

2021-2022

Newsletter

Staying Human in the Digital Era



In the past jobs were about muscles,
now they are about brains,
but in future they will be about **the heart**.

- Ms. Minouche Shafik, Director of London School of Economics

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Moving from Reactive to Proactive: Adapting to the New World

Professor Jerzy Waligóra
Founder Director Principal of PACK



Ladies and gentlemen, my school, Private Academic High School No. 8 in Kraków, has been cooperating since 2014 with Delhi Public School Gurgaon led by visionary principal Ms. Aditi Misra. Even the pandemic has not become an obstacle to the continuation of our fruitful cooperation, f.e. we organized a virtual exhibition of our students' art works.

This example from my own backyard serves as an excellent illustration for the topic of today's debate: Moving from Reactive to Proactive. Because this virtual cooperation of schools is precisely a pre-emptive action, it is - as we say in Poland - "quantum leap" - and everyone present here knows very well that the pre-emptive strategy is the essence of proactivity. Probably mainly virtual contact will stay with us longer than we thought earlier. The Covid 19 pandemic is a fundamental circumstance that has forced us on a massive scale, or even better still force, because it is still an unfinished process, to move from the state of reacting to situations that have already occurred to the state of anticipation and creating desired situations, thanks to which the unwanted is avoided. The pandemic has intensified the search for proactive solutions in many areas of life, including education, one of the fundamental tasks of which is to prepare young people to function in new conditions, in the New World.

Because the world after the coronavirus pandemic will be different, it is already there, it is already happening. It is no different in this world with a school that is also changing. Because it is the time of "liquid modernity"

to recall the popular term of the world-famous Polish scientist Zygmunt Bauman. When we talk about volatility, uncertainty, liquidity, the term VUCA comes to mind and the second, introduced by Bob Johansen, VUCA Prime. Both are commonly used today in management theory and in the business world - they also turn out to be very useful in education.

In this short speech, I am not going to create new theoretical models or modify existing ones. I wanted to modestly, referring to the experience of the last year, which I have behind me as a school head, to draw attention to certain aspects of the transition from reactive to proactive, with VUCA in the background.

One of the components of VUCA Prime is vision. Like many educational institutions, my school has developed its vision, which defines the main goal of our activities: to ensure thorough intellectual and emotional growth. This goal is known to all members of the school community, it is accepted by them, which facilitates joint efforts to achieve it, and this is a kind of imperative, regardless of changing conditions. And even the pandemic did not change it, thanks to which, keeping in mind our vision, after the lockdown was announced in March last year, we acted proactively, in advance, agility (agility in VUCA Prime instruments), immediately (two days after the schools were closed), starting after training of teachers full-scale remote teaching. We have earned enormous gratitude from students and parents. While most schools for many weeks limited themselves to

e-mailing tasks and instructions by teachers to be done by students at home, our teachers conducted real-time classes via communication platforms (mainly Zoom), constantly enriching their digital skills and deepening their orientation in the available applications and digital teaching aids. Moving from reactive to proactive, we have forewarned, i.e. in practice we have eliminated the need to bridge learning gaps in a large scale, which undoubtedly awaits most schools in Poland as a reactive action. Probably my school will also need some supplementary classes, because regardless of the solutions used, distance learning is less effective than in-person learning. But it won't be a big problem for us to solve. Despite the pandemic, we want to provide services at the highest possible level.

As I mentioned: if the goal is clear (VUCA Prime: clarity) and the members of the school community understand it (VUCA Prime: understanding), it is much easier to mobilize everyone to get involved in the implementation of the plans. The community feeling of solidarity, unity of aspirations and values is strengthened. In my school, the difficult time of the pandemic greatly mobilized my parents, who previously did not necessarily always clearly manifest their belonging to the school community and identification with its goals. Moving to a completely new way of teaching and organizing the school due to the pandemic, we have intensified contacts between the school and parents who have clearly felt themselves to be members of the school community. Under these conditions, a "chain of good hearts" appeared. Parents

School Anthem Comment

massively put forward pro bono initiatives to provide various forms of assistance and support, from the simplest (helping people in quarantine to make purchases, taking the dog for a walk) to highly specialized legal advice (very important for people running a business in a situation of changing law due to the pandemic) and medical. I was impressed with this activity.

Two more important circumstances which, in my opinion, will contribute to a positive transformation of the existing forms and ways of functioning of the school, the desired transition from reactivity to proactivity. The first is a well-planned and implemented system of teacher education. I am speaking on the basis of Polish experiences, where it is necessary to bring teaching studies closer to school practice, not only to remote teaching but generally, limiting theoretical education in favor of practical training and internships in educational institutions. If we reformulate the aims of teacher education to prepare a new teacher to cope with vital problems and current educational needs, we will proactively avoid many potential mistakes of young teachers and will not have to reactively correct them.

The second circumstance is the need to ensure the right atmosphere, respect for emotional attitudes, spiritual experiences and inner convictions of members of the school community. Schools after the pandemic will certainly use digital tools in teaching much more often and better than before the pandemic, with a positive impact on the learning outcomes, they will more often use the project method or solving problems in small groups, maybe we will even manage to bridge the digital divide. But by changing the school in terms of methodological solutions and technical equipment, we must not allow technology to dehumanize us. Students, teachers and parents must feel psychologically comfortable. In this context, it is also worth paying attention to the need to create favorable conditions at school for practicing mindfulness, which, apart from the undoubted benefits for the mental health of the individual, also increases the effectiveness of teaching and learning. I do not mention the need for the school to shape students' soft skills, whose role in the school of the future (and in life) will be even more important than today.

Thank you for your attention.

I suppose no one remembers exactly which year it was when encouraged by our Principal Jerzy Waligóra, we decided to write the Anthem of VIII Prywatne Akademickie Liceum Ogólnokształcące. Actually, it was VIII Prywatne Liceum Ogólnokształcące at that time-the adjective Academic was added to the name of our school in 2004 and at that time the anthem had already existed for a couple of years.

It didn't take long for the Founder Principal to convince us to write it because our school, since its very beginnings, has been vocal and music has accompanied us on every school occasion. Those who have been members of our community for quite some time now, know very well what we mean. Therefore, we had complied with the Founder Principal's request without further ado and with great pleasure, although this should be said that writing a good anthem is an "impossible mission" especially because the writers are teachers and the singers - supposedly singing about themselves- are students.

If we looked it up in an encyclopedia, you would find out that the word anthem originates from Greek hymnos which means "canticle". Usually anthems are formal, turgid, since the very old-times composed - either to honour gods, distinguished figures, unusual events, homeland or for a laudable purpose.

Anthems have always had this integrating role of uniting a group of people, expressing the community of values or emotions. Today, we sing national, military, religious, academic or school anthems. Because every school with ambitions, and our school is one of them, obviously does have its anthem...

But our anthem- and it has to be said right away- is for sure totally different than all the others. When you hear it for the first time, it is actually hard to call it an anthem. However, that is what it was supposed to be: not really formal, not really turgid. Not the kind that you would actually sing standing up. Supposedly, it was supposed to be not a canto but rather a song. The kind of song which you hum out of your own will, because the melody is catchy, and the lyrics are not embarrassing, when you sing it publically especially as a student among peers. No marching steps unless these are the steps on a mountain trail. An anthem both in name and function but without turgid and school kitsch. Without telling anyone to be delighted or not. Or to feel something or

not. With no banners flapping in the wind, without big words and big declarations about values which may or may never pass, or those for which you would give your life up without even a blink of an eye...

At the same time, it doesn't mean that our anthem hasn't been coded for some important matters and enduring values. Although, it does happen at school that hours go by in boredom and torture-as the lyrics say- filled with longing for somebody or something, it is the space of the classroom that preserves to be the space of hominess, closeness and security. And then suddenly, in the last months or weeks of the students' adventure with school they learn-we want to believe so- that those were the best moments and they have just passed. But maybe they haven't passed entirely, just transferred into another dimension- of the individual and collective memory.

Our anthem does not say it directly because not everything has to be addressed directly. Sometimes all it takes is a painting, a small scene which says it all. That is why you will find in the anthem somebody who touches somebody's hair or looks at the watch, we can see chalk being held in one's fingers or ripped out notebook pages ...There are a lot of metaphors and emotions here. It all serves the purpose of trying to express the impossible to express, keep what is ephemeral and capture some truth about this place, especially about those people who revitalize it and give sense to it. Because, at the end of the day, only the things that are human or between humans really matter. The rest is - as it is sung by a popular band- the dust on the wind.

The question whether this "impossible mission" of writing a good anthem has been successfully accomplished in "VIII PALO Anthem" is left for you to answer.

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Professor Janusz Waligóra
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Translation into English
Justyna Witek
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VIII Prywatne Akademickie Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Kraków [PL]
VIII PALO [Acronym]
Academic High School no 8 in Kraków [ENG]

About Us

Anthem of VIII Prywatne Akademickie Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Kraków

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I.
Z ławki wyteżasz wzrok łakomy —
Kwadrans do brzegu; opadł żagiel,
I cisza minut nieruchomych;

Dwadzieścia łódek w ciasnym stawie.
Jej włosów właśnie dotykałeś,
Kiedy cię zbudził głos natrętny,
Rysujesz kredą nitki białe –
Zostaje w palcach ślad niechętny.

Ref.
Ósemka — choć pewnie nie ósmy cud świata,
To przecież — może się kiedyś nim stać,
Bo gdy się obejrzysz, spojrzysz wstecz po iluś tam latach,
Zobaczysz, że jednak coś mogła ci dać.

II.
Choćbyś chciał złożyć w niepamięci
Minuty ciężkie gdzieś na dno,
Wróć, by w oku łzę zakręcić
Na myśl o ósmym PALO...

Kartki z zeszytu wrywane
Lecą, spadają, drżą w powietrzu...
A ty, kim jesteś? Żegnasz bramę
I chcesz powiedzieć, żeś nic nie czuł?

Ref.
Ósemka — choć pewnie nie ósmy cud świata,
To przecież — może się kiedyś nim stać,
Bo gdy się obejrzysz, spojrzysz wstecz po iluś tam latach,
Zobaczysz, że jednak coś mogła ci dać.

I.
Sitting at your desk, you strain your gaze –
Quarter till the shore; the sail has fallen down
The silence of the immobile minutes
Twenty boats in a jammed pond

You've just been touching her hair
When awakened by importunate voice
With chalk you draw white threads –
Which leaves a reluctant trace on fingers

Chorus
„Eight” may not the eight wonder of the world
But it may be it one day
Because when you look back, after a couple of years
You will realize it might have given you something after all

II.
Even if you wanted to hide in oblivion
The heavy minutes at the bottom
They will come back to moisten your eye
With the thought of EIGHT PALO

Notebook papers ripped out
They fly, they fall, they shiver in the air...
And you, who are you? You kiss goodbye to the gate
And you want to say you felt nothing?

Chorus
„Eight” may not the eight wonder of the world
But it may be it one day
Because when you look back, after a couple of years
You will realize it might have given you something after all

„Eighth” – VIII PALO



Admission Counselling – in VIII PALO Students Make Informed Choices

Tomasz Wawrzyniak, Admissions Counsellor

In VIII PALO (Private Academic High School) we continuously support our students with their educational and social activities, as well as assist them in making informed choices about their future studies.

The choice of the right university or college, as well as a degree course matching their personal interests, strengths and values can become the bane of every high school student. Invitations to open days and brochures from universities both in Poland, the rest of Europe and the whole world, constantly come flooding into the email box of VIII PALO. As a result, students often feel lost and experience information chaos. Numerous questions arise concerning the level of teaching as well as prestige of a given course at a chosen university.

In VIII PALO we strive to anticipate our students' needs and expectations not only by offering them career and admission counselling classes, but also individual career and admission counselling concerning their future study choices. Furthermore, we offer help in the preparation of university recruitment documents.

It has to be stressed that whereas the rules for admission of students by Polish universities are clearly defined, for students who have passed Polish school-leaving examination (Polish matura), the rules for admission in other countries may differ and seem complicated at first. This is when students often need help to make it clear what the requirements of different foreign universities are. This is our main area of expertise.

We offer our students support as soon as they start high school. This is when we begin to provide our students with current information on colleges and universities as well as degree courses. Before the Covid-19 pandemic we would invite university representatives from all over the world including France, Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Austria and countries further away such as USA, Canada or Australia. During the pandemic such meetings have not taken place in the school classrooms, but have moved online. Although face to face contact has been impossible, new ways have emerged to gather information about different degree courses. During university open days, it has become possible to visit the universities online. With a few clicks, students have been able to get information during the webinars, they could also talk with university students and lecturers during Q&A sessions.

Furthermore, our graduates' visits to school are absolutely invaluable for admissions counselling. Our graduates are always welcome and they come back to share their knowledge and experiences concerning recruitment processes. This year during the Global Days our graduate, Piotr Sławęcki, advised our students about the opportunities created by studying the International Baccalaureate Programme and what advantages this has given him when he applied to study in University of Science and Technology in Kraków (AGH).

In 2021 during the school open day, this year's IB graduates Agnieszka Kubica and Weronika Urban talked about their

experiences and their successful efforts to get into a leading European university. Graduates that come back to visit us give us a new lease of life, that is why it is extremely important to keep in touch with them and welcome them back to our school.

Numerous graduates of VIII PALO have been admitted to the best universities around the world. Our students choose universities from 100 best universities on the ShanghaiRanking, the academic ranking of world universities. The most popular destinations among our students are as follows: the Netherlands: University of Utrecht (52. place), University of Groningen (69. place); Great Britain: University of Cambridge (3. place), University of Oxford (9. place), University College London (16. place), University of Edinburgh (42. place). In 2021 our students have made other extremely interesting choices, namely: University of Copenhagen (33. place) and University of Aarhus (69. place) in Denmark.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that events listed above constitute only a fraction of what admissions counselling is about. An admissions counsellor's main job is to meet one on one with students, talk with them during the breaks, answer thousands of emails written by both students and university representatives, fill in hundreds of documents for the recruitment purposes etc. In addition, an invaluable role is played by tutors and teachers who write recommendation letters and often articulate students needs and expectations.



Photos from the End of School Year Ceremony at VIII PALO
Credits to Olga Szpak, IBDP Student Year 1

Being Selfless Pays

Professor Jerzy Waligóra

The idea to reward meritorious students for their voluntary service was born ten years ago. For many years in our school educational programme, it has been seen as important to encourage students to undertake voluntary activities. These include helping the disabled people, the elderly, reading to children, charity bake sales, nationwide charity actions etc. After a few years of students being engaged in this form of activity, the school psychologist Elżbieta Hejmo and the school head and professor Jerzy Waligóra have decided that although charity per se is gratuitous, it is worth symbolically rewarding outstanding students. The Golden Karmel is an award. Its name refers to the name of the street where the schools' headquarters are located. The Latin maxim on the medal captures the essence of voluntary service: „Frustra vivit qui nemini prodest” (“He who helps no one lives without purpose (in vain)”). The medal is awarded by the decision of the Teachers Council.



The Golden Karmel award / Photo by Kinga Rupslaukis



Credits to Olga Szpak, IBDP Year 1 Student

End of School Year Ceremony

June 2021 marks the end of the 2020/2021 school year in Poland. This was a school year unlike others. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the students were forced to go into online teaching almost at the beginning of October. As much as remote teaching and learning are challenging and difficult, the majority of our students performed well and faced the situation bravely and in a responsible way. The evidence of this are the very good results achieved at the end of the school year.

The End of School Year Ceremony at VIII PALO was conducted online in our newly renovated assembly hall. The best students were asked to come personally and were given certificates as well as various rewards and scholarships for their high marks and excellent performance. The remaining students as well as teachers could follow the whole ceremony via online stream.

Everybody at our school hopes that the following year proves less difficult, less 'online' and more 'face to face' so that students and teachers can work together in their most comfortable setting – the school.

A Good Person Speaking Well

„Sejmik” of 2021 in VIII PALO

Lea Romanek, pre-IBDP student

In our school, both students preparing for Polish matura and IB diploma are required to participate in an event called “Sejmik”. It is a way of connecting the students and making us hone our research and presentation skills. It also introduces us to the academic life by allowing us to give a student-prepared lecture. Every year, a general topic that the students’ presentations must follow is selected by the school principal and the teaching staff. It is worth adding that the lectures do not have to be very strictly connected with the main topic which allows for as much flexibility as possible. The main theme is always very broad, so that every student can pick the individual topic based on their own interests. Students work on the presentation on said topic for about two months and present it around March.

It is a great experience to be a part of Sejmik, if you find something interesting that you would like to talk about. The best advice for how to enjoy the work you are going to do is to choose what you will be presenting carefully, and be personally involved in the work, topic, and presentation as much as possible. This year’s “Sejmik” had the topic of “Existence or non-existence? That is the question. The phenomena of existence and non-existence in the universe.”

Students picked all kinds of topics, from futurology and trans-humanism to evolutionary roots of humankind. We were divided into six sections, spanning students from across the entire high school. Each section had two segments with a break in between. My group decided to choose a rather broad title: “Do we exist?”. Our lecture was about the future of humankind, self-evolution, and the simulation theory. One of my personal favourites from the section, however, was about nihilism and its relativity to the topic of existence, or rather its lack of purpose. The students who prepared it spoke really well, and you could tell they were very interested in their topic. And that spirit is what is most important about the entire event: the excitement of the students who prepared something they enjoyed researching and talking about and the cultivation of their own interests.

“Sejmik” is one of the most unique events in our school. It is also one of the most noteworthy ideas that set us apart from other high schools. It allows students to see into the academic, college world in more relaxed circumstances, helps develop new interests and communication between students. It connects us all as a school, striving for one goal: knowledge.



Oxford Debates in VIII PALO

Maciej Osmański, pre-IBDP student

Teaching the art of debating in a thoroughly thought-out manner is something that numerous schools seem to be interested in these days. Such debates are the way in which children are able to learn various valuable skills that they will need further down the line – teamwork, conducting research, public speaking, justifying their claims and opinions, thinking outside the box, considering different perspectives... The list goes on! It does not come as a surprise to anyone that our school has also taken interest in this topic. The VIIIth PALO debate team has been representing us in different competitions for a few years now. That very team has recently taken part in two different Oxford debate showdowns. This is why, I would like to share some behind-the-scenes information I have been given by one of the debate club members.

Firstly, to those unaware, what does an Oxford debate even look like? Every debate centres around a thesis – a general statement about some sort of an issue, be it political, moral or ecological. Two teams are then formed – the proposition (whose goal is to prove the thesis right) and the opposition (who aim to refute the thesis). Each team consists of four speakers who each play a different role:

The 1st speaker gives a general introduction to the topic of the debate. This includes presenting useful vocabulary related to the topic, background information and most importantly the team's stance on the topic.

The 2nd speaker presents the team's head arguments.

The 3rd speaker introduces counterarguments to the opposite team's second speech.

The 4th speaker sums up the arguments their team presented and closes the debate by explaining why their team should win.

Every participant is given 5 minutes to present their speech, during which other participants can ask short questions. Every speaker should answer at least two of these. Both teams, as well as individual speakers, are awarded points for how they perform. That sounds easy enough, doesn't it? Believe me, it isn't.

The work that needs to be put into preparing for even one debate, is tremendous. In order to properly prepare for a debate, the team has to gain a deep understanding of the thesis, prepare 3 well-structured and solid arguments and think of what the opposing team might say to prepare for a counterargument. Furthermore, all of that has to be done twice, as in most cases the team doesn't know which side they will be taking until 15 minutes before the debate. It might not sound like a tremendous lot but on average preparations for just one debate take about 6 hours in total. Though rarely is it so that they have to prepare for just one debate at a time. In one of the competitions they took part in, our debate club performed in 8 different debates, out of which 4 were on the same day. Yes, you heard that right. They had to simultaneously prepare for 4 different debates. The amount of work they put into this is beyond admirable.

As we have learned, participating in an Oxford debate is much more of a gruelling task than it may initially seem. Blood, sweat and tears are poured into the process, however, the effort pays off in a beautiful form of a rhetoric discussion that furthers the horizons of everyone involved.

School Workshops and Events

International activities at VIII PALO

As the traveler who has once been from home is wiser than he who has never left his own doorstep, so a knowledge of one other culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly, our own.

Margaret Mead



Among vital traits the young person entering adult life needs to possess in the globalized world are those of conscious functioning, international mindedness and readiness. Parents and teachers treat those characteristics as motivation to maintain the sense of belonging to international community and an ongoing development for the sake of future generations.

We would like the student, the participant of international activities at VIII PALO, to receive a through education in order to pursue the career of his dreams. It is vital for us to equip the youth with knowledge regarding their roots and help them realize the importance of respect towards other people. Thus, such a person is capable of becoming a self-confident global citizen.

Building the profile of VIII PALO student, one who follows principles of ethics both in private and school life, thinks critically, is curious of people and the world, is constantly supported through international activities at the school. The aim of such support is to develop both linguistic and multicultural competences. Our actions are based on four pillars of education described in UNESCO programme for Associated School, and they are as follows:

Learning to Know,
Learning to do,
Learning to Live Together, Learn to Live with Others
Learning to Be

(source: UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network)

The students of VIII PALO are constantly developing their vocabulary and multicultural competences while attending foreign language classes. Our school provides students with extra language classes, lessons with native speakers of English and Spanish as well as classes conducted only in English as part of IB department. Moreover, our students have the opportunity to confront and evaluate their knowledge and skills while participating in numerous international conferences, young leaders' conference, student exchanges, International Models United Nations as well as project activities in countries such as: Germany, Norway, Denmark, the UK, the Netherlands, India, Nepal, the USA and Senegal.

We believe that the time spent in high school is the best period to raise awareness and strengthen our students in the conviction that the world is full of possibilities and they can achieve extraordinary things in their adult lives as long as they show commitment, empathy and work hard. We strive to keep our students open-minded, try to inspire and encourage them as well as provide them with theoretical knowledge and practical means of implementing it.

It is difficult to describe all the international activities which are conducted by us. Thus, the list below contains countries, schools and organizations which we are constantly cooperating with:

India

- Delhi Public School, Gurgaon, New Delhi
- Navrachana International School, IB World School, Vadodara
- Stepping Stone High School, Maharashtra

Germany

- Gymnasium Johanneum, Lüneburg

Nepal

- Malpi International School, Malpi

Norway

- Gjøvik videregående skole, IB World School

the USA

- World Conference for Development of Global Education
- International Summit, Pompano Beach High School, Florida
- Loudoun International Youth Leadership Summit
- Central Valley Christian School, California

Model United Nations

- Model United Nations of Malmo - MUN of Malmö 2020 (munofmalmo.org)

Finally, it is worth sharing some successes of our students and the results of their international cooperation:

International publications by our students

The book containing narratives written by students from four continents:

The Power of International Stories: Coming of Age in the Global Villages(1)

(1) Description: Through writing stories that reflected their culture or themselves, students became published authors. Their teachers placed these stories in their cultural context as well as were asked to contribute a statement or quote about the importance of stories. Students and teachers from four continents and nine countries contributed: Armenia, Bangladesh, Colombia, Estonia, Georgia, India, Poland, Russia, and the United States, to demonstrate the power of story as these adolescents are coming of age in our global village. This book was funded by a U. S. State Department grant.

