



The Doon School WEEKLY



"I sketch your world exactly as it goes." -Arthur Foot
March 16, 2024 | Issue No. 2701

BEYOND BLAZERS

Is School veering towards oblivious hierarchy?

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Murder, revenge and a father's insane pursuit for justice.

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Mind The Gap

Zubin Dhar *explores the importance of critical thinking and reflection.*

In today's day and age we have short attention spans; it's a proven fact. The average attention span held on one singular place or object used to be twelve seconds for the previous generation, only eight for ours. It doesn't sound like a lot, but that's an entire third that dropped within one generation, and it has some pretty significant consequences on how we process and reflect on information, how we form opinions.

Thanks to social media, news is not sought of your own volition, but comes to you in a perfectly calculated and tailored stream. Having near-constant access to technology and the internet has been shown to hinder teens' memory abilities or the ability to engage in conscious thinking in several studies. Such findings suggest that as an adaptation to the online environment, we remember where to access information instead of remembering specific information. Furthermore, multitasking might include simultaneously accessing digital media and the internet while also engaging in other activities, like household chores or interacting with others. This can lead to an overall drop in the idea that we need to focus on one thing, or that we need to research for our own personal knowledge.

One of the most accessible sources of information is our direct social environment. Biologically, children evolved a strong desire

to conform to their social groups. Alas, modern society has changed faster than the teenage brain, and tweens and teens remain much more susceptible to groupthink than adults. People's beliefs and actions significantly influence their behaviour, with studies showing that people change their behaviour to fit in with others. Studies show that peer perceptions of adolescents have a greater influence on their evaluation of their social and personal worth compared to children aged 10-12. Parents often ask students if they would follow a friend who jumped off a cliff, but it's a question of whether they would give into groupthink. If everyone is doing it, it feels weird to be the only one not.

Thus, these two facets combine to lead to a situation where groupthink due to social situations occurs a lot more easily, and active information gathering reduces. There is almost a wilful refusal to learn further than mandated, a palpable sense of apathy towards self-improvement in the field of knowledge and understanding. Perhaps this is because we have been taught to prioritise "useful" knowledge over the general. That is to say, remember the things that you can mention in an interview so you look good as an applicant, but there's no real need to learn about other things. Eat the textbook so you can ace exams, but reading around the subject or understanding implications is not

necessary. I say this of course, as no expert, but it is visible all around us as students. We are told time and again by the world that there is no need for extra effort in places that don't have material value. As reported in reputed journals, Pope Francis worked as a bouncer in an LA nightclub; but that information is apparently useless because I can't write it on my SAT, use it in my Common Application, or show it off at a party. Yet I can start conversations with it, I can realise that the world is quite odd and nothing really is fixed, or I can just find it to be refreshing as an odd factoid.

There is lethargy in information gathering, and there is reluctance to form distinct opinions of the self. If there is a general opinion, you can just go with it, why waste extra energy thinking about it! There is disregard for reflection and rumination. Critical thinking, a skill that most people value in a person, candidate, colleague or otherwise, is ditched simply because it's less work. We are no longer inherently conditioned to be curious, and it's refreshing when someone is. The *Rolling Stone* published an article on this very topic, and how those who ditch distractions are able to break away from this. Complacency abounds otherwise.

This results in half-baked ideas and shallow understanding of the world around us. Ignorance is bliss

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This Week in History

1781 CE: Uranus, the seventh planet from the sun was discovered by English astronomer William Herschel.

1930 CE: Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian nationalist movement, began the Salt March.

1933 CE: The first Nazi camp was opened in Dachau soon after Adolf Hitler became chancellor.

1951 CE: United Nations forces recaptured Seoul during the Korean War.

1990 CE: Lithuania became the first soviet republic to declare its independence from the USSR.

READER'S CHECKLIST

What members of the School community have been reading this week:

Aryan Agarwal: *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak

Kartavya Jain: *The Psychology of Money* by Morgan Housel

Loechin Phangcho: *The Teachings of a Stoic* by Epictetus

Aarav Anand: *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* by Elif Shafak



“

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched — they must be felt with the heart.

Helen Keller

PERSEVERANTIA OMNIA VINCIT

Vatsal Goel has been appointed as the Secretary of the **IAYP Council** for **2024-25**.

We wish him a fruitful tenure!

UNQUOTABLE QUOTES

He found the lights closed.

Viraj Rastogi, light bulb moment.

Global warming is all in your head.

Zorawar Sekhon, hot topic.

Bent is a straight line.

