those who just can't function without going outside, to those who are having difficulties acquiring necessities such as food and water. The next worthwhile negative point to talk about is the violation of freedom the



quarantine brings. The best way to describe the emotions of all those who hate quarantine is by quoting Maya Angelou's 'Caged Bird' and, while this entire poem can be a perfect description of humanities feelings towards lack of freedom the part that specifically should be looked at is the third and 6th stanza where it talks about the birds longing for freedom and the birds longing for the distant hills which describes humanities mental view best.

Now to move on to the positive aspects of the virus. Firstly the virus gives time to all for many things including time to accomplish what you were never able to, time to start a new hobby or activity you never had time for and time to get your life together and this is especially helpful to those struggling in school or at work who have has many problems stacked ontop of eachother for a long time. Another benefit of the



virus is that it allows connection between those you are in quarantine with, with family or old friends who you now have the time to reconnect with and allows connection to the world through the internet meaning the world is closer together now more than ever. The final benefit is the benefit to nature. Since the pandemic and quarantine started nature has had time to thrive, pollution has made a significant decrease resulting in events such as animals returning to areas they once abandoned due to pollution. The poem 'There will come soft rains' describes this and talks about how once humanity is gone then nature will be able to survive and come back. However, the quarantine allows nature to return without the death of humans.

When looking at both sides of this argument I must say that I personally believe that it is the best of times, because I have been able to benefit a lot from the quarantine and while I do not like the death the virus causes it does indeed bring forth some important benefits.

Ultimately in the future I believe that the Earth will have benefited majorly once the virus ends and once we step outside for the first time in months we will be able to truly appreciate how the virus allowed the Earth to thrive in these times of machines. ■

Ethem Evecek, Grade 10

INTERNS AT ISTANBUL INTERNATIONAL

Asha Parkinson Tee and Jasper Kiburg are teacher trainees at NHL Stenden in the Netherlands. The Faculty of Education has an International Teacher Education Department and for a number of years Istanbul International School has been an approved teaching practice partner.



“I’ll be honest - I had quite a rough start to Istanbul. Even as the wheels of the plane hit the ground at SAW, a knot began to form in my stomach. It tightened when I arrived at my accomodation and did not cease well into my first few days here. I was in a new place, and though I wasn’t experiencing homesickness or culture shock, five persistent words nagged at my thoughts: you need to go home.”

In a story meant to tell you about how wonderful my experience has been, this starting point may throw you off a little, but it’s important and we’ll get back to it.

Despite my rocky start, my first day at Istanbul International School was near perfect. I met up with my fellow interns, who I have now dubbed the Super Six, and we fed off of each other’s excitement. Upon being ushered around the school I’d call work for the next 3 months, I felt that familiar feeling of inspiration. I was looking at many pieces of work on the wall and thinking, “yeah, I can do this!” You’ll note I said the day was “near perfect.” To elaborate, I’m a clumsy person. So clumsy in fact, that at the end of my first day, when meeting the entire Primary faculty for refreshments, I spilled hot Çay across the floor. The splat was colossal enough that it got my mentor, Mrs Evla’s, dress wet. Needless to say, I was “that” intern. It was embarrassing.

Some of my favourite memories at IIS revolve around playing guitar in the classroom with my students. I’m an avid musician and there’s nothing I like more than composing for my students. Mrs Evla has an amazing way of introducing sounds to her students. She’ll start a story about how she was awoken in the night to a knock at the door, wondering who it could

be and then she'll continue the story by creating characters and settings from the sound of that lesson. I was immediately impressed and wanted to put my own, bluesy spin on the idea. So, together we wrote a blues song for the 'ch' sound. It was about a chubby chicken, chewing chocolate. It definitely had single potential for a future album!

I also have fond memories of working in a small Grade 2 group where we explored adjectives and created acrostic poems of our names with them. I remember feeling a sense of pride and admiration when one of them came up to me and asked if she could also make one for her teacher. It's a particularly good feeling to help inspire kindness and gratitude in students, I know these little things can really brighten someone's day.

Four weeks into a steady internship later and our fears were realised - the school was closing. I felt that same knot I felt when I first came to Istanbul reappear, but this time it was at the prospect of leaving. After much debate, I decided to stay and make myself useful on the home turf. With that decided, I was asked to come into school for six working days over the course of the two week closure.

