

An Experience of a Lifetime

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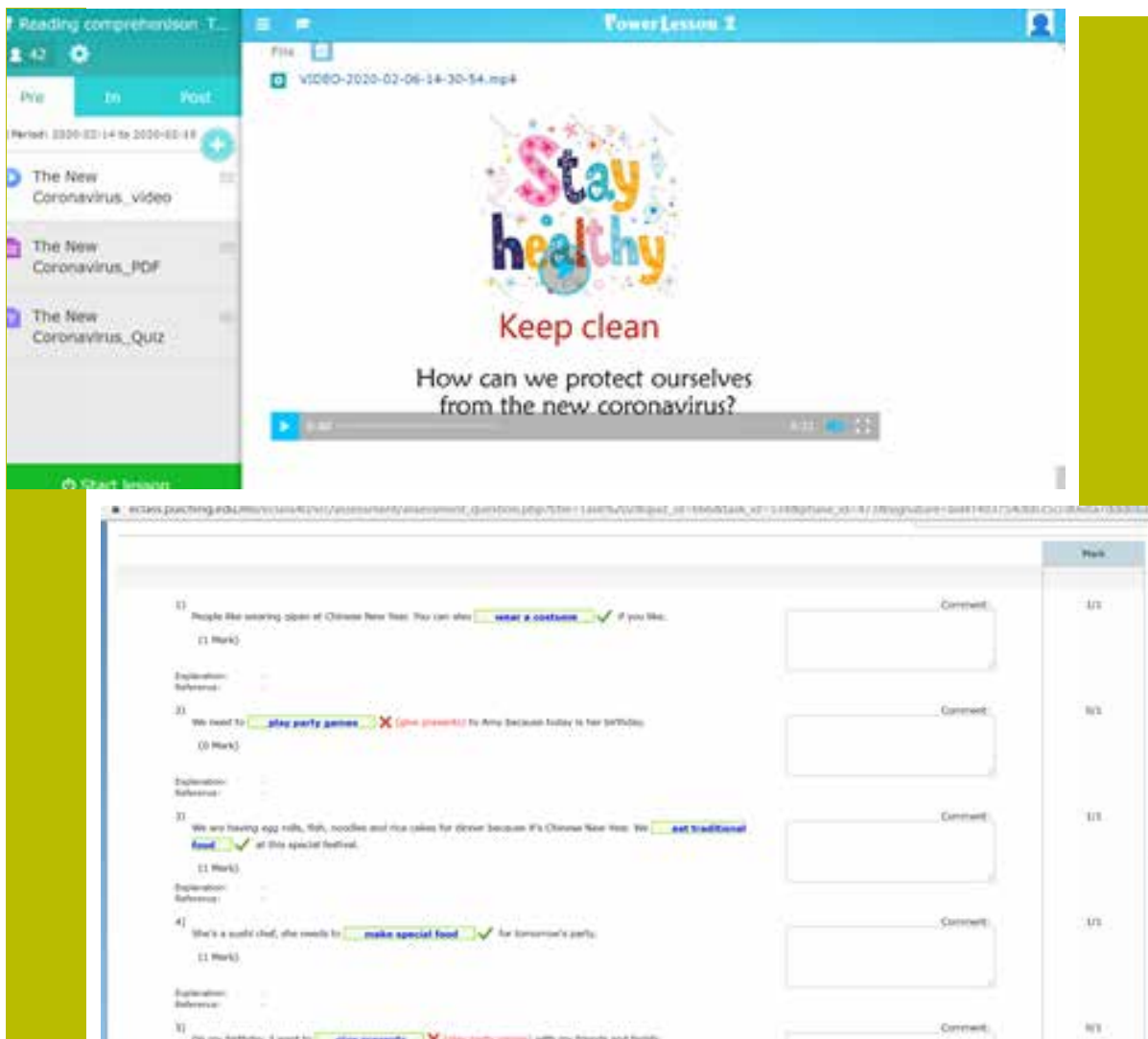
It is 10th April, 2020 today. Schools have closed for 85 days. I have never had such a long Chinese New Year holiday in my life. But the worst is that I do not even know when school life will go back to normal.

In late January 2020, the Macao government closed all the schools to prevent the coronavirus from spreading amongst the students. Meanwhile, DSEJ, the Ministry of Education in Macau, announced that all the schools would have to implement e-teaching, thus swapping face-to-face learning to distance learning.

I am an English teacher in a private primary school. We were still having the CNY holiday when the announcement was made. To abide by the government measures during the epidemic, we were advised to stay at home. However, we still had to communicate with our peer teachers to prepare materials for eLearning. We first communicated via instant chat apps. We soon found it difficult to work in this way as we could not see the documents or materials. Then we tried Zoom, WeChat

Work and VooV to host group meetings, which enabled us to work on the computer screen. Eventually, we chose eClass Power Lesson 2, an interactive eLearning platform, as a major means of communication with teachers and students. Using this e-teaching platform, we have since been able to tailor-make e-Lesson plans and assign learning tasks to our students. Different functions of the platform also facilitate our teaching and help us accommodate the needs of students with different abilities.

Upon the completion of students' assignments, teachers can check the answers of each student. The system also generates the statistics of students' performance. In fact, we had been using eClass for 8 years before the global school closures. That's why all the teachers are confident and comfortable about using the platform for distance teaching. In fact, equipped with past experience, we had got everything ready within merely a week by the 3rd of February.



