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FINALS WEEK OR MY FINAL WEEK, STAY TUNED!

Finals? "Finals week or my final week, stay tuned." The internet meme—have you come across it? Who likes them? High on caffeine, low on sleep, stress through the roof, and, well, you guessed it, unforeseen results—a recipe for burnout we as students have to face during finals. Months' worth of material, utilizing critical thinking, complex problem solving, maintaining a high GPA, satisfying program requirements, time management, personal and professional expectations, and, cherry on top, professors thinking their class is the only class that we are taking—the list goes on and on and on. Hold up; I'm already stressing out

A lot of students, including myself, experience high levels of stress during finals week. From the sheer amount of material to be covered, we have to grapple with lectures, assignments, and readings to be tested on in an anxiety-inducing hour. During this week, from the moment I wake up, questions like, "What should I study first?" "Where should I start?", "What would my final grade be?" and "What if I fail?" starts flooding my mind. This stress is especially through the roof for final year students, as the result of these examinations is detrimental not only for the final year but also for our professional careers and postgraduate studies. Coupled with that, a lot of students do not know how to deal with this stress, which, like a vicious cycle, can lead to more stress. So here comes the question.

Should taking the finals in the traditional and stereotypical format be the only way to test our knowledge as students?

My answer to the posed question is a firm NO. Why? You may ask, because a one-size-fits-all model is not effective. It does not accommodate ways in which students demonstrate their understanding. That is to say, some students excel under stress, while the majority of us can't showcase our best under such conditions. Who else can word the above paradox better than Einstein himself?



"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

To put it bluntly, traditional exams cannot accurately measure every student's ability. In the meantime, I leave you to have a look at the picture by Colin Calleja and form your own opinion.

Okay, enough complaining.

Let's now have a look at some ways, though not new yet effective, to address these anxiety-inducing challenges and better accommodate students' needs and preferences. Among many others, field projects that benefit the wider community, professional presentations, practical work via programs such as a day in the life of a specific company's employee, and collaborative assignments can provide a more holistic and authentic measure of students' learning outcomes. As a final note, while final tests might still be useful, other types of assessments, less stressful, should also be employed to better showcase our understanding and learning. So, do you think the suggested alternative methods will shake things up?

Sidiqa Kamran ECO-123



ESROT! **NSTRUCTOR MAKIN** AN IMPACT AT A

instructor, has been making waves at to and understand students at a higher level (AUCA) as he continues to inspire and focused, determined to improve their English educate the new generation of academy students. Born in London and raised in Bristol, Rothwell's journey to Kyrgyzstan countries. He notes that students in Kyrgyzstan was not a traditional one.

With a passion for the Chinese language and culture, Rothwell originally planned to study and teach in China. However, due to the pandemic, his plans were put on hold. Instead, he began working online as an English teacher and translator. After two years of teaching online, Rothwell made the decision to try his hand at in-person teaching, which ultimately led him to AUCA. Primarily teaching academic writing since September 2023, Rothwell has found a deep connection with his students.

because his student life was not long ago. He skills in order to achieve their dreams. Rothwell has been particularly impressed with the students at AUCA compared to those in other are not afraid of making mistakes, unlike students in China, who fear embarrassment and judgment. He admires the international vision and drive for development that he sees in his AUCA students.

Kyrgyzstan's culture and natural beauty. He is an avid hiker and enjoys spending his free time in the mountains, appreciating the scenic views. He has even tried horseback riding in Kyrgyzstan, a luxury hobby that he had not experienced in the UK.

Charles Rothwell, a 26-year-old British As a young instructor, he believes he can relate Rothwell prefers to shop at local bazaars for organic products, believing that true Kyrgyz culture can be found in the villages rather than the cities. One the American University of Central Asia sees his students at AUCA as motivated and cultural shock for Rothwell was the practice of women pouring tea for men, even when the kettle is within reach. Despite these differences, Rothwell has embraced the unique aspects of Kyrgyz culture and integrated himself into the community. As a professor, Rothwell is committed to ensuring that his students receive high-quality education. He is wary of the use of AI by students, emphasizing the importance of understanding how the system works before employing it. He believes that AUCA students are capable problem-solvers and should not be underestimated. Charles Rothwell's impact at AUCA is undeni-Beyond the classroom, Rothwell has embraced able, as he continues to inspire and mentor the next generation of students in Kyrgyzstan.

> Hoda Sadat IMC-121





Disney Songs in the Kyrgyz Language: A Story of Yryskeldi's Passion

reshly graduated from high school, Yryskeldi has been posting small fragments of famous Disney movies with Kyrgyz voiceovers that he creates by himself. Within a year, his videos are getting thousands of views and also inspiring the young Kyrgyz generation to speak more in their native language.