From the Super Six, a troubled two were left. My friend and colleague, Jasper, had also decided to stay and together we entered an empty school building, unsure of how we were going to be put to use. It soon came to be that we were assigned quite the task! We were put in charge of creating an e-learning plan for the teachers of Pre-Primary, Primary and Middle School. We had to research and test out platforms we felt would benefit our staff, students and parents, based on our knowledge of the school and feedback from the teachers and management. Everything I had been doing in practise at University was suddenly coming to fruition! Jasper and I put our heads together

and we came up with a concept called M.E.M.E - maximum efficiency, minimal effort. With this vision in mind, we chose our platforms, formed and then pitched our plan to management who gave the plan the green light. This opportunity was the greatest challenge and gift I could ever have been given as an intern and it has added to my motivation to enter education. Nothing gets you ready for teaching quite like a pandemic!

I've been doing school internships for 4 years now and I can safely say, no school has made me feel quite as welcome and supported as IIS. Put it this way, every school greets you with a smile but IIS greets you with an embrace. You are brought into the fold immediately and given the space to grow and the faith that you can do great things. As a prospective teacher, especially one who is about to graduate, there is nothing more I could wish from a school.

To close up and bring this story around full circle, I want you to know that sometimes things don't immediately mesh with you. They take time to settle and bond, but wait that time out! It's worth it.

To the faculty, my fellow interns and the students, teşekkür ederim. You make the 7am start worth it!

Till the next time,

Mr. Asha

PS: I present to you, with much love and pride, the Super Six. From right to left, Anja, Leonie, Lucas, Jasper, myself and Kira.



Left to right Jasper and Asha sharing thoughts on a learning to School Management

For the people sitting next to me on the bus, it was probably just a regular Monday. For me, it was the start of the teaching practice period in my second year of International Teacher Education - a dream to be a teacher that started in 2017.

I was placed in Middle School with Mr. Masih's class 5A. In the first week I already started taking over the English lessons, and slowly took over other subjects. The challenge in the first week is always to get used to the students, and for the students to get used to me. I am not Mr. Masih, I am Mr. Jasper. Therefore, the goal is not to copy the mentor, but to develop my own style of teaching.

Two weeks into the practice I was fully integrated into the routine of being a teacher at IIS. Students greet me in the morning, they listen to me when I try to tidy the line in front of the lunchroom and some students proudly show off their colourful socks in the hallway (Yes, wearing coloured socks is my teacher-trademark).

During one English lesson I was teaching about interviewing. We practiced this in class and due to the odd number of students, I paired up with one student to practice this skill. She asked me

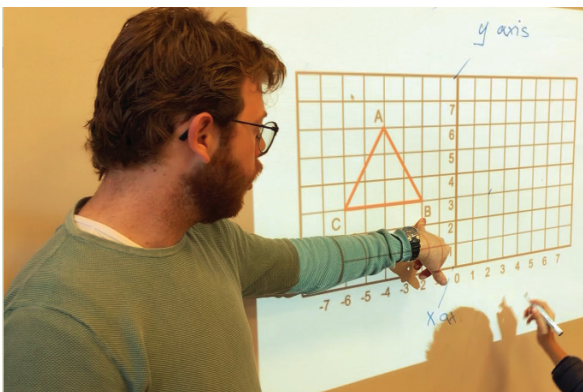
about my hobbies, and when my birthday was. I told her that I was a keen musician and that my birthday was at the end of March. In the upcoming days it was announced that the school would close down and on the last day when she saw me in the hallway I was given a keychain of a music clef. She told me that we wouldn't be in school during my birthday and that she wanted to give me a birthday gift. I was speechless and when I think of it now I still am. The gesture was so lovely, and so unexpected that it was instantly one of my fondest memories in Istanbul. To that student: Thank you very much for the gift, I had a great birthday and I use the key chain every day!

Like I mentioned, my hobby is music and I am a keen musician. Therefore, it was the logical choice to combine the two passions I have. I worked together with Mr. Rael in the auditorium in preparation of the Middle and High school concert. I have experience in band and performance coaching and the auditorium is the perfect playground. I helped in the High School club time and very shortly after I unexpectedly ended up playing the drums with the school band. We practiced 2 times a week and in a



very short time, we could play a few songs, but most importantly we were locked-in as a band. When the bombshell dropped that the concert was cancelled, my bandmates were pretty bumped out. The solution was to play a few songs for the Global Village project. We set up a small stage and played a few songs. The high schoolers enjoyed it and we loved playing for them.

February 17, 2020 was the start of an incredible adventure, and March 17 was the start of a quite unexpected plot twist in that adventure. The school was closed for an early 'Spring break', teaching was 'on hold' and from the six teacher interns that started only Asha and I were left.



We were faced with a new challenge. How would we set up an eLearning system that is effective and implementable at very short notice? Luckily at our university, NHL Stenden, we focus on Design Based Education. In DBE we aim on implementing design thinking and design process into the classroom. It provided us with the theoretical knowledge and tools to work on this project.

In three days, we researched, designed and tested a new methodology: The Meme Approach (read: mi:m). A meme is not only a popular internet phenomenon, for us meme stands for Most Effective, Minimum Effort and is our philosophy for distance learning.

