



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF YAOUNDE

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A look inside
this issue:

GRADE 4

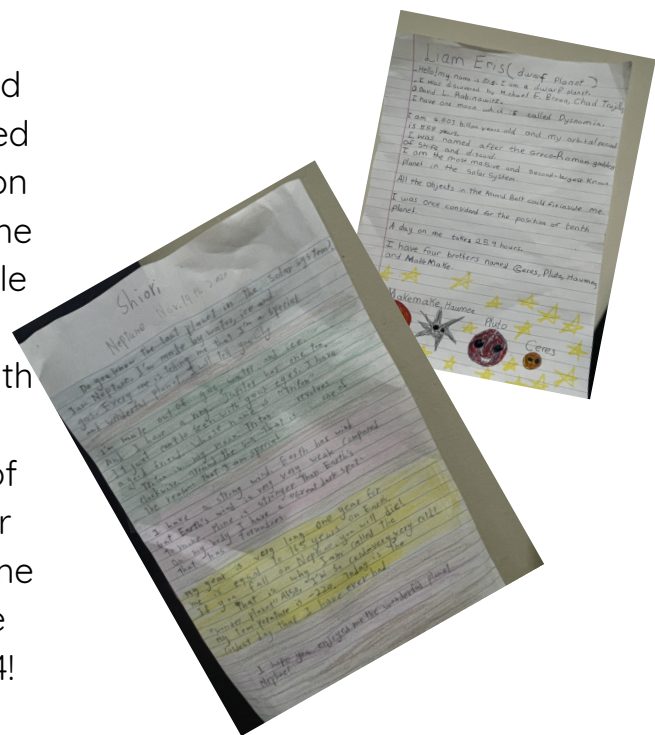
PYP
COORDINATOR -
VIRTUAL
LEARNING

GRADE 3

STUDENT OF
THE MONTH

Grade 4 Vision of the solar system

In Grade 4's How the World Works unit the class created a large scale representation of their understanding of the solar system. This incredible 2m by 2.50m collective display is complimented with planets and stars. Each student researched part of the solar system and their work is displayed around the peripheral of the massive display. Well done Grade 4!



Virtual Learning – is the glass half full or half empty?

BY MS ELLA MONA PERSSON - PYP COORDINATOR

It happened again. ASOY closed campus. Due to immediate response, however, learning ensued. Learners of all grades at ASOY were online already the next day. While these are trying times for everybody, let's try and look at the glass as half full.

Whether we like it or not, one thing that is constant in life is change. In order to cope well in a world that seems to spin faster and faster around its axis, skills such as resilience, flexibility, adaptability, the ability to "fail well", and the aptitude to face adversity with a growth mindset and positive thinking will support us.

If we decide to look at the current situation as a learning opportunity, we may be better prepared for the next unforeseen event. In IB, we strive for life-long learning. We foster the application of Learner Profile traits. And we see that the great need to develop our IB, ATL skills closely correspond to what is often referred to as "21st century skills". Skills that OECD, the World Economic Forum, and many companies are looking for in their future employees and future world leaders. Rote memorization of facts is less needed than critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, creative thinking skills, and flexibility.

According to World Economic Forum, already by April last year, 1.2 billion students were out of the classroom. Or well, out of the 'classroom' as we used to know it. If the definition of classroom is a room full of desks, students and a teacher or two. Learning continued though, just in a different format. What implications does this new way of learning have?

HALF-FULL

Teachers, schools, and learners have gotten rapidly upskilled in education technology. While I had never used Zoom a year ago, now it is a tool I use frequently. Learners and staff at ASOY have, likewise, gotten tech savvy. IB, ATL skills such as self-management are put to the test through remote teaching and learning. In order to complete many tasks successfully, admin, teachers, students, and parents?



need to know how to prioritize. When the teacher cannot physically feedback and feed forward, support, or remind learners to stay on task during learning, independence is a highly beneficial character trait to have. While insufficient bandwidth, old devices, or Internet outages may be frustrating. Often, creativity surpasses challenging situations. Likely, this deepened integration of technology will stay with us and it may become an integral component of future learning.



Once self-management skills, such as prioritizing, organization, and time-management are in place, learning at home at your own pace also have other benefits that may be harder to achieve in the classroom. You can switch activities when you feel the need to. You can stop for a brain-break when you feel like. You can go back and re-read materials over and over again and thus spend more time on topics you struggle with, or less on those that come easy to you. For some – albeit not all – students, online learning has proven to be more beneficial rather than limiting. What can we learn from these students?

