

ONLINE LEARNING:

Challenges *and* Responses



INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL ISSUE OF LOYOLA ELECTRONIC NEWS SERVICE

LOYOLA SCHOOL

SREEKARIYAM P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



VOL.1 | NO.2 | 15 AUGUST 2020



Publisher

Fr. P. T. Joseph, S. J.
Principal
Loyola School
Thiruvananthapuram

Coordinator

Fr. Roy Alex, S. J.

Editor & Graphic Designer

James Thomas

Contributors

Fr. P.T. Joseph, S. J.	
From the Principal's Desk	3
Major Nikhil Chacko	
Independence Day Message	5

PTA Representatives

Maneesh M. K.	
If nothing ever changed...	6
Merlin George	
Online classes, the new norm	8
Renju Pillai	
From real to virtual	10

Teachers

Bansa Prem	12
Aswathy R. Philip	14
Josmy Thomas	16
Krishna Priya	17
Sandhya George	19
Ramachandran G.	20

Student-Speakers

Akshay Akash, XI A	21
Anantha Krishnan A.D., XII A	22
Geevarghese Nebu, XII D	23
Nandan M., XI E	24
B. Rishikesh Varier, XI B	25
Samuel John, XII B	26
Vaisayan Bhattacharya, XI C	27

Student-Writers

Aakarsh Yogesh Nair, IX B	28
Abhishek C. Wilfred, VIII A	29
Afthab Feroz, VII A	30
Akshaj Deepak, X B	31
Ananthapadmanabhan Nair S., IX C	32
Benjamin James, VI A	33
Devanarayanan V., X A	34
Jaison Ajo Joseph, VI C	35
Kevin Salins, IX A	36
Manav R., VIII B	37
Mohammed Ibnu Anzar, VI D	38
Sean N. Neil, VII C	39
Sreesankar B., VI B	40
Vinayak Krishna, VII B	41
<i>Breaking News</i>	42



From the Principal's Desk...

The second edition of LENS is ready to be released. During this lockdown period, our editors of LENS, James Thomas Sir and Fr. Roy Alex are working hard to update you with all the news and happenings of the school. In this edition, they have focussed on online learning and teaching experiences of parents, teachers and students. This edition also brings in huge participation of all stakeholders of Loyola. On this occasion, I invite you to read about the new initiatives at Loyola.

1. New Commerce Batch for Std. XI

In July Loyola launched the Commerce Batch for Std. XI. There were several hurdles to start this: hiring new teachers, approval from the ISC council, late announcement of the starting of the programme, etc. I hope next year onwards more students will join the commerce batch.

2. Introduction of Artificial Intelligence for Stds. V to VIII

To give a head start to our technology-oriented students, Loyola In collaboration with UST Global, launched an Artificial Intelligence program for classes 5-8. Only when the school reopens, students will be able to use the AI lab. Till then UST Global is

familiarising students with concepts about Artificial Intelligence. I am really inspired by the enthusiasm of the students in the class.

3. Introduction of Artificial Intelligence for Std. XI

I have started teaching an introductory course in AI for Class XI. CBSE has introduced AI in its curriculum for class XI as a skill development subject. This year the students will learn to program Jupyter notebook using tools like Matplotlib, Numpy, Pandas and Keras and apply them for developing Artificial Neural Networks.

4. Introduction of Entrance Coaching for JEE/NEET

Under the school's supervision, *Extramarks* will train students to write JEE/NEET. By the time this project was initiated in July, most students enrolled themselves in other platforms. However, I hope that this foray in to Entrance coaching under the supervision of the school will be an innovative one which will benefit students in the long run. The focus is to connect the school curriculum with entrance coaching at affordable prices with the help of technology. The program was launched officially on 7th August.

5. Introduction of competitive exam preparations for students of classes VI to IX

This program aims to prepare students for all competitive exams. Loyola School is making use of *Extramarks* platform for adaptive learning and link it with the school curriculum. Loyola School plans to innovate teaching-learning process using technology. This programme was launched on 8th August.

6. Reduction of class strength for UKG to Std. VI

To increase personal care of students, the class strength was reduced to 35 and an extra division was added to UKG to Std.VI. As more and more class rooms become available, Loyola will continue this process.

I wish you all a Happy Independence Day.

Fr. P. T. Joseph, S. J.



Independence Day Message

We should always cherish and celebrate the independence we enjoy in all our decisions. A thin line exists between the independence and indulgence of an individual. It takes for people to respect one another and take a conscious decision that their carnal desires will not take the better of them to

exploit the decency of his unsuspecting neighbour. When one cries for freedom, does he intend to curtail another man's freedom to enjoy his so-called right?

The British succeeded in uniting a divided subcontinent but before their departure, they succeeded in dividing it as well on the lines of religion. As we cherish how we overcome colonialists who filled their coffers while people died due to starvation, we should remember not to become like those whom we scoff at. Personalities like Sashi Tharoor have taken on the British in a civilized manner engaging in debates and reminding the present youth how their ancestors were. The legacy of the British is one that the present generation tries to forget.

Aim to create a legacy that everyone will cherish. This begins by respecting one

another and suppressing our desire to dominate others. We should endeavour to serve others and thereby serve our motherland by constantly and consciously sacrificing our desires and helping all those we can.

Take small steps, like helping the ayah to sweep the class you study in, and gradually you will see that you are able to think more of your neighbours than yourself. But never forget that the best service you can do to yourself, your family and the nation is to do the best in what you are entrusted with; however insignificant it may seem to you, it is always important for another who is counting on you.



Major Nikhil Chacko

Additional Director (Logistics and IT)
Kerala and Lakshadweep Directorate

Loyolite of the 2004 ISC Batch



Maneesh M.K.

PTA Representative, UKG-B

If nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies!

Being a parent of a boy who is starting his formal schooling, I wanted to give him the best of what I can. Selection of school being the first milestone, he got it covered with getting admission to Loyola. Next comes the most unexpected hurdle, COVID-19. I highly appreciate the Management and Staff of Loyola for implementing the digital platforms and adapting to it promptly while the pandemic wave is hitting us hard on every aspect of life. I wondered how to make my boy sit in front of a computer screen for even half an hour listening to lectures and study.