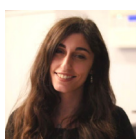
We believe that in online learning the delivery of the lessons should be as effective as possible. Short and to the point. Accessibility to the lessons should take minimum effort. We took very much into account that there is a difference between eLearning and classroom teaching, therefore whilst presenting our ideas we emphasized the adaptive role of the teacher. Once the difference in teaching is accepted, distance learning opens up many new possibilities to teach.

For me as an intern the past few weeks have been hectic and busy, however it was the perfect opportunity to further develop the skills that are related to the teaching profession. Our first ever assignment in our university was 'How do you see yourself as a dream teacher?'. It was not a guide, but more an unreachable target of who you want to be as a teacher. In the last month, my adaptability, cooperation, communication, theoretical knowledge and research skills have been tested in a real-life situation and I can confidently say one thing. Through this internship I came one step closer to my dream teacher.

I continue teaching Grade 5A online until the end of April, knowing that the profession chose, is the best decision I could have made in my life. I would like to thank the students and my colleagues for the amazing time I had at Istanbul International, all the things that I've learned and all the incredibly lovely interactions I had in the school. I hope to visit the school again in the future and share new experiences.

Mr. Jasper

NEW JOB, NEW HOME



Natalia Tserki

is from Greece and has been working in the Secondary School at Campus B as an Administrator. She is a teacher by training and holds also a Master in Educational Management.

My name is Natalia and I have been working as an administrator at Istanbul International School since August 2019. My tasks include handling calls, emails and general inquiries, liaising with parents and teachers, and providing admissions advice and guidance to all prospective parents. It's a truly international environment with families from more than 60 nationalities and teachers from more than 20. That forms an interesting team that gives you the opportunity to learn something new every day. You can hear various languages being spoken, and get information on different customs..

During the year, students attend different clubs according to their age and take part in events organized for them to enrich and celebrate their skills and projects. These events form happy occasions where parents, students and teachers can meet and observe students' progress. Unfortunately, this year the COVID-19



Picture 1 Fener



Picture 2 Arnavutkoy

pandemic has led to the cancellation of some of the fore mentioned events. However, it has given us the chance to form a strong online community to ensure the continuation of the academic year and the implementation of new approaches to teaching, taking advantage of new technologies. It is a tough period that will make us all stronger and more united.

The school is located in Uskudar, on the Asian side of Istanbul. It's a peaceful neighborhood on the Camlica hill and offers us a great view of the European side. Istanbul is a really vivid and diverse city. There are many places to visit: Fener with its colorful streets, Taksim with its museums and shops, Eminonu with its bazaars, Prince Islands for Sunday walks etc. The European side is more crowded and busy, while the Asian is more peaceful and green. Of course, there are many nice places to live by yourself or with your family. On the Asian side, Cengelkoy, Uskudar and Atasehir are nice and peaceful places for families.

Living in Turkey, you get adapted to its traditions: Turkish tea and breakfast are some of them. You are always offered a cup of 'cay', and on Sundays streets are full of people who want to enjoy a traditional Turkish breakfast. For foreigners there are many new experiences: the food, the drinks, the modes of transportation, the diverse population of the city. Of course, a good idea is to socialize and make Turkish friends who can show you around and introduce you to their culture – no better guide!.

When it comes to safety, I would confidently say that I have never felt unsafe in Istanbul. You can see policemen in different parts of the city, and the locals are always happy to help you, in case you get lost or need any information. In any case, speaking the local language is better, even if you just know the basics.