Our school has provided a timetable for the students to follow as they do self-learning so as to help them maintain a healthy lifestyle. Physical Education, Art and Music lessons are also included in the timetable. Class teachers compile a list of assignments and send it to the parents every week. Learning materials are uploaded on eClass a week in advance. Without seeing each other face to face, it is not easy to check if students can master the knowledge and learn on their own. As a solution, teachers prepare multimedia learning materials such as videos, narrated PowerPoints, interactive games, to name just a few. Teachers also keep

a close eye on the learning process, adapting teaching strategies from time to time to suit the varying needs of the students.

Under these circumstances, good communication is crucial. Teachers are required to communicate with one another and with parents via chat groups. If parents or students encounter problems in their studies, they can seek advice and solutions quickly. Frankly speaking, communicating with parents is the heaviest workload especially for primary teachers. Every day, we spend hours keeping parents apprised of their children's learning progress. Yet every

family has its own problems. Some parents who work as doctors or nurses do not even have time to rest, not to mention spending time checking on their children's learning progress. Some children are becoming addicted to video games because their parents are too busy to supervise their work. No matter how worried we are, we can only contact them through the internet or phone calls. Some students even ignore the teachers' messages. I hope school life will soon go back to normal so that we can take good care of the students, meet them regularly, talk freely with them, and be closer to them.

As the epidemic has eased recently, the school resumption date is likely to be announced soon. Accordingly, we have frequent meetings to discuss what we will do when school resumes. There will be a big difference in the learning results among students due to their different family situations. Therefore, in the first two weeks, we will have revision on the topics assigned during the suspension period: Formative assessments will also be needed during the revision lessons in order to find out how much they have achieved during the long self-learning period. Make-up classes will be organized should the results of the assessments deem it necessary. We may consider extending the school year to provide more time for the different levels of students to catch up on the important learning items that have been left out.

This unexpected global pandemic has given us a chance to experience something perhaps only once in a lifetime. We have stayed with

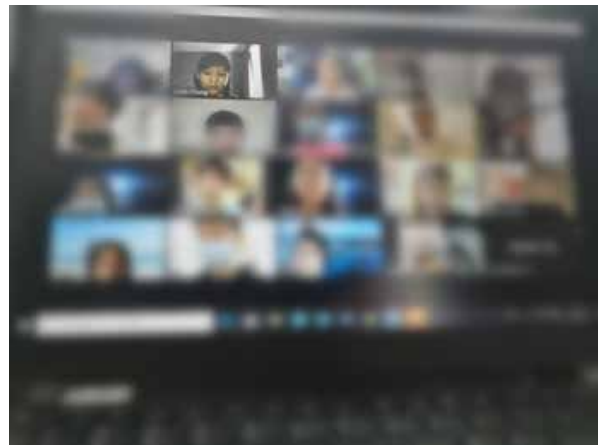
培正中學 初小「不停學計劃」上課時間表

時間	星期一	星期二	星期三	星期四	星期五
9:00-9:40	中文	中文	中文	中文	中文
9:40-10:00	健康與體育	健康與體育	健康與體育	健康與體育	健康與體育
10:00-10:40	英文	英文	英文	英文	英文
10:40-11:00	小休	小休	小休	小休	小休
11:00-11:40	數學	數學	數學	數學	數學
11:40-14:00	午餐/休息				
14:00-14:40	常識	常識	普通話	常識	常識
14:40-15:00	健康與體育	健康與體育	健康與體育	健康與體育	健康與體育
15:00-15:40	音樂	資訊科技	視覺藝術	聖經	品德與公民

老師輪值時間：星期一至五 (上午 10:00-12:30, 下午 2:30-4:30)

*健康與體育：建議由家長陪同下，每天選擇合適的項目(老師已提供資料)進行體育鍛鍊。

*溫馨提示：每天要早睡早起(不宜遲於晚上 10:00 睡覺)，注意飲食和個人衛生，每天要多喝水，勤洗手；每天多做運動，保持健康的體魄。



our family for at least two weeks or even longer. We talk to each other, play with each other, spend time with each other. Children learn to share the household responsibilities; parents learn more about their children. These are happenings so precious and yet so rare in our busy daily lives. I have also realized that Macao is indeed the best place to stay in the world. I am proud of being a Macau citizen. As the saying goes, "You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf." (Jon Kabat-Zinn) It may be a daunting worldwide challenge that we are experiencing, but we will certainly overcome it eventually. Have faith!

Vocabulary

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. distance learning
遠程教育 | 6. to name just a few
僅舉幾例 |
| 2. an interactive eLearning platform
互動式電子學習平台 | 7. to suit the varying needs
適應變化的需求 |
| 3. generates the statistics
創造統計數據 | 8. the suspension period
暫停期 |
| 4. maintain a healthy lifestyle
保持健康的生活方式 | 9. global pandemic
全球大流行 |
| 5. in advance
提前 | 10. a daunting worldwide challenge
嚴峻的全球挑戰 |

Grammar Point

“to prevent the coronavirus from spreading” (line 1 ... paragraph 2)

Using the verb "to prevent"

Prevent is often followed either by a possessive adjective + gerund or by an object + from + gerund.

Examples:

You can't prevent me from leaving.

I want to prevent him from getting sick.

“to name just a few” (paragraph 5 ... third last line)

to name (but) a few

To provide only a few examples, though there are copious amounts from which to choose.

Examples:

I have quite a few favourite subjects. Well, to name just a few, they are History, Geography, and Biology.

The countries I have been to include Japan, Italy, Brazil, to name just a few.