But now I'm seeing him longing and excited for the evening sessions and missing it on weekends.

It is no magic other than the teacher's talent in making them engaged and entertained throughout the session. Being part of these sessions gave me a glimpse of the teachers' patience and efforts for these kids in a real class environment.

friends. And these sessions are the only means for them to see and hear a few others of their kind. It is not only the kids who missed the essence of real classrooms, but teachers are also missing their students' chit chats, non-stop questions, and naughtiness, which made their regular day.

I'm pretty fortunate to be in the company of parents who co-operate with the situations and

adapt to the challenges of the new digital platform. With the sessions recorded and notes shared, students don't have a chance of missing a class.

Comment from a fellow parent: "The online classes are a great initiative during this pandemic phase to bridge the education for the kids. Both parents and kids are



Even at this age, when they can't sit tight to a chair for ten minutes, boys pay excellent attention to the sessions and are eagerly waiting for the teacher to call their names. The teacher is also making sure that all students are being called and attended to regularly.

As this pandemic forced our kids to be restrained within the walls, they miss some significant concepts of real-life education from a physical class where they learn, play, fight, and make

enjoying the online classes. It is well planned and laid out, easy for kids to follow. Topics are not overloaded and very well lectured by Ma'am. The schedule is fully utilized, and the syllabus is being covered smoothly. Kudos to the entire Loyola family!"

A big thanks to MS Teams, WhatsApp, and the internet providers for the technology platforms and seamless connectivity, which enabled us to fight against these unexpected challenges.



Merlin George

PTA Representative, IC



Online Classes

The New Norm

It is so comforting to know that all of us are facing this new situation together. Of course, the situation is not ideal. We have no idea how long this will last, and on the final count, we are doing quite well considering the mess that the entire planet is in right now. But my eyes never fail to become slightly teary when I hear the little voices say with a sense of despair, 'I miss school'.

I am in a unique position when it comes to online classes. I am a teacher and a mother, and a parent representative at the same time. And to be honest, at times when things get crazy I find all these roles getting muddled up in my head. Now, online classes as with

everything else in life have both benefits and challenges. The main benefit, of course, is that every lazy mother dreams of once in a while: no dirty white shirts to wash, no early tiffin boxes to pack, and no morning wrestling match. Another big plus is being able to see how

one's child behaves in a classroom setting, albeit a virtual one.

As a mother, I have always been curious how my kids would behave in the classroom and interact with their friends and teachers in my absence. We all know from our own childhood that it will be different. Being with my son during these classes has given me a lot of insight into his personality, learning style, and communication. It is so nice to see the strong bonds that he has built with his friends and teachers. It has also helped me understand how our teachers make this highly energetic bunch learn anything from scratch. Sometimes, a tendency to judge does creep in, but then I remind myself that I am a teacher too. It is simply not easy for any teacher to be totally free of pressure knowing that at least a few

of the eyes on the other side of the camera may be judgmental or prejudiced. Also, as a teacher, I must say that I keep an eye out for the strategies that my son's teachers use to control the class and to get things across even with all the obvious limitations..

Another fun yet taxing bit is being the representative. With the innumerable technical snags and communication gaps that are bound to happen in this situation which is new to us, it is no easy task to be the 'first line defender'. Especially when I have on my to-do list a thesis

waiting to be written, meals to be cooked, and homework to be helped with. One of the main responsibilities is being the point of contact between teachers and parents and ensuring that the line of communication remains open and clear. Relaying the concerns communicated by the teachers and providing timely feedback to parents is something that is called



for on a regular basis. Satisfaction that I get via better arrangement of online classes is what drives me forward.

It is so comforting to know that all of us are facing this new situation together. Of course, the situation is not ideal. We have no idea how long this will last, and on the final count, we are doing quite well considering the mess that the entire planet is in right now. But my eyes never fail to become slightly teary when I hear the little voices say with a sense of despair, 'I miss school'.



Renju Pillai

PTA Representative, XII B

From Real to Virtual



It has been about four months since the schools was closed, and the kids constrained within the four walls of their houses. The kids miss the schools, the open ground, the fresh air in the morning, the grand assemblies, the hustle and bustle in the classrooms and the one-to-one interaction with their favourite teachers.

COVID-19 has compelled a kind of house-arrest for our vibrant boys of Loyola also, right from mid-March of 2020. Initial days of forced vacation were very joyful, as they thought that it would be just a bigger vacation than those during the previous years. However, the joy started fading, when they realized that the pandemic is here to stay. Soon, the school management came up with a solution, and Loyola was among the foremost in starting online classes. The 12th grade students started online vacation classes via Zoom, since they were to be prepared for the next board exam. It was a first experience for most teachers to deliver online lessons since everyone was new to such a mode of teaching, there were all sorts of problems, like camera not focusing, poor audio, internet connectivity issues, sessions getting timed out, and on top of that, even the boys playing pranks with the online platforms. The newer the generation is, the more tech savvy they are; hence it was easy for them to play pranks, with fancy backgrounds, and even muting and unmuting the teachers while they were teaching. As a parent, I wondered about tons of patience a teacher must be carrying,

The Loyola sons definitely miss the mighty campus. But, one thing is sure, the boys, their teachers, the school and the parents are together to fight against the challenges thrown to us. We all are one team!

in order to deal with the students and cope with such stress. Teaching is, for sure, one among the noblest professions in the world!

In less than a week, the online mode got stabilized and classes continued in Zoom. Later, by June 2020, the school came up with a more sophisticated and an excellent learning platform for the students – the Microsoft Teams! This became a turning point in the entire online learning experience. Ability to schedule classes, allocate and

correct the assignments on time, run MCQ tests are a few conveniences provided by MS Teams. There are regular sessions as per timetable, the extra doubt-clearing sessions, the zero hour for chitchats, co-curricular activities

and what not – even unit tests via the online mode!

We don't know the future after the pandemic, and we don't know how long it is going to continue in the virtual mode. The Loyola sons definitely miss the mighty campus. But, one thing is sure, the boys, their teachers, the school and the parents are together to fight against the challenges thrown to us.

We all are one team!

Cheers!

MAGIS



Bansa Prem



Whether we are tech-savvy or not, we have been shaken up overnight and forced to upgrade our pedagogical and communication tools. Initially, it was a surreal experience teaching in silo, talking to a screen where my children appeared in boxes and my classes occurred in 'space' rather than 'place'.