NO POLLYANNA

We are not in denial shielding our views of remote education with rose shimmering fantasies. The struggle is real. Many to most teachers choose their professions because they deeply care about children and they thrive in the interaction with the learners. Just as students miss each other and the teachers, the teachers miss their students and colleagues. There are also both local and global challenges and we do not try to shy away from those either. Inequality in learning opportunities, and thus widening learning gaps between privileged and disadvantaged, may supervene as not everyone has the same access to technology or support from home. Gender inequality may be another result as, often, it is a woman who will stay at home and tend to children's learning at the expense of her own career and financial independence. The social-emotional aspect of not interacting with peers may lead to feelings of alienation, sadness, depression, and social-emotional skills not developing as they would in a face-to-face environment with more direct human support. And while independence, discipline, and grit are skills supporting home-learning, not all learners have developed these skills yet.

OPPORTUNITY

But instead of feeling like victims, let's think about what we can do. Does the situation provide learners room to apply their understanding in their Exhibition work (PYP), Personal Project (MYP), or CAS (DP)? In IB, we often talk about 'Agency' and 'Action'. We aspire for learners to have the agency to act as a result of their understanding. So let's!

Who can we reach out to? And how? What can we do, individually and collectively, to make a difference to self and others? What



What possibilities are there? There is so much room here for investigations, planning, trials-and-errors, reflections, and consequently, learning. In the field of Positive Psychology, it is noted that the ability to feel and recognize 'Gratitude' is one imperative factor contributing to the sense of wellbeing. Likewise, 'Appreciation' is an IB attitude (now imbedded in the descriptors of the IB Learner Profiles). If we make a point to foster the skill of feeling grateful for what we have, instead of focusing on what we lack, if we get back to the metaphor of seeing a half-full, rather than half-empty, glass, we will likely face the curveballs life throws at us with greater ease.



HOW PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN: STRUCTURE, BALANCE, OFF-SCREEN LEARNING, BONDING, AND GOAL SETTING

Structure and Balance

The more structured the learning environment is, the easier it is to learn for most, and especially our young, learners. Distraction happens to best of students (and professionals). Visual schedules may help. Aim to be balanced. Referring to time set aside for learning, play, exercise, eat, and sleep helps guide both adults supervising learners and the learners themselves. While many of our older learners can be entrusted to produce schedules themselves, younger ones may need help. When producing them, learn to prioritize; is it a must, a should, or a want? Does it have a deadline or not? Is it 'fun' or do you 'dread' it? Place tasks requiring your full attention at a time when your attention span is high. You should probably not try and process new, complex information that require your full attention in front of your favorite TV show.

Off-screen (life) Learning and Bonding

While online learning is often in front of a screen, try and make sure learning also happens off screen. If not in the form of homework, learn on your own. Work on life skills. Together. Cook the family meals together, get the hammer and nails out and construct something from scratch, learn how to fix a broken tire (bike or car), read a classic, learn to play the piano, practice dribbling a ball, choreograph a dance sequence, do a community clean-up, start to home-grow food from your food scraps (such as apple or tomato seeds) or by sprouting lentils and beans, or write the next article for ASOY's monthly news and submit it to Mr. Barlow.

Goal-Setting

Work on goal-setting and action planning. What are we trying to achieve and how can we get there? Most ASOY students are familiar with 'SMART goals'. SMART goals are goals that are:

S – Specific: Be exact. "Lose weight" is not specific, but "Lose 5 cm around my waist" is.

M – Measurable: "Read more" is vague, "Read 20 minutes every day" is exact.

A – Achievable: If you choose goals beyond your reach, you will likely get discouraged and might, on the contrary, give up as a result.

R – Relevant: Does it make sense?