Enthusiastically talking about his first experience in professional voice acting, Yryskeldi shared the story of the path that led to this offer. During the quarantine of 2020, when everything was shut down, Yryskeldi remembered his hobby from 5th grade when he was making a voiceover for Disney animated movies. As a fun activity, he started voice-acting in the Kyrgyz language as well as he began learning his mother tongue deeply. His renewed interest brought him not only joy but also the motivation to contribute to the Kyrgyz language.

"My motivation came from the lack of content in Kyrgyz language," he says. According to his point of view, back in 2020, he noticed that there were many voiceovers in Kazakh and Uzbek languages, but not in Kyrgyz.

Yryskeldi started his TikTok page for fun in 2022, and his videos went viral with thousands of likes.
Yryskeldi's videos are mainly about the importance of speaking in your mother language, as well as its popularization through entertaining content. He says that he wants to promote the state language without any pressure on mostly young Kyrgyz individuals and instead create a healthy digital environment that will stimulate love for their mother tongue.

Yryskeldi moved to Russia with his family when he was three years old, and growing up he was mostly surrounded by the Russian language and culture. He was living in Perm City, where Kyrgyz people are hard to find. Yryskeldi spoke in Kyrgyz with his family, however, it was still difficult for him to maintain the ability to communicate in his native language.

"Mom praised me in Russian and scolded me in Kyrgyz," he stated with laughter. As a result, he didn't speak Kyrgyz that much, but when he came back to Kyrgyzstan, and most of his peers weren't able to compose a sentence in Kyrgyz. However, his mother supported his new interest and bought him a laptop and a microphone to develop his skills.

"The further away you are from the homeland, the stronger the patriot you become," he smiled. There was something that suddenly clicked in his mind, and he started to represent his Kyrgyz identity more.

In Yryskeldi's videos, there are various voices made by him. Unfortunately, with age, his voice is breaking, and now he isn't able to recreate them. He was trying to reach out to people who shared his passion. However, it was so hard that his friends started suggesting he post the flyers looking for individuals with mutual interest. Yryskeldi found people who would like to try voice acting, but they weren't that passionate and committed.

"I've met two people who did voice acting, but the quality of their final product wasn't satisfactory at all. So, I decided not to prioritize them because of the criticism I'd have to face from my viewers," despaired Yryskeldi.

From Yryskeldi's cutouts, his main TikTok page, which gave him fame, was blocked forever due to copyright issues caused by the small movie fragments in his videos.

Yryskeldi had no idea that his main passion would go down because of the things he didn't know.

Consequently, he stopped his activity for a while but started it again quickly.

Besides, there was also school, and then work appeared in his life. "I found out that if you're sitting and filming videos for TikTok, millions don't fall from the sky," laughs Yryskeldi. He was quite disappointed that he didn't get money out of that, and he had to find a "normal" job.

Bishkek is a city where everyone knows everyone, so he started getting annoyed by the stares and the public places and questions about his persona.

"I'm afraid of not meeting people's expectations,"
Yryskeldi justified his annoyance because he is an
ordinary young guy in real life. Eventually, he
receives messages from his followers thanking him
for the motivation to learn the Kyrgyz language. As a
result, his motivation skyrockets when his followers
send him inspirational texts.

For now, Yryskeldi tries to put more effort into his content and it is paying off. Besides his social media, Yryskeldi wants to pursue a career as an actor and tries to surround himself with people who positively view his interests and support him through the battles of his new wave of fame.

Akima Anarbekova JMC-121

"The further away you are from the homeland, the stronger the patriot you become"

BRIDGING DREAMS: A JOURNEY OF TOEFL PREPARATION WITH AFGHAN STUDENTS

As a part of the "Challenges of the 21st Century" course, I started a project where I teach an Online TOEFL preparation course to Afghan students. As I saw many students graduating from schools and struggling to continue higher education in universities, my goal was to create a platform where they could gain the necessary competencies to transform their academic dreams into achievements. This project was not just a preparation for TOEFL, but also a chance for them to reach global education opportunities that are hard to get otherwise.

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is an important benchmark for non-native speakers to get admitted to top universities worldwide. This course under the guidance and supervision of Professor Ekaterina Galimova covered reading, listening, writing, and speaking sections and included interactive learning materials such as online mock exams, books, and various TOEFL preparation tools to ensure an effective learning experience.