"The illiterates of the future are not those who can't read or write but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn." These words of Alvin Toffler ring uncannily true in the context of teachers during this lockdown.

Announcement of suspension of classroom teaching, accompanied by directive to teachers, to continue to be available as per their timetables, through e-resources, threw us into a tizzy. Whether we are tech-savvy or not,

we have been shaken up overnight and forced to upgrade our pedagogical and communication tools.

Initially, it was a surreal experience teaching in silo, talking to a screen where my children appeared in boxes and my classes occurred in 'space' rather than 'place'. I missed my students' mischievous smiles, friendly gestures, laughter, fisticuffs, redressing their petty grievances and of course their curious faces with unbridled youthful energy. On the other hand, I could find solace in being able to mute 40 and listen to one child speaking.

Grappling with domestic responsibilities and faltering internet connections, the transition hasn't been seamless. Every day we do "mental gymnastics" to unlearn and figure out ways of humanizing the classroom experience online.

Now, the nervousness of the first class or two has given way to a newfound assurance. The see-saw with students somehow started to bring normalcy to an otherwise trying situation. Student feedback that they are able to understand us is encouraging.

Students have been convinced to turn on their cameras and when we see them look quizzical or nod in agreement, we know when to pause and when to move

We can lament the loss of teaching as we knew it. We can debate the presumed privilege and inevitable exclusion built into this virtual world and its worth. But there is greater merit in believing that what we do makes a difference.

on. They have learned to raise their hands virtually and we to take questions posed simultaneously. Teaching language in online platform has made it easy for me to evaluate listening, speaking and reading skills. As we unlearn and master techniques of sharing screens and writing on virtual whiteboards, we feel newly empowered and equipped.

We can lament the loss of teaching as we knew it. We can debate the presumed privilege and inevitable exclusion built into this virtual world and its worth. But there is greater merit in believing that what we do makes a difference. Thus, let's strive to maintain the gentle rhythm of probing and guiding and opening debates to splendidly active young minds. Let us unlearn to reinvent ourselves.

ON THE

NEW

NORMAL



Aswathy R. Philip



For a novice to technology it was a nightmare coming true, but with little or no choice I turned a student once again. From downloading apps and learning their uses, setting up class timetable, preparing for online classes, making presentations, all had to be done in a week's time. It was an experience in itself learning from colleagues, teaching colleagues what little I have learnt.

The year 2020 was welcomed with all pomp and glory, like every New Year. 'Twenty twenty' has an added charm to the name too, doesn't it? Soon after the New Year, we at Loyola were

getting ready to bid adieu to the outgoing batch of 2020. Teachers were busy preparing question papers, finishing portions, doing last minute revisions, arranging the labs etc. Little did we know

that life would turn turtle in a few months and phrases and words like quarantine, pandemic, total lockdown, break the chain, all became part of our life.

Government declared closure of schools in March. We considered it just as an extended vacation. Not in our wildest dreams did we foresee what was in store. Slowly the virus spread, it dawned on everyone that schools are not going to reopen in the near future. We needed to find new avenues. The only option was to go online!

For a novice to technology it was a nightmare coming true, but with little or no choice I turned a student once again. From downloading apps and learning their uses, setting up class timetable, preparing for online classes, making presentations, all had to be done in a week's time. It was an experience in itself learning from colleagues, teaching colleagues what little I have learnt. Quite often the entire family too contributed in the learning process. It definitely helped in building up a rapport amongst the colleagues too. Learning about the technology used, typing question papers, preparing lesson plans for online teaching, all alien tasks till date slowly started taking shape. I became a student to my students who were ever willing to teach their teacher. It definitely was a refreshing experience.

Goof-ups gave hilarious moments to my family, for instance when

James sir suggested that we enter a specific file name to the file with mark list, I promptly entered the suggested file name as the subject of the mail I sent him. I cannot explain the anxiety and panic attacks seeing the red triangle light up on my laptop which signifies poor connectivity. Screenshots of my 'frozen face' and slurred speech from my students disheartened me many a time.

Like any Loyolite who considers his school as his home, who loves to play to his heart's content on the grounds, I too look forward to the day when the school gates open and the empty corridors and classrooms become vibrant once again with loving Loyolites buzzing around.

In comparing physical and virtual classroom, the latter lacks the touch of the vibrancy. Interactive sessions and personal attention to students are missing. Effectiveness of what we convey to the children is always doubtful. But change indeed is the constant, so we need to embrace the changes and move on, making the best of the given circumstances.

Like any Loyolite who considers his school as his home, who loves to play to his heart's content on the grounds, I too look forward to the day when the school gates open and the empty corridors and classrooms become vibrant once again with loving Loyolites buzzing around.

My online Teaching Experience



Josmy Thomas

He showed his book through the web camera and asked me. 'Ma'am, is this neat?' I tried to read the numbers but the laptop monitor reminded me of the 'screen of fog.' So I told him: "I cannot see anything, my dear." He was upset, not being able to reach out to

generation. Learning must go on. We all have accepted the challenge with lots of uncertainty. Online classes did not bog me down but yes, I was worried about technical glitches, internet speed and power failure. I swallowed the pain of not

being able to see my entire class together.

It is a month now, and I am settled. COVID-19 is taking a toll on our minds; we need to relax and enjoy nature.

Perhaps, the effect of the pandemic is different from person to person.

I used to enjoy the

evening rain with its changing tone and rhythm, but these days even the overcast sky makes me anxious, and I hear myself asking: "Will it pose any problem during my class?"

I miss the Loyola premises; the flowers and trees are waiting for the children to be around. Let us all pray for the day when all of us come together to resume singing in unison: *Cheer Loyola's Sons.*

me. My heart was ripped apart. I realised that it was a virtual class room where I cannot touch my tiny tots, where they cannot gather around my table and chit-chat, where they cannot try to hypnotize me with their magical identity cards.... I miss you terribly my dear boys!