Artur Kapera, the student of VIII PALO as the co-author of scientific articles in English:

Animals and their Role in Tourism – Examples and Controversies from around the World and from Poland, student/co-author: Artur Kapera

Hunting tourism in Poland – an outline of the problem, student/co-author: Artur Kapera

Summed up by Ms Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska

UNESCO in our School

by Małgorzata Słobodeniuk,
teacher of English
and UNESCO school coordinator



VVIPALO Students with Principal, UN Headquarter in New York

The UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), established in 1953, enables the cooperation of educational institutions worldwide to reach common goals such as peace, tolerance, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and high-quality education. Our school has been its member since 2017 which has allowed us to enrich the range of actions that ensure that our students care about the planet, well-being of other nations and demonstrate their understanding for different cultures.

The above mentioned values are promoted during educational projects we managed to complete, despite the pandemic, in the past school year. One of them was Global Week – each day focused on a different issue: People, Prosperity, Peace, Planet and Partnership and the aim was to raise awareness on acute problems of the world as well as the consequences of the fast-paced globalization.

Furthermore, our participation in Global Online Aspiring Leaders for Sustainability Summit, organized with the partner school in Ashburn in the USA, was based on cooperative work on reaching Sustainable

Development Goals to ensure a better future for all of us.

Moreover, every year we are obliged to commemorate at least two dates from the ASPnet calendar, which reminds us about the world heritage, cultural diversity, environment or human rights. Thus we held an International Mother Language Day on which occasion a literary contest was announced, the International Day of Peace when a group of students virtually visited the United Nations Headquarters in New York or World Poetry Day when volunteers sent poems, rewritten by hand to people who needed consolation.

In addition, on the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development our students, together with the Indian partner, Delhi Public School in Gurgaon, worked on a music project titled “The Beats of Harmony – In Harmony with Diversity” to present their rich musical cultures.

Besides, to balance the online form of many activities, this year’s Earth Day centered around the proposals of city outdoor games to encourage us to leave our homes after

several months of being locked down. What is more on another occasion with the purpose of promoting the idea of recycling our students turned useless materials into toys for the local animal shelter.

What is worth mentioning is the outstanding commitment of our school voluntary organization that collected basic necessities for our compatriots in the Eastern borderlands. Thanks to the Centre for Documentation of Deportations, Expulsions and Resettlement, a part of the Pedagogical University of Cracow, our students had the chance to discover the history and current situation of those people.

The distance learning, we all have struggled with this year, has not been conducive to too many initiatives. Nevertheless, our involvement in the ASPnet actions has brought some valuable benefits. Not only have our students become more tolerant, empathetic and open-minded but they also have improved their creative and communicative skills and the ability to think globally.

Worldwide Collaboration: Connected Learning on a Global Scale

Pompano Beach High School's fifth International Virtual Summit

Collected by Ms Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska

Student exchanges are undoubtedly unforgettable events and to be honest, apart from their educational value, they give us an opportunity to travel and meet amazing people in their home countries. Due to the pandemic which thwarted our plans, we experienced the Summit like no others. We were given an opportunity to meet people from all over the world, attend classes, as well as discover cultures and places from our own homes via the Internet. Nevertheless, we consider it as an enriching experience with all advantages of on-site meetings.

Selected comments:

During the Summit I got to know many amazing people and the atmosphere was awesome, even though we could see each other merely online. I managed to learn a lot about different cultures and make international friendships that will last. It was a wholesome experience, and surely I will never forget it.

I had a great opportunity to participate in the International Summit of 2021. To be honest, I signed in spontaneously, but I am satisfied with the decision I had made. I was willing to get involved in the project, and it was worth it!

The International Summit of 2021 offered us a wide range of valuable meetings. I would like to share my opinion about presentations describing various countries. The ones I liked the most were actually long videos - I found them both fascinating and funny.

People I have met are amazing, open-minded, curious, and most of all, diverse! In my opinion, neither the place nor the way of organizing it makes the Summit special. What really makes the event special are our different cultures, appearance, skills, and views on various things! It does not matter that much whether we went to Florida or not. For sure, it would have been unforgettable, but this is not the primary consideration. We are the primary consideration. We and those friendships that will last for years.

We presented our country in front of the American class. Furthermore, we had a film about Kraków and a multimedia presentation. At the end of it, there was an amusing exercise - a few Polish phrases and tongue twisters to repeat. Our listeners dealt with that task surprisingly well. I am impressed since I, as a native speaker of Polish, still find some of them challenging. In return, we had an opportunity to watch a presentation given by students from Zimbabwe. I especially liked their traditional dance, I also enjoyed the activities they provided us with, as well as their engagement in all they did. I learned, for instance, that there are 12 official languages in their country. I need to emphasize that I am impressed with their English language level. The teachers who were listening to the presentation were very kind and genuinely interested - they asked a lot of questions, and I really liked that.

The International Summit in Pompano Beach High School has been one of the best experiences in my life. We used to complain about being overwhelmed by the technology, however, it enabled taking part in the event. I was given a chance to meet many wonderful people from all around the world, not only students but also teachers and principals. I admit that it was the first time I had opened up to people. I had an amazing opportunity to practice English, learn more about different countries, and what I find the most important, I won friends for life! We also got a chance to observe typical American lessons, and we felt as if we had been real students. I am extremely grateful for that unforgettable opportunity, and I hope that one day we will see each other in person. I strongly recommend the Summit to everybody who is thinking of studying abroad.

I was touched by the words of Principal Hudson, and I shed a tear during the speech. I would like to quote the words: "If you come to the United States when the pandemic is over, remember that you have a home right here at Pompano Beach High School". Overall, I am grateful for this experience and I appreciate the opportunity. I can add that the days at the Summit are a significant part of my life.

I would like to describe an unforgettable meeting - One day the future will come. I found that theme attractive. It was discussed at the meeting with students of Florida Atlantic University. They were willingly sharing with us their experiences, and they provided us with comprehensive answers to questions that we had about studying in the USA.

I would like to say that Mr. Thomas' words from his closing remarks, which I heard on Friday, have had a great impact on me. He said: „You have to buy into an idea in order to be a part of the culture". It was important, especially in light of what Miss Konstancja said on Thursday - in order to be a part of something, you cannot just sit in a corner waiting for opportunities. You have to be proactive, take a lead, look for opportunities and be a good and hard-working person. It all can be applied to me because I can be described as a bit shy and timid. Nevertheless, now I am aware that it is inevitable to step out of my comfort zone in order to become a global leader.

Pompano Beach High School, Broward County Schools, Florida

Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska

Pompano Beach High School (PBHS), a magnet school helmed by Principal Hudson Thomas, holds a prominent place in my and VIII PALO's story. Our heartfelt thanks goes to Ms Julia Perlowski, who used to be a teacher at PBHS (currently working as the Theatre Specialist at Boston Public Schools), whom I met in India through a U. S. State Department program for teachers and through whom the road to PBHS was paved. Principal Hudson Thomas, by inviting teachers and students from China, Japan, India, Haiti, Brazil, The Republic of Ireland, and Poland, gave these participants an opportunity to enhance their knowledge about the United States and to develop cultural awareness in the fields of

technology, international affairs, education and globalization. Through the years, he has been a special advocate and friend, entrusting me with many more trips for the students from VIII PALO, International Baccalaureate School 006265 to the USA. Later, a student delegation from PBHS in turn visited Poland.

A team of highly dedicated faculty and staff at PBHS ensures the seamless running of the International summit with the utmost hospitality, including, but not limited to Ms Jill Narus Samaroo, Ms Loralyn Carlson, Ms Lisa Spencer, Ms Ann Wayland-Cook, Mr Ronald D. Holley, Ms Kim Boudinet and Colonel Gregory N. Johnson. During

these summits our Polish students learned valuable leadership skills from the U.S. Army JROTC PBHS Tornado Battalion. Aleksander Pikulski, who now serves on the WorldLINK Foundation, was awarded the honorary rank of Cadet Lieutenant Colonel, US Army JROTC Tornado Battalion Ambassador. As of today, PBHS has enlarged its original summit from three to fifteen because of the dedication of Principal Thomas and his team of able teachers. We thank all of them and their community for their unconditional hospitality towards the entire world. PBHS made sure that the United States of America opened the doors to their homes and a space in their hearts to welcome us all in earnest.

Dear Principal Hudson Thomas,

thank you for giving us an opportunity to learn from the best specialists and educators, as well as for opening the doors to your school. Because of you and the Summit our world is more united by a HUMAN TO HUMAN TOUCH.

God Bless You & Family,

Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska
Deputy Head School Engagements

An address from Mr Hudson Thomas, Principal of PBHS in Florida, whose leadership has built the Partnership of Excellence between our schools since 2013

adapted from: Revista Inspira - International Edition, 2022

As principal of Pompano Beach High School (PBHS), a magnet school focused on International Affairs with Information Technology located in Florida (USA), one of my goals is to provide opportunities for our students, faculty and staff, families, and community members to increase worldwide connections through personal global interactions.

Pompano Beach High School's experience has proven that making the initial partner connections can be well thought out with extensive planning or as simple as a fortuitous drop in visit to our campus. The second was true when we were visited one day by an enthusiastic group from Sao Sebastiao, Brazil. It was immediately apparent that a strong relationship was inevitable. Through positive communication and shared goals, the connection was made and Sao Sebastiao became an active and significant partner.

School partnerships are enriched by Pompano Beach High School's biennial International Summit created to develop cultural understanding in the field of education, increase knowledge about the United States and visiting schools, and establish lasting ties between all the participants. The first Summit was held in 2012 when educators and students from

Japan and Sweden were invited to our campus for a week of collaboration and sharing. Since then, school partnerships have flourished as evidenced at the 2021 Summit with the participation of over 170 guest students, teachers, and administrators from Brazil, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Mexico, Nepal, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe. The positive impact is tremendous as evidenced in the voices of our attendees at the close of each Summit. One of our guests, a student from Brazil, tearfully encapsulated her Summit experience in one word: saudade. Visiting Brazil and other countries of partner schools is another way for our stakeholders to increase global connections. Students and faculty members of Pompano Beach High School travel to many of our partner schools around the world. Experiencing the various cultures and classrooms is exciting and can be a life changing experience. Several of our students changed their career goals as a result of their experiences traveling to our partner schools.

I was privileged to be selected by the United States Department of State as a member of the 2013-2014 Brazil Administrator Exchange Program. It gave me the opportunity to travel to Brazil for two weeks where I was able to share school

administration experiences, develop school leadership and management models, and increase understanding between Brazil and American educators. It was my pleasure to reciprocate and host three Brazilian administrators at our school. During their visit, they could be seen around campus participating in many activities such as busily taking notes in an economics class, listening to student debate teams compete, and joining in extracurricular events such as a tailgate party at a football game. The Brazilian administrators' enthusiasm and willingness to share with our faculty, staff, and students was stimulating and enriching for all those involved.

International understanding has never been more important than it is today. The global connection that Pompano Beach High School has with its partner schools fosters and supports beneficial communication through the commitment and diligence of each member. It is my hope that all of our collaborative efforts continue to make a positive impact in the lives of those who participate.

Hudson B. Thomas
Pompano Beach High School
Florida, USA

Last week, I took part in the first ever virtual edition of the International Summit hosted by Pompano Beach High School. Some might say that we lost an opportunity of flying to the USA because of COVID, that we could have had a life changing experience, and instead we were just sitting in front of our monitors. However, I do not see it that way. Why? The people I met are amazing, open-minded, curious, and most of all, diverse! In my opinion, neither the place nor the way of organizing it makes the Summit special. What really makes the event special are our different cultures, appearance, skills and views on various things! It does not matter that much whether we went to Florida or not. Certainly, it would have been unforgettable, but this is not the primary consideration. WE are the primary consideration. We and those friendships that will last for years. Of course, we did not become best friends the first second we met - it was a process. Now, I will tell you briefly how it looked and what I have learned, all in a chronological order:

Day 2 Tuesday, 2 February

It was my fervent hope that after the first ice-breakers on Monday, we would actually start feeling comfortable with each other. And I was not disappointed at all! First, we had a pleasure to attend a Spanish lesson. The teacher was very amiable, and apparently, genuinely interested in our cultural differences. During that meeting, I could discover how the school system looks in other countries, what languages they learn, and how they deal with this extraordinary coronavirus situation. Then, we had a "study hall". To be honest, I had not heard of that before. Now, I would love to have such lessons!

Next, a cadre meeting was scheduled. A new person -Tyurkana from Kazakhstan who lives in Turkey- joined us for the first time. We all were far more relaxed that time. We discussed our hobbies and passions, exchanged phone numbers and found each other's profiles on social media. We discovered each other as individuals. We also watched the first part of the cultural showcase together. After the meeting was over, I had a wonderful conversation with Nikhita. Or conversation lasted for about 2 hours! I got to know a lot about traditions and cuisine in her country and I met her closer. I am extremely happy that I can call her my friend now.

Day 4 Thursday, 4 February

The first meeting I had that day was a university workshop, during which I learned a lot of valuable information on studying in Florida. I definitely started considering it as an option. Then we had a cadre meeting! I really loved them at that point. Again we had some great conversations and watched the last part of the cultural showcase. We all stayed after it finished, once again. Me, Ines, Alex, Haidy and her little, cute niece who showed up, stayed the longest and were visited for a moment by Mrs. Samaroo, who seemed happy that we AGAIN were spending our free time together. We sang songs (No, I am not joking), and taught each other the basic words of our languages. I must admit that a duet of Haidy and her niece were stunning while singing! At one point there were only three of us left and we started discussing culture and food. It was an amazing day!

Stay safe, you, who is reading this.

Love from Poland.

Wiktoria Biegańska

Day 1 Monday, 1 February

First, we were supposed to watch an opening ceremony and country introductions on YouTube. I learned about the existence of such jobs that I had not been aware of. Thanks to that I also know that I do not have to choose now, but instead I should do what I love. I was also informed what schools, countries and people were going to take part in the Summit.

After that, we had our first cadre meetings. I had assigned to cadre 4, along with Heidi, Hayli, Victoria and Alex from Pompano Beach; Nikhita from India; Haidy from Egypt; Bishwo from Nepal; Danny from the UK; Emely from Mexico; Ilona from Ireland; Ines from France; Jonah from Germany; and Tiziana from Switzerland. I must admit that (despite the fact that I had already known and liked one of our cadre leaders - Heidi Christensen who was my host) the beginnings were challenging. We were all quite shy and quiet. However, all members of the meeting made a good impression on me. even after the first day!

Day 3 Wednesday, 3 February

That day me and all other Polish students gave a presentation about our school and country. I am really happy with the result. Later, we watched the presentation prepared by Zimbabwe representatives. I am glad for the opportunity to watch it because I had not realized how different the life there is. Tapiwanashe described numerous amazing things about her life and I am really thankful for her patience and enthusiasm when answering our questions.

Then, there was a cadre meeting with our fellow cadre leaders: Heidi, Hayli and Alex! I must say that it was a real breakthrough. We totally grew comfortable with each other's companion. We had such a natural and funny conversation that most of us stayed on Teams about an hour after the actual meeting was scheduled to finish. We were kindly reminded of that by Mr. Hudson and Mrs. Samaroo who seemed happy that we were enjoying ourselves. We also watched the second part of the cultural showcase. It was so inspiring!

Day 5 Friday, 5 February

Naturally, I was (and still I am) sad that the Summit is ending. I started the day with a country group meeting and an engaging Kahoot game about Pompano Beach High School made by Aleks K. I got second place. Then, I met with my cadre again. We simply enjoyed our last official encounter and we promised each other to meet after the ending ceremony. I must say that it was really inspirational and motivating. I enjoyed the speeches that gave me this kind of feeling of importance and belonging. At the end, some girls sang "We are the world". The experience was so moving that I almost had tears in my eyes.

Later, as promised, we met on Zoom with our cadre. We played some funny games for a really long time (literally about 4 hours) and had some heartwarming goodbyes.

To sum up, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who I met during this Summit. It is an experience that I will never forget. I have travelled the globe without moving from my chair, made some incredible friends, learned a lot, and most of all, I felt important and special.

I am delighted that despite the pandemic, I had the opportunity to take part in the International Summit! It was all possible thanks to the Internet; however, I would like to express my gratitude to our teachers and principals for organizing this event despite the coronavirus.

The first day was very positive - it provided me with a lot of knowledge and new contacts with people from different countries. On Monday, we met teachers and the headmaster of the Pompano Beach High School. We saw presentations about schools and met other participants. Presentations in the form of films made a huge impression on me. Thanks to them, I was able to learn about my peers from Florida. Having finished watching the presentations, I met my fantastic team and during the first meeting we felt the connection.

On Tuesday, we attended American online lessons. My team joined biology run by a likeable teacher from Pompano Beach High School. We talked about genetics and genetic diseases. Then we had a meeting in our group; we got to know each other better and learned about traditional dishes in our countries. The most appealing to me were the national sweets - especially Turkish baklava. It looks delicious.

On Wednesday, we presented our country in front of the American class. We had a movie about Krakow and a multimedia presentation. At the end of it: there was an amusing exercise - a few Polish phrases and tongue twisters to repeat. Our listeners dealt with that task surprisingly well. I was impressed since I, as a native-speaker of Polish, still find some of them challenging. In return, we had an opportunity to watch a presentation given by students from Zimbabwe. I especially liked their traditional dance, I also enjoyed the activities they provided us with, as well as their engagement in all they did. I learned, for instance, that there are 12 official languages in their country. I need to emphasize that I am impressed with their English language level. The teachers who were listening to the presentation were very kind and genuinely interested - they asked a lot of questions and I really liked that. We also had classes in groups where I was particularly touched by my African friend's statement about equality. I agree with her and I believe that each of us is equal despite skin colour and origin.

On Thursday, we had university workshops where we watched presentations and learned how to apply for a particular university. We had an extraordinary opportunity to talk to very helpful graduates

and ask them various questions. That day was very engaging and helped me find answers to my questions about studying in the USA. I am very grateful for such a chance. In our group we talked about our feelings and plans for the future and I know that each of us can achieve whatever we want!

Friday was, unfortunately, the last day. We had a meeting with our ambassador Alex who is incredible. We took part in an engaging game about American culture and Pompano Beach High School. We also had a meeting with our teams. Everyone was very disappointed that it was the last meeting but glad with that opportunity. For me, every event was extremely practical and fantastic. We exchanged contacts and I hope that we will stay in touch despite the distance. At the end, there was a closing ceremony which summarized the whole International Summit thoroughly. I am delighted and grateful that I could take part in the wonderful event, meet such incredible people, teachers, cultures, traditions and improve my language skills. I will never forget it and I hope that in the future I will be able to take part in such an exchange in Florida!

Regards,
Marysia Macałka

Summit conclusions

Jan/Feb 2021 by Michał Nowiński

It has been the best school week I can remember. I want to thank Mrs. Krzemińska-Kaczyńska, Mrs. Samaroo, as well as everybody who helped to prepare the event. I appreciate the opportunity to take part in the Summit. After so many weeks of constant online lessons, I found it a blessing.

I truly enjoyed talking with people from all over the world during cadre meetings. I also found the cultural showcases fascinating. The Zimbabwe presentation, which took place despite insignificant technical problems, was thought-provoking. Our presentation

was also given a warm welcome - members of my cadre appreciated our effort. I was keen on all the lessons run by teachers from Pompano, IT lessons in particular. On Thursday, we watched presentations from various countries, including Poland. Later, we talked about our schools and our interests, as well as the pandemic situation in our countries. We had already had a connection with each other and we were less and less shy while speaking. Our group leaders also helped us a lot. I discovered that Efe from Turkey lives in Antalya where I have been twice so far. On the last day, we were

sad saying goodbye but we promised each other to keep in touch on WhatsApp. I was very surprised that the organization of the whole event was on such a high-level. There were many participants and I must admit - the preparation was exemplary. During the Summit, I got familiar with cultural differences, such as: in China lessons finish at 10 pm, in the USA students do not go to school on Friday.

Thank you again for the organization of this event and I hope that in 2 years we will meet again, this time in Florida.





What have I learned at the International Summit? How do I feel after such an amazing experience? The International Summit in Pompano Beach High School has been one of the best experiences in my life. We used to complain about being overwhelmed by the technology; however, it enabled taking part in the event. I was given a chance to meet many wonderful people from all around the world, not only students, but also teachers and principals. I admit that it was the first time I had opened up to people. I had an amazing opportunity to practice English, learn more about different countries, and what I find the most important, I won friends for life! We also got a chance to observe typical American lessons and we felt as if we had been real students. I am extremely grateful for that unforgettable opportunity and I hope that one day we will see each other in person. I strongly recommend the Summit to everybody who is thinking of studying abroad. Besides, if you want to discover different parts of the globe, this Summit is also for you. I would like to encourage you to put your doubts aside and go!

Nadia Moskała

The Summit 2021 - my memories!

The Summit was scheduled to begin on 1 February and last until 5 February 2021. Unfortunately, it could not take place in Florida due to the unusual situation with the coronavirus. However, we were given a chance to participate in the event online.

On the first day, I was slightly nervous about how it would look. However, immediately after the commencement of the event, my doubts disappeared. I was assigned to cadre number 5 with amazing people from whom I learned a lot. My leading teacher was Ms. Ann Wayland-Cook and my cadre leader was Parth Agarwal. I consider myself lucky to have had those people as my guides for the Summit. It happened at the beginning of the first cadre meeting that I felt as a member of one big family.

Day two appeared to be even easier since I had already known my cadre. I could choose the lesson and I decided on Mr. Holley's 3D

modelling lesson. It was totally absorbing and I wish it had lasted longer! Then, I was given a chance to observe Spanish lesson! I enjoyed them both, as well as the atmosphere. Afterwards, I had a brief cadre meeting. On day two, I also watched Cultural Showcase 1 and I absolutely loved it!

Wednesday was a very good day for me. My Polish group had a country presentation which was praised by the participants. Later, I watched a Zimbabwe presentation, thanks to which I could expand my knowledge about the country and its culture. Then, Cultural Showcase 2 took place again - I was amazed with all the facts I learned.

Thursday was the day of University Workshops with FAU Florida. It meant an amazing opportunity to learn more about the university. Thereafter, some of PBHS graduates answered our questions concerning their universities. What is more,

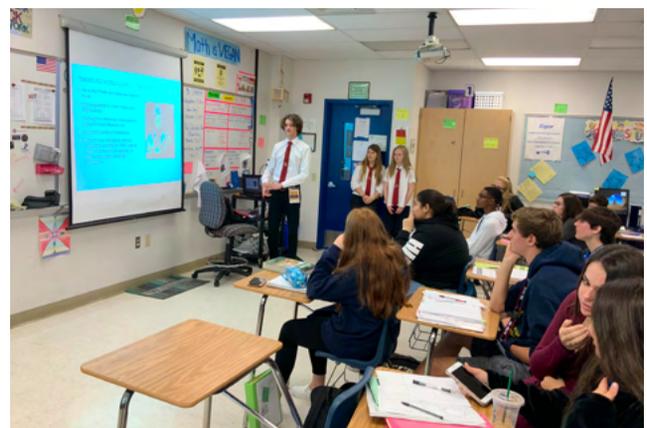
me and other members of the cadre took part in a brief meeting. We discussed the workshops. Afterwards, there was Cultural Showcase 3, which I enjoyed due to an amazing presentation prepared by the representatives of Turkey.

