

# Sparsh Newsletter



## Virtual Classes: The New Normal

### From the Editors' Desk

By Siri Kundur and Sonakshi Kose

While the nations were hailing and parading their technological advancements, a tiny virus sneaked and rendered the mighty and the powerful helpless. Meet Covid 19. However, we students view this as an opportunity to transform the age-old groaning mechanisms and practices. As the proverb goes, "Time is the greatest teacher", we have learnt from it to adapt and evolve, which is the very ethos of Manthan.

At the very knock of untoward situation, Manthan, displaying foresight, had picked up this new style of learning post-haste and has been striving to retain the excitement in learning even while limited to electronic mode of education only. In this new monthly edition of Sparsh, focusing on elementary and middle school, we have taken up our first theme as 'Virtual Classes: The New Normal'. As modes of communication have dwindled to online chats, meets or emails, Manthan decided to publish monthly newsletters to ensure uninterrupted interaction with parents and students regarding the indomitable spirit of our learners that has made learning enjoyable even in these troubled times.

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## Riddles

1. It is greater than god and more evil than devil. The poor have it and the rich need it. If you eat it you will die. What is it?
2. What five-letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?
3. Where does success come before work?
4. What is so fragile that saying its name breaks it?
5. A school teacher asks his students to put certain objects in a large box. Apples and balls are allowed whereas pencils and flowers are not. What determines whether an item can enter?
6. Name three consecutive days without using the words Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.



Poster by: Varuni Ala, G7

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This edition of the Newsletter will not only showcase the students' opinions but also strive to represent the perspective of the parents and teachers as well. Through various interviews of learners and parents, we tried to gain knowledge regarding their viewpoints on these online classes. In doing so, we also investigated the pros and cons of online learning, reflected in the article, 'Bon Voyage to Virtual Learning'. Students were ebullient enough in sharing poems and stories created in class. Finally, our technical head has presented us with a hilarious comic strip, the first of many to come.

Hand-in-hand with learning, Manthan has opened avenues for more frequent and positive socializing time between learners and teachers, as learners project their talents and share their interests. They share not just their talents but also their queries, and each on their own come forth with solutions to various problems. The seven habits of gratitude, being appreciative towards our friends, our family, our environment, our teachers and even us, are being practiced throughout the grades. We hope that we may be able to present ourselves as a tenacious team for this newsletter, but most of all, we hope that you enjoy it.

# Bon Voyage to Virtual Learning!

BY: SONAKSHI KOSE AND GAYATHRI REDDY

Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself!"said John Dewey. The claws of COVID-19 have scarred the school campus and paved the way for the new form of learning: virtual classes. The sudden change in medium of education for learners, during these bizarre times, have proved that the virtual learning has succored during this time of pandemic. These dark times keep coming and going, but the one who learns to adapt to different situations is a true learner. Manthan has successfully conducted these online classes with great enthusiasm.

Online classes have propitiously helped students who are keen to learn, allowing them to continue the learning process, as it does not have full stops but commas. Virtual classes can be beneficial as they continue the learning process for the students who are keen to learn during this crisis. This form of learning has also helped learners explore their surroundings.

What seemed like the darkest hours in aeon, have actually opened the locked doors to new possibilities.

Virtual learning has taught students to focus on their health, physically and mentally helping them build self-esteem through various means. In a survey of 1,500 students (who currently enrolled in an online program) conducted by [campustechnology.com](http://campustechnology.com), 86 percent considered that online learning is as good as or better than attending courses on campus.

Virtual learning can help foster the students' physical as well as mental health. According to [acellusacademy.com](http://acellusacademy.com), "Being at home surrounded by loved ones provides a safe environment that will help enhance a child's mental health while allowing them to thrive when it comes to academics." In fact this is quite true! At Manthan, students are taught to engage in mental stability, practice showing gratitude to one and another and learn to cope up with these bizarre times during the quality circle time. However, being able to learn to explore their surroundings and forge a way out of the obstacles might be helpful in the future by making them more adaptable to difficult situations.

Moreover, the schools and teachers are also continuously researching and using their creative ideas to make the classes more engaging and help students build their self-esteem during these unusual times. Being aware that online classes can strain the student's eyes, Manthan teachers have tried to train learners to take short breaks and do small eye exercises. In the present situation the only way to learn is through virtual classes and the cons are certainly not intimidating enough to bend the willpower and motivation of dedicated teachers and learners.

To sum up, virtual learning, by its very nature, has not only posed challenges but also taught us to overcome them and opened the portal to a new era.



## CORONA VIRUS ACROSTIC

*By: Arya Santhosh, 6B*

**C**elebrating every life saved.  
**O**vercoming every death tear.  
**R**emoving all the sadness.  
**O**verpowering every obstacle.  
**N**o one is poor or powerless, No one is rich or powerful.  
**A**ll of the world is together in this fight.