COVID-19 has forced online classes on us. I am a teacher and all the teachers are responsible for the future





Krishna Priya

To March

Now all you do is wake up in the morning, mostly with the thoughts of any glitches that you may have to face or may have committed. 'Did I send everything? Am I in the list of defaulters? Did I schedule the meeting?' are the questions that run through your mind. Instead of switching on the lights in the kitchen, you switch on the laptop and check if everything is all set. If the Internet is on, all is well. If not, a duel is on the cards.

Upsetting the Apple Cart, the month March, named after the Roman God of Wars, brought us an unwelcome visitor. Though we started to feel the chill towards the end of January, things were normal till mid-March. However, the master didn't feel like staying in Thrissur; it wanted to wreak havoc and disrupt the lives of the abnormally normal human beings.

Does that ring a bell? The first corona case in India was reported in our God's own country in January. Well, we have come a long way. The cumulative tally shows that the master has gained supreme control and India has recorded 18,04, 077 cases as of July 31.

This number takes me back to the

time when all of us would eagerly wait for the press conference to know the numbers. Sometimes the drama would take us directly to Mere Pyaare Deswasiyon. I don't blame you if you are reminded of Mark Antony's famous speech, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears..." With a patient shrug, forgetting all the differences, we lent our eyes and ears to decipher the meaning of the precious few hundred words born out of that historical moment.

What a visually tantalizing image I have of the scene!

Ironically, that visual brings me to the soul-searching journeys that we made to place ourselves in a remote land where you can fly like a bird

and hike to reach the top of a summit. After you ascend, you descend to the Monday blues that welcome you with both arms into the second home to meet the young minds, all eager to conquer. Despite the risks that hover over us, the only desire is to return.

Now all you do is wake up in the morning, mostly with the thoughts of any glitches that you may have to face or may have committed. 'Did I send everything? Am I in the list of defaulters? Did I schedule the meeting?' are the questions that run through your mind. Instead of switching on the lights in the kitchen, you switch on the laptop and check if everything is all set. If the Internet is on, all is well. If not, a duel is on the cards. After getting rid of the bug, you finally open the front door to let the sun's rays enter your decked up house. As soon as you think of sitting on the veranda with a warm cup of tea, there comes the squealing and wailing of the ones who need to be ready for the online downpour of knowledge. Halfway through, you realize that you haven't picked up the newspaper and drown yourself in the heart-wrenching stories of earthquakes, floods, border conflicts, gold smuggling, NEP and not to forget the corona tracker. Sometimes you also note down some points so that you can conduct a quiz or debate or test to enlighten the enlightened.

After you achieve enlightenment,

From the number of books you wanted to read, to the number of classic movies that you wanted to watch, to trimming your loosely hanging six packs, to cleaning the cupboards, to learning a new language, the list is endless! Believe it or not, we only have four more months before 2020 draws its curtains. So buckle up!

your stomach starts rumbling. You sometimes resort to the leftovers, sometimes to quick and healthy options. However, the inner cook in you who had risen up in the months of March, May and April laughs at you and asks, "Hey, wake up, what happened to your state-of-the-art culinary skills that you had developed? Don't downplay your worth. You are worth more than this!"

With embraced heaviness, you also think about the many promises that you had made to yourself when the lockdown started. From the number of books you wanted to read, to the number of classic movies that you wanted to watch, to trimming your loosely hanging six packs, to cleaning the cupboards, to learning a new language, the list is endless! Believe it or not, we only have four more months before 2020 draws its curtains. So buckle up! There, there, "If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb."



Sandhya George

Little Feats!

Welcome newcomers of the UKG batch of 2020-'21. You are the first and privileged batch of the *Loyola e-family*.

Feats in June!

Building social skills presents new challenges for kids in kindergarten. Our focus in the month of June was to get the children to adapt to the new medium. Interaction with friends and learning in an environment that belongs solely to them but within the framework of school rules was one of the biggest challenges.

Positive reinforcement from the guardians goes a long way with self-esteem during the online session.

Feats in July!

Prayer and class assembly were introduced in the month of July and the children made a 'fun'tastic show of their talents.

Show and tell was yet another

unique experience of the online medium. Those who have pets definitely cannot bring them to school.

Input from a parent

Boys plan things they wish to talk about, even stories they wish to narrate! Once the session is on, they keep asking: "Am I going to be called next?"

It shows the yearning of the toddler to be online – definitely a positive sign!

Teacher Challenges

Coping with connectivity issues and learning the intricacies of this



technology-based teaching were major challenges for the teachers. Our programme is from Monday to Friday, from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, with four divisions taken by four enthusiastic ladies: UKG A by Sandhya George, UKG B by Siji Abraham, UKG C by Rajasree P., and UKG D by Neethu Deepak. Parents rest assured that these toddlers will move on to be confident, talented, academically brilliant and social minded students.

The Pitfalls of Online Classes



Ramachandran G.

Digital communication platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams have enabled teachers sitting in their homes to deliver knowledge at the study rooms of students far and wide. It looks like the reversal of the *gurukula* tradition, the *gurus* going to the disciples! One might think that this is a win-win situation for both the teachers and the students because they can be in their comfort zones and don't have to venture out at all. But, is it really an unmixed blessing? Not quite.

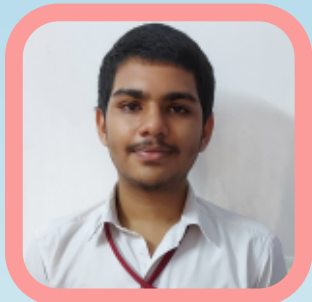
I have asked myself if it takes more time or less to teach online compared to classroom teaching. From the teachers' point of view, preparation takes more time than presentation. It takes longer time to put curricular material together for an online class. I spend a lot of time reshaping my classroom material to suit the online environment. In some cases, activities that I used to do effortlessly in regular classes cannot be adopted for online classes. To be sure, assessments

As for the students, all the socialising made possible by modern technology is no healthy substitute for actual mingling with living human beings in the real world. So, let us all look forward to a reversal of the present paradigm shift.

are made on a regular basis, but proper grading is easier said than done.

Online classes are more challenging to teachers and students who are not tech-savvy, and even if both these groups acquire enough proficiency in the field in due course, they still remain powerless against power failures and internet outage.

As for the students, all the socialising made possible by modern technology is no healthy substitute for actual mingling with living human beings in the real world. So, let us all look forward to a reversal of the present paradigm shift.