Friday had the greatest influence on me and my emotions. It was time to say goodbye to my cadre and to all participants of the Summit. I found it hard due to the relation we had built over those few days. I was touched with the words of Principal Hudson and I shed a tear during the speech. I would like to quote the words: "If you come to the United States when the pandemic is over, remember that you have home right here at Pompano Beach High School". Overall, I am grateful for this experience and I appreciate the opportunity. I can add that the days on the Summit are a significant part of my life.

Natalia Bernas



Principal Hudson Thomas, Colonel Gregory N. Johnson, Principal Professor Jerzy Waligóra, Ms Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska and VIII PALO Team at PBHS in Florida



Polish Students At PBHS



Polish Representation with Principal of PBHS Mr Hudson Thomas

Representatives of sixteen countries from all over the world and many friendly, wonderful people – it was a pleasure to attend the International Summit and be a part of the event that unites schools around the world.

Despite the limitations resulting from the pandemic, we all had the opportunity to interact with each other. During that exceptional time, I met a lot of people - all curious about the world and open to other cultures. I am honored that our group can popularize Polish customs and traditions and show them to such an amazing audience.

It was also an excellent way to get to know other cultures. Some of them were similar to ours; others were completely different, but they were all unique and worth knowing. We see the lives of people in other countries, we see what difficulties they have to face and we compare them with ours.

I was also hugely impressed by the variety in the schedule. It included lessons with Pompano students, where we could observe some aspects of American school, “Cadre Meetings”, where in small groups we were discussing and sharing our experiences, as well as “Cultural Showcase” – YouTube videos, music, sport and art performances of each country.

Further, I would like to describe an unforgettable meeting: One day the future will come. I found that theme attractive. It was discussed at the meeting with students of Florida Atlantic University. They were willingly sharing with us their experiences

and they provided us with comprehensive answers to questions that we had about studying in the USA.

Although I spent a fantastic week with all the participants of the Summit, I wish we had met in Florida. If it had not been for the coronavirus, we would have taken photos in Pompano School instead of taking screenshots on Microsoft Teams. However, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the principals and coordinators for organizing the International Summit, despite all circumstances and difficulties, beginning with class meetings and extending to different time zones. It is a great merit that we should appreciate. Now we are obliged to continue the tradition of the International Summit. As Mr. Hudson Thomas, Pompano’s principal, said, “we do this not because it is easy; we do this, because it is hard”. I couldn’t agree more – the fifth edition of the Summit taught us that, side-by-side, we can do everything we want.

I enjoyed the International Summit very much – being part of this event was an amazing experience which definitely broadens our horizons. If only I would get a chance to experience it once again in the future and meet all those awesome people in Pompano Beach High School. I am convinced that although the time is passing, they will always be as friendly and full of happiness as they were during the International Summit.

Hanna Wolanin



Maysia Ślusarczyk in Kraków’s traditional outfit with Colonel Gregory N. Johnson, the U.S. Army JROTC PBHS Tornado Battalion



With a visit to North Broward Preparatory School, IB School in Florida



Pompano Beach High School Summits' Memories

Photo Gallery

credits to PBHS



Global Online Aspiring Leaders for Sustainability

Beata Szaleniec, IBDP Year 1 Student

On March 20th, the Global Online Aspiring Leaders for Sustainability (GOALS) summit began. The whole event was based on learning and working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which were established in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly as a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all”.

The 17 SDGs are:

- GOAL 1: No Poverty
- GOAL 2: Zero Hunger
- GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being
- GOAL 4: Quality Education
- GOAL 5: Gender Equality
- GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality
- GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- GOAL 13: Climate Action
- GOAL 14: Life Below Water
- GOAL 15: Life on Land
- GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
- GOAL 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goal

During the summit, we (the delegates) were divided into 6 fictional countries: Pecunia, Mahi Isles, Prospos, NROB, Oolum, and Brondor. In this imaginary world, each of us served as a member of the country's government and worked towards maintaining/achieving four SDGs. Just like in reality, each group faced a myriad of challenges arising from global or domestic issues. Every day we faced multiple crises in our country groups and we worked together to solve them by passing legislation, introducing new taxes, or collaborating with a different country during the Domestic Discussion.

Each new day also came with a general theme, be it Poverty or Refugees, and the challenges were posed accordingly. At the end of each simulation, two countries would separately prepare a Resolution to solve the big issue concerning the whole fictional world, and then they would present it at the International Forum the next morning, where we would all discuss the ideas and vote on which one would be passed.

My experience with the summit has been truly life-changing. My country group (Brondor) has proved to consist of intelligent, supportive, and truly remarkable people from Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, India, Indonesia, France, Italy, and, of course, Poland. The first few hours of the Domestic Discussion were spent on getting to know each other and doing icebreakers prepared by our brilliant facilitators. I must admit, that I could've never hoped for a better team, and

I believe that I have made lifelong friends from all around the world.

I served as the Minister of Public Affairs for Brondor, which meant that I was in charge of maintaining peace between different parties involved in solving the crises. It wasn't always easy and, at times, I and my team felt completely hopeless, but after heated discussions, we would always come to an agreement.

Another incredible aspect of the summit was the Speakers' presentations at the beginning of each day. Bill Morose's speech was among the ones, which inspired me the most. Bill has run a business of his own for many years but shut it down to help people in Cambodia. It all started when, in 2003, Morose has heard a story of an ex-Khmer Rouge soldier, Aki Ra, who has been clearing landmines by hand for years. Morose decided to travel to Cambodia with his wife, and when he returned, he started a Landmine Relief Fund. Three years later, Bill and his wife moved to Cambodia to help locally by providing support for rural schools and providing food. I found this speech so inspiring since Bill and his wife completely abandoned their everyday life to help people in need. I believe that if there were more utterly selfless people like Bill Morose, the world would not look like it does right now. I truly aspire to reach a point in my life, where my actions can even remotely resemble those of Bill's.

The GOALS summit ended on the 24th of March. By then, I have learned possibly

more than I have my whole life. The moment I left the last Domestic Discussion, I knew I would miss every person I met during the conference because each and every one of them has changed my life for the better and has motivated me to keep fiercely changing the world. We have served as members of fictional governments now, but in a few years, if the people I met will in fact lead the world, it will truly be a place worth living, flourishing, and raising children in.





“One World. One Hope. One Future”

Wiktorja Czechowska, IBDP Year 1

Despite the indefinitely prolonging time in quarantine, our school has found a way to overcome those upsetting restrictions and offered students multiple international initiatives, which are free to participate in. Plans for the year 2020 included a trip to the United States for the Loudoun International Youth Leadership Summit. Unfortunately, the lockdown did not allow students from our school to participate in it personally. However, it did not stop them from taking part virtual way. A theme for this year was “One World. One Hope. One Future”, with the main focus being on the United Nations sustainable development goals. This event started on 20th March 2020 and continued for a year, ending with a few days' simulation called Global Online Aspiring Leaders for Sustainability - GOALS held from 20th to 24th March 2021. During those days, students followed a meetings schedule and virtually participated in many discussions and conferences. The aim of this experience was to focus on international collaboration, global citizenship and leadership. Additionally, to collect passionate people from various parts of the world, eager to work together and present new perspectives in order to introduce positive changes into the world.

Another event, conducted as a matter of the Loudoun International Youth Leadership Summit, was a meeting with the Broad Run High School from Virginia, United States. The main topic of this discussion was “Media bias”, where students also had the opportunity to ask some other

questions and get to know each other. The small community we have created allowed us to share some political and social views in a judgment-free environment. Each and every one of us had a voice when we wanted to participate. Our teachers, who dedicated their time to helping us plan and organize this wonderful meeting, were also leading the discussion. It was a great opportunity to see how, despite numerous differences between Poland and the US, the way the media works in both those countries is extremely similar. Additionally, we got to hear the perspective of US citizens on how the past elections were conducted. They introduced us to how it really looked like and how their media presented it. It allowed us to gain a different view and compare it with what we can see on television. On the other hand, we shared with them how the situation in Poland looks straight from the horse's mouth. It was fascinating to see that other people are also interested in media and politics around the world.

What is truly important is that, even in such challenging times as we live in right now, countries can unite to some extent and create something that inventive. This gives many people a sense of togetherness, which might be very helpful during the lockdown and quarantine. The ways, in which the internet allows us now to communicate, open many doors to international collaborations, which our school is always eager to take and use to the fullest.

Learning English through Drama – a Theatre Workshop with NY actors from “Mainstages”

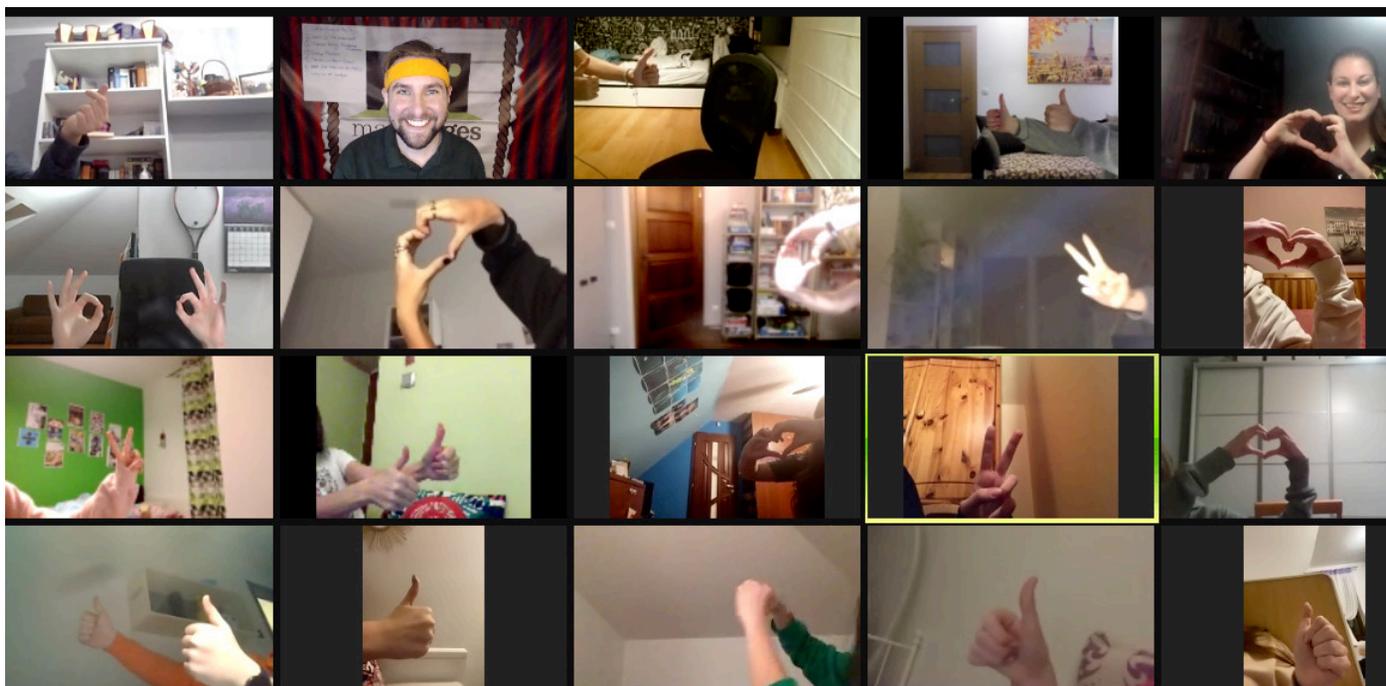
Krzysztof Mierzowski, pre-IBDP student

The pandemic has forced numerous events to be cancelled or postponed. Adapting to the pandemic conditions, many hosts took the path of moving these events online. This allowed the students of our high school to participate in a series of five workshops hosted by actors from New York. The workshops were focused on improvisation, character building, and language skill-building. Students were taught these skills through many theater games, conversations and various other activities.

I greatly enjoyed all the workshops. The games we had the opportunity to play really helped me with building self-confidence when it comes to public speaking, which certainly is a great skill to possess in the modern world. I absolutely loved how everyone expressed themselves and their creativity so freely while participating in an exercise consisting of dressing up as a chosen character and telling everyone about the person they were impersonating. The feeling of such freedom, when it comes to expression, was greatly connected to the truly amazing, friendly, positive and joyful atmosphere that prevailed during the workshop. This atmosphere allowed me not to be afraid and get stressed over mistakes I made while participating in the workshop.

As befits an acting workshop, we also got to learn a few techniques used by actors. These include the Sanford Meisner technique and GOAT sheets. Another thing I really liked, apart from the games played, was the concept of the “Song of the Day”. Each day the actors presented us with a different song coming from a musical. We always had a short chat about the background as well as the song itself. I really liked some of the songs, which encouraged me to dive deeper into the musicals they came from, which in turn allowed me to broaden my music taste and find some truly great songs, which made it into many of my playlists I listen to daily. During the end of each workshop, we got to ask the actors about America (any question we had as long as it was appropriate) and got to tell them about Poland.

I am really happy that I had the opportunity to take part in this set of workshops and I am sure that if I had a chance to do it again, I would take it without a doubt. It is also great to see that even during the conditions of the pandemic that we have never faced before, such workshops are still possible. I want to end this article by saying: “If you get a similar opportunity – seize it!”



Virtual Acting Workshop with Actors and Actresses from New York, organised thanks to the U.S. Consulate in Kraków

Learning English Through Drama by Mainstages

Mainstages, a New York City-based theater, educational, and entertainment company took our students through a series of acting experiences, which offered them an insight into the basics of what it takes to be a live stage actor. The five-day online workshops were organized by the U.S. Consulate in Kraków. The program was hosted by American professional performers and theater trainers with Roberts Tarushka as the main host. Each workshop was a chance to learn about the most popular American musicals with their lead songs and the process of character building for a play. Students were involved in improvisation, vocal, and characterization activities along with language boosting games. Please read what impressions the workshop left with our students.

Mrs Bogumiła Śpiechowicz, English teacher at VIII PALO

"In November, I had an opportunity to take a part in workshops with American actors who focus on theatre education and entertainment and work for Mainstages. There were two hosts – Bob and Sarah, they were meeting us on zoom for 5 days straight. After each one-hour session, we were getting an email with a summary of the previous meeting and preparation for the next one. So even though the meetings were taking place during our school days, we still had an opportunity to get ready for them and recall what we have done in the previous session.

At the first meeting, we got to know each other more, the hosts explained to us how our meetings are going to look like and they learned how to pronounce our names. Also, just like at the end of every other meeting we had a chance to ask them anything about the U.S. and also tell them anything interesting we wanted them to know about Poland. In the mail with a summary and preparation for the next day, the hosts were including the song of the day, which we were supposed to listen to before each session, so we could talk about it more and analyze it. We talked about songs like "Helpless" from Hamilton or "This is not over yet" from Parade. This activity taught me a lot about different musicals, also it encouraged me to research many of them. Each meeting started with an analysis of the song of the day, and then we had different kinds of warm-up activities, which were funny and entertaining, some of them were prepared with the usage of poems and in one we were practicing American English vowel sounds. That was followed up with some theatre activities such as filling up a GOTE sheet. It lets you analyze and understand any character more deeply. GOTE stands for Goals, Obstacles, Tactics, and Expectations and we could analyze any character of our choice. It was a truly inspiring experience, as it gave me a different perspective of understanding some of my favourite characters! We also had a few English activities which aimed to develop our English in a fun way. What I loved most about the workshops was that we weren't pressured to do anything and the hosts were always very positive. I'm glad I could take a part in this program, it was a fun experience in a safe and entertaining environment."

Lena Ebo, student of IBDP Year 1

"From the 16th to the 20th of November, students from our school participated in online acting workshops with actors from New York. Every workshop consisted of interactive exercises and games. One of my favorites was "Name and Motion" in which each person had to say their name and show a move of their choice. It was a great ice-breaker. Later we played "what do you have?". A game in which the hosts picked a color, and everyone had to instantly find an object of this color in their room. These games stood out for me because they let us be as creative as we wanted and brought a lot of laughter into our sessions. Apart from playing games, we also learned a lot of new vocabulary connected with acting and even got to act lines from our favorite movies. Also, every day, we discussed a previously chosen song from one of the worldwide-known musicals. At the end of each session, we asked the hosts anything we wanted to know about the United States and teach the actors something about Poland. I am really happy that I decided to participate in those workshops. It was an amazing experience that I will remember for a long time. "

Aleksandra Blaschke, student of IBDP Year 1

"When I am thinking about workshops with Sarah and Bob – actors from New York – I remember so many interesting activities we did. There was something nice for everybody. We were talking, we were learning about theatre and the United States, we got to know a lot of new stuff, for example, amazing songs from Broadway musicals. We were experienced how hard it is to show ourselves and I think everyone did a great job in that aspect.

But, above all, I remember breaking a certain barrier in me. I started talking in English, I started talking to the computer, which I hated before.

It was amazing that we could ask everything, we could share everything. At the final meetings even I began to feel comfortable with what I was saying - I stopped blocking myself because of incorrect forms. What made the biggest impression on me was that I started to feel alright with my emotions and it was not a problem showing them when I wanted to.

Workshops helped me a lot with my language skills. Now I feel more comfortable speaking English – I realized that people don't judge your every incorrect word. It helped me also with expressing my emotions, mainly being in front of a computer. I am thankful for these workshops, I hope to have many more opportunities like that one in the future."

Marysia Galos, student of VIII PALO Year 2

"It is incredibly hard to express my opinion about these workshops in few words. What I can say is that it was something wonderful and very needed during the pandemic. These workshops helped us forget about it and got us to spend a great time even if it was in front of the screen. I learned lots of tongue twisters, which helped me improve my pronunciation, I heard marvellous songs of the day, but I also opened up to new people. I feel much more confident thanks to that. We watched many musicals and funny videos, which made us laugh.

My favourite thing? I am not sure if I can choose one, I liked everything!

It was a great time with a lot of fun and a huge portion of knowledge. I will definitely sign up for other workshops to learn new skills, and maybe I will make my mind to become an actress. Who knows? Go there and see what you can learn!"

Nadia Moskała, student of VIII PALO Year 1

"The classes I participated were really cool and they were a very interesting experience. It was fun learning English by talking about dramas and playing games in English. Also, it was a chance for us to work with professionals, people to whom English was everyday life. We could talk about stuff, which we had no idea about before. We had an opportunity to get some knowledge about America and American traditions because at the end of each class there were activities called "ask American anything", and we had a chance to ask any question we wanted.

In conclusion, if the school happens to organize such workshops again, I would like to participate. I also recommend them to you because you can learn a lot. And it's not just about learning English, but about experiences and other interesting information that can be learned from people from other countries."

Antek Bigaj, student of VIII PALO Year 1



Educational Project - cooperation with Wayne Community College in North Carolina

Helena Brzozowska, VIII PALO student

In March and April 2021 we had the amazing opportunity to cooperate with students and teachers from the Wayne Community College in North Carolina for several engaging events where we shared, exchanged and discussed valuable knowledge on various topics.

The first of those events, "HERstories in Cracow" was a live storytelling session with Ms Alicja Ziolo, a Cracow storyteller who took us through the extraordinary fates of various women who were born in the city and whose deeds were of great importance to people of Cracow, Poland and worldwide. From the legendary princess Wanda and a student named Nawojka, through the first female students of the Jagiellonian University, Stanisława Dowgiałłówna, Janina Kosmowska, Jadwiga Sikorska, to Sara Schenirer, a brave and bold educator and Maria Orwid, whose efforts in the field of psychiatry helped many survivors

of the Holocaust with their trauma and PTSD. The presentation was enhanced by breathtaking drone footage of Cracow which made a great impression on both the Polish and the American students who all spoke very highly of the motion picture as well as the presentation in general and expressed interest in further improving their knowledge of the topic.

As someone who has lived her entire life in Cracow, I was surprised by how little I knew about the extraordinary women of my city. As it turns out, this is not a rare case - in a city where the vast majority of streets is named after men, it's not surprising that so few people know about the ladies who have done so much for the benefit of others. Ms. Ziolo therefore emphasised the importance of street names and is herself making efforts to rename streets in the city after women in order to familiarise citizens with who they were.

The second part of the project was a presentation conducted by students from the Wayne Community College which touched upon the topic of media literacy. The students presented us with common sources of manipulation, educated us on the topics of misinformation, disinformation and various types of cognitive biases which one may encounter while browsing the internet. They also provided many simple and useful techniques for recognising and combating such biases. We were shown how to spot fake reviews and social media accounts. The students from Wayne Community College also presented several tools which one can use to check the credibility of an image, such as FotoForensics.com, a website where you can train yourself in spotting edited images for free.

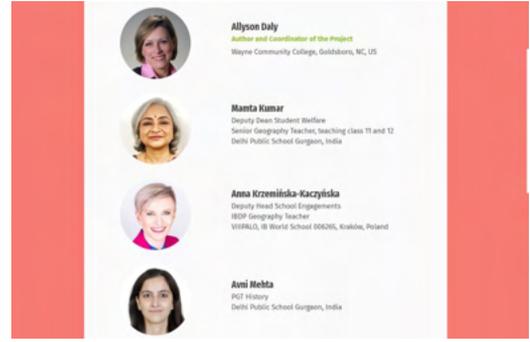
The presentation was followed by a short discussion during which it was pointed out





"Refugees are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, children, with the same hopes and ambitions as us—except that a twist of fate has bound their lives to a global refugee crisis on an unprecedented scale."

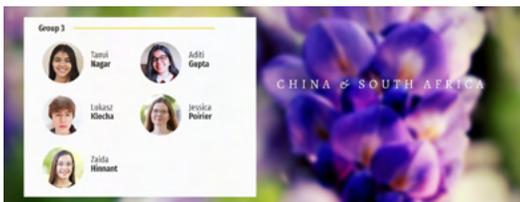
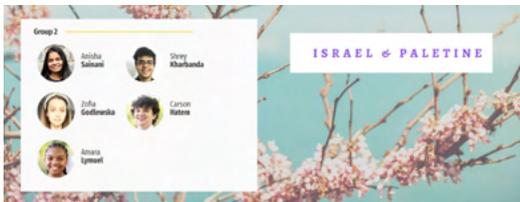
—Khaled Hossaini, UNHCR goodwill ambassador.



how important it is to always verify the information we find on the internet and how easy it is to be tricked by people who spread misinformation or disinformation.

Personally I believe such a presentation was much needed, especially that now, in the midst of the pandemic, more people spread false information, be it purposely or not, about the coronavirus or the vaccines. As a result, thousands start to believe conspiracy theories that in this situation may be extremely harmful. As I see it, educating people on such topics and presenting to them various techniques of verifying information is indeed crucial now that we have so many sources providing us with information which, as it turns out, isn't always true.

Group 2, consisting of Anisha Sainani, Shrey Kharbanda, Zofia Godlewska, Carson Hatem and Amara Lymuel, raises the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and how it impacts migration between the two countries, explaining what caused the conflict and its history, the migration laws and many other problems. The students also told and discussed the stories of children, families, an elderly citizen and an expectant mother who all migrated due to the conflict. The group made a comparison between migrants and refugees to better understand the project as well.



Group 3, consisting of Tanvi Nagar, Aditi Gupta, Łukasz Klecha, Jessica Poirer and Zaida Hinnant, dedicated their podcast to various struggles of migrants in South Africa, including cultural differences and racial tension. The group also incorporated into their podcast the real life response of a native South African and Chinese migrants in South Africa.