Prabhav Jain, Pythagoras would roll in his grave.

You're not great in common sense.

Aarav Dadu, not so common.

Give me a piece of pen and paper.

Zubin Dhar, and a Coke too.

I want to join the Weekly as a doodlerist.

Shaurya Surana, no openings yet.

TRIALS CHECKLIST

1. Complain loudly about laptop screenings; maybe they'll give up and let you keep watching 'educational' videos.
2. Learn a new sport — like dodgeball with paper aeroplanes or synchronised stapler tossing.
3. Form study groups with people as hopelessly lost as you; misery loves company, after all.
4. Prepare for likely answers by writing "A," "B," "C," and "D" on flash cards. Shuffle them for added suspense.
5. Highlight every line of text, because if everything's important, nothing is!
6. Monopolise the coffee machine; who needs caffeine-fueled competitors anyway?
7. Ensure the pen has fresh ink and a new notebook is used — because 'being prepared' vibes are essential for optimal studying.
8. Identify students with healthy routines and cheat off them — they're clearly doing something right.
9. Pick a religion and pray — because divine intervention might be your best shot at acing that exam.
10. Finally start that workout regime — right after one more episode of procrastination.
11. Finish the exam with flying colours, then wake up — because reality is overrated anyway.
12. Give study tips to others — because sharing is caring, even if you have no idea what you're talking about.

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until someone calls you out for it, and then it's just shame and regret. I would be incredibly happy if even half the student population who picks up this issue and starts reading this article are able to finish it, and

of those who do, I hope more than a few will research to find out the merit behind this piece. Even fewer, possibly, will be those who have a distinct reaction, instead of just agreeing with whatever sentiment is going around the table, and not

think about it again. If you've been on social media, a trick often used to increase viewer retention is to say "If you got to this part, let me know," and I'm going to do that here. If you reached the end of the article, tell me the next time you see me. I'll count.

Beyond Blazers

Varun Pradhan discusses the problems of a societal structure based on clout.

Living in an institution with a strong Junior-Senior relationship culture like ours surely yields a large advantage, in the sense of building a strong sense of brotherhood and the transfer to the Juniors; the same skills and traits that were inherited by us from those who came before. The latter element is what makes up much of School's internal culture and history. However, in this journey of passing down culture, motivation, and ethics, have we forgotten to pass down good character?

This idea becomes especially prevalent in today's time, when young and impressionable Juniors are told that their role models should be chosen on the criteria of accolades and awards, and not the lessons they can teach or the stories that they can tell. And it is these achievements that come to define the Seniors in School, not their character. It is natural to get inspired by those who are achievers, and are hailed for their excellence conferring to awards or positions, but do awards and appointments really propagate and instil the ethos of this institution? Are we replacing the unique ethics and deep morals of a true "Public School Boy" with the relatively shallow metric of awards and accolades? Doon's essence is based on its ability to instill good character in the Boys who have passed out of its gates, a character that sees them through for the rest of their lives, a character that we are famous for. With these awards and accolades becoming the main motivating factor for engagement in School, there is a washing down of the actual ideas the School was built upon.

When a Senior is reduced to the emblem on his tie or the colour of his blazer, it strips away from the true character of that Senior, good or bad, kind or harsh, temperamental or steadfast. As a result, this leaves less to learn from that particular person on how to be, or even not to be. Two boys may hold the same positions or awards, but they still have two completely different stories to tell, each with their fair share of ups and downs. Each person offers completely different lessons and anecdotes from their lives; these are what are turned into moral lessons that are passed down ideally. However, this very method of teaching is slowly dying out, as the practice of Juniors, as well as Seniors, sitting around and comparing each other's on-paper achievements

and standings, is becoming normalised. This narrative slowly evolves into one where these awards and accolades become the only factors that are weighed to determine a person's worth. We see Seniors now popularising the idea of "award chasing", not character building, and that's a major problem.

This becomes a pivotal issue as this subsequently feeds into the notorious modern age rat race .

We see Juniors chasing more gratification through these prizes, and going out of their way to secure them at the cost of vital ideals and morals. This system and train of thought feeds off each other in a cycle of destructive gospel that ultimately eats away at the institution's environment and balance. It is detrimental in the long run to expose the youngest Juniors to the idea of sacrificing friendships, being underhanded and compromising moral values as normal, because these practices in the end are justified, just to chase awards.

However, in this journey of passing down culture, motivation, and ethics, have we forgotten to pass down good character?