Akshay Akash, XI A

Impulse versus Restraint

When you regain your lost freedom, that is, when you make your own decision against one made for you or fill in a gap of information like seeing what a suggestive title is about, you get a surge of feel-good hormones like dopamine and serotonin of which a lower base level makes one predisposed to being impulsive. Though it may be a basic human nature to feel uneasy at times like these, stay home, stay safe.

We, humans, have a strong need to feel like the masters of our fates.

Social distancing and quarantining have become a must and is the reason we do not meet in person anymore. Many will feel uneasy, even those who may not have gone out had it had not been a lockdown, mostly because we didn't decide it for ourselves.

If I were to ask you not to think of a black bear, many would have thought of just that.

Another related aspect is our curiosity. When a behaviour or action is discouraged, it is hard not to be intrigued, and this curiosity leads to the very same action. That is why babies who were apathetic to something suddenly crave for it when we tell them not to touch or play with it. More copies of novels like *The Great Gatsby*, *To kill a Mockingbird*, and *Catcher in the Rye* were sold because of attempts to suppress them. And click-baiting is effective just because we are curious.

These traits lend themselves to brain chemistry. When you regain your lost freedom, that is, when you make your own decision against one made for you or fill in a gap of information like seeing what a suggestive title is about, you get a surge of feel-good hormones like dopamine and serotonin of which a lower base level makes one predisposed to being impulsive.

Though it may be a basic human nature to feel uneasy at times like these, stay home, stay safe.



Anantha Krishnan A.D., XII A

Certainties and Uncertainties

After all, if such a small virus can impact us so drastically, imagine how each and every one of us can influence one another. Life is one dangerous ride. However, you have to trust it. You have to love it.

“The greatest certainty in life is death. The greatest uncertainty in life is the time.” Let me engage your imagination to bring out the truth of this statement.

Imagine that you wake up late on a school day. You get ready and scramble to the bus stop. On the way, you almost collide with a taxi. Fortunately, you escape without a scratch, but you enrage the driver. This near collision distracts him and results in another disastrous collision. It is your fault, though indirectly. If you had set a proper alarm and woken up early, you could have saved a person’s life.

Most of the time, you do not think about this power you have, the power with which you influence everything you come into contact with, directly or indirectly. Take a look at what is happening in the world right now. We are unable to walk out of the house because of the apprehension that an obnoxious virus may cascade down our respiratory tract.

People say that this virus holds a lot of power. Now, change your perspective. Who gave it this power? We did it! The same ones who hustle for power in every situation, accidentally slacked our concentration like the driver and provided something foreign a chance to take over.

What can we do then? In such a situation we should think of our personal wellbeing. Though death is certain, it doesn’t mean that we must not utilize our time here. After all, if such a small virus can impact us so drastically, imagine how each and every one of us can influence one another. Life is one dangerous ride. However, you have to trust it. You have to love it.

Cheer Loyola’s sons.



Geevarghese Nebu, XII D

COVID-19 and its impact on teenagers

When I heard schools were going to close, I was thrilled, like every other teenager. What could be better than not having to get up at the crack of dawn or rush to get to school? I must admit, for the first few weeks, it was brilliant...until the novelty started to wear off.

The few reasons for this could be less exercise, inconsistent routines, social isolation, conflicts among family members, cooped up emotions and so on which tend to become huge problems for us to deal with, within the four walls of our homes.

In these times what we have to accept is that this is the situation that we are in right now and what we have to let go is our doubts, fears and insecurities.

The earlier we do this, the better, and our mindsets will be equipped to fight till the game is won.

Thus, it may be hard for young people like us to remain motivated in relation to school work or planning for the future under the current conditions of the lockdown.

However, what we must realise is that we should overcome this, even though that is easier said than done. Looking at some positive things that people used this lockdown time for, I realised that we should be more productive, learn new skills, improve our physique, spend more time with our family, recognise that dealing with all these problems is completely normal and that we should be kind to ourselves and others.

COVID-19 has changed the way we live, study, and work, possibly forever. No one knows where we will be this time next year, or even next week, and that's scary.

However, as Dodinsky once said, "the key to being happy is knowing that you have the power to choose what to accept and what to let go." In these times what we have to accept is that this is the situation that we are in right now and what we have to let go is our doubts, fears and insecurities. The earlier we do this, the better, and our mindsets will be equipped to fight till the game is won.



Nandan M., XI E

George Mallory

We believe that Tensing and Hillary were the first among humans to conquer Mount Everest, in the year 1953. However, it is also conjectured that there was another man who had conquered Everest before them. His name is George Mallory. Recorded evidence includes a photograph showing him and his friend stand 800 ft. below the summit in 1924. After that they were found missing.

In 1999, a group which went to climb Everest found a human body lying in the distant mountains. In his shirt was written the name 'George Mallory'. His body was found in the pathway meant for returning. Experts say that he must have reached the peak for sure. People who know him say that he was so determined that it was unthinkable for him to return without reaching the peak.

Mallory had promised his wife that on reaching the peak, he would take out her photograph, kiss it and then place it on the summit. The people who examined his body did not get the photograph which proves that he might have reached the summit.

When people asked him what is so great about conquering Everest, his reply was simple: 'I am doing it only for my sheer happiness and also to prove to the world that nothing is impossible to man.' George Mallory may or may not have conquered Everest, but what matters is his determination and attitude towards achieving things, which places him among the most inspiring people in the history of mankind.

George Mallory may or may not have conquered Everest, but what matters is his determination and attitude towards achieving things, which places him among the most inspiring people in the history of mankind.



B. Rishikesh Varier, XI B

Online Class: A Necessary Evil?

Right now, virtual courses allow students to access lessons and exercises and interact with teachers in ways that would have been impossible if an epidemic had closed schools a decade or two earlier. So, even though we may be skeptical of online learning, we have to embrace it and try to improve it.

The sign of the times has dictated closing of school and starting of online education. But, can online lessons replace regular classes? Clearly online time cannot provide many of the informal social interactions students have at school. It is perhaps too early to say how online classes will move student learning forward. Research to date also points to what we could be doing to support students who are most likely to struggle in the online setting.