Another part of the project was a three-way cooperation with students from the USA and India, who worked with students of the IBDP Geography course. Ms. Mamta Kanti Kumar and Ms. Anvi Mehta from Delhi Public School Gurgaon in India, as well as Ms. Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska from WIIPALO, IB World School 006265 participated in the project, called "The Research in the Humanities Project: Investigations in Global Migration" which was initiated and coordinated by Ms. Allyson Daly from the Wayne Community College and granted by Foundation Wayne Community College. WordLINK Foundation also provided support with organising the cooperation.

Group 4, consisting of Kudrat Mehta, Paarth Arya, Olivia Andrews, Liana Chavez-Estrada and Ashlan Hinnant, traced the migration from Syria to Germany, answering various questions regarding its causes and problems of and connecting those with critical analysis of push and pull factors that affect migration.



The project consisted of two parts. Firstly, the students took the Gallup skill test, based on which they were assembled into groups. Those groups then worked on assignments related to Migration and Refugees, for which they conducted academic research and then shared their findings and thoughts in podcasts which covered the phenomenons of migration between specific countries.

Group 5, consisting of Jyotika Malhotra, Krish Khara, Aleksandra Jodłowska, Katie Wagner and Bryson Parks, gave an overview of what exactly migration is and provided insight into its impact on India and Bangladesh, introducing already existing migration laws and potential solutions to a variety of problems related to migration. The podcast also involves a Bangladeshi immigrant and shows the commemoration of immigrants' problems in filmography.

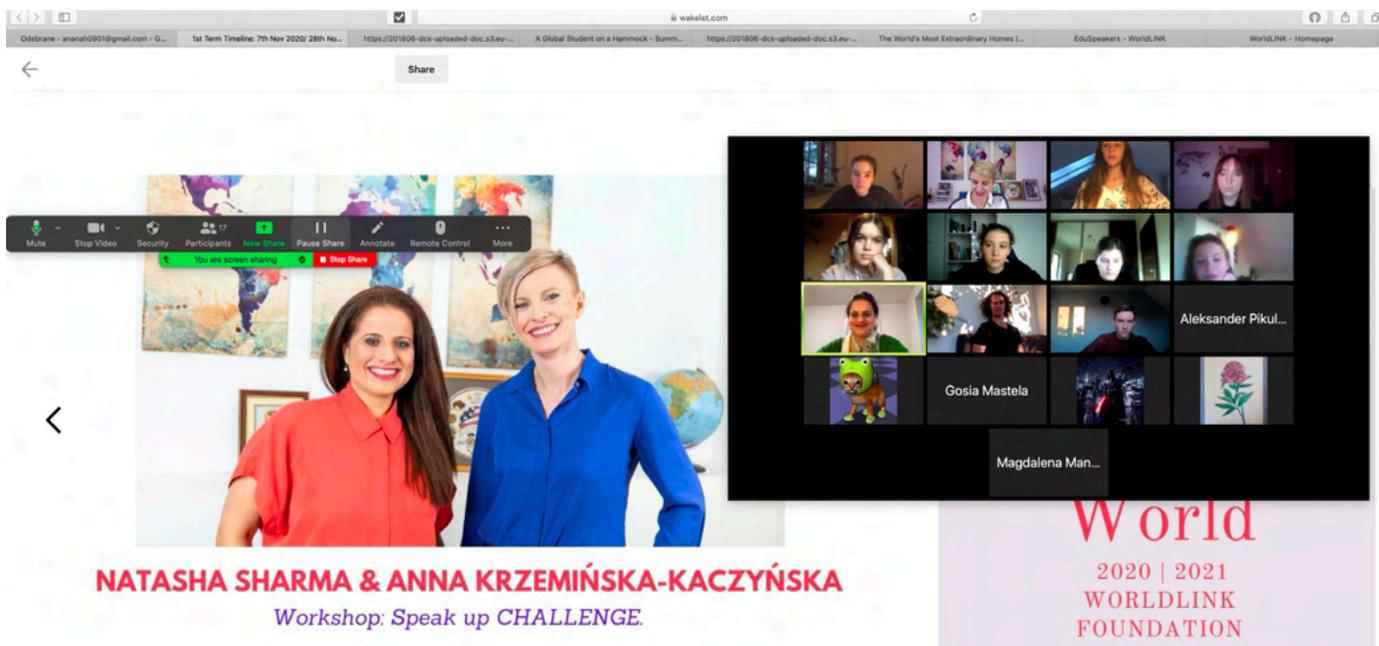


The whole project was recapitulated in April.

Group 1, consisting of Mohak Chanda, Pranav Bhardwaj, Olga Oracz, Fred Tarpley and AnitaMarie Keys, covered the topic of migrations between Mexico and the United States, elaborating on the factors and causes that lead to migration as well as stories of people who migrated and artwork that they made.

Landing page of the Project and Students' podcasts are available at <https://www.worldlink.pl/research-in-the-humanities-investigations-in-global-migration/>





YOUTH IN VUCA WORLD. SELF-DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS in English within English Teaching Program in Poland

By Wiktoria Biegańska, participant of Youth in VUCA World Program edition 2020/2021

Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous, that over the COVID-19 disruption evaluated into Visionary, Understanding, Clarity and Clarity or VUCA for short. Surely, growing up and shaping your personality in a world described by these characteristics is not the easiest task to do. That is when "Youth in VUCA world" leadership project, organized and realized by WorldLINK Foundation, within a Small Grant by English Teaching Program in Poland and supported financially by NIDA & Polish-American Freedom Foundation, makes its move. Students participating in the workshops have been meeting every third Saturday for the past nine months. The aim was to work on students' English skills. The workshops on multiple themes have been created to help aspiring youth acquire necessary skills, to one day be better versions of themselves. The participants were from across Wieliczka Community as well as the students from across Poland, recommended by the Ambassadors of ET Program in Poland. The author and coordinator of the project was Mrs. Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska, who is also the Ambassador of English Teaching Program in Poland and an experienced project coordinator. I was lucky enough to get a chance to attend these workshops and my experience was totally positive.

Since the workshops were conducted in English, it was a perfect way for participants to hone their English language skills. I personally find this way of learning the language very helpful. We were given a safe space to speak our minds, with a use of "praise in public, criticize in private" rule. By listening, recording videos and noticing new

words in context, while focusing rather on the content than the language itself, we were naturally making progress in vocabulary and everyday use of English, at our own pace. It is called "a content-based learning method".

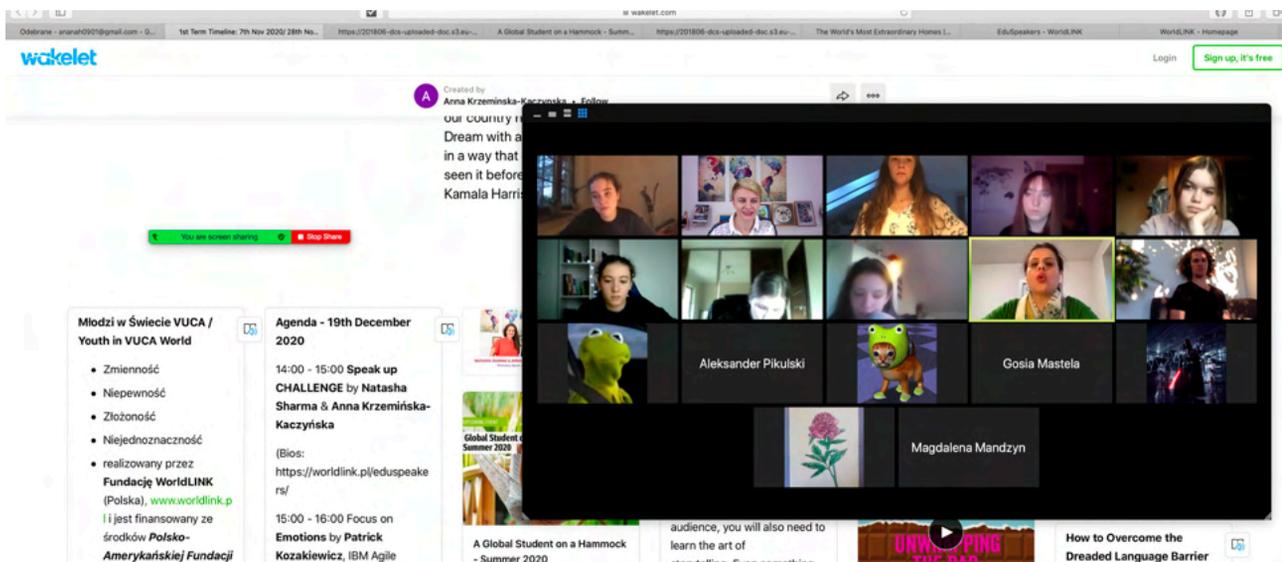
First of the themes included was mindfulness, and the workshop was conducted by Mr. Patrick Kozakiewicz (IBM Agile Thought Leader, Mindfulness Program Lead, Design Thinking Coach). During the workshop, we learned about recognizing and controlling emotions and thoughts. By doing multiple exercises, we saw what distracts us, what makes us feel in a certain way and as a result we managed to start working on these issues. We were told to notice the changes in our body, mind and life and welcome them, before consciously letting them go and most importantly, to keep our attention on a leash, and gently bring it back when it starts to float around.

Staying human in the digital era, was the second theme, presented by Mrs. Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska (CEO & Founder of WorldLINK Foundation, Deputy Head of School Engagements, IBDP Geography Teacher). During her workshop, we tried to think about the impact today's VUCA world has on us, and our personal growth and the Earth's environment. We analyzed all sorts of data from numbers indicating the amount of waste that we generate which ends in the landfills or in other places in the world to numbers indicating the amount of time people spend online, and problems caused by these. We brought some light to our own personal growth. Another crucial theme was a global education that brought us lots

of life-worthy discussing wicked questions. What we learned was to be motivated by our own desires and dreams rather than by somebody else's expectations or mandates. The latter instead of building us up, brings us down, making us be less 'us,' less authentic!

Mr. Don Allen (the artistic director of English Touring Theatre Company in Kraków), in the third workshop, made us pay attention to what is really important when it comes to public speaking: 3xP. It stands for practice, practice and most importantly practice. You need to be good at giving speeches and making presentations to actually make someone remember what you are saying, but to achieve that, you need to be very well prepared. Not only is careful research necessary (which it definitely is), but you also need to know the place where you will be presenting; you have to prepare answers for some questions most likely to arise; and last but not least, you should try to make a good contact with the audience. Gestures and conscious control over the tone of our voice might help with that, but it is also crucial to make yourself appear human! Make it funny, make it surprising! An unusual, maybe humor-fueled start, as well as a such an ending, combined with a catchy, clear message in-between makes a presentation memorable and attention-drawing!

The fourth theme, with Mrs. Alicja Ziolo (Cracow storyteller and a licensed guide), was connected with getting to know the place we live in and making an effort to do something good. When the workshop started, Valentine's Day was on its way,



so we were introduced to some fascinating love stories that happened in Cracow and its surroundings in the past; the last one of them taking place in a concentration camp during the Holocaust. Then, we were given homework to do some research about Jewish communities in our home cities, and to record a video presentation about our findings. This way we got a chance to learn something about a place we thought we knew. During the workshop, we were told some inspirational stories of regular people creating initiatives commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. It was an experience that has shown me that you do not need to be many to do something for many.

Mrs. Konstancja Szymańska's (Assistant Director for International Recruitment, Partnerships and Engagement at Intensive English Institute, Florida Atlantic University, USA) workshops were about foreign language anxiety, getting involved with your community and building global leadership platforms. We took a personality test to better understand and accept ourselves. We tried to find things to improve within our community, and to become proactive. We also learned about the concept of foreign language anxiety, and how it holds

us back and how being aware of this problem we can start working on it. English not being our native language, sometimes makes us ask ourselves: "What if I forget a word? What if I have a weird accent? What if, what if...". It is normal to be afraid of being judged. What should be done, is following two rules: feel the fear and do it anyway, and praise in public, criticize in private. The first one is for our sake: if we do not speak up, we surely will not be criticized, but we will not achieve anything either. The second one is for others' sake: if you follow this rule, you will avoid embarrassing other people, while still giving them feedback, in a gentle way.

The major life lessons I took out of this project are as follows: 1. Evolving does not mean changing who you are, but coming home to yourself. 2. Instead of just reacting to what others tell you is right, be proactive and do what you feel is right. I also think this project has made me see some aspects of myself, I have not been aware of before. I believe that these workshops have helped me become a better version of myself, because as I learned during the workshops: noticing the problem is the first step to solving it.

Why mindfulness

A [new systematic review](#) in *Brain and Cognition* found 30 relevant studies that used MRI or fMRI brain imaging to look at the effects of mindfulness training on brain structure and function, including 13 randomly controlled trials.

Associated brain changes, in terms of activity levels and volume and connectivity changes, have been reported in the:

- prefrontal cortex (a region associated with conscious decision making and emotional regulation and other functions),
- the insula (which represents internal body states among other things),
- the cingulate cortex (decision making),



Photos from shooting the music video clips in Kraków

Indo-Polish Musical 2021

Olivia Andrews, PDP

As the American singer-songwriter, activist, and humanitarian John Denver said, “Music does bring people together. It allows us to experience the same emotions. People everywhere are the same in heart and spirit. No matter what language we speak and what colour we are, music proves: We are the same.” This quote was used in the closing speech during the conference at the end of the project. Students from our school and Delhi Public School in Gurgaon, India had collaborated for seven weeks in order to create the: “Notes of Harmony – In Harmony with diversity, Indo-Polish Cultural Exchange 2021”. It was created for the UN World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development May 2021.

The first step to creating the project was brainstorming and matching songs to the five categories given: Timeless Song, Folk Song, Patriotic Song, Instrumental Piece and Disney Song. During the first practice, the lead singers “tried-out” different songs under the leadership of Ms. Justyna Witek and Mrs. Anna Kubica. Once the songs were assigned to each artist, the singers and musicians were sent home to practise. A few weeks later we were invited to the recording studio. It was a first-time experience for some of us, so we were nervous, but the teachers made sure we felt comfortable and helped us get ready. One by one the students’ songs were recorded with sound and video. After a long stressful day, we all agreed it was a fantastic experience and as a group we definitely became closer. Our last checkpoint were the video clips.

We really enjoyed the whole process of filming. We danced, laughed and lip-synced around beautiful places in Kraków. We had professional camera men recording us, fun accessories and diverse scenery. We all got to shine and explore our artistic side once again in the company of people we shared a similar passion with – music.

During the entirety of the project, students and teachers from both schools interacted, chatted and shared ideas which helped us get to know the students from India. The whole collaboration was concluded with a conference on the 31st May. We were able to enjoy the music and culture of India and interact with our peers face to face, or, shall I say, camera to camera.

This experience allowed us to come together whilst enjoying ourselves and deepening our passions that also pulled us out of the slumber of COVID-19 and online schooling. Finally, I would like to thank especially Ms. Anna Krzemińska-Kaczyńska for guiding and leading us throughout the project. We would also like to thank Delhi Public School for the collaboration and sharing a piece of their culture in such a unique way. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, especially affecting students in India, it was not easy, but it was all worth it in the end. We hope other pupils can take part in similar future projects and enjoy them as much as we did. The students taking part in the initiative all said it had been a one-of-a-kind experience that they will look back on it with a warm smile.



Landing page of the Indo-Polish Musical with MP4 files:

<https://worldlink.pl/indo-polish-music-project/>



Encounters with Literature – „Czytnik Club”

Robert Kossowski, IBDP 2



One of the extra-curricular activities that our school is organizing in order to educate students in a broader way is “Czytnik Club”. It is run by teachers who on a daily basis teach Polish language, Ms. Z. Wojtusik and Mr. Adler. The general idea behind this venture is that students and teachers who are interested in a particular book gather together in order to discuss themes and the narrative of a particular title. That said, the title of the book is established around a month before the meeting so that every person who is interested in taking part in the discussion, can find some time to read the chosen work.

Of course, when the pandemic broke out and the school moved online, the meetings were reorganized and were mainly conducted on

Zoom. Unfortunately, as we all know, an online meeting will never have the same atmosphere as a face to face gathering. Nonetheless, positive and friendly climate still prevails in the meetings.

I strongly encourage you to take part in such a meeting, since the books which are discussed are carefully chosen to be interesting for each student and they are written by both Polish and foreign authors. The following books have been discussed by students this school year: Zyta Rudzka, “Tkanki miękkie”, Marian Pankowski, “Pątnicy z Macierzyzny”, Jacek Dukaj, “Katedra”, Wit Szostak, “Cudze słowa”, Wiktor Paskow, “Ballada o lutniku”, Colson Whitehead, “The Nickel Boys”, Denis Johnson, “Train Dreams”, Andi Watson, “The Book Tour”.



“Take Off Shackles of Beauty” Project

Zwolnieni z Teorii Foundation, what is it?

Zwolnieni z Teorii is a contest initiated for the purpose of creating and executing a social project. A social project is any sort of initiative, which changes the world for the better. It can concern culture, sports, new technologies, your city, art, or simply anything you are passionate about. The contest brings together like-minded people who are focused on supporting those around them. The contest is organised in a way that allows everyone participate. The Zwolnieni z Teorii platform additionally offers various extra resources, such as announcements about opportunities to partner up with multinational companies. From the very beginning, every participating group also gets to work alongside a mentor, who helps the group in case of any problems and serves as a “guide” throughout the contest.

What is our Project about?

Our project is called “Zdejmij Kajdany Piękna.” We want to show how much beauty we cannot admire because of blindfolds imposed on us by social norms. The social issue we noticed was body shaming. We want to normalise the physical appearance that does not fit in with the established canons of beauty. We want to show that each of us is dazzling, regardless of silhouette, skin colour, or hair colour. Body shaming is a phenomenon deeply rooted in contemporary pop culture that sets fictional canons of beauty. An established standard of beauty and body shaming can lead to eating disorders, lack of self-confidence, and very poor mental well-being. Women most often fall victim to body shaming.

Our Reflections:

What did we do in our project? Social projects are very complicated and require performing many different tasks. The hardest one, in my opinion, was acquiring partners. That could be the effect of the pandemic, which prevented us from meeting in-person with company representatives. It also caused losses in companies' budgets. However, the conversations with them were much less stressful than I expected. Every company representative was trying to help, and usually, they offer to help us in a year because of lack of money now.

The task I enjoyed throughout our project was conducting interviews. Before the first one, I was extremely anxious because I have never done it before. Nonetheless, together with Beata, we prepared a list of questions that allowed us to stay calm during the interview. While conducting, it turned out that it was much more comfortable than I thought. We had to be focused the whole time to make the conversation flow, as only asking questions would make it dry. It was great practice, and as a result of it, I wasn't stressed before the second interview.

In general, I think participating in this project was a great learning experience. We did so many more things necessary to make it possible, but it was the best type of CAS we could choose.

-Julia Jaroszek

During our project, I was responsible for finding the partners for our project. In the begging it was the biggest challenge during our whole project. I had to write emails to sponsors. It was a challenge because not many companies want to patronise small projects involving teenagers. Eventually, we had to find patrons through connections. We got sponsorship from our families and friends. In Post and some other companies are our sponsors. From that category, we got the maximum amount of points. Also, I took part in one of the interview that we are conducting on our Instagram. At first, I was very stressed about that interview, and I was afraid of speaking and asking questions. But then I just relaxed, and I was able to do the interview. Our project requires a lot of commitment and the ability to arrange events in time. I think all of us will get something out of this project. Above all, this project taught me patience and perseverance. After all these obstacles, we made it, and I hope to come to an end. This project is essential for me because I see that this project's engagement helps me in personal development.

-Wiktoria Brzoska

My experience with developing our project has been incredibly valuable. Even though our main objective was to change people's outlook on beauty, I believe we learned many things about ourselves. For me, the most educational experience was looking for sponsors. I've called a myriad of different companies asking them for help. If they agreed to consider our proposal, I would e-mail them with a brochure about our project attached. I've designed the brochure myself as well and translated it to English, so it could be sent to non-Polish companies. During pandemics, not many firms were keen to help us financially, since (as they explicitly told me), they didn't have a penny to lose. Some companies didn't even pick up the phone, but some did and even though the process was long, frustrating at times, and definitely stressful, it has taught me how to formally introduce an idea to a business, and since I want to study that field in a year, I found it to be particularly useful.

-Beata Szaleniec

Hello! My name is Emilia, and I am responsible for running an Instagram account of our project. The main task of mine is writing blog posts and creating aesthetically pleasing graphics that match one another. Every two weeks, our group had a meeting to discuss plans for the upcoming month. During the meeting, we brainstormed ideas for new posts and digital graphics. It helped us to organise our work for the next few weeks.

After organising the ideas for future posts, I put the plan to action. Usually, once a week, I researched a particular problem faced by women. When I collected all the information needed, I began creating a series of beautiful posts. It is said not to judge a book by its cover, but the first thing we paid attention to was the cover. That was the reason why I spent so much time designing them. I paid attention to every detail. The most significant ingredient to run a successful Instagram account is the colour pallet. In the beginning, we decided to choose shades of pink, beige and brown to match the skin tones. I believe we made the right decision since the colour pink reminds us of women empowerment, for example. Another factor that I always considered while designing the posts was the font. The texts needed to be clear and eye-catching. As I wrote before, the devil is in the details.

Once I designed and uploaded a post, my second duty was to do my best to reach as many people as possible. To "remind" our followers that a new post has been uploaded, I created aesthetically pleasing Instagram stories with few words about a problem we were covering at that moment. Every team member also shared their post on their Instagram story to extend the reach.

During this service, I have noticed significant self-growth. I learned how to work under pressure as well as how to cope with stress. I considered participating in the "Zwolnieni z Teorii" contest, as a valuable experience rich in knowledge about effective marketing, running a social project and management.

-Emilia Szostak

To take part in the Zwolnieni z Teorii competition truly takes more will than one would expect. If one finds themselves going into this project and looking at it as just one of those school competitions, they shouldn't expect to go far. I think what the educational foundation is a great opportunity for the students that attend schools all over the country to acquire new, and at that, very useful experiences. However, I believe it's important one signs up with the right motivation and mindset.

With the time-consuming and demanding IB programme, it has been quite the challenge to sometimes keep up with working on the project. I personally was responsible for searching for and contacting sponsors, and later focused on creating visual content for our Instagram and Facebook profiles. Those profiles are where most of our project takes action.

I recall being very stressed making the first calls to the companies and public figures we were potentially interested in working with. It was something I've never done before, and remember I took a very long time to prepare and keep the calls short and professional. While through the first calls I sat with notes in hand sweating, all run smoothly, and making one call after the other I gained more confidence.

As said my main focus, through the project was creating the graphics that were to represent our project. I cooperated with Aleksandra Ptak, us two as well as the rest of the team created themes and evaluated them into visual ideas. While some concepts were harder to portray visually, for others ideas popped into our heads straight away. At the beginning of the project I was also new to digital art, which was quite the challenge but also allowed room for a lot of progress through the project.

Hence, I believe the idea of completing a project such as this is very enriching. While it, as stated before, is very time-consuming, it allows contact with a very adult like world. Where we students are in charge, we have to organise our time and take initiative.