This project had a positive impact on me both personally and professionally. It improved my teaching, leadership, and communication skills and allowed me to properly manage a diverse classroom. The preparation for each class as an instructor and the teaching in class was a great experience which helped me realize how great it is to transfer knowledge to others. The project has given me the chance to apply and share my knowledge with students, and this, as a tutor, has strongly impacted my leadership skills by leading a class of students. In addition, it has improved my communication skills by teaching and controlling one group of students with different backgrounds and academic levels.

A major challenge I faced was the different English proficiency levels among students, making it difficult to proceed with the class at one pace. With the help of the professor and my current course, I implemented specific teaching styles and learning speeds for each student by creating different schedules of study and paces for covering each section of the test. Another huge challenge for me during the course was maintaining the motivation of students when faced with poor performance or discouragement due to the situation in Afghanistan, so I tried to show them real-life success stories of Afghan students around the world and AUCA. For example, as a guest speaker to motivate the students, I called Yousuf Amani, a Sophomore in Business Administration at AUCA. This helped them stay motivated and see a tangible outcome for their hard work.



This project has made a significant and positive impact on the students. One of the students, Nisar, stated: "Before this course, I felt that going to a university abroad to pursue my dream would be just a dream. However, with this course, I see those dreams as goals within reach and see significant differences in my performance." Another student named Hidayat mentioned that the teaching, support, and inspiration he is getting are helping him achieve a competitive score in the exam. These positive comments from the students of the course mean that the project has helped students access the resources that were out of their reach.

The project is helping the students bridge the gap between their current circumstances and their future by providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to succeed in TOEFL. The most rewarding moment for me was when I realized that my efforts were not in vain, particularly when a student expressed how the course transformed his dream into achievable goals and also when I saw a significant increase in the scores of the students. This clearly shows the positive impact of our efforts in bridging the gap between their current circumstances and their dreams for a future filled with hope.

y name is Isabek Sultan, and I had the privilege of participating in the 10th Virtual Discussion on April 20, where students from Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Myanmar, and Afghanistan came together to delve into the topic of Social Media as a Weapon of Destruction.

This event epitomized the essence of liberal arts education—fostering critical thinking and effective communication. The depth of our discussions was unparalleled, delving into core issues such as freedom of speech, its limits, the ensuing repercussions, and more. What struck me profoundly was the dialogue with students from Myanmar, who shed light on the oppression prevalent in their nation. Despite our diverse backgrounds in language and culture, we found common ground in our shared struggles and aspirations for a better world.

In this discussion with students from Myanmar, we delved into the profound ramifications of curtailed human rights in Myanmar, set against the backdrop of relentless political upheaval. The discourse was not merely academic but a soul-stirring exploration of the essence of freedom, both internal and external.

Our dialogue traversed continents, drawing parallels between the struggle for civil rights in the United States and the poignant realities unfolding in Myanmar. We grappled with the pivotal question: Is freedom an innate essence or a tangible manifestation in the external world? The insights gleaned were profound, illuminating the intricate interplay between personal liberties and societal constraints.

Consider, for instance, the Civil Rights Movement in America, where the fervor for internal freedom clashed against the stark realities of segregation laws. It became evident that while one may harbour boundless freedom within, the external landscape could remain obstinately restrictive, curtailing the liberty to traverse certain spaces under the ominous shadow of punitive measures. Yet, as history has shown, the unwavering pursuit of internal liberty eventually begets transformative shifts in the external realm.



What stirred my soul most profoundly was the unwavering resolve of the Myanmarese students, who, amidst adversity, exhibited a fervent dedication to dissecting the political fabric of their nation. Their impassioned pleas for change, coupled with astute proposals for pragmatic solutions, painted a vivid portrait of a generation poised to ascend to the highest echelons of leadership. It was not difficult to envision them shaping the future trajectory of their nation from positions of influence and authority, their voices resonating with the winds of change.

Participating in this event was a fulfilling experience. The convergence of students from various universities onto one platform to engage in such vital discussions felt groundbreaking. It underscores the power of technology in bridging geographical divides and fostering global dialogues.

I wholeheartedly advocate for more such initiatives, urging fellow students not to miss out on these enriching opportunities. I am deeply indebted to each participant whose contributions have not only broadened my horizons but also nurtured the seeds of leadership within me, propelling me towards a greater understanding of our shared humanity. Participants' diverse perspectives, impassioned arguments, and thoughtful reflections have woven a tapestry of knowledge and wisdom, fostering a spirit of collaboration and mutual growth. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Ekaterina Galimova, whose exemplary guidance and unwavering commitment to fostering intellectual discourse have been instrumental in shaping this enlightening discussion.