Most online courses have a format similar to in-person courses. The teacher helps to run virtual discussion among the students, assigns homework, and follows up with individual students. Sometimes these courses coexist and sometimes they do not.

Generally, online classes are not as effective as in-person classes for most students, especially students with weaker academic backgrounds. Still, they are certainly better than no classes. Right now, virtual courses allow students to access lessons and exercises and interact with teachers in ways that would have been impossible if an epidemic had closed schools a decade or two earlier. So, even though we may be skeptical of online learning, we have to embrace it and try to improve it.

Internet of Things



Samuel John, XII B

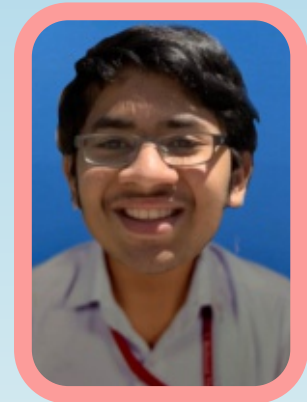
LEGOs, previously known as 'Automatic Building Bricks', have been built with such consistency that every single brick created since 1958 can still interlock together. Isn't that beautiful? I am here to speak a few words on Internet of Things. Now you might wonder what that has to do with Legos. Well, they are synonymous with compatibility. So, what is Internet of Things, often abbreviated IoT? It is a system of interrelated computing devices, mechanical and digital machines provided with unique identifiers and the ability to transfer data over a network without requiring human-to-human or human-to-computer interaction. But how does IoT do it? In essence, an IoT uses its sensors, which are similar to our senses. Each one of these sensors reads its surroundings, searching for pre-programmed

stimuli, and upon finding one, sends the information through the network to its processing unit, which decides what action should be taken, without the user having to move an inch. An example might help to differentiate between IoT and robotics. A robot can sense that it is midnight and collect midnight dew, but IoT can sense that it is midnight in China or ask for water to be boiled in India. The possibilities are endless. Why is it such a good example of compatibility? The reason, one of the biggest plus points of IoT, is that every single system, living or not, man-made or not, can be connected to an IoT as long as it can be given an IP address, which is a rather simple task that can accomplish a great deal.

To conclude, I would like to propose a vision of a world where merely saying the name of a dish gets it purchased from the nearby store, a world where cars drive themselves to a shelter the moment it begins to rain, a world that is way closer than ever before. Thank you!



Music Therapy



Vaisayan Bhattacharya, XI C

Victor Hugo once said “Music expresses that which cannot be put into words.” but I would like to use words to articulate what music can do to us.

If you are a music lover, you would probably have already experienced how a lively song can uplift your spirits and motivate you and how a melody can help you to relax. Music has the power to change our mood. Sometimes, the right sound at the right time can prove to be a therapy without our even realizing it!

Today, we can enjoy myriad genres of music. We can choose from an array of options. We can listen to anyone from jazz player Louis Armstrong to hip-hop rapper Kendrick Lamar, from the insightful Rabindranath Tagore to AR Rahman! I am here not to recommend songs and artists, but to share with you the impact of music in one’s life.



Nowadays, we often feel frustrated, angry or sad. The lockdown, the restrictions, the inability to meet our friends, staying away from Loyola... All this hasn’t been easy on us, but there are things we can do to feel better. Listening to our favourite numbers will make us feel so motivated, and often so inspired that our intrinsic motives alone will drive us way beyond the finishing line.

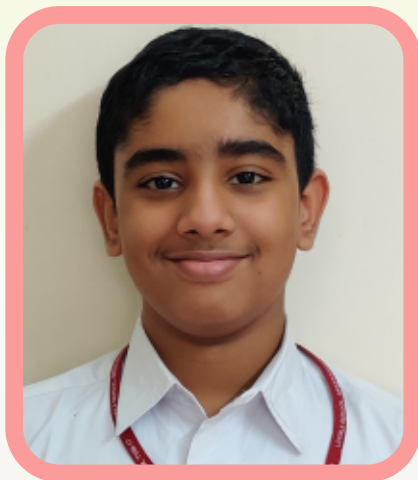
Beethoven said “Music is like a dream...” but I say, “live that dream.”



Our Online Learning Experiences

[STD VI TO X]

Aakarsh Yogesh Nair, IX B



Being a Loyolaite, I consider myself extremely lucky. I believe, we were one of the first educational institutions in Trivandrum to adopt MS Teams for conducting virtual learning sessions. Led by our Respected Father Principal P.T Joseph, SJ; our school found a new teaching mechanism.

We were ready from June 01, to commence our new academic year. Even though there were a few initial glitches, the transition was smooth and all teething problems were resolved.

Our dear teachers were quick to adopt the new way of teaching; some have even become gurus of online teaching. My experience so far has been great. I truly enjoy the new way of being in "virtual classrooms". I do miss the "real classrooms", the school premises, playgrounds, meeting friends and teachers in person. There are many things about school that I miss, but one must learn to adapt oneself to the *new normal*.



Abhishek C. Wilfred, VIII A

On the first day everyone was excited to see each other and was talking among ourselves, as if we were in our old classroom. I was able to hear the teachers clearly and the daily quiz was a great way to make us up-to-date

It was at the end of May when I had my first online meeting. It felt like a great change when I started to experience the 'new-normal' classroom. Before the lockdown I had to sneak my way into getting my hands on my parent's phone but now the tables have turned and I have to use it like my own. On the first day everyone was excited to see each other and was talking among ourselves, as if we were in our old classroom. I was able to hear the teachers clearly and the daily quiz was a great way to make us up-to-date. Before the pandemic it was hard to write down the notes for some slow writers but now the notes are posted online and are permanent for us to write down. Unlike in our old classrooms, each student can get one-on-one attention from the teachers and we are not distracted by anything. Overall the online classes are really helping us through these troubled times.



Afthab Feroz, VII A

“Progress is impossible without change and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.” – Bernard Shaw

I strongly believe the measure of intelligence is the ability to change. Still I prefer the real teaching-learning experience in the classroom environment. I like to have one to one interaction with the teachers and spend time with my friends. I miss the warmth of a normal classroom atmosphere. I do miss school and I hope we can reunite soon.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has created myriad problems and we are forced to adapt ourselves to changes every now and then. One of them is the online learning process. I would like to share my thoughts on this pertinent topic. Online teaching-learning process is the only factor supporting the field of education now. It helps us to stay updated. But there are a handful of disadvantages too. In my opinion, it seems a little difficult to become familiar with the whole system. We should prepare ourselves to accommodate problems like network connectivity issues and other technical glitches. The process is also strange and at first it took me a long time to understand the topics dealt with in the class. I worked quite hard to catch up. Eventually, with the aid of a focused mind and optimistic outlook, I could comprehend things and the process now seems familiar.