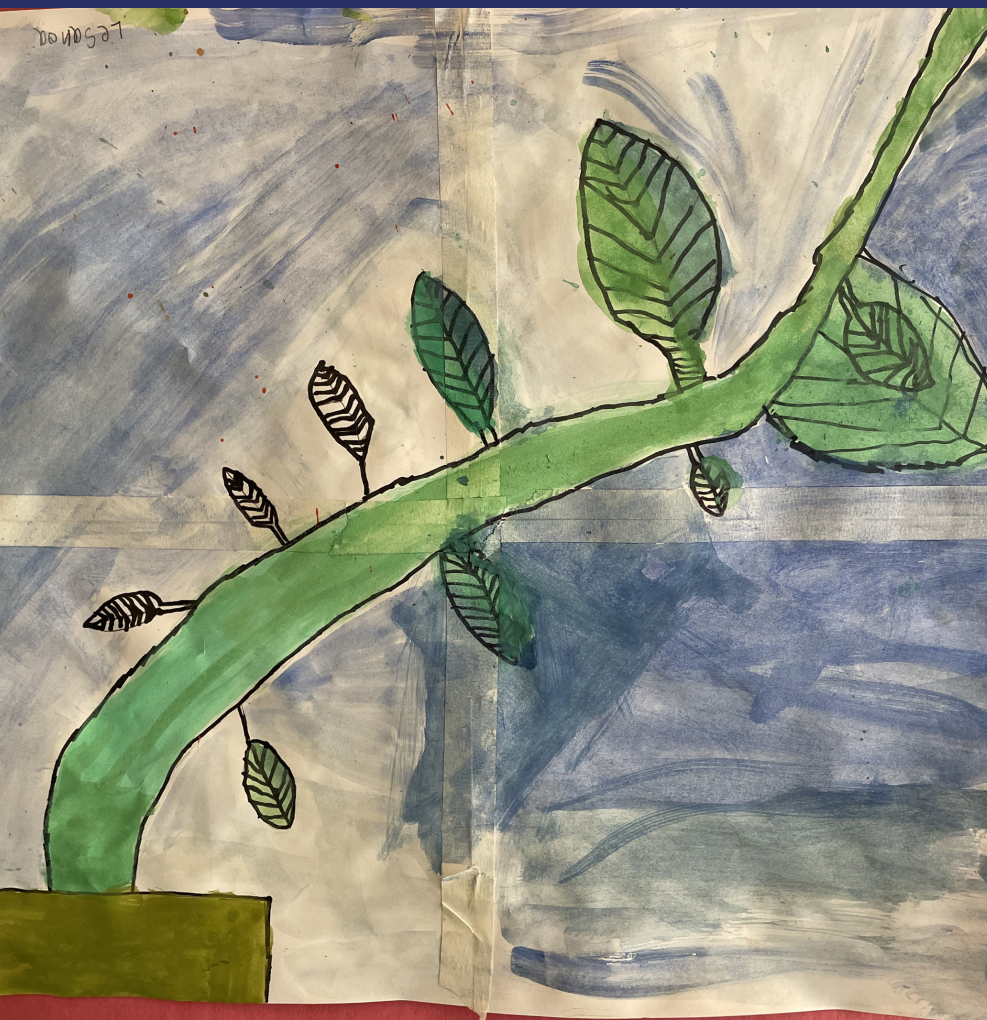
T – Timebound: By when? One tip is to not have the goal be too far off in the future, or if you insist on having one end goal far off in the future, then have many measurable sub-goals or check-ins on the way. For example, if your child currently reads on RAZ-kids level B and wants to get to Z by June, it may be more realistic to see if s/he in one month can get one level up to level C. Level Z would simply not be realistic for this academic year and if the goal is placed 2 years ahead, without check-ins on the way, likely the goal will be forgotten about long before reaching it. In this example, although dependent on the individual learner, rather level D or E might be realistic by June, measured through monthly check-ins to see if the June goal needs to be adjusted on the way.

One addition, that I would like to add to SMART is an L. You also need to limit the amount of goals. Too many at the same time will be overwhelming and the risk is that you will not do anything as you feel you are drowning in the sheer number of goals. One or a few goals are easier to focus on.

To conclude, can we at least agree that the glass is refillable? And whilst we do not know what the future may hold, if we will finish up the school year with face-to-face learning, blended learning, or fully virtual, let's try and be as prepared as we can.

Let's refill our glasses and look forward. Cheers!





Nature is...

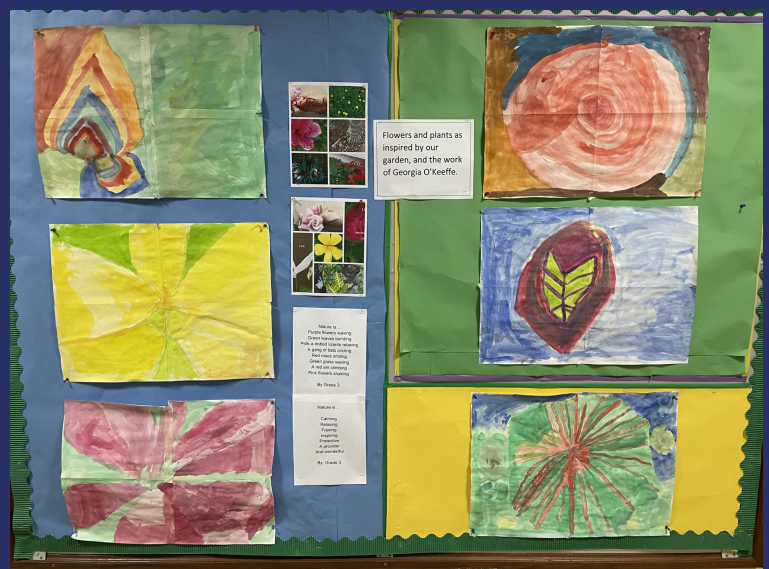
**Calming
Relaxing
Freeing
inspiring
Protective
A provider
And wonderful**

By: Grade 3

Flowers and plants as inspired by our garden, and the work of Georgia O'Keeffe.