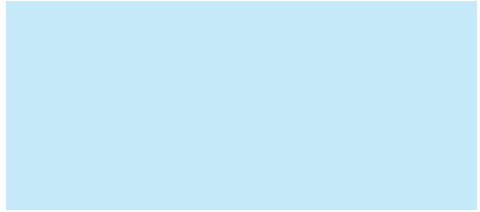


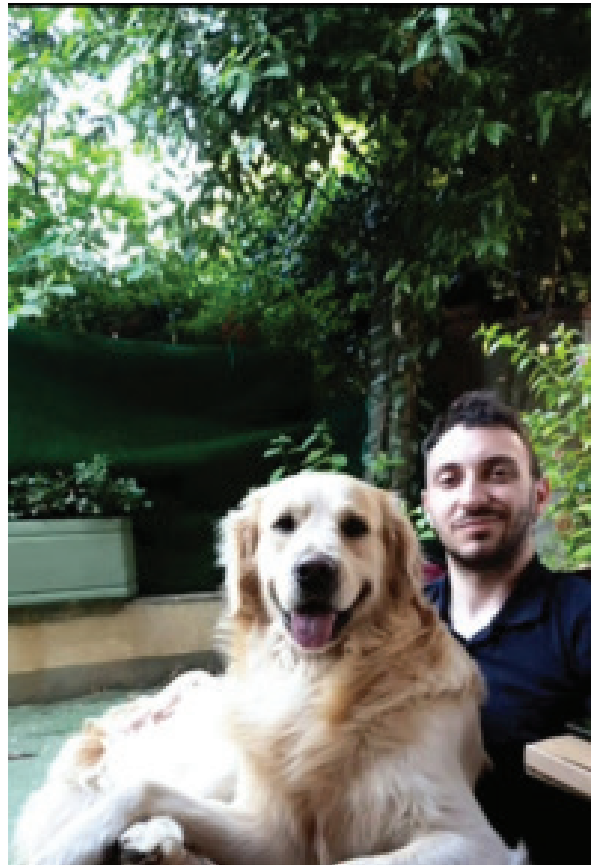
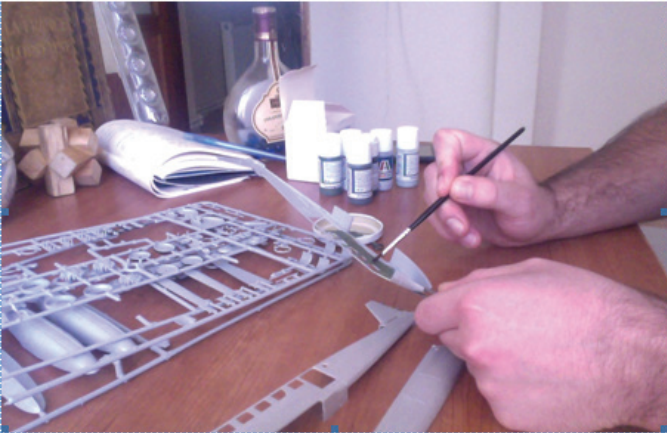
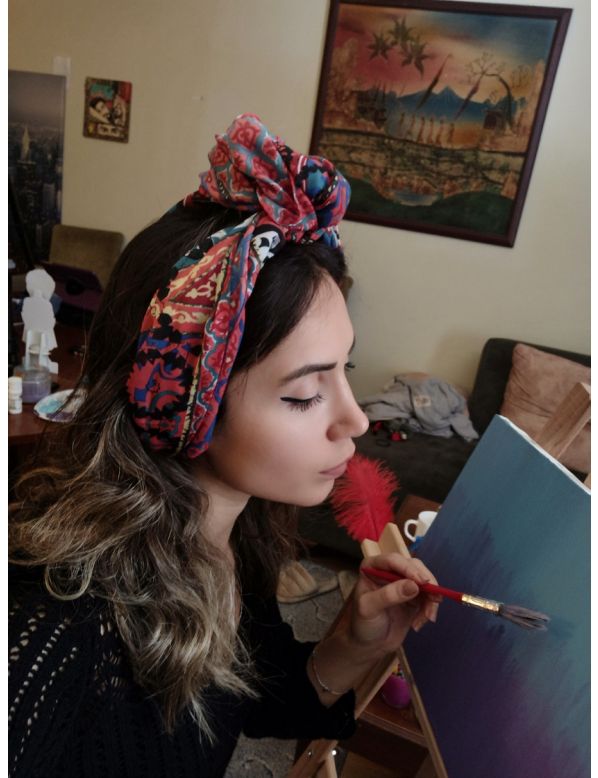
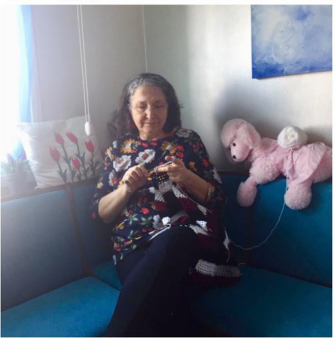
Picture 3 Sunset in Cengelkoy

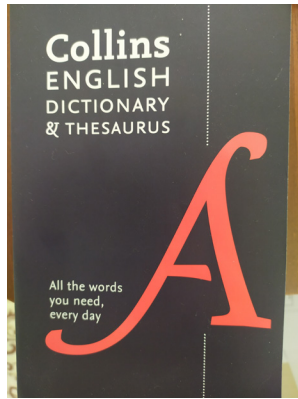
What I like the most about the city is that you can easily meet people from different backgrounds and that there are so many places to visit that you really never can get bored. It's a city where everybody can find his or in my case her place!

TIME FOR ALL KINDS OF PURSUITS WHILE OUR SCHOOL STAFF IS HOUSEBOUND









Wherever
you come from,
there is a place for you!

Students come from more than
60 countries and teachers from
over 20 different countries