I strongly believe the measure of intelligence is the ability to change. Still I prefer the real teaching-learning experience in the classroom environment. I like to have one to one interaction with the teachers and spend time with my friends. I miss the warmth of a normal classroom atmosphere. I do miss school and I hope we can reunite soon.



Akshaj Deepak, X A

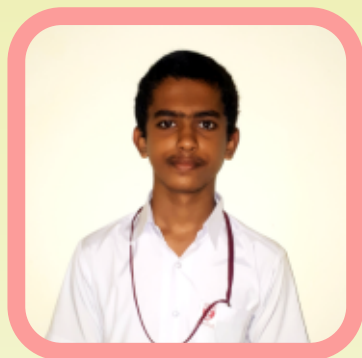
The doubt clearing sessions are innovative, not disrupting the proper flow of class. The debate sessions are enjoyable stressbusters. Overall, I think that our online classes are a one of a kind experience and we will cherish it even when our school re opens.

The beginning of online classes appeared to be rough due to lack of fast internet and good web cameras for students, and the teachers' videos freezing all the time.

Later, the teachers adopted knowledge-rich PowerPoint presentations and whiteboards, making it more interesting. Freezing reduced. The regular assignments kept us on track and the weekly short test technically prepared us for the upcoming Unit Test. Except for the occasional glitch and network errors, classes went well.

The extremely tiring six-period-day caused eye strain, neck and shoulder pain. The finishing of assignments and uploading them added to screen time. The change to four periods eased these.

The doubt clearing sessions are innovative, not disrupting the proper flow of class. The debate sessions are enjoyable stressbusters. Overall, I think that our online classes are a one of a kind experience and we will cherish it even when our school re opens.



Ananthapadmanabhan Nair S., IX C

I like online classes compared to regular classes but at the same time, we lack the freedom to talk and play with our friends in person. We also cannot enjoy the good times we would have had at school.

We have regained our lost togetherness as we are continuing with yet another school year in Loyola School. Learning has a special place among our priorities, so we are morally obliged to learn. Our school has provided a platform directed entirely towards learning and productive interaction with teachers. The Microsoft Teams software has proved to be a great application for online meetings and group discussions.

For me personally, this software is a blessing. It is very efficient and user-friendly due to which the classes go on smoothly. Its features, I feel, allow very convenient answering and submission methods. It is also very efficient when it comes to participating and interacting during the class.

Online learning, in my opinion, has emerged as a more productive method of learning than what I actually expected. It saves time, money and energy. It is very time saving as we don't have to leave our house to learn. Likewise, it also provides us with wider opportunities to express our thoughts and queries. It also prepares us for conditions like this in the coming future. I like online classes compared to regular classes but at the same time, we lack the freedom to talk and play with our friends in person. We also cannot enjoy the good times we would have had at school.

However, one cannot have everything well done. So we need to adjust according to the situations. For now, I am positive that we have the best we could have.



Benjamin James, VI A

This online experiment has been a success because of the tireless effort from our principal, teachers, staff and the parents who give us the necessary guidance. So let us stay home and be safe.

COVID-19 pandemic has taken over the world. People are advised to stay at home to prevent disease transmission. A novel solution to avoid crowding in school was the introduction of online classes.

Our online classes started on June 1st using Microsoft Teams. It was a whole new experience introduced to us using demos. The subjects are taught in five interactive sessions per day, each lasting for forty minutes with ten minutes break between sessions. Assignments and tests are regularly conducted and feedback is given by the teachers. Our favourite extracurricular activities including arts, physical education and music are also conducted online.

Technical problems like power failure and transmission disturbances are sometimes faced which are overcome by viewing class recordings later.

This online experiment has been a success because of the tireless effort from our principal, teachers, staff and the parents who give us the necessary guidance. So let us stay home and be safe.



Devanarayanan V., X A

*Rather than 'the dog
ate my homework, a
new excuse arose
-internet issues!
Everything went fine.
Instead of catching
the bus to go home,
we left the meeting
and closed Microsoft
Teams. That day's
session was over.*

June 1, 2020 was a day different from every other June 1. It was a day on which students readied their laptops, fixed their connections and got ready for a new mode of learning, unlike any other June 1 when students waited for the school bus in the torrential rain of the monsoon season. Instead of the regular school bell, a notification came. Sindhu Ma'am started the Mathematics meeting. Students joined the meeting. Instead of a teacher and 44 students, there was a presenter and 44 attendees. 'Keep quiet' was replaced with constant shouts of 'mute. The 'raise hand' option was also another novel feature of the platform. Students could just click that button if they had to clear a doubt. Rather than 'the dog ate my homework, a new excuse arose - internet issues! Everything went fine. Instead of catching the bus to go home, we left the meeting and closed Microsoft Teams. That day's session was over.



Jaison Ajo Joseph, VI C

The whole world has come to a standstill, and the reason is the COVID-19 pandemic. A lockdown is a requirement for people to stay at home, usually due to specific risks to themselves or to others if they move around freely, a state of isolation or restricted access instituted as a security measure.

But my online classes have been a convenience for me and allowed me additional time with my parents and grandparents at home. Teachers have been putting extra effort to engage us in the online classes. But sometimes internet connection gets interrupted and this causes problems with my online learning. I also feel that we are forced to spend a lot of screen time as part of online classes followed by daily assignments. I surely miss interacting with my friends at school and playing on the school playground.

We have become more alert about personal hygiene and cleanliness. The lockdown has also made us appreciate our parents who usually work day and night to satisfy our daily requirements and never complain. I would also like to appreciate our Principal and the teachers for helping us with online classes.

This lockdown has taught us many lessons about life. We have learnt how to handle difficulties with a positive mind, and I hope these lessons remain with all of us throughout our life. In short, my online learning experience has both pros and cons and still I would cherish this experience throughout my life!