Nature is ...
Purple flowers waving
Green leaves bending
Polk-a-dotted lizards relaxing
A gang of bats circling
Red roses smiling
Green grass waving
A red ant climbing
Pink flowers shaking

By Grade 3.



Student OF THE MONTH



Marc Antoine Mopa - Grade 2

Marc Antoine has such a big heart! Selfless, caring, and hardworking are just a few ways to describe what a great student he is. Marc Antoine consistently puts the best interest of others ahead of his own. He is a friend to all and offers a helping hand to any student in need. Marc Antoine welcomed (Henry) and made our newest addition to the class to feel quite at ease and make his transition from Virginia to ASOY seamlessly.



Ismael Bah - Grade 6

Ismael exhibited significant improvements during virtual classes. He consistently attended classes and regularly participated during class discussions. Together with his group members, Ismael displayed a high level of intrinsic motivation and interest in the content. He made significant improvements in his summative assessments, showing greater attention to instructions.

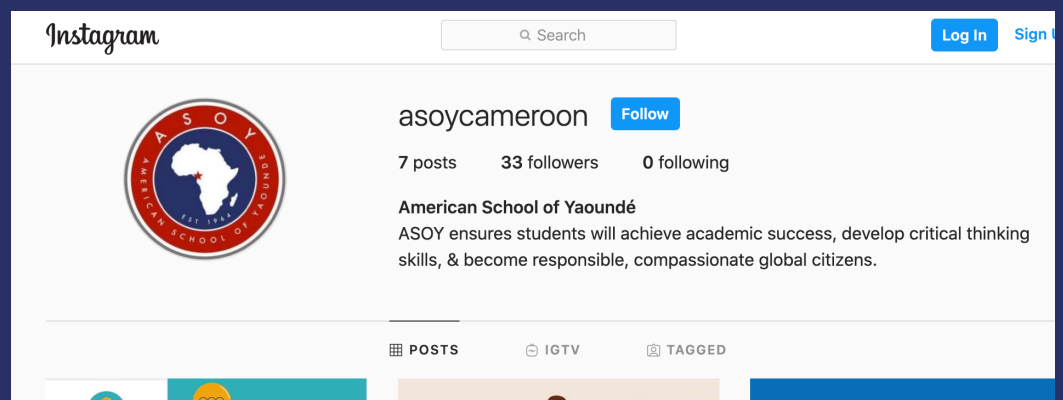
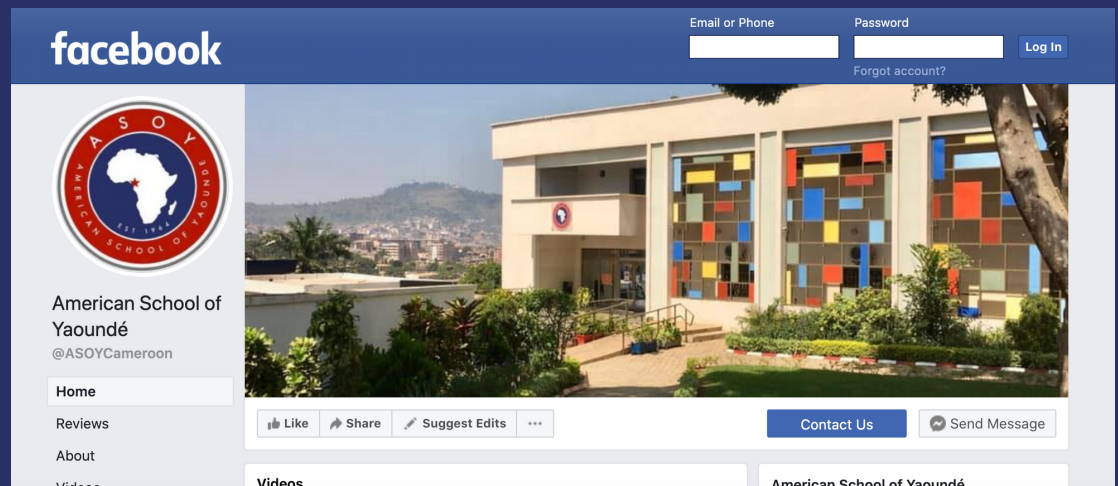


Lindsay Monkam- Grade 11

Lindsay works hard to understand all of the material presented in class on a consistent basis. She proves that hard work pays off with her high marks on summative exams. Lindsay is a dedicated student in various fields such as school, Student Council and in working on her Extended Essay. She has demonstrated great responsibility in these areas throughout the year and continues to strive to be her best. Along with all of this, Lindsay is a caring and thoughtful student in and out of the classroom.



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