**V**isibly there is no enemy.  
**I**nvisibly there is a single cell army of enemy.  
**R**egenerating old India back to life.  
**U**pholding the fight to save lives.  
**S**ave home, stay safe for we can win this war.



## LOFTY EUPHORIA

Story Written By: Haasini Kellampalli, 8D

My hands pressed into the rubber track; the white powder used to denote the starting line smeared onto my skin. The air swished past my ears, emanating a light hum. It was the only sound one could hear in the arena, but I knew that all of us were drowning in a sea of tension.

"On your marks!" The referee roared.

I nestled into a kneeling position, my heart beating ferociously.

"Get set go!"

With the rush of adrenaline coursing through my blood, I sprang up and began to sprint across the track. My limbs pushed through the air, allowing for me to make swift movements. The crowd cheered along to the race, many rising from their seats and shouting our names. I could no longer see anyone in front of me. I was gaining a clear advantage, soaring through the race, with my competitors staggering behind.

A wave of lactic acid seeped into my muscles, yet I continued to run.

As I neared the 300 meter mark, I began to take note of a queer phenomenon. My feet weren't making contact with the track.

I was treading through the air, barely able to move forward. I held my breath and bent my head down. I was floating.

## Story continued...

Something about this situation simply didn't register in my mind. I continued to run as if I was a creature affected by gravity, which clearly wasn't the case. I closed my eyes, and screamed helplessly, but I didn't stop running. I couldn't stop running.

No matter how hard I tried to make my body stiff, it failed to comply with my commands.

Moments passed. My eyes remained shut. I continued to run.

Then, by the stroke of a mighty power, I could feel my feet making contact with a surface. I was relieved of my sense of paranoia. It was all just a dream, an illusion. I opened my eyes, and all of my assumptions vaporized. I wasn't on the track. I was in a meadow. Trees loomed over me, leaves falling off their branches. Flowers adorned the ground, with bees gently settling onto them, extracting their share of nectar. Leaves crunched under my feet with every step I took. What was this place?

What was happening to me?

This was no Earth. This was a utopian land. A utopian land that felt vaguely familiar.

Memories flashed into my mind, consuming the sanity I had left in me. This was my home, I had a gorgeous cottage, with two beautiful children. I grew up in this meadow. I looked down, and a satiny dress hung off my body. Throughout all of this, I ran. I never stopped running. My head was spinning. I never stopped running. Everything was revolving around me.

Shapes were falling apart. It was all a blur. "Up!" my coach screamed, "the drugs, they seem to have done their job. The race begins in half an hour. I need you up!"

I stirred up, disoriented and groggy eyed. I could feel the steroids coursing through my veins, the drugs my coach ordered me to take to enhance my performance.

Everything I had experienced before, it was drug induced.

The race, it was yet to begin.

## A Teen In Quarantine

BY: KAPEESH GUDLA , 7F

The past two months have  
been metamorphic,  
I felt the depth of misery and  
the height of euphoric.

With garlic breads and  
dips.  
"Is that the best you can  
do, oh Lord?"  
He says,  
Enjoying himself on his  
own accord.

All are stuck in their ways,  
Just like the old fashioned  
days.

Listen people! Do as you're  
told,  
Because this might be the end  
of the world!

Tick, tick, tick, the clock  
goes,  
It's time!  
The bell of death has  
chimed!

The losses are drastic,  
People go ballistic.  
Only one person doesn't  
care,  
For he thinks it is fair.  
He says, "It is my time!"  
He is a teen in quarantine.

He enjoys it more than  
anybody,  
With pizza and chips,  
Watching TV,

## Celebrations!



Despite these trying  
times, when young or  
old, all have been  
confined to small  
matchbox-  
like houses and rooms,  
we in Manthan have  
brought colour and  
fervour into the lives of  
the Manthanites.

### Gratitude Week

We learnt about the  
seven habits of  
gratitude, which are  
habits best practiced  
every  
day in gratitude for our  
family, our health or our  
friends. Through these  
habits, we've learnt  
exactly how much we  
ought to have gratitude  
for.

### Eye Exercise

We got to know the best  
ways to exercise our  
eyes after each period

### Talent Show

Learners took part in a  
talent show, where they  
were invited to  
display their talents.





Painting By: Sri Harshith, G7

## OUR 'ÉMINENCE GRISE'

BY: SONAKSHI KOSE AND SIRI KUNDUR

Have you ever thought that you would find yourselves in these unusual situations where it would be difficult to step out of your own home? An unanticipated shift from the classroom has resulted in the change of the education system dramatically with the substantial demand of online learning. During trying times like these, amongst a handful of schools which have organised online classes, Manthan seems to have been one of the pioneers in successfully conducting these online classes

In this regard, we got an opportunity to interview our congenial teacher leader of middle school, Ms Sailaja ma'am.