CHESS CLUB

In today's world, where challenges and demands are constantly changing, civic engagement is becoming an important aspect of young people's lives. That is particularly evident in the student environment, where young people are eager to participate in projects that contribute to public benefit and personal development. I, Fotima Sabzalieva, a sophomore in Economics, also wanted to gain experience in participation in such projects and show my civic engagement, and in the spring of 2024, I took the course "Challenges of the 21st Century" under the guidance of Professor Ekaterina Galimova, which involved participation in projects.

I decided to take responsibility and organize a Civic Engagement Project, proposing to open a club to teach chess to children from orphanages. This was a natural choice for me, given my love for this game and my experience of participating in various chess tournaments. I saw chess not only as a game but also as an opportunity to develop children's abstract and logical thinking, accuracy of calculation, attention and concentration, as well as diligence and hard work.

Before the start of the chess club, I had a session with the AUCA psychologist Aida Parpieva to get recommendations on how to work with children who have gone through difficulties in their lives. This meeting helped me to look more confidently at the upcoming work and prepare for it. The organization of the chess club took place in several stages, starting with an introduction to the basics of the chessboard and pieces and ending with practical exercises and problem-solving. I used a variety of methods, including problem books, educational videos, and cartoons, to make the learning process fun and accessible to the children.

During the club, there were some difficulties, such as language barriers and interpersonal conflicts between the children. However, with determination and outside help these difficulties were overcome. I tried to actively interact with the children, resolving conflicts, and maintaining an interest in chess.

Participation in such projects not only develops the personal qualities of the participants, but also has a positive impact on society as a whole. Civic engagement promotes a more mature outlook on life, empathy, compassion, and social responsibility.

I have seen by my own example that civic engagement not only helps personal development, but also contributes to social well-being. Through my story, I want to inspire people not only to believe in the power of civic engagement but also to take an active part in creating a better future for all.



EMPOWERING ORPHANED STUDENTS THROUGH AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLUB

How might we create a welcoming and supportive environment for orphaned students to improve their English skills through participation in an English Language Club? My name is Aidai Bakchekova, and I am a second-year student of the Business Administration Faculty. I am happy to announce that I had a great opportunity to implement an English Language Project within the spring course Challenges of the 21st Century. This project was based within the Civic Engagement Community. As an English Language Tutor, I had a chance to teach diligent students from Elistan Orphanage, where I intended not only to improve their general English language knowledge but also to increase their motivation and develop their critical thinking skills.

Nowadays, the English language is considered an important tool for communication. The aim of sharing experiences was to improve teamwork skills and negotiate with each other. For this purpose, they memorized hard new topics such as Free Time and Chores, Dream Job, Friendship, Countries, and their features. I can describe this part as a learning process that helped them to strengthen neural connections for memory, after which they became more confident in their knowledge.

In the realm of teaching at the orphanage, I encountered a mix of difficulties and opportunities. Starting with challenges, it was hard for me to create lessons that meet the needs of students with varying levels of background. Then, I noticed the children were starting to lose their focus. Additionally, maintaining students' attention and a conducive learning environment amidst distractions and instilling engagement required creative strategies such as a 10-minute dance and song break, drawing things starting with the English letter, and guessing riddles. Despite these hurdles, I seized the opportunity to hone my leadership, communication, and adaptability skills. Each obstacle presented a chance for growth, pushing me to explore innovative teaching methods and adapt my approach to suit individual student needs. As I reflect on my experience, I anticipate future projects to offer both fulfillment and challenges, fostering not just professional development but personal growth as well.



On the students' side, navigating the educational landscape within the orphanage setting presented its own set of challenges and opportunities. Despite their circumstances, the children demonstrated remarkable resilience and eagerness to learn. For students, the challenges included staying focused during lessons and getting used to different interactive games. These tasks weren't always easy, but they offered opportunities for growth. Despite the difficulties, the children learned how to collaborate with others and improved their analytical skills through reading texts and taking tests. So, while keeping their attention on the lesson and adapting to new games were tough, they provided chances for students to develop important teamwork and analysis skills. I am grateful to my professor, Ekaterina Galimova for giving me a chance to demonstrate my teaching abilities. Before conducting the project, the preparation session was passed with AUCA psychologist Aida Parpieva, where with the Civic Engagement group we were able to ask questions regarding working with children and get informative updates. For instance, in our group, there was a question about how to respond to students' various emotions. We learned that it's important to let children express their feelings and to say things like, "I understand how you feel; you did a great job accomplishing this task." This approach helps children feel understood and appreciated, which can positively impact their emotional well-being and their learning experience. I appreciate every member of AUCA and the Civic Engagement Community for supporting and contributing to implementing these beneficial projects. I hope to engage in the next Civic Engagement projects!

THE BATTLE WITH CANCER OR FAMILY'S CURSE?