-Maria Gemel

Taking part in a "Zwolnieni z Teorii" project most definitely requires a great amount of work. However, proper teamwork and efficient assignment of individual roles can certainly make it manageable. For the past few months, my main task was to design graphics for the project's social media. Every couple of weeks we would upload a post concerning the theme of current beauty standards and their implications. Each time, I tried my best to accurately portray the specific topic in my design. Doing so was a completely new experience. It gave me an opportunity to explore a new, simplistic art style and become more comfortable posting my work online. At the very beginning of the project, I felt slightly hesitant about the designs. However, as the time passed, I gained more confidence in what I was creating and tried to improve the drawings so that they are more visually interesting. I believe that adding illustrations to our social media posts makes them way more engaging for the viewer. A series of simple, cohesive designs gives an idea of what the project's purpose is. At the end of the day, bringing people's attention to the problematic beauty standards and the importance of self-acceptance is what our initiative is all about!

-Aleksandra Ptak

I decided to enter the competition "Zwolnieni z Teorii" last year. My group formed the project "Zdejmujemy Kajdany Piękna" in response to this. The aim of this project is to assist women who are self-conscious about their appearance due to unrealistic beauty expectations. In my opinion, we should normalize the physical appearance of the women which does not fit into the established canons of beauty and also to show that each of us is stunning regardless of our figure, skin colour or hair. In the project I was in charge of organizing interviews, I myself had the pleasure of conducting an interview with Ms. Baranowska. I was also in charge of the project's social media account (Facebook), which reached several hundred observers and likes. During this time, I also managed to help in writing an article about our project for a youth newspaper. During the implementation of the project, we encountered many difficulties, the biggest of which was COVID-19, due to which some planned activities and events could not take place. Among other things, we planned a photo series promoting various canons of beauty, and then an exhibition of photos in the hall belonging to the AGH University. The primary purpose of this event was to show diversity in the beauty. However, due to the pandemic, we were not able to carry out this plan, because bringing models or now organizing any public event at this time is impossible, due to the prevailing restrictions. A hard part of the project was to contact influencers, celebrities or famous people, despite hundreds of e-mails sent, we received a response to only a few of them, and in most replies people wrote that because of COVID-19 they do not have time to participate in our project. With partners, sponsors the situation was similar, because many companies have already suffered financial losses due to the virus, so they are not able to support our project. I did not expect that this would be such a problem. Also, during the interview which I had the pleasure to conduct, I encountered many difficulties, mostly technical problems related to the platform on which the live interview was held. However, during the project I also had the opportunity to learn many important things, such as not to give up; even if we did not receive any answers, we continued to write to other people. I also learned that even despite obstacles such as a pandemic nothing is impossible, instead of an exhibition we managed to organise many inspiring interviews, and we are also planning workshops with primary school and elementary schools children, because we think that changing attitudes should start at an early age. The skills I acquired during the process of creating our project are marketing, organization skills and consistency.

-Patrvcia laskiernv



Open Eyes Economy Summit 2020

Kornelia Reinfuss, IB DP2B

On the 17th of November, we had the opportunity to take part in the fifth edition of the Open Eyes Economy Summit (OEES). Courtesy of our teacher, Miss Urszula Drzewiecka, we were able to attend the congress for free on the dedicated online platform and had a chance to spend the entire day listening to both Polish and foreign entrepreneurs, professors and leaders conversing on a range of topics.

The unusual circumstances that have struck the world this year not only meant the congress had to take a different form; they also gave a new theme to the entire first block of the program. The opening speakers had a chance to talk about the post-pandemic economy and whether or not it would go back to the way it was in the early 2020. What I think solidified my expectations towards the OEES, was the short opening speech delivered to the audience by Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, who asked the question: "Why would we want to go back to the pre-pandemic world? A world of uneven wealth distribution, global warming and severe unemployment." It was something I greatly appreciated, as it convinced me that OEES was a place where people looked forward, developed ideas for the future and kept their minds open to new ideas. The speakers at the Artificial Intelligence panel, which I went to visit in the afternoon, further convinced me of this, as, contrary to the public discourse, they all discussed artificial intelligence as a thing already present in the society and would talk about its further developments instead of being hung up on 'today'.

The topics covered at the summit ranged from the economy and business to culture, sociology and politics. Among these, my favorite speech of the day was the one given by Michael Ignatieff. The Canadian speaker addressed the topic of political divisions in the society, which is a highly relevant issue not just worldwide, or in countries such as the USA, but especially in Poland. In the current political climate, many people are despairing over just how divided the Polish nation has become. Mr. Ignatieff suggested that divisions and differences are not something undesirable, pointing out that aggressive calls to unity are something that often accompanies ideology-based political systems that do not tolerate any differences in the societies they rule over. Differences are a natural result of the freedom of speech and expression, while unity creates a far stronger pressure for conformity. And as of political differences interfering in day-to-day human contact, Mr. Ignatieff said:

'Politics cannot define us.' We should be beyond politics. It is not something that should define our interactions with the world and interfere with our daily lives. As a person with a deep dislike of politics, I found this talk quite insightful and refreshing.

Unfortunately, as the afternoon blocks rolled out, the website where the congress was taking place started experiencing some technical difficulties and it became increasingly difficult to follow the speakers who, at times, were inaudible. At first, the issues were not overwhelming, but later on they became a nuisance.

Overall, I must say that the OEES was an interesting experience. The issues covered were not highly technical, that is true. However, that stems directly from the overall theme of the congress: it is accessible to everyone, even with no prior technical knowledge. As a result, the material presented had to be somewhat generalized and not fully in-depth. I think it was wonderful to have the opportunity to take part in this interesting gathering and witness the dialogue between people from various walks of life.



OEES Reflection

Bartosz Turlej, IBDP Year 2 student

Although OEES offered plenty of interesting lectures, interviews and meetings to watch, due to the form of the event, it was unfortunately impossible to attend all of them as they took place at the same time. Thus, after the welcoming introduction, I moved to the 'FIRMA-IDEA' section and spent almost the entire time there.

One of the main topics presented was the branch of Artificial Intelligence called 'machine learning' (M.L.). This subset of AI deals with something that, to a large extent, still differentiates us from computers - the ability to learn new skills. M.L. aims for the machines to learn from and make their own 'wise' decisions based on data, patterns, common behaviours, and rules. This may sound quite like a concept belonging to a distant future, but actually, we come across different forms of machine learning every day. For example, every targeted ad, that shows something one had recently searched for, pop-ups due to algorithms that 'concluded' that one is probably interested in a particular product. Other things like virtual personal assistants, online suggestions, recommendations (e.g. on streaming platforms like Spotify, Netflix) or fraud detection in crime investigation area are also good examples. Such forms of machine learning have been present for many years now; however, dealing with larger amounts of data in a shorter time and with decreasing involvement of humans is the current goal for engineers. As exhilarating as it sounds, there is one major concern. Presumably, the ultimate form of AI machine would be something that could at least measure up to a human being, it is difficult not to be concerned about our safety. Even if the machines would be designed in such a way that despite their excellent intelligence, we would still be able to control them (to some extent), they will probably replace humans in a vast number of jobs as they would be more efficient, easier to manage, and in the long term, probably cheaper. Obviously, while some jobs disappear, new ones are created; however, I am not sure if those intelligent machines won't disturb the balance by replacing a majority of people -causing something that could be considered a global unemployment crisis.

Therefore, we can see another example of technological progress, an advancement that on the one hand, can bring incredible new opportunities and massive changes to our modern world, but, on the other hand, not all of those changes will necessarily be positive. I am a person that prioritizes advancement, and this case is no exception, though every action should be thoughtful, taken with a decent amount of responsibility and care. Unless we do that, what awaits is the future full of regrets.

IB Matters



An interview about the IB program with an IB graduate, Piotr Sławęcki

Helena Mactier, pre-IBDP student

My name is Helena Mactier, and I'm a first-year student at PALO in the pre-IBDP program. I interviewed Piotrek Sławęcki, who graduated from the PALO IB program in 2018, and is now a student at the AGH University of Science and Technology in the computer science, electronics and telecommunication department. My aim was to find out more about IB, and how it can change one's university experience.

Why did you pick IBDP, and why did you pick VIIIIPALO over other schools?

I attended PGA (Prywatne Gimnazjum Akademickie), as my middle school, and having comparison to a public primary school, I felt that the overall atmosphere and approach to teaching are very positive and effective, which made me realize that VIIIIPALO is a natural next step on my path. I'd be lying if I said that I hadn't been thinking about other schools, primarily the famous VLO, especially considering my interests in computer science and related fields, VLO's algorithmics-focused class, etc.. However, I saw the IB as a better opportunity to grow and develop in many aspects absent in the Polish high-school education program and the final exam.

How did you become interested in what you're doing right now, and how did the IB program affect these interests?

I've been interested in computer science, physics and science in general for most of

my life, an interest which emerged from a child's curiosity, which continues to pave the path to my future. Ever since I was a little kid, I have loved experimenting, forming creative, and, in most cases absurd, hypotheses, and then testing them to see if the outcomes met my expectations. The IB fueled said interests further, especially through its extensive approach, with academic-level lab reports, exploration and research papers, and so on, showing "the right way" to approach them.

Did IB help you when you were trying to get to university? Would it have been the same if you had taken the Polish final exam?

In my particular case, the IB gave me a significant benefit. The AGH University of Science and Technology seems to set great store by (or at least used to) the IB program. Getting a 4 as the final grade for Mathematics HL (before the syllabus change, which introduced Math's AA/AI) would result back then in receiving the

absolute maximum of recruitment points, allowing an easy way in and full freedom of choice. Getting a 7 in Physics HL and 6 in Maths HL further cemented this opportunity and allowed me to enroll in my currently pursued degree program. Based on my friends' testimonies, I'd say that this would have been much harder to accomplish through the Polish final exam program. However, there is no simple answer to that question. There are so many differences that one would have to live twice and choose two different paths to be able to answer it reliably.

Do you personally think it was worth it to take the IB program? In hindsight, would you choose the same path?

I do, definitely. If I were given the choice once more, I would not hesitate to choose the IB again. Maths HL and Physics HL gave me some insight into topics covered during the first year of my degree, which made the first two semesters a lot easier to endure, and enabled me to focus on my interests, join the AGH Space Systems students' association, etc. Although still not perfect, my proficiency in English increased significantly throughout my years at PALO. I think that the constant use of the English language, the familiarity with proper scientific research and writing, and the interdisciplinary balance, achieved by the IB program enables students to focus on their selected path (the HLs), while still learning other interesting and exciting things through other subjects distributed between different groups. These are the most important aspects of the IB, or at least the ones which influenced my life the most.

Did you know which subjects you wanted for your IB exam at the very beginning, or did you choose them later? If later, when did you choose them?

I knew that Maths HL, Physics HL and English B HL would be my HL's from the very beginning, even before I joined the program. As for the SL's, unfortunately, computer science wasn't part of VIIPALO's offer at the time when I was joining the program, or I would obviously have chosen it. During pre-IBDP year, I decided that History, Economics and Polish A was the combination of SLs which interested me the most, and I went with that. I have to say that I have never regretted this decision, as I learned a lot, and enjoyed it all the way through.



Was it harder to get into a Polish university after the IB than it would have been with the Polish final exam?

As I have mentioned before, I think the IB gave me a significant head-start in terms of what I learned prior to beginning my university education. Language differences were not a problem, if anything, being used to doing all of the research using English sources is a major benefit, especially in STEM-related fields. I think the IB is better at preparing students for university, especially by putting a large emphasis on doing lots of independent research, distinguishing good sources from bad and unreliable ones, etc.

Do you think that the IB program is harder than other programs?

It is a challenging journey, for certain. From my perspective, I would say that it is harder. However, my knowledge of the other programs is based only on my friends' information. The programs are different, and the choice between them should not mean answering a question of which one is easier or harder, but of which one meets someone's interests and expectations better.

Did you study more at VIIPALO compared to people in other programs?

I know people who devoted significantly more time to studying than I did, and people who studied significantly less, all achieving comparable results. It's something that depends more on a specific person than on a school or a program. But, if I had to estimate, I think I would have spent less time studying if I had taken the Polish final exam program.

Where do you think you'll end up after graduating from the university?

I'd like to know the answer to that question, myself, I really would. At the moment, I'm not sure. Ideally, I would like to end up with a job in the aerospace/space engineering related sector, as an embedded software and hardware developer. That's still a somewhat distant future, though; only time will tell.

What would you have done if you had not gone to VIIPALO?

I have never thought of that, and usually prefer not to. The choices we made in our past are the foundation to who we are now, and having made different choices, I would be a different person. The extent to which my life would be different, if I had made a different choice, is astronomically large.

How come you are studying in Poland after taking the International Baccalaureate?

The course and degree I'm currently pursuing at the AGH UST is what I've been aiming for since primary school. This way I study in my hometown, several minutes on foot from the university. It's convenient, it's also an economically optimal choice. Additionally, this way I can focus on my interests by working with an extraordinary team of amazing people at the AGH Space Systems and pursuing my dreams.



International Mindedness – understanding, accepting and valuing different cultures and perspectives.

Michał Musielak – English B, IBDP teacher

Here at VIII PALO we believe in equality, open-mindedness, and we try to put strong emphasis on respecting others as well as accepting the fact that some people (if not most of them) might think and perceive the world in different categories than us. This means that both the school authorities and teachers would like the students to be internationally minded. So, what does it mean to be internationally-minded and how does it reflect in our school?

Generally, the concept of international mindedness is fairly simple. One can define the notion as “a view of the world in which people see themselves connected to the global community and assume a sense of responsibility towards its members.”⁽¹⁾. This definition, however vague, actually paints quite a vivid picture of what it means. To put this into practice, this term means understanding, respecting and valuing different cultures, ethnicities, accepting diversity and embracing the fact that various attitudes have a lot to offer.

Am I internationally-minded?

I guess most students can ask themselves the question above. The answer might differ from person to person as everyone approaches the term in different ways and on a different level. If you look at the IB learner profile, it encompasses such ideas as “knowledgeable”, “open-minded” and “caring”. All these could constitute a part of your international-mindedness.

Being “knowledgeable”, as the word suggests, means “knowing a lot”⁽²⁾. The students can connect this with the drive to know and discover more about other cultures and ethnicities. They don't necessarily have to travel to remote areas and mingle with the local people. You simply can get to know more about your friends and classmates that come from backgrounds different from your own. By spending time together and getting to know each other better, you can discover a great deal about the newly met friend of yours.

It is often said that “travelling broadens one's mind”. This expression does sound cliché and most people would say it is common knowledge, but there is something to it. I mean, if you talk to people who visited other countries and experienced different cultures, they have totally different perspectives and their attitudes are much more varied than the ones who spend the majority of their lives in one place. This opinion of mine might be a bit unfair and cruel but I strongly believe that the more you travel, the more open and tolerant you become because you see something you wouldn't be able to spot outside your environment.

The other trait described in the IB learner profile is one that talks about being “open-minded.” As stated in the definition, the student should “critically appreciate cultures and personal histories of others as well as their values and traditions. They ought to seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and should be willing to grow from the experience.”

It is clearly visible that both types of “mindedness” are directly related and connected with each other. Be being open to others, their cultures, and by appreciating what other cultures have to offer, the people become more aware of their surroundings and realize that diversity is the value in itself. Thus, they express and promote concern regarding global environmental issues and the knowledge about others might be useful in reducing ethnocentric attitudes.

The other trait that describes an IB student, and thus an internationally-minded one, is “caring”. I am sure this does not need any explanation and elaboration. Apart from “showing empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others, the students have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.”⁽³⁾

So, how does this so-called “caring” student relate to being internationally-minded? The answer is simple. Not only does this notion refer to thinking about others, it is also about bringing some commitment to community, local at first and then once at university, to the international one. This can be expressed by taking up leadership roles in your professional and academic lives and incorporating the idea of international-mindedness in that field.



What does this all mean and why it is important?

I hope that the things written above made you reflect on the matter of international-mindedness, and the way you might fit in here. Generally, the idea here is to try to adopt some kind of system of values that revolves around tolerance, appreciation and acceptance of others, not to mention kindness and openness to multiple viewpoints and beliefs. Of course, respect towards one's own culture and roots also plays an important role. People need to be aware of the fact that their cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds are a part of the bigger whole and that it is impossible to detach oneself from the world and live in isolation.

It is especially important when talking about present-day and future. Rejecting other viewpoints, considering other cultures and ethnicities inferior to ours, depreciating their value and significance can lead to various conflicts affecting people, economy and environment. That is why the people who will be the leaders of the future need to understand the importance of international mindedness.

(1) International-Mindedness – Connecting to the World;
<https://www.pyresources.com/learning-community/international-mindedness> (accessed 25th May 2021)
(2) Cambridge Dictionary Online;
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/pl/dictionary/english/knowledgeable> (accessed 25th May 2021)
(3) Ibid.

Academic Honesty and Ethics in IB

Jacek Gołębiowski, IBDP Year 2 student

IB learners strive to be “principled” (IB learner profile):

“We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.”

Academic honesty in the IB programme could be viewed in two ways. It is either about a set of rules which may not be violated at any point, or simply a certain path that can be taken by an individual in the educational process. The former presents a view that academic honesty in the IB is highly restrictive, whilst the latter gives an opportunity to follow a useful work style.

Academic honesty does not solely refer to non-plagiarising a piece of work but it is also about academic misconduct or malpractice. Thus it can be defined as a specific type of behaviour that provides an unfair advantage for a student. The examples include: gaining access to exam materials, taking unauthorized material into an examination room or even disruptive behaviour during examination.

Apart from it being obligatory, respecting academic honesty also develops students personally. Without academic honesty values that could be potentially gained from any educational programme are missed on. What is probably the most important, any violation of academic honesty results in the student losing “the learning opportunity”.

Even though a breach of academic honesty in IB programme is a serious matter and may even result in a grade on the Diploma not being awarded, any unethical action in an academic life afterwards may have far worse consequences. Simple plagiarism will reduce the credibility of a university student as well as an academic. It may make it difficult for a student to gain a university degree or for an academic to further their career.





Created TOK and Arts Exhibition by IBDP Students

TOK

The Theory of Knowledge and Arts Exhibition

Karolina Spyrka, Visual Arts, IBDP Teacher



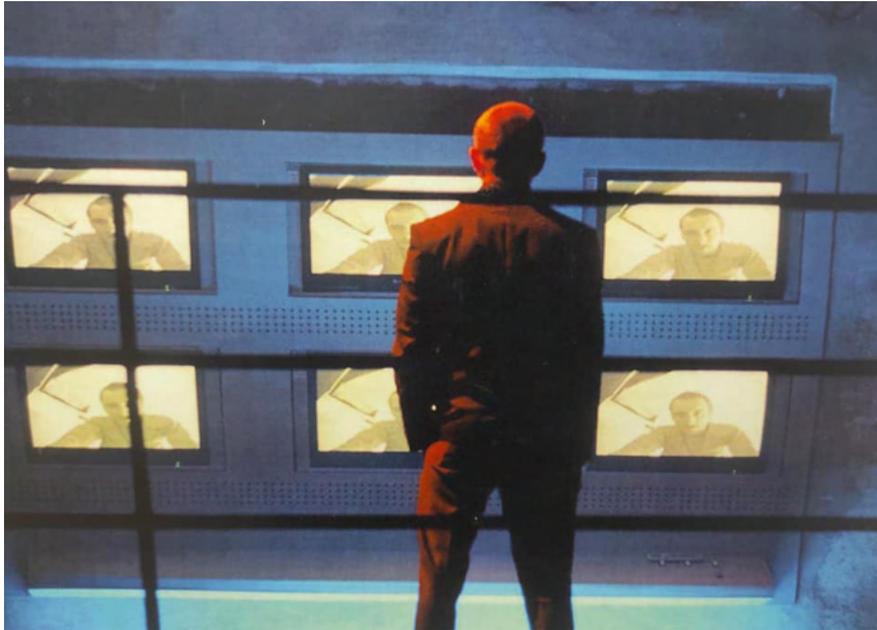
In the twenties of XX century, German scholar Aby Warburg created one of the most compelling outlook into both origins and interdependences between western cultures, by composing a collection consisting of images documenting thousands of objects and artefacts. In this way, he established a point of reference for cultural thinkers, called The Mnemosyne Atlas, as well as contributed to opening first interdisciplinary exhibition in Hamburg Library — Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg (KBW) (Warburg Library of Cultural Studies)¹. Although he was not able to complete his work prior passing away, the effort he managed to accomplish turned to be invaluable input to the world of art history and cultural studies. His methodology and comparative approach to artefacts became the standard for scholars around the world. Curators that were soon to emerge as professional art collectors and thinkers possessing strong authority in recognising what art is, how to display and serve it to the viewers, are in fact indebted to Aby Warburg. His preference for non-obvious, potentially clashing relationships brought new perception into art pieces selecting manner and bravery in finding patterns where no one would even look. He intended to push his recipients for finding contrasting clues, encouraged to think, evoked unusual conclusions on the state of the modern culture.² Our school library has acquired one copy of The Mnemosyne Atlas: the book is a photographic documentation of art historian work and a visual and theoretical explanation of the contemporary curatorial strategies. My brief reference to The Mnemosyne Atlas was dictated by my intension to familiarise the viewers of the TOK and Visual Arts Palo 2021 exhibition with Aby's Warburg heritage.



The idea behind these two interdisciplinary subjects' collaboration comes out from their nature, as both are in my opinion based on theoretical cultural studies, motivating students to conduct their own investigation into notions that shape the contemporary reality. The aim is to learn and understand, participate with awareness and compassion, and respect to all fields that are covered. The purpose of the TOK and Visual arts exhibition is to connect with the school community, by sharing and creating educational experience for the viewers. Our audience this year includes school teachers together with students of PDP classes, and so we have created the exhibition having in mind that this event will serve them as an introduction to IB programme, and holistic approach in teaching. All of the projects created by the groups of students have their individual functions and should inspire audience to uncover them, discuss and rethink.



IBDP 1 students participated mostly in remote teaching this year, thus by stepping out and presenting results of their TOK exhibition projects we are aligning it with curatorial aspects of the Visual Arts subject, and using in practice the tools that had been demonstrated to them only theoretically. Visual arts students were asked to take the role of the curators, discuss and collaborate in organised groups in order to display TOK exhibition objects that are reflections of a specific cultural traits. This year we are using the space students are the most familiar with: the everyday school halls, classrooms, we will be also using physical objects, texts, audio and visual mediums. Curators will take care of the other students projects, as in the professional field of art world and museums curators use to work with artist and cultural artefacts. They will present a cross-sectional vision, propose potential ways of presentation and meet with some of the Visual Arts core's aspects, what was impossible to fulfil during the lockdown in our city. This experience will also bring them back together after several months of separation. We treat this project as a pilot event, our best intentions are to evolve in the future and expand our group of viewers by reaching out the local community, and, of course, to invite the school community, parents, teachers to the bigger scope next year.



THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE EXHIBITION

Łukasz Zych, TOK, IBDP Teacher

Maybe you know this story. You have your daily routine, duties, school and work activities. You know exactly what you would like to achieve in your life, and where you see yourself in the next ten years. But one day some questions unexpectedly start to appear in your mind. "Why do we seek knowledge?", "Are some things unknowable?", "Who owns knowledge?". The certainty disappears, you feel insecure and vulnerable. Now there are two solutions – you may either suppress these thoughts or think about them. You may accept this challenge or give up. This event is the implication of the second option which seems to be more difficult – the attempt to find some reasonable answers.