**Sparsh team** : Good morning ma'am. How are you? I hope we did not cause any inconvenience.

Ma'am, we would like to start off with our first question - was it challenging to set up the online classes?

## OUR 'ÉMINENCE GRISE CONTINUED..

BY SONAKSHI KOSE AND SIRI KUNDUR

**Sailaja ma'am :** Good morning! I am fine. There were mainly two elements involved: training the teachers and getting accustomed to the technology. Many teachers were not used to using the G-Suite applications, so certain training and practices were involved. Cyber-safety was a serious issue as well. We had to check every single app for cyber-safety options and protocols. I heartily thank Ram sir and Shalini ma'am, whose driving force made it all possible. They wanted to ensure that the children's learning was not affected. Ram sir had, in fact, predicted that online classes might be a necessity in February, two weeks before the initial lockdown. Upon being asked whether this helped them to set up the classes without falling behind on the syllabus, the answer from all the teachers was a unanimous yes.

**Sparsh team :** Making all of this possible is what I find astonishing, which gets me to the point where I can't stop pondering upon another question - Have the students and teachers adapted to this new method of teaching and learning?

**Sailaja ma'am :** Not completely yet, but we are fast learners. While we are all attempting to get used to online learning, I would say that the majority of us are not used to this. We are trying to make the classes more engaging and less stressful. By sharing with our students suggestions and giving multiple breaks, we look to reduce their time on a screen and decrease stress. As for making it more engaging, we cannot have traditional group activities. However, during an active discussion in a lesson, students do not just use their eyes and ears; they must use multiple senses which are 'activated' during a lesson. We are trying to include new activities like quiz and even poster making and debates online. We look to make online classes such that they give the same effect that regular classes do. Weekly meetings are still held to improve these aspects of virtual classes.

**Sparsh Team :** Despite a vast array of steps taken to make sure that the virtual classes stand as the new normal, what are the possible concerns, according to you, that the entire middle school can face?

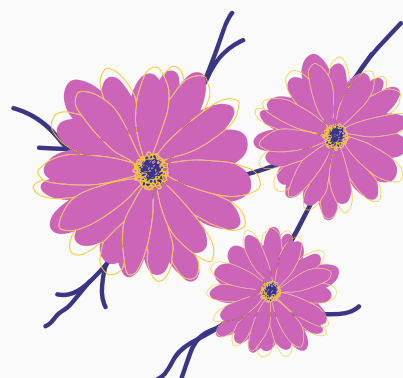


# Continued...

**Sailaja ma'am:** The school is waiting for any changes in the syllabus by Cambridge or C.B.S.E. This is their biggest concern. Apart from that, students in class have been noticed to not answer sometimes when called upon. I, in fact, miss the assembly during which I got the opportunity to communicate to all of the middle school students. Online, this becomes a challenge. At school, we can talk in person to the students about any problems they are facing, but during online classes we are still trying to figure out how to emulate that close connection.

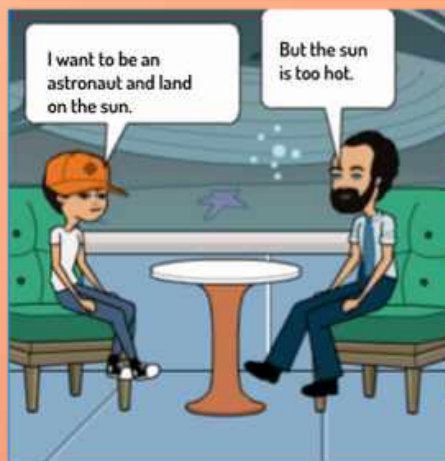
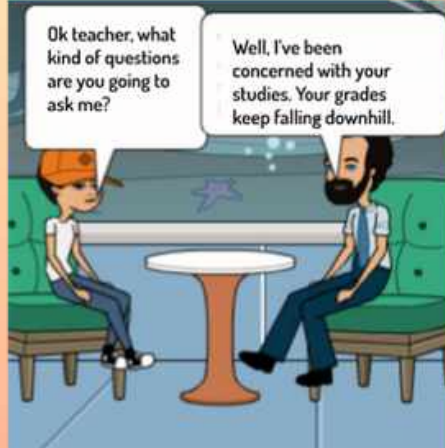
**Sparsh team :** Yes ma'am, we strongly agree with your statement. Thank you so much ma'am for being with us for this interview and sharing your views on virtual education.

**Sailaja ma'am :** Oh, no, thank you for conducting this interview. I always appreciate the opportunity of being able to update the Manthan students and parents regarding the school's progress.



# Tickling Tummies

Comic Strip by: Adil Saleem, G8



## Credits

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