The challenge of cancer has affected Alina's family, but hasn't weakened her. Meet a girl who has lost two aunts to this disease and bravely faces this family struggle each day.

Behind a big monitor at the AUCA's studio lab sits a girl working on her filmmaking project. Her wavy hair gracefully fall onto her shoulders. She has a serious, yet serene face covered with small freckles. Her prominent cheekbones and elegant, refined facial features could have prospered her a successful model career, but she chose a position behind the camera.

I see her one day in a red French beret, next time she wears exquisite Kyrgyz national earrings; and last time I met her, she was in a lace blouse covered with flowers. She expresses herself through fashion and does it in a very unique and sophisticated way. Meet Alina, a senior from the TCMA department.

I've known Alina for 3 years. Her dream is to become a film director one day. She is 26, pursuing her second Bachelor's degree. We met during my project for children with disabilities, where she volunteered as a photographer, and later made a movie about one of the project's participants, Aidar. Since then, we became very close, and I accidentally learned that such a fragile and kind lady carries the burden of her family's fate.

In Alina's family, three women have faced the horror of cancer. Two of her aunts could not overcome the insidious disease and passed away. Her cousin battled breast cancer for a year and went into remission.

"My mom lost two sisters, and now she is very conscious about our health and makes sure that we [the children] get checked. Thanks to this, my cousin found cancer at an early stage and had it removed in Turkey", - shared Alina.

Breast and uterine cancer are not discussed in society; they remain shrouded in something shameful, hidden behind the phrase "She has a woman's disease." Therefore, women tend to hide their illness and battle it in silence, whereas the mental state and positive thinking play a big role in treating cancer.

Alina shares that her aunt from Naryn did not go to the hospital until the pain became unbearable. She was checked by local doctors with a final diagnosis of an appendix and sent to Bishkek with the words: "You should go to thecapital to have it removed." It was not an appendix after all, it was a malignant uterine tumor.

FROM HER HUSBAND AND HIS FAMILY, THERE WAS INHUMANE TREATMENT

Alina's aunt had big plans in her youth; she intended to move from her native village to Bishkek, but a man kidnapped her to marry, and her dreams about career crashed. From her husband and in-laws, she faces inhumane treatment. As Alina recalls: "She was 'kelin,' not a person, but a slave." Even during her last hours, her husband wasn't there. Alina's mother was supporting her all the way. Nobody knew that she would die so quickly.

DOCTORS IN KYRGYZSTAN GIVE THE WRONG DOSE FOR CHEMOTHERAPY

Alina started to realize what cancer was after her first aunt died. She was studying in Japan at that time and heard shocking news on the phone. Imagine the pain she had to go through being so far away from home, not being able to support her family and, most importantly mother. After her second aunt died, she started to understand the whole picture of cancer treatment in Kyrgyzstan: "Sometimes doctors in Kyrgyzstan give the wrong dose for chemotherapy." She opposes concerns on the whole health system of Kyrgyzstan dealing with cancer, considering the fact that two of her aunts were treated in a local hospital in Bishkek and died. Alina talks about everything in a very peaceful way, with no tears in her eyes, like she retells someone's story, not hers.

She has already accepted this fate and learned how to cope with it.





TOP RESEARCH PAPERS HONORED – APRIL 2024

BEST FYS PAPER

This academic essay examines the intricate relationship between slavery and dehumanization, focusing on Harriet Jacobs' narrative Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Through Jacobs' vivid portrayal of the harsh realities endured by enslaved individuals, the essay argues that dehumanization is not merely a consequence of personal animosity but an inherent and essential feature of the institution of slavery. It delves into various forms of dehumanization depicted in the narrative, including family separation, sexual abuse, and brutal punishments, highlighting how these practices were systematically employed to maintain control, uphold economic interests, and perpetuate a hierarchical power structure.

Read the full paper by clicking this LINK.

BEST SYS PAPER

The research paper attempts to answer the following question: "What were the primary obstacles faced by women seeking abortions in the United States between 1950 and 1970 years?" Women seeking abortions in the United States during 1950 and 1970 faced several obstacles. Legal restrictions, such as anti-abortion laws, posed a major challenge, making the procedure illegal and highly restricted. Financial barriers created big issues for poor and African-American women and their family. Access to safe abortion procedures was limited, leading women to resort to unsafe methods, risking their health. The fear of legal consequences for both women and providers led to unsafe abortions, which created high death rates of women.

Read the full paper by clicking this LINK.

Sabina Maratbek kyzy PSY Ainazik Zhanyshbekova PSY



Позиция авторов статей не всегда совпадает с позицией ред. коллегии в целом.

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