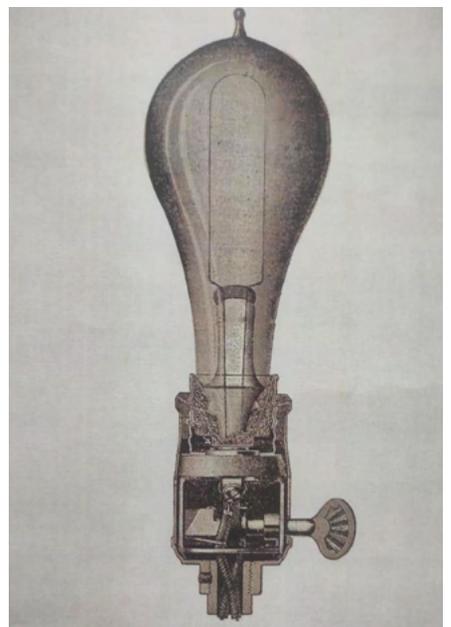
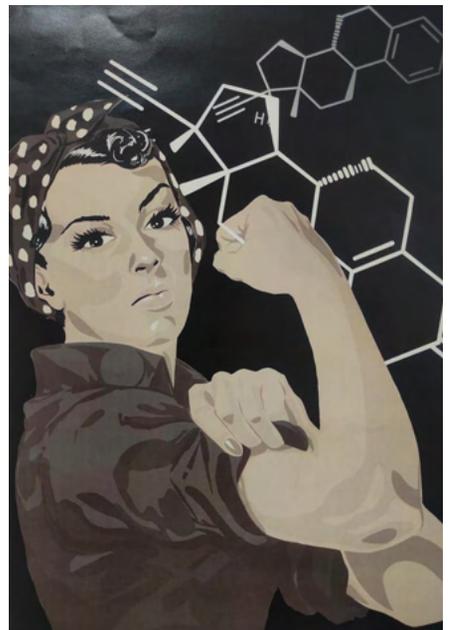
The Theory of Knowledge Exhibition focuses on exploring how we can explain relevant knowledge issues using the objects we can find in the material world; how they manifest around us. The students have chosen one specific knowledge question and they have tried to answer it with the use of three different objects that have personal relevance or a link to areas of their personal interests. The students could create the objects themselves, but there was an important rule: they had to use pre-existing objects rather than ones created specifically for the purposes of this exhibition. Therefore, the main goal was to find some answers in the already existing objects, which seems to be a more challenging and sophisticated task.

This phenomenological approach gave the participants a lot of freedom in the process of choosing proper real-world manifestations. An extremely wide variety of different types of objects were suitable for use in this exhibition. You can find some tangible objects such as a telescope or a necklace, but also songs, tweets and movies- objects that exist in a particular time and place, including virtual spaces. But be prepared - some answers to the selected knowledge questions may be different if we look through the lens of different perspectives.

The students were able to find some solutions and paths, you are our guest. But we are all knowers belonging to the epistemic community. We do not promise you simple answers to complicated questions nor to convince you to a particular perspective or approach. Open up your mind but at the same time don't fall into the trap of total relativism. Think freely and critically. Listen to them and agree or disagree with their concepts. Get engaged in discussions. Change your mind or feel more convinced of your pre-existing opinions and beliefs. Everything may happen. Just don't be indifferent.

We wish you a good and unforgettable intellectual journey. Enjoy.

Ms Łukasz Zych, TOK Teacher



CAS Creativity - Activity - Service from IB students' perspective



CREATIVITY, ACTION, SERVICE EXPLAINED

Agnieszka Kubica, IBDP Year 2 student

CAS is one of the most underrated parts of the Diploma Programme. The simple premise of completing at least one hour of each: Creativity (activities including artistic expression and/or creating); Activity (sport); and Service (voluntary work) gives the necessary motivation to develop oneself regardless of the school-load. CAS allows us to relax and enjoy our hobbies without guilt, even in the most stressful periods with the intrusive thoughts about deadlines lurking around the corners of your risk-taking mind. After two years of CAS, here are some of my reflections and hints for future IB students:

Combine!

Perhaps the ultimate trick to manage and enjoy CAS is to simply combine! That can mean finding activities that count towards Creativity and Service, or maybe Service and Activity, or all three if you are as inventive as Mr. Jabłoński with his chemistry jokes. It makes it easier to monitor and fulfill your CAS, but also ensures that your activities are more well-rounded. The other method of combining is even more important: make sure to include your hobbies. Some may be easy (especially if you are an artsy or sporty person), but some may be more difficult. However, more often than not, it is possible and completely worth it. In my case, I combined my multiple crafting hobbies (such as macramé and crochet) with service by donating my works to a Christmas Charity Fair. Additionally, choosing your hobbies as CAS activities motivates developing skills in areas you enjoy doing and will probably continue after graduation.

Engage with your local community

Combining your hobbies with doing something good for the world is great, but

why not start with your local community and see the change you can make in the lives of individuals around you? Look in places, such as your former schools and local foundations, they certainly need help; the moment you start engaging, you will be flooded with opportunities. I personally worked multiple times with two educational foundations and one language school, all less than 15 minutes by car from my house (which is convenient) and managed to see my impact on the smiling faces of 'little monsters' (kids) I was working with. I formed close relationships with the people there and two of these places offered me a part-time job, which was one of the biggest surprises.

Become a better person

CAS allows you to become a more self-disciplined, a quality I certainly struggle with, having the self-control of a very hungry hamster surrounded by appetizing, freshly cut carrots, and well-rounded person. It forces you to become a better individual, by making you reflect on your choices and actions!

Have FUN!

Either by developing your hobbies or venturing way beyond your safety bubble and experimenting, CAS is the opportunity to develop yourself on your own terms while having great time, which is undeniably the best form of education there is.

For all the reasons above and many more, CAS was certainly my favorite part of the IB experience and I will probably try to include CAS-like activities in my future life.



Final Reflections from CAS

Marcelina Wiśniewska, IBDP Year 2 student

At the beginning of the IB Programme, I have been rather sceptical about the concept of CAS. If the stories were to be believed, I would have been stressed, overworked, and emotionally drained, simply because of my course subjects themselves. The idea to add to that three, hour-long, weekly activities seemed a bit cruel. I was also worried about the activity since I am not a great enthusiast of sports, and service because I thought that voluntary work should come naturally, not be forced. During the course, however, my views have changed, and I found some unexpected outcomes. The actions that I suspected would be hard, turned out to be enjoyable, and the ones I was the least afraid of may have been more problematic than I thought.

The biggest surprise of my CAS was definitely the activity. At the start, I had little hopes of actually enjoying it, but I grew progressively more fond of it. Perhaps, it was because I didn't expect myself to excel at it. I let it be a casual way of unwinding, and before I knew it turned out to be pleasurable. The regular schedule of my sports activities helped with the goal of commitment and perseverance and allowed me to see how my physical condition gradually improved. The figure skating and yoga classes challenged my skills, especially since they were a complete novelty. They managed to steal my heart, and, if possible, I would like to continue to practice in the future. I think it would help me relax and have fun during further studies and work, just as it did during the IB course.

From the very beginning, I wasn't particularly stressed about my creative activities. As someone who always engaged in various arts and crafts, and who hopes to base their future on them, I thought it would be easy enough to handle it. Unfortunately, as I soon found out, most of my creativity and willingness for artistry was directed towards the Visual Arts classes. I was rather fed up with it after a while, and didn't dedicate myself fully to the CAS experience. I found it challenging to keep up with the schedule, do it regularly, and enjoy myself in the process. It made

me realise that, even when it's my passion, it's very easy to get fed up with one type of activity. One definitely needs a variety as a form of getaway.

The service part of CAS was the most challenging for me. My worries started right away, at the stage of deciding what kind of actions to choose. It wasn't as easy as simply drawing something, or going to a training. It required initiative and planning. I had to take into consideration how to make the best use of my skills and the limited amount of time. Often, I had to reach out to different organisations and people, work together to make something happen. I also had to decide what causes to support and how to help within my possibilities. I feel like service involved the greatest variety of efforts, experiences and learning outcomes. With protests, I engaged in global, universal issues, showed my commitment to certain communities, my views, and my willingness to protect them. The English classes that I created for seniors pushed me completely outside my comfort zone and required a lot of responsibility, planning, and commitment. It turned out to be great stress. I was lacking confidence and felt uncomfortable in the role of a teacher. Even so, it was amazing being able to help elderly people (who were all lovely) develop new skills. Finally, I was also able to utilise my crafting skills and strengths by creating various gifts throughout IB. It made me realise that I don't have to push myself so hard because even the small things we are able to do comfortably can be of service to someone.

Overall, the CAS experience has brought me more joys and sorrows than I would expect. I found interest in things I wouldn't try otherwise, and made me realise what drains me and makes me uncomfortable. I also thought of many activities that I wasn't able to engage in during those two years. Due to the lack of time and financial means, I didn't choose them for my CAS, but now I hope to be able to test them out. As I've learned, encountering new, unusual things may be really refreshing and enlightening!



CAS – PURSUING INTERESTS

ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB AND STUDENTS' NEWSPAPER

Maria Koper, IBDP Year 1 student

During the first semester of the school year, as a service part of the CAS, I was participating in the meetings of the environmental school club, where we educated ourselves on the matters of today's world, like climate change or global warming. Even though I certainly gained some new knowledge, I felt like I wasn't fully using my opportunity to do something as a service that I can both really enjoy and would contribute to my self-development. That is why I decided to switch it up and look for some new opportunities. Fortunately, during this time, our school newspaper, which was run by students under the supervision of the teacher of Polish language and literature, was looking for new people and upon finding that out, I decided to join.

I was always interested in writing, however, I never had an opportunity to pursue this hobby, considering that it never was an area that I had my main focus on. I have never participated in any writing clubs before. My only experience with creative writing, or creating articles was in school and occasionally my individual recreational writing sessions. With that in mind, when I first learned about the opportunity to join the school newspaper team, I decided that it was a great chance for me to test my writing

skills while fulfilling the service part of the CAS. We publish monthly editions, usually at the end of a certain month. We were given a free hand to write about anything we find interesting or worth mentioning like any news or events. This personally encouraged me, as a writer, to do more research on global or cultural events, which also helped me learn and improve my knowledge.

What I certainly enjoyed most about writing for the school newspaper was having a very flexible work schedule, which I believe helped me manage my time better in order to be more productive and focused on my articles. Since I was not restricted by any hours I was able to work whenever I had new ideas or felt motivated. I also had the opportunity to improve my writing skills, which was useful for my school work. Writing for a newspaper, even if it's just a school one, makes you question and see your work from many different perspectives because of the awareness that not only you or your teacher but from many different people with various opinions and worldviews. You have to think more about what is appropriate and what is not, but also how you can make your article interesting and entertaining. You are able to abandon the boring traditional scheme and structure that is inevitable when writing

school essays. I believe, that writing in the school newspaper, in the long run, can help improve many different areas.

Writing monthly articles is not only beneficial to students who read them, but also to the writer. By doing more research on various topics, you can gain new knowledge and educate yourself on certain matters. In March for women's history month, we decided to dedicate an edition to women and their achievements. I had a chance to write an article about women's liberation movement in Poland which started at the end of the 19th century. By doing research about this topic, I had the opportunity to learn more about this part of my country's history, which is not often talked about in history books.

Even though I have been part of the school newspaper for only two months, I can say that I am satisfied with my choice to switch service activity and try something new. It gave me the freedom to work at my own pace and on the things I found interesting. Additionally, I can say that I really enjoyed writing articles, which made my service experience very enjoyable.

IB – A “humorous” summary

Jacek Gołębiowski, IBDP Year 2 student

International Baccalaureate programme, most commonly known as IB, is without any doubt one of the most demanding educational routes one could take. Even though it starts as a relatively stress-free process in pre-DP class, where IB curriculum is barely discussed, it slowly transitions into a goal of just getting through. The only actual prelude of what was to come, was in my case an Internal Assessment from Biology. At this time, I saw it as an interesting experience, since we were only required to perform a long-term experiment with some documentation of moderate length. Thus, it gave a biased view on what the IA's will look like in the DP. The 2-3 month experiment was nothing in comparison to the challenges

faced while completing IB assignments. Apart from having to sacrifice the soul by spending any time whatsoever “finishing” them, and by that, I mean correcting them bazillion times before they may be finally sent, you had to spend countless all-nighters just to meet the deadline... cannot imagine having more fun... On top of that, there still was one work loved by every student, the Extended Essay. Now, there is plenty of time to work on it after finally finding your true and only research question, which could potentially make writing it a breeze. However, in a situation such as mine and many others, where no time would be spent on it during the holidays, the work becomes an absolute nightmare when it collides with

the rest of our lovely assessments during the second year of DP. And lastly, the icing on the cake, known as CAS. Three hours in total per week are not that much of a trouble, however, once assessments from every single subject start intersecting, which again is not surprisingly uncommon in IB, CAS becomes just another thorn piercing your soul.



Students' Corner

This section presents the articles, essays, editorials and various other pieces written by the students of VIII PALO. One of the major advantages of the school is the fact that there are many different types of students attending our school with different, often contrasting opinions on various subjects. Some of them are really outspoken and eager to share their views on life. Thus, the collection of written works varies in terms of topics, subject, form and content. This section presents just a few of the texts written by our students.



Marcelina Wiśniewska on role models of the past

This article was written by Marcelina Wiśniewska, the student of class DP2C. In her piece, she reflects on the significance of role models of the past, their influence on people's lives and the part they may play in modern society.



Are yesterday's role models still relevant today?

Marcelina Wiśniewska, IBDP Year 2 student

We live in the world of unceasing, dynamic progress where many of the bygone issues seem to be irrelevant and outdated, no longer actively affecting the masses. With the efforts of many, they have been confronted and surpassed, leaving behind a brighter future for the ones inheriting this globe. In the face of constant improvement, it may be hard to look back, ponder over the battles already fought. But what if we should? Those distant issues may still be significant today, and together with them their heroes.

The memory of people who brought us to where we are now can very easily get blurry. As they pass, instead of their names we remember the ideas they once represented. Those stay alive for much longer. Even as laws change, people's mindsets and attitudes may be harder to shift, and so matters such as gender discrimination, homophobia, or racism to this day require our attention. By remembering the role models of yesterday we can learn a lot about what awaits. Many of them have been pioneers who were forced to find solutions to problems never considered before. They had to draw attention to their causes, make their voices heard when no-one wanted to listen. Whilst our generation faces a fair share of new issues, many of the old ones are still present today. By studying the past solutions and mistakes made by the figures of the past, we can be better, push further, and achieve even more.

Beyond the lessons to be learned from the bygone days, it could be argued that acknowledgment of the people that changed this world is something obligatory due to sheer respect. The life we are living was created by their will. It was gifted upon us, not perfect, but better than it was

before them. For this reason, the memory of them should be preserved and cherished. With gratefulness, we shall remember thanks to whom we are where we are.

However, one could say that many of those old heroes are not relevant anymore, that they do not affect our lives. They came and went, leaving a mark on this world, but instead of dwelling on the past we should focus on the present, seek role models of this age. The problems tormenting the Earth have changed, new ones emerged and the old ones assumed new forms. It may seem wise to look up to the figures involved in those issues, present in the world we've come to live in. Does that mean that appreciation of the people of the past and their actions loses its usefulness, though? No, it does not! Even when we cannot relate in any way to their causes, we can still look up to the ones that fought to change the world. Their lives are a testament to human strength and perseverance, and proof that it is possible to bend the world to our will. Especially with hindsight, one can see how far we have come and how crucial the efforts of an individual can prove to be. In need of reassurance and courage, there is no better place to look than in the glorious past.

Despite a seemingly insignificant place of the role models of yesteryear in today's world, one can draw quite a lot from the last. Disregarding the figures simply because they may be deemed as no longer relevant can be an ignorant and foolish decision. After all, it was those people who once upon a time "had a dream" that brought us to where we are. They should not be forgotten but continue to influence and inspire those who are willing to listen to their lessons.

Weronika Urban's take on procrastination

One of the most common practice among IB students is the practice of procrastination. Some students have really mastered this skill and sometimes it proves to be really surprising that they are able to meet all the deadlines.

The article below was written by Weronika Urban, the student of class DP2C. She approaches the topic of procrastination being a seasoned IB student of the 2nd year.



Procrastination masters and their problems

Weronika Urban, IBDP Year 2 student

Nowadays, IB students all around the world need to face various challenges and solve different types of problems. Together with my colleagues from the editorial office of our "IB Daily" newspaper, we created a poll in which we asked students about the biggest challenge they were experiencing during the IB Diploma Programme. Almost 98% of the students came into the agreement that the hardest opponent of the IB community is the monster known as procrastination. However, how exactly can we describe this challenge and what can we do with it? Here is my view on this issue.

There is no doubt that each IB student will have to face the challenge of coping with procrastination at least once during their IB Diploma experience. Sincerely, we all were in this situation where we had to do an all nighter on a given assignment because "Youtube was just too good". I remember that during my first year of IBDP, I had to write my whole ToK Essay in one day because I "had other things" (meaning, of course, Youtube videos and Facebook posts). Sadly, I wasn't the only one who had to write that assignment in one day. However, why does procrastination keep happening? For me and most of the students, it wasn't the only occasion to "speedrun" important tasks. In my opinion, the fact that students have such an enormous amount of things to do and experience significant levels of stress cause the lack of motivation to do the assignments earlier. Students stress so much over papers or tests that their thought process in the brain prefers to assume that the urgent tasks are nonexistent. The fallacy stating "not doing equals not failing" is obviously incorrect, so what can be done to avoid it? The answer is simple - the students need to start taking the first steps in fighting procrastination. It can be done by restriction of social media usage or trying mindfulness therapy, which improves the ability to focus and to pay attention to given assignments. Later on, the regular planning of the tasks and distancing from platforms

like Facebook or Youtube will decrease the need for doing the school-related matters at the last minute and improve coping with the IB stress.

Some students or teachers might argue that procrastination is not a challenge and state that it is just a sign of pupils' laziness. Of course, the argument that each assignment has a deadline given months before the final date, and procrastination and "speedrunning" are just signs of irresponsibility, is undeniable. On the other hand, by looking at the psychological factors, this can be easily explained as a commonly occurring student problem. In the previous paragraph, I recalled one of the explanations regarding the logical fallacy. Followingly, it can be further expanded to the general evaluation of the influence of stress on students, which leads them to the feeling of "laziness". In general, people who experience high levels of pressure from the environment tend to feel enormous tiredness. Such feelings might lead to the deprivation of academic performance. Thus, it suggests that students are just fighting with the stress of being in the Diploma Programme, and procrastination is just another challenge of this battle.

In conclusion, I think that all of the IB students in our school developed some degree of proficiency in the art of procrastination. However, it is important to acknowledge the reasons behind such behaviours and the significance of the factor of stress in the life of the IB community. By restriction of the use of social media, and the form of "attention recovery" therapy, students who read this article should be able to face this challenge with new motivation and power. It is important to always remember that we are not alone in mastering procrastination, and IB people all around the world experienced a similar situation. We, and the whole IB global community, just need to take the first step to fight it.

The need for a change – a microwave/kitchen problem

This article was written as a humorous description of a certain problem regarding food that some VIII PALO students seem to be experiencing. The student approached the topic in a very creative way and made numerous references to a long-forgotten political system.



The kitchen queue – a lesson to be learned

Agnieszka Kubica, IBDP Year 2 student

What's wrong with our queue? Turns out a lot!

Let's start by painting a familiar picture: It is 12:19. In the VIII PALO IB building the students are sitting at the edge of their seats, waiting for the crucial moment, when the teachers say the necessary sentence "Have a nice break". The moment the sound of their words reaches their ears, the race begins. Some are lucky and their lesson ends earlier, some not so much, if the lesson gets prolonged. However, almost everyone has one aim in their minds: the kitchen. At our school, it is an extremely small room, with a sink, bunch of cupboards, two bins, a kettle, a coffee machine and the microwave – the most cherished possession. The queue to the kitchen forms instantaneously. Students and teachers, boys and girls, every grade, it doesn't matter anymore. The only thing that does matter for this noisy and dense mass is to get your hands on the microwave with the dream of a warm meal within the next 30 minutes motivating them to act.

At the first glance the only thing which is wrong with this picture is the inconvenience that everyone faces. However, under closer inspection it becomes much more unfortunate or even disturbing.

Cultural meaning of queueing

I will begin with the cultural significance of queueing. While the concept is an integral part of the British national myth of a pragmatic and orderly nation, which often is mentioned with a sense of pride or even superiority, the symbolism of queueing is quite different in Poland. The picture of a queue in front of a shop is almost a must in any article, course book or movie about the PRL era. The communist regime in Poland, which followed World War II, has led to consistent shortage of almost every single product. Even if a product was available, it was rationed by the system of

paper documents with number of product per citizen. PRL was time of oppression, lack of freedom and poverty. Thus, the clear link of queueing to this time in Polish history makes our kitchen queue a bit more unfortunate.

The communist microwave

The queue is one of the links of the picture I painted at the beginning to communism, the other one is the fact the microwave is an object used by the whole community, which could be also called the society of our school, regardless of their role or position in this "society's" hierarchy. If one were to draw a parallel between the world and our school, the kitchen would be the closest to communist nations. In the kitchen everyone is equal and the population of our country-school collectively owns the factor of production – the microwave. Additionally, if we would like to increase the number of factories, we can collectively pay for a new device, which is exactly what happened with the coffee machine. In a way the kitchen is our school is the ideal communist country. However, it also shows its limitation, with not adequate "supply of microwaves", which leads to constant queueing and not everyone being able to access the microwave.

Colonialism and microwaves

The sole object of microwave is also problematic. The microwave was invented by an American engineer – Percy Spencer in 1945. The technology was first popularized in the US and then implemented in other developed countries, followed by the developing nation through the process of globalization. International trade, especially when it comes to technological innovation, usually does not come from a place of equality and fair exchange between the countries. Trade between countries of different level of development

often ends with exploitation of the less powerful one. The US so far has been the only superpower for a while now, it has a huge role in deepening that inequality between the rich and the poor. The fact that we are using a lot of American products, for example the microwave, illustrates the influence of the US on other countries. The process is often called mcdonaldization (a fitting name, especially when we consider the number of McDonald's in a close proximity to our school). This influence is the modern form of colonization, thus it is important to be aware of these interactions behind the everyday objects we use.

Human Rights of students

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 25 states that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food [...]". One may consider that limiting the number of microwaves to one for the whole school is breaking this article. It is not possible for every student that wants to use the microwave and eat their lunch during the break. Thus, the unfortunate students, especially the ones, which attend classes of teachers that usually prolong their lessons, are disadvantaged. On the other hand, students with free periods around the hour have the privilege of using the microwave without the queue at different time periods. It shows that not everyone is equal and sometimes circumstance favors certain people over others.

Overpopulation

The queue forms because the real time demand exceeds the real time supply of a product. The number of students willing to use the microwave is greater than the capacity of current production, because the resources – microwaves

are limited. Simply, the population of the school is too great to sustain itself on what's available at school, which is why many students buy their food outside the school. A clear parallel to why international trade occurs. Additionally, the kitchen in its rush hours shows the traits of high population density. The exchange of germs and bacteria is much higher, which means that a sick student in the kitchen is more likely to infect others that are outside it. Additionally, the smell of all the different people and their foods may be overwhelming, similarly to what happens with pollution and waste in highly populated areas. And finally, the kitchen gets very loud and touchy, which increases the noise pollution within the building and the risk of crime, such as sexual harassment.