Kevin Salins, IX A

On account of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lockdown was declared a few months back which led to regular classes not being conducted. This inability to conduct the regular classes made everyone turn to the only other option – online classes.

These online classes have provided us an experience almost similar to regular classes but in my opinion, it is way better. We have got only four periods compared to the usual eight of regular classes. There is a lot of free time in the afternoon. Rather than attending eight classes with a break in between every two, we are now attending just four classes with a break in between every single one.

There are drawbacks to this though. Looking at the screen for a long time can be detrimental to our eyes. I feel that looking away from the computer screen whenever content is not being shared can ease this problem. Students can focus on the audio from the teacher rather than staring at the computer screen all the time.

Looking at the technical aspects, glitches in software, power failures and maybe even poor network all affect the ability to attend online classes. These are unavoidable cons of online classes.

Because of the current scenario, a physical classroom is impossible. I think that online classes are the best solution for education during the sort of life we are leading right now. Until the lockdown is lifted, we have to adapt ourselves to learning online.



Manav R., VIII B

Online class saves our time and we can interact more with our family members. We can utilize the rest of the time for our hobbies which is not possible on normal school days. Through online classes, I have frequent access to the digital gadgets which made me a tech-savvy these days. It is interesting when teachers teach with the help of presentations and videos.

“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

Education aims at the overall development of a person. Amidst the times of the pandemic, the traditional sort of education is impracticable. We, the people of the digital era, have to switch over to online education with its virtual classroom. It has its advantages and disadvantages. Since it is a virtual classroom, we can meet our teachers and friends and at the same time keep social distancing which is important in this time. Online class saves our time and we can interact more with our family members. We can utilize the rest of the time for our hobbies which is not possible on normal school days. Through online classes, I have frequent access to the digital gadgets which made me a tech-savvy these days. It is interesting when teachers teach with the help of presentations and videos. The only problem I find is Internet disruptions. My working parents needed to dedicate their valuable time for resolving the technical problems.

Online classes proved that knowledge can be imparted in times of any pandemic. I believe that education plays a crucial role in grinding this virus into bits. Let us all hope for the best!



Mohammed Ibnu Anzar, VI D

Online classes have made me realize how much technology has advanced. It is really mind blowing. This concept was new to students and teachers. From my perspective I feel like it has been a bit weird at first. I was totally confused as to how learning could occur without going to school. I was amazed to see how we all got used to it in less than a couple of weeks. Learning and assessment were happening sitting at home.

In a way, online education is better than classroom teaching. It saves a lot of resources in terms of material, money and time. In the context of COVID, it helps prevent its further spread. Many other infections are also prevented. We all can mute ourselves unlike the normal classrooms and use the raise hand option to ask our doubts.

Some of the points that I noticed are not very good. When there

I was totally confused as to how learning could occur without going to school. I was amazed to see how we all got used to it in less than a couple of weeks. Learning and assessment were happening sitting at home.

are network problems we cannot hear our teacher explaining the topic. We may also miss class because of electricity failure. This really terrifies me because, for a student, not being able to attend a class is very bad. If the teacher records the class and sends it, it will be very useful in these extreme circumstances. Another downside to this is that students can easily get distracted with the electronic devices that they use to attend classes. This can be prevented by better monitoring from parents.

I would also like to say that this has been a new experience for all the students and teachers.



Sean N. Neil, VII C

Finally after about four months of lockdown, it was good to see my friends and teachers at least virtually.

This has been a completely new experience for us students and teachers. We helped each other and got to learn a lot of new things about 'Virtual Learning.' I do miss the physical presence of my teachers and friends.

However, a few advantages that I see are:

- 'Stay home, stay safe' and still continue to learn effectively via modern technology.
- Fun online quizzes, MCQ's to attend.
- A better understanding of how 'work from home' for parents and teachers must feel like.

Some of the disadvantages are:

- Some days, my eyes hurt at the end of the day even though we take breaks in between classes.
- My back hurts sitting without a proper desk unlike in school.

However, after these initial hiccups, my experience with online learning has been fun.



Sreesankar B., VI B

It is a real boon to me that this has helped me to continue studies and at the same time familiarize myself with different computer programs.

COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in closing of schools all over the world. So classroom education has switched to online learning whereby teaching is conducted on a digital platform. When I came to know that schools will remain shut I felt sad because I couldn't meet my friends and teachers. But starting of online classes boosted me as I got an opportunity to meet them again. I felt a bit tensed at the start as I was not used to this learning mode. Also my usage of laptop was limited. But this became interesting through the efforts taken by the teachers. It is a real boon to me that this has helped me to continue studies and and at the same time familiarize myself with different computer programs. On the contrary, continuous usage of electronic gadgets results in stress to eyes and causes headaches. I really miss mingling and playing with my friends. Hope we will overcome these restrictions soon and regain our precious happy school days.



Vinayak Krishna, VI B

My learning areas extended outside the curriculum through Artificial Intelligence and debate sessions. Along with the studies, our school also started physical training, arts and music classes as well.

"A meeting has been scheduled; you are invited to join." My day begins with seeing this message in MS Teams. Initially, words like 'join', 'accept', 'meeting', 'turn in', etc. created confusion for me, but within a week I tackled the problem. For this, I am very thankful to all my teachers for sparing their precious time for our benefit from their home itself. They are creating forms, quizzes and assignments frequently and returning their feedback without any delay. My learning areas extended outside the curriculum

through Artificial Intelligence and debate sessions. Along with the studies, our school also started physical training, arts and music classes as well. Recorded sessions help me to overcome the intermittent connectivity issue. Due to over screen exposure I am getting frequent headache and eye pain and my doctor advised me to do some eye exercises and take compulsory breaks in between the sessions. We can pray to God that vaccine for corona will soon be discovered. Nothing is permanent, surely, we will have sunrise of good times!



Two more Loyolites have made it to the Indian Administrative Service this year. They are Anoop S. of the CBSE stream & Stefan Simon Tobias of the ISC stream.



**ANOOP S.
RANK: 299
CBSE 2011 BATCH**



**STEFAN SIMON TOBIAS
RANK: 362
ISC 2011 BATCH**

***Congratulations
You did all of us proud.***