

# Highlights of Remote Learning: *A teacher's reflection*

25<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Life's ups and down invite us to respond. In the COVID 19 distance learning 'crisis,' we chose to make the most of the situation, and the outcomes have been productive, sweet and fun!

Being in home quarantine for months on end isn't conducive for a good quality of Western living, yet we made the most of the process and became really creative with how we taught!

It all started on a Wednesday. The first day of term. Homeroom was at 8:45 am via Zoom, an app never before used as a class. Each Ranges TEC homeroom had a strategy to help students successfully join. The homeroom teacher would welcome and lead the conversation, while a support staff member would follow up the technically challenged and those lost in the interwebs. The result was amazing. 100% of my class made it online and before 9:15 am we were

playing 'treasure hunt games' on zoom. That first week of learning I was introduced to over 30 dogs, a bunch of wrestling cats and one very pretty parrot. The online classroom created a space for students to share their most prized possessions and even during physical distance, a deeper connection was formed and relationships grew.

Week 2 of online learning we started a fitness program. Laptop cameras were adjusted to face lounge room floors and students competed to do the most push-ups, burpees and even handstands in an allocated time. Students recorded their wins and each week completed the same challenges, intending to acquire gains in fitness and strength. The gyms are closed yet we still have body weights.

In most cases, we hardly modified the learning content. Our classes are already tremendously



practical and relevant to real-world settings, that in some cases, being at home helped!

At one point, most year 10 parents were hounded to reveal the Air PSI in their tyres and to check their car boots for jacks and wrenches. In moments like those, I hoped that parents took the time to engage with their kids and share the life lessons, 'how to change a tyre' together, forming deeper connections, parent to child.

To break up classwork, we did challenges and got up to mischief. At one point a boy was caught making a cup of milo in the tin (on his birthday). We had food/beverage competitions and even had a live tutorial on how to make a delicious toastie. At times I sat teaching on Zoom from the grassy field behind my house, in a desperate effort to acquire internet connection (bless Mt Evelyn).

To wrap up the season of online learning, celebrating the good it brought to our lives (and acknowledging the frustration and challenges), we spent a week in costume. The highlight was students dressing up as



people they admired. With impassioned presentations, students highlighted the resilience and overcoming nature of known and lesser-known idols. I was deeply moved at the maturity and compassion of the young people presenting. They acknowledged the



adversity in their heroes lives and how they had often overcome the odds. It felt like a direct parallel between the challenges that hands-on learners faced, being trapped at home for the beginning of term 2.

Our students excelled and have returned to full-time on-site learning with excitement to be back and knowledge undeniably gained. I am so proud.

Thank you to the amazing team at Ranges TEC. Thank you to the parents who pushed through fear and frustration and supported your caged up, hands-on learners.



And finally, thank you to the amazing students, you persevered and have won! Well done crew!

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