Lesson to be learned

So do I think that the one microwave is a terribly bad idea? Yes. But we have to recognize the importance of it in our school life. It encourages interaction between groups. The kitchen is a place of local cultural exchange and can teach us a lot of lessons. They include: history, politics, economics, geography, privilege and equality among others. And probably most importantly: the social rules that govern our everyday lives.

Our grandparents had the story of long and exhausting journey to school. Our parents love to share the struggle of finding information in the limited resources of local libraries and how easy it is for the young lads with the internet. Our generation will tell the story of the kitchen queue. As much as it may form many pleasant memories and teaches a lot of lessons, the bad side of it is there and cannot be ignored. Which is why I urge the school committees to consider the purchase of another microwave to solve the problem.



Gray without fifty shades

Students attending English B HL course are required to read two works of literature that are originally written in English. They are then discussed in the classroom and constitute the basis for the oral exam at the end of the course. Usually, the choice of books is influenced by both the teacher and the students attending the course. One particular group of English B HL students decided (with a little help of their teacher) to discuss a famous Gothic novel entitled *The Picture of Dorian Gray* written by an Irish writer, Oscar Wilde. Here's what happens when students are confronted with classic literature and get creative. The first text is a review of the book penned by Marcelina Wiśniewska, the second one, a creative take on *Dorian Gray* providing beauty advice in a form of an internet blog.



Oscar Wilde

Young, beautiful and full of dubious moral values - “The Picture of Dorian Gray”

written by Oscar Wilde

review by Marcelina Wiśniewska, IBDP Year 2 student

“The Picture of Dorian Gray” probably doesn’t require much introduction, nor does its author - Oscar Wilde. First published in 1890 on the pages of Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine, it was forced to undergo censorship changes, as it was recognized as perverse or inappropriate. Despite this process which dulled a bit quarrelsomeness of the novel, it is still filled with the bravery of manifests and traits connecting it to Wilde’s life. The controversy and honesty have contributed to the cultural significance and reputation of ‘Dorian Gray’.

The part I value the most in this remarkable work is the richness of characters, their sophistication. The creation of such a depth was possible because of Wilde’s attention to detail, their multiplicity and quality. He went as far as to give every one of his characters a backstory of incredible complexity. The effort of writing entire philosophies, driving each person, adds to the realness of the world. They are dynamic, ever-changing and actively responding to all that’s happening, yet at the same time, they seem separated from what we know. The aura of magic and unreachability is present in every aspect of the main characters. They are all beautiful, wealthy, have the luxury of acting however they please: moodily, violently, suddenly. Despite the apparent perfection, the novel shows the ugliness of human nature whilst holding up a splendid facade. This mix of authenticity, uniqueness, and unrealness is what makes the people of ‘Dorian Gray’ so likable, even if they clearly shouldn’t be, and their brilliant interactions are something one simply cannot get enough of.

“The Picture of Dorian Gray” is not a book for readers who prefer a steady pace of events, and a gentle build-up of the

suspense. This one is unstable, stormy, ready to respond to every whim of the author. Some events are described with the highest precision, every word of a conversation is relevant, essential to understanding the motivation of characters. Sometimes the timeline jumps a couple of years, and seemingly important elements, that would affect the action quite a bit, are barely mentioned, though. There are also fragments where Wilde leaves the plot development only to focus on a random description lasting an entire chapter. A capricious manner of a pace, like this one, reveals a lot of the writer’s nature.

Wilde can truly surprise and shock the reader. The plot is highly original, with its magical side that still serves a down-to-earth purpose, such as commentary on the matters of human temper, the state of society, or general ideological questions. A relation like that isn’t something one would find in just any book.

Most importantly, all this sophistication, creativity and flamboyance of the characters and events, as well as the moody pace, mirror what’s inside Oscar Wilde’s head. It is a testimony to his bravery and an autobiography of a kind. It gives him a chance to share his philosophies, beliefs, and complaints, as history shows, only falsely, freely. Such significance and masterful creation have caused the novel to become a classic. One may argue that it is an obligatory position on a list of anyone who dares to call themselves a man of culture, just as meaningful as the struggle surrounding its publication. I would rather recommend “The Picture of Dorian Gray” because once you start reading it, there is no going back to the way you felt before. It is one of the books that leave one wrecked and unable to think about anything else than what was on Oscar Wilde’s mind.

SLAY LIKE GRAY

Antonina Kielian, IBDP Year 2 student

Make thy skin Gray-t again!

Apr 16th, 1881

Hello there, chaps!
One shall never think they are perfect. One shall, however, seek for perfection. As many of you, my dears, asked me about how I maintain my faultless appearance, I have decided to share with you the guidelines you all ought to know in order to look like straight from a painting!

The key to beauty is, to acknowledge the corn - a bath! However, before you all think of me as an insane simpleton, it is not the regular bath that I have on my mind. What you need, my dears, is approximately ten gallons of hot olive oil. It is clear that the wealthier you are, my dears, the better olive you shall get. A bathe of this kind, will turn your skin soft just like silk right before being painted by a subtle artist! What you want to do next, my dears, is use actual silk to dry your body. It is essential before the following step,

which is a now-so-widely-favoured, a veal face mask! The raw meat your favourite peasants of choice have prepared for you appears to have truly magical impact on your skin. I, however, have taken an audacious step further to order my servants to collect the best lambs' livers and blend them for exactly six hours and apply on my face for thirty five minutes. Add a drop of arsenic to dry it up a little bit, and you can compete with me for the softest skin in England! Oh My Lord, I have such sophisticated sense of humour.

Allow me to know how these wonderful suggestions work for you, my dears! Do not hesitate to subscribe in order to hear when your truly beloved Dorian writes the next steps on how to Slay like Gray!

Cheers!
D. Gray

To be fair, your first haircare!

Jun 8th, 1881

Welcome back, my dears,

Firstly, thank you all for the lovely comments you have left under my previous post. OML, I cannot believe a little blog of a beauty-loving saucebox like me has attracted so many beautiful chaps! In continuation to the previous entry, I have chosen to share with you my haircare routine!

As extraordinary as it may appear, my dears, the most excellent wait to keep your hair looking like a perfectly tightened paintbrush is nothing else, but ammonia! In order it to be pure, you shall carefully choose a donor of this quite revolting substance, feed him well and allow

the best living for approximately a week. The preparation requires half a pit of ammonia in a basket of water. Then order your servants to gently scrub it as an overnight hair mask. A personal tip from your favourite aristocrat, as I am skeery of ruining my impeccably done hairs style, is make a painter do it - because who knows their brushes better than a frequent brush user?

That shall be all for you tonight, my dears. Take care, of your hair!

Cheers,
D. Gray

The quintessence of adolescence!

Jul 10th, 1881

Hello there, chaps!

Man alive ! So many comments from you, my dears, truly lovely ones! However, it has come to my attention that a lot of you chaps still have problems with your appearance and ask for more Gray-t advices. As for all of you who still feels like dying ducks in a thunderstorm , I have composed another post about how I prepare for every family bee .

One thing you shall remember, my dears, is that pallor is your goal, your friend, and your greatest advantage. Nothing is more appealing than skin matching a blank canvas. If you do not share genes with me though and the skin tone cannot reflect light so delicately as as pale as the flakes of white roses, do not worry my dear, and use some white lead as the perfect foundation for the artpiece which is your face! Furthermore, lavender powder applied with ceruse will most certainly give you a porcelain gloss you seek for. Remember - if you think it is too much, always add two more layers. It can never be too much! To complete

this look, as some belladonna or lemon juice straight into your eyes. Do not worry if it irritates your beautiful eyes - it will just make them water and look sparkly! If you desire a youthful look, do not dare to forget about some rouge on the cheeks. The final touch includes flower-based powder with a dash of arsenic to put onto your eyelids. Now you are ready to conquer every ball and banquet, and no man shall ever again cavort about these dark circles around your eyes pr dry hair!

I am curious, what are your previous favourite beauty tips? Do not wait anymore to subscribe, and please keep in your handsome mind that if any of you, my dears, have more struggles or questions, let know the beloved and thoughtful parnder in crime of yours , Dorian, who is here to give a helping hand.

Cheers!
D. Gray

Learning during the Pandemic



Living in the Age of Digitalisation

Jan Walczak, pre-IBDP student

I think it is safe to say that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected each and every person's life in one way or another. Some people lost their jobs, could not pay the rent and in effect lost their homes, some lost their loved ones and some paid the highest price and passed away due to Covid or Covid-related reasons. For young people effectively the biggest change is the transfer to online schooling, which is just another reality compared to normal classroom-based learning.

Over the last year everything that could, happened online. At first, it was just a huge adjustment for everyone, but when the snags were finally worked out, it became a viable way of educating and for some also working in a semi-effective way. We were all fortunate enough to have access to fast internet and devices which could support this format of learning, but in some parts of the world it became a huge problem because children could not attend school in any manner. In places where this problem occurred, some creative solutions were implemented like, for example, radio school where the lessons are just broadcast over the radio and students can tune in and listen.

Personally, I think that online school has many advantages such as the elimination of commuting to school, which in turn means that students can finally get an amount of sleep adequate for their age and can eat healthier food and more regularly. Another upside is that many schools finally had the time to renovate and build new facilities more easily thanks to the absence of students. For example, our school has just finished the construction of a state-of-the-art lab. Unfortunately, like in everything, there are downsides. One of the main ones is the widespread cheating which is borderline impossible to eliminate. It can be made more difficult but, after all, for some the temptation is just too big.

The part of life that for most took the biggest toll was the social life. Nearly overnight it just disappeared, then appeared once again but then the third wave came and we are back to staying at home all day every day. Only in the recent weeks has the social life started going back to normal and, with the end of this period in sight, when in a month (as at the time of writing) everything comes back to the "old" normal, we can start looking back at the effects of this lack of in-person contact. Most people's mental health was

negatively affected because loneliness can affect even the mentally strongest people. In some studies loneliness has been linked to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. Fortunately, owing to technological advancements of the 21st century people could stay in touch with each other using the internet and meeting in casual ways on the same platforms which are used for online education. Because of the newly found abundance of time, people could finally pick up the pursuits they always wanted to do. Many people learned to cook, bake or, for example, started listening to or making podcasts to pass the time.

At the end of the day, the Covid pandemic, which is yet to end is a tragedy for many people but we cannot get caught up in all the negative sides and sometimes have to be optimistic and look at the upsides. For all it was a huge adjustment and a life and world changing event but, as once Alvin Toffler said, "the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn".

How online teaching should be conducted in order to maximize its effectiveness?

Robert Kossowski, IBDP Year 2 student

Recently, online teaching has affected not only teachers and students, but also families of both of the groups mentioned. It was difficult for both, students and teachers, to accommodate to new realities. We conducted a survey among our school friends about their experience connected to online learning.

The results were rather astonishing. It appears that most of our students are rather unhappy with the online learning, since it is less efficient for them. Of course, there are also some benefits such as, increase in time that we have for Internal Assessments, since we are not commuting to school. However, the most important question that we asked our friends was: "How should online teaching be conducted in order to maximize its effectiveness?". The most common answer was that students should have their camera turned on during every lesson. This way every one of us would not be distracted

by various things, for instance, their mobile phones.

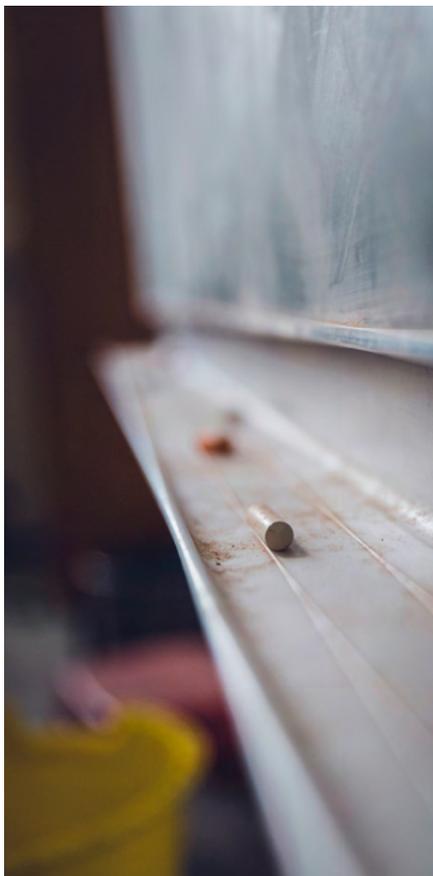
Moreover, some students came up with the idea that every lesson, if possible, should be conducted in a way that the teacher is asking students one by one. If this was the case, every student would be fully engaged in a particular class. Additionally, there were some comments that group work and general discussion were the most efficient way of learning during this difficult time.

Based on the survey that was conducted we managed to conclude that the more interactive and engaging the lesson is, the more efficient it will be. Moreover, students need to be somehow invigilated, for instance, with the use of the cameras, which would allow teachers to monitor their behaviour, so that they would fully participate in the classes.



Online Learning

Lea Romanek, pre-IBDP student



In today's times as users of the education system we face a problem. Governments and schools have to choose between online learning or traditional learning.

On one hand, the face to face method helps with social contacts, but on the other it is more dangerous, as direct contact helps spread the virus a lot. Online learning, however, can negatively impact the contact between students, as well as make receiving help from teachers a lot harder, as breaks at home are usually spent eating or playing games. Traditional learning is also more demanding for students and teachers, as they need to travel to and from school everyday, no matter the weather. In contrast, online learning provides you with the opportunity to wake up 10 minutes before the lesson starts, attend classes in pyjamas and snuggle up in a blanket while listening to the teacher. However, any serious talk about online learning cannot be truly complete without addressing the elephant in the room. Students texting, playing games and not paying attention in class. Because a webcam does not provide the teacher with the full image of what the student is doing, there is a lot of room for students to do things that are not connected

with the lesson. Traditional learning, of course, does not eliminate that fully either, as students will find ways to do what they want. It is human nature. We must also discuss the cheating problem. As mentioned earlier, a webcam does not give a full picture, so students can very easily cheat on tests and assignments. It is a big problem, that essentially is also unpreventable because, as previously discussed, students will find ways to do what they want. Cheating then leads to worse performance in lessons, worse results on tests conducted in the classroom, less knowledge of the subjects discussed during online learning, as well as helps cultivate a dishonest mindset that carries on into adult life.

In conclusion, online learning has the enormous advantage of comfort, but lacks the social contact and in many cases, honesty. Traditional learning, on the other hand, forces students to commute to and from school, and makes cheating a lot harder. Which one is better though? It depends what you like and value in life. If you are a very social person, online learning and quarantine will be a nightmare, but if you do fine by yourself, you will find yourself right at home.



Online vs. In-school Classes

Krzysztof Mierzowski, pre-IBDP student

The coronavirus. If you ask people to enumerate words they associate with it, you will most likely hear them say 'face mask' or 'hand sanitizer'. Another word one will commonly hear is the 'quarantine'. A countless number of people have or had to self-isolate during the pandemic. There were many students among these. This situation forced many schools and universities to move from in-school classes to e-learning. In this piece of writing, I will compare both options on the example of secondary schools only.

The Wild West that online classes are

One of the most important aspects that change, when you move from in-school to online classes is the amount of attention students pay to the lesson. If you do not pay attention during a standard lesson, the teacher will most likely notice it and do something about it (such as tell you that you should listen). If the issue of you not taking notes or not listening at all persists, the teacher will contact your parents or talk to you privately. When having typical lessons, it is also a lot harder to make up excuses for such situations. In contrast, during online classes, it is first of all a lot harder for the teacher to control students (even if all have their cameras on). Another issue, that makes the situation even worse is the number of distractors. The main distraction for most pupils is their smartphone. Having lessons in a school usually makes it either very hard or impossible to use it during lesson time whereas online classes allow students not only to use their phone but also browse the internet or play video games on their PC even with their camera on. When at home, many more elements tempt you to turn

the camera off and mute yourself. The list would be long and vary for everyone, so it is impossible for me to create it here. On top of that, there are many simple excuses one can use not to pay attention during a class. Some of them are: 'My camera is not working', 'My microphone is not working', 'I have no camera/microphone', 'I have a terrible internet connection, so I cannot have my camera on'. If a student is asked a question while focusing on something other than the class, he or she can say 'I am sorry but I did not hear you properly', 'I am having a terrible internet connection' and/or just Google the question. The absolute worst about these excuses is how many different there are and it being so hard for the teacher to verify them.

The workspace

Something people often view as an advantage when it comes to classes taking place online, is the fact, that one can just lie in bed or on the sofa and study. This is of course not possible during in-school classes. But is this really an advantage? There is really no issue with doing one day of lessons lying in your bed, but if you do this regularly, your brain builds associations between bed and work. At first glance this might not seem like something negative, but in reality it is something very unhealthy. To put it very simply – the brain gets 'confused' when you try to sleep in a place, which according to its associations is meant for work. This 'confusion' might lead both to sleep problems and it can have an adverse effect on the quality of your work. This problem is not apparent when the classes are conducted in the traditional way. The school environment has very strong

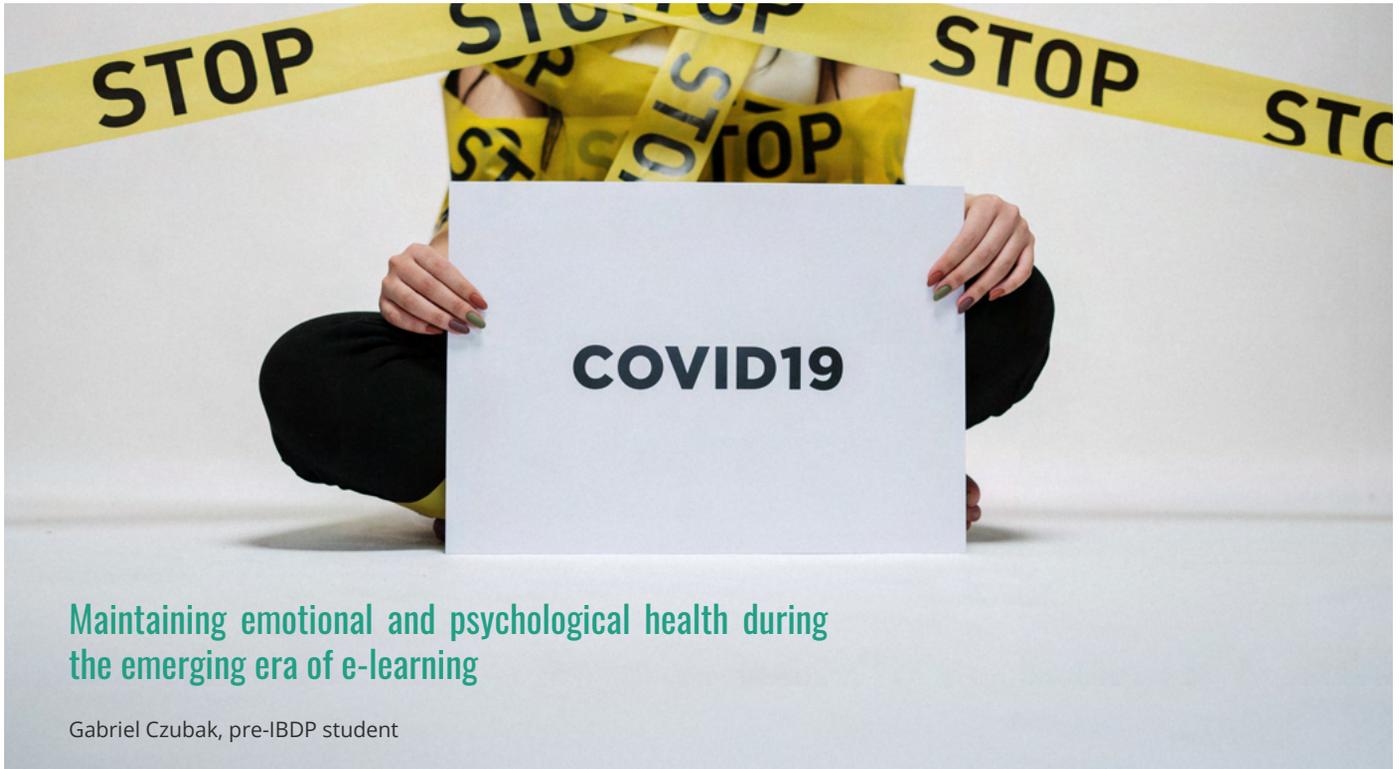
associations with work 'wired' in our brain. This greatly helps students (and teachers as well) to learn/teach, focus and in general, get in the 'study-mood'.

What every student loves the most

An inherent aspect of the school (at least the school most people know) are tests, quizzes etc. That is the part of the ongoing 'war' between teachers and their pupils. Everyone who once attended a school is well aware of this phenomenon. While teachers know a lot about cheating during traditional tests, they have to face a plethora of new problems when it comes to cheating on tests written during online classes. The biggest problem during online classes is the previously mentioned lack of control over students. While during normal classes the teacher can check if students look at each other's papers or if any of them is in a possession of a cheat-sheet, during the online ones the teacher's field view is either very small or just nonexistent (if the student has their camera off). This allows students to hide cheat-sheets with a lot of ease or just to perform a Google search for the information they need. They are also able to simply ask their friends for an answer. Many teachers use various online programs, which are supposed to prevent the students from cheating, but these can usually be easily worked around.

Conclusion

Both, online and in-school classes come with various advantages and disadvantages. I personally prefer traditional classes over the online ones (unless I have to write a test, then my preference might change).



Maintaining emotional and psychological health during the emerging era of e-learning

Gabriel Czubak, pre-IBDP student

Isolation and COVID-19 has not only affected the physical but also greatly impacted the mental health of many people, especially students. IB students were and are definitely not excluded, mainly because the IB DP is one of the most demanding and difficult pre-university academic programmes. In order to obtain the diploma, students have to complete all their internal assessments (IA), complete all programme cores (CAS, extended essay and TOK essay), receive at least a total of 24 points, out of 42, from all of their 6 subjects' grades and meet other challenging requirements.

The DP requirements were initially barely decreased as only certain papers, or their sections, from the external assessment

examinations, in May 2021, were cancelled. Therefore, before the May 2021 examinations were altogether cancelled in April 2021, many students experienced substantially greater levels of stress and depression as they had to meet almost the same academic requirements while their concentration, academic effectiveness, social interaction with others and, hence, motivation were greatly reduced due to isolation. Even after the May 2021 examinations were cancelled, which brought relief from stress for many students, the emotional and psychological impacts were still apparent and might still exist for some students.

The pandemic restrictions and isolation might not cease in the next few years and,

also, the external assessment examinations might be held in the following years. Therefore, how should future DP years evaluate and react to what May 2021 students experienced? What could they do to avoid such negative impacts described above and maintain their emotional and psychological health while also maintaining academic effectiveness and their motivation?

The following are certain recommendations which DP students, or people in general, could consider and try implementing in their daily lives and, if implemented, they could help them in keeping mentally fit and in maintaining, or even improving, their DP performance whilst learning in isolation:



Eat well and drink enough water. These are the basics in relation to a healthy mentality. Depending on an individual, 3 litres is an optimal amount of fluid to drink daily. Although water is the main fluid, which is recommended to be drunk depending on a person, tea and fruit juices can also qualify as sufficient in providing the body and brain with essential nutrients.

Unhealthy drinks and foods, such as fast foods or soft drinks, may not suffice in providing the nutrients needed for a healthy mentality during times of isolation and decreased physical activity.