Even though the various schemes built around many of these awards are put in place to encourage good skills and practices, (for example, the need to get a reading award for the Scholars' Blazer) these encouragements have been turned into tiresome and unimaginative "checklists". This mindset completely destroys the entire point of these awards in the first place. Materialism, in terms of clout needs to stop, and instead an unquantifiable merit, that is the strength of character, needs to be valued.

The key is communication, it is the propagation of the idea that you aren't who you are because of the colour of your tie, it is about your habits and your ideals. It is what will keep you looking into the future and enjoying the present instead of allowing the past to take over as your only defining factor.

Blood For Blood

Ayaan Mittal

Fiction

Victor Roque sat in the courtroom. He thought back to that fateful day, where agony had befallen him. He thought back to the day where he saw his daughter's blood splattered across the street, the day he saw her skin torn through — it had skid along the asphalt like a bloody crayon. That day, he saw her exquisite blue eyes dulled out by death, and her radiant skin lifeless. He thought back to the day she died. His precious little love who died because of the callous antics of a couple boys. His daughter was void of the opportunity to live life because under the influence, those boys did the unthinkable. In the faint darkness of a gloomy evening, past the busy traffic time, on a damp, deserted road, these boys found his daughter to hit. They had rammed the car right through her body. It was excruciatingly agonising for him to think of a world without her. All he saw were the horrid remnants of what once resembled a life worth living - gone in an instant. His blood boiled ferociously as he thought back to that fateful day.

After a couple more minutes of peering at the evidence, the judge cleared his throat “Michael Astin and Jason Locke, you should be ashamed of yourself. You acted like wild beasts in a jungle. On the day of 20th December 1974 at 9:02 pm, an innocent girl, Mariane Roque died because of you. I would have put you behind bars for decades if it weren't for your young age, your clean records and your fine backgrounds. Your licence will be terminated for a year. And you must pay a fine of 10,000 dollars. But you are free to go, on the assumption that it was just an anomaly. The court is adjourned.”

The parents swarmed around their darling sons, embracing them, hugging them, kissing them.

Victor Roque sat right beside the aisle. The children stood by him, they smiled gloriously, their eyes gleaming with pride, they did not give him as much as an apologetic glance. The parents walked right behind them, and looked to Victor shamefaced, although their eyes carried a defying sense of triumph. This made Victor's blood burn and a fierce anger raged inside him. He said to himself “Some blood on my hands is a price I am willing to pay for justice, for death is the only vengeance for death. I have been good long enough. I placed my daughter's justice in the hands of a man I don't know. I cannot see the animals that killed my daughter walk free. No! No! No! I can not

let that happen! I must kill them myself. I must bring justice to my daughter. I must kill them for Marianne.”

He lurked in their shadows for days, he followed them around everywhere they went, he took every step that they did, he never let them out of his sight. He could have given them a hundred deaths if he wanted to, but he didn't. He sat in the darkness, waiting for the right moment to strike. He wanted to kill them the way they had killed her. He wanted them to feel the same pain that his daughter must have felt before she had died.

**All he saw were the horrid
remnants of what once
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Over the past few days, Victor had determined that the two boys walked past 5th Avenue between 11:30 to 11:45 every day, to get to their college campus. What better way to kill them than on the first day of the New Year. He wanted the first day of 1975 to be their last. So, on the 1st of January, 1975, he killed the two boys as they walked across 5th Avenue, New York at 11:38 am with his white Cadillac. He didn't stop. He didn't look back. He just drove on. As he sped down the street, he smiled softly and whispered “Marianne, this is for you. May your soul rest in peace, my love.”

The next day, as the police broke into Victor's house; they found him dangling by the ceiling. A note was tied to his shoe, “Death is the only vengeance for death. So, it is only right I kill myself. Here I come, Marianne.”

The Observer

A brief overview of School Council deliberations, held on the 12th of March, 2024.

The first agenda presented before the School Council was ‘Activities should have more collaboration with social service’. It was proposed that School teams, activities and publications could go out for Social Service fortnightly. This would not only help structure and organise social service in School but also provide an entry-point into social service for the students. Sports teams, activities, and publications will be given social service tasks that align with what they do. For example: the debating society may lead a social service initiative to teach underprivileged children public speaking. It was suggested that the Social Service Secretary collaborate with sports captains and the Boys-in-Charge to come up with social service initiatives, and to draw up a schedule for all bodies involved. A drawback to the proposal was the potential for the tokenisation of activities and SUPWs, therefore, it was suggested that any plans should move slowly and be concrete in nature.

