

TALKTOWN



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN E-LEARNING STUDENT.

Online learning is tedious and difficult. It's something we've had to accustom ourselves to, whether we like it or not. In the short amount of time we've had to do it, we've built up memories and experiences through these strange times. So here I am, sitting in the same place I've been in the past two months, writing my experiences packed into a single day.



Most days, I wake up pretty early, at around 7 a.m. Form time (or assembly, if it's a Monday) is at 7:45 a.m., so I usually get a bit of leeway to prepare myself for school, although some days I oversleep and miss form time (or assembly). Compared to normal learning, I get a lot more sleep and time since things like dressing up or packing up become unnecessary in online learning.

Form time is usually an attendance check and some reminders concerning cameras and missing work. Sometimes, I've found those reminders targeted at me. (Sorry about that, Mr Jorge.) Not much difference here compared to normal learning, coming from my experience last year.

There are six 1-hour periods, but minus the form time taking over period one on Monday and study periods, the average day usually has room for 4-5 lessons. How each class goes for me is never the same, however. I don't do very well in classes that require me to do things by myself. If I'm unlucky, classes like those will often appear during the day, affecting my mood more than staring at a screen for 4-5 hours has done. This one makes the most difference for me since online learning involves A LOT more screen-staring and less interacting, creating an entirely different learning experience.

That's why I often take breaks either in between lessons or in the middle of a lesson, such as getting going for a stretch, drinking some water, just having a rest before going back to a lesson. It often helps me relax. That's a pro you get from online learning; you are more comfortable at home.

DRINK YOUR



WATER, FOLKS.

I'm making it look pretty grim, but there are upsides when learning online too. Learning from home gives you a sense of familiarity while "in school". You also feel more private because no teacher is looming over your shoulder all the time. However, this might not be so good because we can get distracted easily, which affects our behaviour when we get back from online learning.

All in all, I don't feel like online learning is great compared to normal learning since it's more challenging academically due to communication problems, distractions, and whatnot. However, it's certainly interesting to see how school has completely changed during this time, and what we can pull out from this experience to improve normal learning in the future.

SIGNED: NGUYEN TUAN KHOI (96)

UN day

By: Jenny & Vivian 10G

UN Day is an annual tradition in our school where we come together and celebrate the round square ideals. This year on Friday 15th of October our school spent the day focusing on diversity and its importance, there were in total 11 options students could choose from, such as 'Diversity in Media', 'Diversity in Music', 'Diversity Debates', 'Gender Diversity', 'Biodiversity', 'Neurodiversity', 'Diversity in Cultural Clothing', 'Diverse Me', 'Countryball', 'Diversity in STEM' and 'Food around the World'.

Additionally, UN day helps show students' learning and curiosity through different forms and embraces teamwork amongst students. This year's topic encourages students to learn and be aware of the diversity present in society.

Within, 'Gender Diversity' students each broke into groups of three and four to discuss ways to present the information they had found such as PowerPoints, videos, posters etc. Overall, students in this group got to learn about the 70+ different genders present within our society and learnt how to embrace gender diversity.

During UN day, students took part in designing and reflecting. Those who participated in the group 'Diversity in Culture clothing' and 'Diverse Me' spent hours learning about themselves and others. They designed their characters and reflected on their strengths and weaknesses. 'Diversity in Culture' focused on learning about others and their history, we all know the saying "Those who do not learn history are bound to repeat them." by George Santayana. Therefore, the group Diversity in Culture spent their day researching and creating their designs on clothing from around the world, learning the importance of each piece in the end. While those in 'Diverse me' focused on themselves, finding their identity. Bringing their artistic skills to life by designing and creating a game character inspired by themselves! Everyone involved in these groups were very inspired and displayed their work in a visionary way.

Out of the 11 topics offered, two options were Science related: 'Diversity in STEM' and 'Biodiversity'. Students in 'Diversity in STEM' broke off into groups and discussed the significant contributions women made to science eg. Helen Brooke Taussig who discovered a treatment for the 'Blue Baby Syndrome' or Hedy Lamarr who invented a secret communication system called 'Frequency Hopping' that is still frequently (no pun intended) used to this day by military services. While students in 'Biodiversity' focused on our ecosystem's diversity. They focused on the two fundamental global goals created by the SDGs, 'Life Below Water' and 'Life on Land'. The group's final product was a game called 'Exploding Species' which took inspiration from the popular game, 'Exploding Kittens'. To conclude, those who participated in the two science-related options got to either learn more about the environment that humans are co-habiting with (and, arguably, harming) or got to learn about the oppressive history of female scientists.

Those who participated in media-related options such as 'Diversity in Media' and 'Diversity Debates' discussed questions relating to the impact of media on diversity. Students in 'Diversity in Media' focused on making visual collages of the diversity present in media whereas students in 'Diversity Debates' debated whether social media is a good platform for embracing and promoting diversity. To summarise, both focused on the relation between social media and diversity learning about the impact that social media has on diversity.

Hosted by 3 students in year 12, countryball was a unique way of teaching students about culture and stereotypes. They collaborated and drew simple country balls to express different cultures and identities in groups. Many shared important meanings behind significant figures and the history of their country. This was all showcased in small drawings of country ball showing creative and inquisitive skills in the group's work.

Art related subjects such as 'Neurodiversity' and 'Diversity in music' were options. Students in 'Neurodiversity' made a short infographic explaining the many different types within the umbrella term. Students in this group got to explore and advocate the harmful social stigmas present within this community. While students participating in 'Diversity in Music' used the app, 'Acapella' to create music and made a website that included the information they found from researching about music around the world. Through this project, students in this group got to learn about the relation between culture and music and got to embrace the diversity of music around the world.