The table below presents the calorie intake which should be provided, depending on the level of the students physical activity (eatright, 2019), it might be lower during the time of isolation and quarantine:

	Male (16-18)	Female (14-18)
Inactive	2400	1800
Moderately active	2800	2000
Active	3200	2400

Sleep well and enough. Along with eating and drinking well, sleeping sufficiently allows for the nerve and other body cells to repair and the brain to dispose of toxins (Healthline, 2020). This contributes to better mental health and, consequently, to greater concentration and effectiveness related to the ability of acquiring and analysing knowledge. The optimum amount of sleep, depending on the person, ranges from 6-10 hours. A person should try to identify the optimum amount of sleep their body needs and sleep that amount each night. They should start sleeping at the same hour each day in order to form a habit, which could help them in falling asleep faster and getting more deep sleep while they rest. Cells, especially muscle cells, and the brain mainly recovers during the time of deep sleep.

Approach the work related to school and other aspects of life as a project, rather than a list of tasks to be done. Of course, it is good to note down the tasks in order to remember and not forget them. However, when executing these tasks, the focus should not be on the whole remainder of tasks which are still not “ticked-off” on the list but, rather, one could perceive the list of tasks as a project. Thus, each task is a component of the project whose completion brings the whole project nearer to accomplishment. Hence, a person concentrates on the task which is currently being executed rather than on what is yet to be done. This mindset could substantially increase mental health, motivation and effectiveness in all undertaken work.

Implement a balance between work, rest and leisure in life. Work is mainly executed in order to be able to rest and leisure later. However, one rests and leises in order to be able and motivated to work again. These three components are vital for not only physical but also for mental health. Hence, while sleeping properly and implementing a motivating approach to work, a person should also take time to do something they enjoy during the day, or week if time is scarce. The frequency of the entertaining activities’ occurrence, its duration and its type greatly depends on the person. However, leisure is vital for a healthy mentality and should not be exchanged for “greater efficiency” in work as such a decision could, paradoxically, result in decreased efficiency.

Exercise. Physical exercise can increase motivation, concentration and discipline. Regardless if it is running, weightlifting, calisthenics, swimming or any other sport, exercise as well as training the body also trains the mind to adapt to and endure challenging and difficult circumstances in a practical manner. Therefore, by exercising, a person develops, to an extent, their ability to accomplish challenging achievements and create solutions to certain problems, regardless of the circumstances. This ability improves mental health and contributes to surpassing certain difficulties and creating solutions for problems related to mental and academic work.

The IB DP is a very demanding academic programme, filled with great challenges which need to be overcome in order to receive the IB diploma. Many IB students have become exhausted and demotivated while climbing over the mountain of achievements required for receiving their diploma, especially during the time of isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The IBO has cancelled certain requirements in order to help students complete the programme. However, the programme, in its altered state, is still very demanding and might be even more challenging for future DP years as the external assessments might not be cancelled.

Therefore, in the time of isolation, student’s emotional and psychological health is jeopardised and their concentration, motivation and effectiveness is decreased.

However, it does not have to stay that way. Along with other solutions, students should consider changing what they eat and drink and how much they sleep and exercise, or how they organise their work-life balance as well as the mindset they approach whilst completing their daily tasks in order to, potentially, improve their mental health. Of course, it might be difficult to implement these changes and students should also consider asking for help from others or specialist, such as psychologists or doctors.

However, these changes, if implemented, could substantially improve the students mental health and, consequently, motivation, effectiveness and, essentially, happiness.



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End of School Year Student Survey



What have you learnt during the pandemic?
What upsides of the current situation can you see?

I now appreciate things that I have taken for granted before the pandemic, like even being able to have a cake in the cafe.

I have learnt to appreciate what I have, since it may not be there forever.

I enjoy being able to meet with my friends again.

I have learnt to write a perfect email.

What would you advise your peers to do over the summer holiday?

Go cycling.

Find a new hobby.

Have a swim in the lake.

Catch up on your sleep.

Wind down.

Have a rest from electronic devices.

Spend time with people close to you who are positive about thw world.

Read books from the school reading list.

Recharge your batteries after a difficult year.



Ignaz Semmelweis, the Pioneer of Handwashing

Michał Kamiński, pre-IBDP student

In the times of the COVID-19 pandemic, we take many precautions to protect ourselves and our loved ones from the virus. Though some people undermine the effectiveness and necessity of wearing masks, no one would question the importance of washing our hands. Yet, two hundred years ago, it was not a part of people's daily routine and in hospitals, doctors washed their hands with just soap and water, if at all. Ignaz Semmelweis is the man to whom we owe the creation of modern hygiene standards, and even if now we dare not doubt the importance of clean hands, it was much different back in his days.

Ignaz Semmelweis was born in Buda (now Budapest) in Hungary. Coming from a well-off family he was able to go to the University of Vienna to study law, and after a year to move to a medicine department, to finally graduate as a physician in 1844. His career as a pioneer of hygiene started in 1846, when he was given a job as an assistant in obstetrics in the Vienna General Hospital's Maternity Clinic. The clinic was divided into two wards; the first was staffed with doctors and medical students, while the second with midwives only.

In many hospitals across Europe, the mortality rate of women with childbed fever in maternity clinics was up to even 10%. Similar number of women died in the Vienna Hospital when they were assisted by students whereas three times fewer of them died when they were assisted by midwives. Numerous investigations were conducted to determine the cause of infections, but none produced any results. Semmelweis, seeing the deadly toll of the disease as well as the suffering it brought, felt an inner need to find an answer to the troubling mystery: "What causes the infections?"

In those times it was believed that childbed fever had a variety of causes. Some of them were questionable, such as a mother's shame upon being checked by a male doctor. Such hypotheses were dismissed by Semmelweis who focused on the differences between the two wards. He was convinced that comparable features of two

wards could not be part of the explanation of the problem, though he did not yet have the evidence to support his claims.

An unforeseen tragedy provided a helpful insight that would help him comprehend the root of the problem. Namely in 1846 his friend, professor Jakob Kolletchka, had died after a student by mistake wounded the professor's finger with a scalpel while performing a post mortem examination. Semmelweis looked over his friend's autopsy records and discovered that he died of a fever-like condition identical to what he had observed in mothers dying of childbed fever. He deduced that the cause of their deaths must be the same. Students and doctors who rarely washed their hands and never wore gloves transmitted "cadaverous particles" to women in labour. In the second ward where midwives who never performed autopsies attended to deliveries, women were less likely to contract childbed fever.

Semmelweis discovered that chlorinated antiseptic solution was the most successful in removing the "cadaverous particles". Thus from now on everyone in Semmelweis's ward had to wash their hands in the solution every time they came to the ward and with soap every time they attended to a patient. The new method brought stunning results: women's mortality rate from childbed fever dropped in just three months from 7.9% to 1.8%. Through further implementation of more rigorous hygiene procedures, he was able to reduce the rate even more – in 1848 it fluctuated around just 1.2%.

These findings only served to demonstrate that the new technique had the potential to transform the way hospitals operate, perhaps saving thousands of lives. Unfortunately, like with many outstanding brains, most members of the medical profession thought Semmelweis's procedures were illogical and senseless. Many people from the medical establishment simply dismissed his hypothesis, while others argued against them. They all generally refused to acknowledge the truth, because it would also require them to accept that childbed fever could be caused by the

doctor attending to the mother. Such idea harmed their pride and reputation, and at the time, the concept of bacteria, especially as a reason of infections, was not really understood.

Semmelweis's teachings made him a very controversial figure and in 1850 his assignment as Chief Resident was not extended, and the hospital did not allow him to continue his research. He returned to Budapest where he worked voluntarily as Head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at St. Rókus Hospital. After six years he was appointed Professor of Theoretical and Practical Midwifery at the University of Pest. In order to counteract childbed fever which was common at the University's Maternal Clinic, Semmelweis had to put his safety procedures in place. This required overcoming a number of challenges and fighting non-stop with the hospital management. Despite the challenges, he was able to reduce maternal mortality to around 1%, which he maintained from 1859 to 1860 when the hospital was transferred to a new location.

In 1860 Semmelweis published a book entitled "The Aetiology, Concept and Prophylaxis of Childbed Fever" and distributed the copies to renowned obstetricians from all across Europe. Their replies were largely unfavourable, just as they had been when he first revealed his results. He, once more, faced opposition and criticism from some of the greatest physicians in Europe who scolded him for his supposed arrogance and foolishness. The overwhelming criticism Semmelweis received and the indifference to the suffering shown by the physicians who could have prevented it had they used his methods, made a terrible impact on the doctor's mental health. Emotional exhaustion from overwork and unbearable stress led to Semmelweis being diagnosed in 1861 with severe depression. In 1865, he was transferred to an insane asylum in Vienna where he died two weeks later.

Years after his death, especially with the discovery of the germ theory, Semmelweis' contribution to medicine was understood and his studies became commonly accepted within the medical community, even by those who had previously rejected them. Many universities and hospitals in Austria and Hungary are now named in honour of the great physician.

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How to Boost Your Immune System

Gabriel Czubak, IBDP Year 2 student

Physical health and the body's cells' resilience to bacteria and other microorganisms, immunity, are one of the most important aspects of life. These aspects determine the state of one's mental and emotional health and are an utmost priority when it comes to taking care of the body as a whole. A feeble immunity and, therefore, a poor physical condition can entail permanent physical and mental illnesses or disorders and lead to death. Therefore, physical health, the immune system and how these are cared for is extremely important for everyone. Especially in the time of COVID-19 and isolation where the coronavirus itself and decreased physical activity increase the risk of

infection, illness and a poor health condition.

Adhering to doctor's advice and taking various medications, prescribed by a doctor, is the greatest priority related to a healthy body and strong immunity. However, apart from the medicine prescribed by a doctor and their advice, there are other factors of everyday life which influence one's health. Considering these factors and engaging in impacting them through various methods could improve one's health and immunity.

The following have a great influence on immunity and health:



Sleep

During deep sleep our body repairs cells and disposes of toxins in the brain. Therefore, in general, the cells and tissues of the body respire properly and are more immune to any type of infection. Depending on the person, the optimum amount of sleep is between 6 to 10 hours.



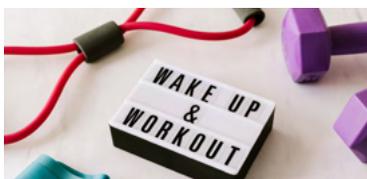
Nutrient intake

Eating healthy foods and drinking a sufficient amount of water are key for a strong immunity. Providing the body with an adequate proportion of carbohydrates, proteins, fibres, vitamins, healthy fats and minerals everyday contributes to the proper assimilation of nutrients by the body's cells and, thus, enables them to respire properly and become more immune to any type of infection.



Vitamin and mineral supplements

Vitamins, organic compounds which are needed for growth and nutrition and are not produced by the body itself, improve the condition of cells' functioning and increase immunity. Such vitamins are vitamin C and vitamin D3. However, their recommended intake should not be exceeded as it will not result in greater immunity. Rather, it could actually result in a weakened immunity.



Physical exercise

Any form of physical exercise improves, to an extent, cellular functioning, assimilation of nutrients and the transportation of nutrients around the body through the blood circulation. Hence, cells become more immune to many infections. An increase in physical exercise can generally increase immunity. However, only to an extent; if cells are over-trained and exhausted, they might become less immune.



Gut health

Looking after the health of the gut and maintaining the right balance of microorganisms that live in the digestive tract is vital for immunity. Some scientists even claim that 70 percent of your immune system is located in your gut. To ensure that your digestive system is functioning properly avoid processed foods as they contain preservatives and flavour enhancers. Try consuming fiber-rich foods such as fruits, grains, nuts and vegetables, it helps bowel movements and keeps your microbiome in balance. Foods that contain probiotics or healthy bacteria allow efficient nutrient breakdown and absorption. Probiotics can be found in fermented foods such as pickled vegetables, miso and yogurts. Avoid alcohol and caffeine since they can disrupt the balance of good and bad bacteria in your gut.

The state of the body's immunity has a great impact on physical but also on mental health. The body's cellular resistance to viral, bacterial and even fungal infections also, indirectly, determines a person's emotional state and, therefore, condition of the life they live. Therefore, the immune system is the most important aspect

with regards to the body as a whole and especially during the time of the coronavirus pandemic when the risk of infection increased substantially. This is why it is vital to ensure that you know the methods to boost your immunity.



Treatments for COVID-19

Wiktorja Zgoda, pre-IBDP student

COVID-19 is an infectious respiratory disease that is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. Some people require very intensive care in hospitals, such as mechanical ventilation or oxygen tanks. Therefore different treatments can be very useful. In this article I will discuss in more detail two treatments: convalescent plasma and hydroxychloroquine.

Plasma treatment uses blood from people who have already recovered from an illness to help other people in recovering. The FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) has allowed this form of therapy to treat people with coronavirus before the COVID-19 vaccines got emergency approved. This treatment is effective because blood from patients who have recuperated from COVID-19 is composed of antibodies to the virus. For the procedure the blood cells have to be removed, just the plasma and antibodies are needed. By using convalescent plasma we can help boost the patients ability to fight the virus. It can shorten the duration, and may also reduce the intensity of the disease. Plasma treatment has been previously used for treating other viruses. It only takes about two hours to complete, and an injection or a drip is used. Convalescent plasma therapy as almost all types of cures can cause side effects, but it is usually very well tolerated by patients. The risk is low, because the blood is tested before the procedure but occasionally it can lead to some difficulties in breathing, HIV, hepatitis B or C, and allergic reactions. Even though

blood donors have already recovered from COVID-19, there is still a slight chance of infection with the virus, but it has not been fully tested yet. For the treatment to be even more effective and to decrease or even eliminate the complications there has to be more research done.

Hydroxychloroquine (sold under the brand name Plaquenil) has been used for years for malaria and different rheumatic diseases and has also been tried out in treating COVID-19. Hydroxychloroquine was approved for medical use in the United States in 1955 and despite minor side effects it is safe enough to be used in pregnant women and to be sold over the counter in some countries. It is deemed by the WHO an essential medication. At the beginning of the pandemic, Didier Raoult, who is a renowned and most widely cited physician and microbiologist specialising in infectious diseases started to use this drug for his COVID-19 patients. He has treated 3,737 COVID-19 patients with this substance in an institute, located in Marseille, France. The analysis reveals that a combination of an early diagnosis of COVID-19, early isolation and at least 3 days of hydroxychloroquine treatment can lead to a better outcome in fighting the disease compared to other types of medication. Another physician, Vladimir Zelenko, discovered that combining a low-dose hydroxychloroquine with zinc and azithromycin can be an effective therapeutic approach against COVID-19 in an outpatient setting. The patients who were using these substances in order to fight severe cases of

the virus required fewer hospitalisations, and no cardiac side effects were observed. However, Zelenko stresses the importance of treating the illness early on in an outpatient setting before the lungs become severely infected and it is too late to reverse the inflammation. It has to be noted here that in WHO clinical trials four times higher doses of hydroxychloroquine were used and such protocol was deemed to be ineffective or even harmful. Taking into account other clinical trials there seems to be no consensus among scientists on the benefit of this medicine despite the numerous successes of physicians around the world in saving people's lives.

All things considered, if we want to provide new ways of treating the virus, or continue using the treatments that are already known we still need more clinical testing. But I believe that we can be very optimistic about using convalescent plasma, as well as hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 as they reveal very promising results. There are also other treatments available that have not been described in this article, namely Ivermectin which is believed to reduce lung inflammation and inhaled corticosteroid Budesonide normally used for asthma (Oxford study). There is also a new emergency authorised drug called Sotrovimab, a monoclonal antibody administered through intravenous infusion. It is important that there is a range of treatments to handle the emerging variants and for patients experiencing adverse reactions to other therapeutics.

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DEALING WITH THE PANDEMIC – COVID-19 VACCINES

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Introduction

The aim of this report is to bring closer to the readers the types of COVID-19 vaccines as well as reasons why they are needed all over the world. Recent COVID-19 pandemic has shocked the world. Life for most of the people has been turned upside down, businesses have been closed along with schools essentially worldwide. By most, pandemic is seen as something temporary, more like an abnormality than new reality. Lockdowns which have become the most popular way to fight COVID-19 pandemic have been implemented at some point in every western country but sometimes with little effect. Herd immunity which has been seen as a possible solution to the current pandemic at the beginning, now is often referred to as „out of the reach”. According to the research that has been conducted by the University of Connecticut the only possible answer to bringing back the „normality” is to vaccinate at least 70% - 80% of the population.

General information about COVID-19 vaccines

There have been more than 90 different vaccines developed (at least at some stage) in order to fight COVID-19. Unfortunately, most of them have failed clinical trials and only (at the time of writing this report) four are considered, all around the world, to be effective and safe. There are also a few vaccines which are widely used but only in a few selected countries, for example CoronaVac and Sputnik-V. It is important to note that COVID-19 vaccines have all been emergency approved and thus they are all at the experimental stage. Therefore obligatory vaccination cannot be imposed since it would be a violation of the Nuremberg code. However, even at this stage of the clinical trials the benefits of the roll-out of vaccines seem to outweigh the possible risks.

Protein subunit vaccines

It is quite a popular type of vaccines in general. The main goal of this type of vaccine is to introduce an isolated protein of the pathogen, in other words a harmless part of the virus to spark reaction from antibodies and T-lymphocytes that they will „remember” how to protect the body from coronavirus. This approach has been taken by the producers of Novavax COVID-19 vaccine and Sanofi-GlaxoSmithKline vaccine.

Vector vaccines

They are not widely used mainly because there were other less expensive ways to produce equivalents. The primary objective of this vaccine is to introduce another version of a virus, with a part of the virus that causes COVID-19 into the body. From this point of view the process is very similar to the one in protein subunit vaccines. AstraZeneca/Oxford, Johnson & Johnson and Sputnik-V are representing this type of a vaccine.

mRNA vaccines

This type of a vaccine is relatively new but it does not mean that it is not safe. mRNA vaccines are often portrayed by many scientists and scientific journals as a vaccine of the future. It contains some material from SARS-Cov-2 that gives instructions to the body how to make a copy of the spike of coronavirus protein and to protect against it. This approach has been adopted by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna during development of their vaccines.

Possible side effects

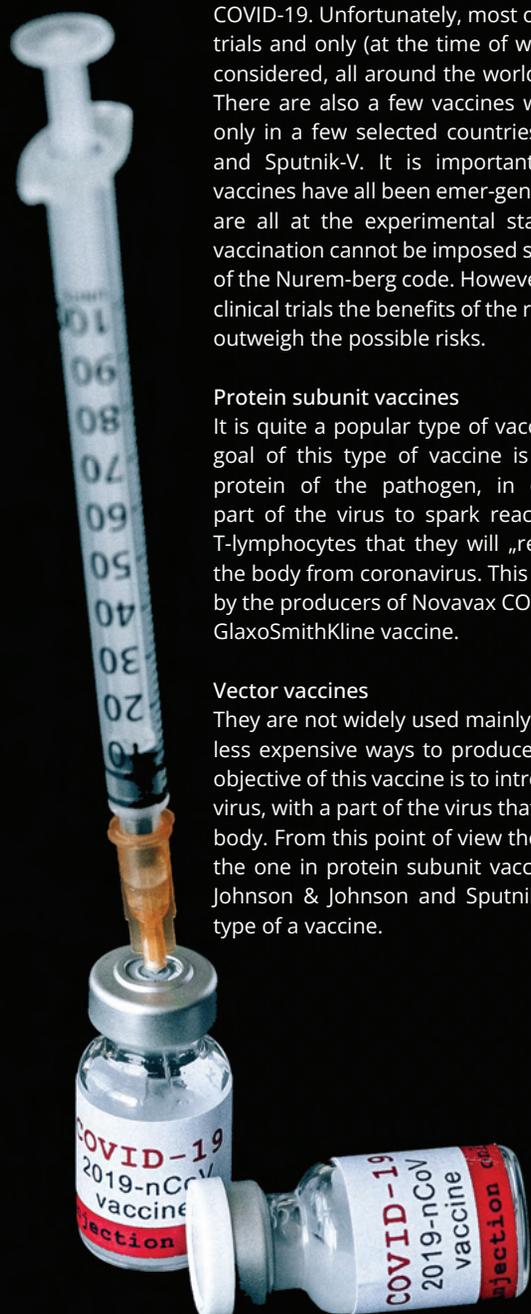
Most of them are minor and should not cause concern. However, there are very rare cases of severe reactions to the vaccination. The most controversial vaccine is AstraZeneca's Vaxzeveria. European Medicines Agency has investigated 86 cases, that were reported in EudraVigilance, from which 18 were fatal. It is important to highlight that 25 million doses were administered, which is about 1 serious incident per 300 000 successful vaccinations. In a few countries, vaccinations with Vaxzeveria have been halted temporarily. In Denmark, they have been suspended because of a link between 7 cases of VITT or blood clots (out of 280 000). Anton Pottegård and his team (that has conducted this research) came to the conclusion that their findings do not conflict with EMA's statement and vaccines are safe. Also Norway has decided not to use the AstraZeneca vaccine and to redistribute the doses to other countries. Johnson and Johnson's Janssen vaccine also sparked lots of discussions regarding the occurrence of blood clots and VITT. In Norway, J&J shots serve as an emergency stockpile and are not used as part of its inoculation programme. As of April 12th, around 7 million shots of Janssen have been administered in the USA and 6 serious incidents were reported.

Conclusion

Vaccination seems to the majority of scientific community to be the only permanent solution to the current pandemic, at least at this moment. Vaccines are very safe even if 1 person out of thousands may suffer from severe side effects, COVID-19 and its complications are claimed to be more dangerous. Developments and researches are being conducted every day and we may be confident that more vaccines are going to be developed in the near future.

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EFT – a much needed way of relieving stress

Natalia Czepielik, pre-IBDP student

The Emotional Freedom Technique, otherwise known as tapping, is an alternative treatment for healing many mental illnesses, anxiety, phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder and other conditions. Ancient Chinese acupressure and modern psychology were combined to create EFT, as a means of relieving stress and calming down fears. The developer of EFT, Greg Craig, believes that tapping allows us to balance energy and reduce emotional, or even physical, pain.

How does it work? The technique itself is very simple. It might even seem too easy to actually be able to heal people. It is based on the concept of meridian points which are believed, especially in Chinese medicine, to be the areas in our bodies where energy flows. There are nine main meridian points: side of the hand, top of the head, beginning of the eyebrow, side of the eye, under the eye, under the nose, chin, beginning of the collarbone and under the arm. Focusing on those points allows us to restore balance needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle. EFT uses fingertip tapping to apply pressure on them. Doing that sends signals to your brain, specifically the section that is responsible for handling stress. However, while tapping those points it is also necessary to repeat a certain phrase in your mind. In fact, it is supposed to be a phrase that helps you accept yourself despite your issue.

It is important to mention that EFT, as a healing technique, has had a huge impact on the mental and physical health of millions of people. A lot of research has been done on the topic and although tapping cannot yet be compared to other standard treatments, it seems like there are a lot of benefits that come with trying it out. Even if it does not heal everyone's medical conditions, it can still help with finding a new mindset, for instance, one that focuses on positivity and confidence.

The Emotional Freedom Technique is not about immediately healing people and quickly getting rid of their diseases. The treatment simply allows them to get the power to heal themselves. It offers a way for the good energy to start flowing through their bodies again.

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