It was proposed that the merging of Clubs, Societies and SUPWs would happen in the next academic year and that this decision will not affect the activities or Boys-in-charge for the Academic Year 2024-2025.

The second agenda for the meeting was ‘The impact of the restructuring of Games on the House Colours Scheme’. Earlier, students could only avail points from the Inter-House Sports Competitions that they participated in in their A, S or Sc Forms. Now, with the division of the Inter-Houses into three categories — Juniors, Mediums and Seniors, there was confusion as to which form you can start availing points from. It was suggested that students be allowed to avail points from their B Form as the B and the A Form are now playing in the same category. Similarly, for academics, it was suggested that points be allowed to be counted from B form, as there would then be parity between sports and academics. It was also decided that there should be a difference in the number of points you can gain from H1 and H2 or L1 and L2 as they have varying levels of difficulty. This would require

some adjustments to be made to the House Colours Scheme; there would be a sub-committee tasked with creating a draft proposal for changes to the scheme.

The third agenda was ‘Consolidating activities under bigger headings’. Following a deliberation in the Co-Curricular Council, this agenda was brought to the School Council to formalise proceedings. This would entail the merging of two or three different clubs, societies and publications together. For example, the photography and videography SUPWs were consolidated into the Media Club. This decision was taken in order to address the decline in student participation for the more niche activities in School and to widen the scope of these activities. It was proposed that the merging of Clubs, Societies and SUPWs would happen in the next academic year and that this decision will not affect the activities or Boys-in-charge for the Academic Year 2024-2025. The Co-Curricular Council Secretary and the Director of Activities will be working together to decide upon the activities that are to be merged and to outline the purpose and nature of all activities, SUPWs, and STAs.

The final agenda for the meeting was an update on the progress of Honour Boards in School. Most of the data required to update the Honour Boards had been compiled, either through the Archives or past issues of the *Weekly*. There were certain years for which there were no records of the Appointments. This information, however, would be compiled by communicating with Old Boys.

The Week Gone By

Arjun Prakash

Dear reader, as you accompanied a few of your beloved Sc formers to the Main Gate with the *bajri* rattling under your revolutionary Liberty school shoes and wintry hands kept comfortably in your pockets — watching them trickle out the gates of Chandbagh for the very last time — you'd notice that the one Dairy Milk bar you'd stored in your pocket was now foldable, completely melted in fact. A sudden change in temperature, perhaps matching with the newfound change in temperament regarding academic comebacks and scholarly pursuits. So, as we face the heat of our Finals, will we stand firm, or fold similarly?

Like yours truly, let's hope it's not a deceptive googly that gets the better of you because we've seen an awful lot of those lately. Speaking of which, the Inter-House Seniors Cricket Competition transformed the Main Field into a melting pot of fine cricketing prowess with the Eagles and the Gentlemen sharing the coveted first position. The electric atmosphere created by the Houses near the pavilion was a treat to watch, with some Masters joining in as well. We really make this place a world in itself. Less notably however, take a quick browse through your spam email inboxes — holiday reviews on Tripadvisor have reported ~~sledging~~ sledding as the trending activity these days, borderline dangerous as it seems, as the A Formers spent aimless days scouring through the internet before catching the first flight back home for their

much-needed post-Boards break.

Elsewhere, the Central Dining Hall has been chosen as the preferred venue for displaying School's version of forced torture, as four Houses bore painful witness to the Eagles stuffing themselves with food faster than the duration of your average J3 batsman's inning. At this point, we might as well add February's wastage results to the House Colours scheme.

With the sprawling blue covers returning to the cricket pitches, hockey frenzy seems to have injected a sense of continuity to the little bit of time we have to touch grass these days. But fret not, for the grass is definitely greener on the other side. As we're well-aware, midterm-planning is well and truly underway, so let's start this exam season on an optimistic note, for we have hills to climb and hard work to do. Until next time!

Sudoku

3			5		7	2	1	6
	7			9		8	5	
	5	1		4	2	7		
9					4			7
7			1		9			
			7	5	6			2
1	3	7	4			9	2	5
	2				5			8
5		8		7		6		1

Key:

1	4	6	3	7	2	8	9	5
8	7	3	5	1	9	4	2	6
5	2	9	8	6	4	7	3	1
4	8	3	7	5	1	9	6	2
2	9	1	2	9	4	8	3	7
9	1	2	8	3	4	5	6	7
8	5	1	6	4	2	7	3	9
4	7	8	1	9	3	6	2	5
3	4	9	5	8	7	2	1	6

Source: <https://worksheets.theteacherscorner.net/make-your-own/sudoku/>

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