Lastly, students in 'Food around the World' made a Padlet discussing how the development of a country affects our diets. Students in this group designed foods that a typical student would eat during Lunch. Overall, students partaking in 'Food around the World' got to learn about the cultural diversity of different foods around the world.

Overall, UN day was a great success and an eye-opener for many involved. Learning more about others, the environment we live in and those around us.



The Issues With Turning On Cameras

By Dang Minh Thu 9J

In these days of online learning, cameras have been requested to turn on every lesson by the school, we have interviewed people from teachers to students to hear their thoughts on cameras. And do they think the camera is important or not? Many teachers have agreed with this idea and have given many important reasons why cameras should be turned on. Here are their contributing thoughts:

As the teacher side, they expressed their thoughts on how cameras were essential for online learning because they need to know how the students feel in class and if they were aware and understood what the teacher was presenting. The teachers felt that if they were to have a glance at the students face expressions, they'd be more alert to see if their students were bored, sad, angry or confused. This helped the teachers adjust their instructions in order to satisfy the students. The students in the class also needed to be engaged and interact with each other, and this could be achieved if they were to leave their camera on. A teacher, who is new at Renaissance also said that it is very hard to know each other through voice calls and it makes them feel super alienated as if they were talking to a mirror. To further elucidate, turning on the camera is very important for the teachers since they're able to feel the warmth from the students and make the lesson more interesting. There are also some teachers that felt like cameras were not necessary for the entirety of the lesson. These teachers felt like students would only need to turn on their camera for the first part of the lesson and then they should be able to turn it off. Although, they did mention that it would be appreciated if in the end, students were to turn their cameras on and say bye. In the end, classes are always in a rush, so it did not happen much.

We were able to attain the teacher's perspective but how about the students? We know that almost all the students don't like turning on the camera because they don't feel that comfortable and they don't like to be watched the whole time in class. This makes it a tremendously difficult task for the teachers to encourage all their students to turn on their camera. Some of the students don't like turning on their camera's due to personal reasons such as but not limited to; room was not tidy, face was not washed, or because they were still in pajamas. I think that for this reason, the teachers have told the students to wear uniforms like normal but for the untidy room, some students are lazy to tidy up their room since they want to feel comfortable because that is their house. Although a majority of the students dislike cameras, there are still some students who are more than happy to abide by this rule. During their interviews they were saying that even though there are students who said that it is very uncomfortable to turn on the cameras, we should still do it as a sign of respect for the teacher's hard work. In some cases, there were students that turned on their camera but only revealing their forehead or their eyes. Some students also said that they don't have a camera on their laptop, so they need to use their phone and it's very annoying to trying to watch the teacher from a small phone and multi-task on their laptop at the same time.

According to the article, we can know that many students do not like to turn on cameras for various personal reasons like feeling awkward, not having a tidy room or they are in pajamas. But we hope that the camera can be opened if the teacher told us, as a respect manner from we as a student.



When is school opening?

By Thao 11LL

2021 has been a tough year for Vietnam due to the Covid and students all over the country have been struggling to receive their education through a screen. A majority of students in Ho Chi Minh has returned to online learning since then the cases have increased immensely during the student 's precious summer break. This is due to people neglecting the hazards and presence of Covid continued travelling a mountainous number of times during the two holidays in April: Hung King's anniversary and Reunification Day. Compared to other cities, Ho Chi Minh City has been affected the most, with its total number of cases being double of the neighboring Binh Duong's. Fortunately, in district 7, safety precautions were taken and the number of cases slowly but surely decreased. This brings up the ultimate question for all the students still stuck at home. Does that mean we will be going back to school soon? The answer relies on many contributing factors.



Firstly, it is salient to note that Ho Chi Minh city is the financial hub of Vietnam, contributing to a quarter of the entire national GDP, covid has definitely "froze" all economic activities in the city which will in turn affect the country's development. Therefore, the government is now opening the city back slowly even though the number of cases is still tremendous. Their decisions are not only based on the number of cases or the situation, but also on the long-term future.

Secondly, the only vaccine that students ranging from the age of 12 to 17 can get is Pfizer and the Cuban vaccine. The Vietnamese government has recently announced some regulations stating that individuals under-18s are able to get the vaccine in October. More specifically, the government wants to prioritize 16-17 years old mostly in Ho Chi Minh. What does this imply for us students? This means that we will be prohibited from in-person school till everyone is vaccinated, this is because going back to school carries the risk of spreading the virus immensely if a student is a carrier of the virus. However, looking at how the government is handling the situation quite swiftly and efficiently, it can be speculated that they are trying to push the process to get 95% of the children age 12-17 to be vaccinated and back to school by the end of 2021. This means that students will be granted access once more to the high-quality education that they deserve.



Given the circumstances, it is safe to predict that school will be open in around January. Once it is open, secondary will surely be going back first, especially year 11 and 13 as they are having exams this year. Even if school stays closed for a while longer, there is a high chance that these students with important exams will be allowed to enter school facilities to proceed with these exams. Key stage 3 and then primary will follow, but it seems that their return to school will be delayed since some students may be too young to understand the true dangers of covid and will not abide by the strict rules.

After all, as a student I know that all of you are desperate to go back to school and see your friends, conduct school activities, participate in sports and study in face to face. Yet, even though it seems everything has returned back to the state prior to the pandemic, going back to school still depends on the how things turn out in the next couple of months or weeks.