

The **Original** Students' Magazine

PLATFORM

By the students, for the students, since **2012**



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We're about writing for liberty to communicate.

with no entrance criteria, on an uncut **platform.**



‘To be young and to not be a **revolutionary is a contradiction against biology’**

– Salvador Allende

(President of Chile 1970–1973 - first democratically elected Marxist president in Latin America)

Don't Judge A Person By Their Face

A Project by U3H

'Don't judge a person by their face' is an international project, based on the theme of Inclusion for all. The girls in U3H have been very busy completing exciting tasks based on the theme of Inclusion, throughout the year, and they are planning many more!!!

This project is based on the British Council platform called eTwinning. It looks at understanding how inclusion is seen, perceived and understood in different countries depending on the cultural backgrounds and aspects of it.

Students have been working with the best-seller book "Wonder", as well as the film, which was released in late November. We celebrated World Kindness day, by spreading kindness messages across the school. We have been looking at famous books and film characters to understand the theme of inclusion in the media, such as Lilo (Lilo and Stitch, August from Wonder, Forrest Gump...) and we have learnt about cultural similarities and differences from our partners in Greece, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, France and Ukraine!

Our next activities include a visit to a local Northampton care home, where we will have the chance to chat with the elders, to better understand what inclusion means for other generations.

Finally, we will be writing a short story book collaboratively with our partner schools!

We can't wait to show you all the final result!



Aleida Guevara March

a Feature by Julia Wardley-Kershaw

'It doesn't matter the sacrifice one man makes when all of humanity is up for grabs'

--Aleida Guevara--



Cuba Solidarity Campaign Rally in Glasgow – experiencing that another world is possible.

October 9th 2017 marked the 50th anniversary of the execution of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, at the hands of the Bolivian military, orchestrated by the CIA. 50 years on, Latin America is still a tumultuous political constant, however it is evident the continuity of the people's spirit remains defiant and strong.

To mark the 50th anniversary, Che's eldest daughter from his marriage to Aleida March, Aleida Guevara March, completed a UK tour (4-11th November), hosted by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, visiting Belfast, Wales, Manchester, Sheffield, London and Glasgow, to speak about her life as a Cuban citizen in a modern Cuba, a successful and dedicated paediatrician and the daughter of a symbol of change and the strive against injustice.

We attended the Glasgow event at the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) on 11th November, where a packed room anticipated the arrival of Aleida, as cameras were set to stream the event into an overflow room and people gathered in the street seeking seats for the event.

From a country viewing the world from a unique perspective, peering through the expansive keyhole into international culture and politics, in a manner it is difficult for us to return, due to media biases and crafted curricular, Aleida demonstrated the force of Cuban ambition and achievement and spoke of some of the frustration the UK presents as we watch on, unresponsive, as our country experiences exponential decline, through the disintegration of identity.

She discussed the nature of democracy and expressed the need for genuinely unanimous decisions, such as the people's voice on going to war. The privatisation of the NHS is clearly saddening to the Cuban medical communities as they question the fate of the healthcare system on which they based their own and she reaffirmed the necessity for unity in the face of a fluctuating political landscape, with the requirement of prioritising people, through 'rescuing our memories' to understand how modern Europe formed in order to tackle the future.

The experiences Aleida has within the medical field, in Cuba and abroad, have helped to shape her resolve to continue to help those in need and view the impact of political and economic disparity on ordinary people, especially children. She was affected deeply by her experiences on medical brigades in Africa and displayed true upset, that she witnessed an environment where children die, not due to lack of medical research but because of economic inequality.

Speaking about her father's legacy, Aleida noted his influence on her life through her choice of vocation, medicine, which was her father's profession and his emphasis on expanding horizons and helping the community through education – the redeeming factor of his personality which has affected her was his focus on being useful within society and Aleida emphasised the importance of providing your skills and expertise when needed by others. Markedly, Aleida acknowledged that she is her own person who feels her profession has allowed opportunity to affect people's lives.

When Aleida speaks, the listener becomes absorbed in her passion and commitment, away from her prestigious name and political associations, as her animated nature, facial expressions and intonation break the language barrier as her drive for communication spans foremost across people. Paired with an eloquent interpreter, the two captivated the hall with the emotion of Aleida's speech and the fascinating information it conveyed.

After the speech a question and answer session delved deeper into the current situation in Cuba, providing insights which directly related to people's interests and at the end of the event Aleida was swarmed by people seeking photographs and autographs and also those keen to speak to such an influential and inspiring person. The predominant message of the absolute necessity to think outside yourself and your own life to collectively move forwards as a constructively participating society rang out.

Cuba is a place where education and healthcare are free and the desire to genuinely care fuels the nation, although a Bolivian soldier killed their hero, Che, 40 years later, it was Cuban doctors who returned to remove his cataracts and restore his vision. In the face of a blockade, Cuba have not cowered or grown disillusioned, nor have they stooped to the superpowers' military tactics of offence, they have, through solidarity, sculpted their own futures, futures of sustainability, progress and unity. Aleida is not only the continuing emblem of her father's values, she is a representation of her own and her country's resilience and as an individual, a force of immense goodness; in a world crowded by motives, hers are only of improvement and of hope.

My article is also available on the Cuba Solidarity Campaign website:

<http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/news/article/3561/it-doesn't-matter-the-sacrifice-one-man-makes-when-all-of-humanity-is-up-for-grabs-aleida-guevara>

Interview with Aleida

At the Cuba Solidarity Campaign Rally, I spoke to Aleida (with some help from her interpreter) and she was interested in taking part in an interview, via email, for this magazine.

As has been the case with most of my journey into discovering Cuba, Latin America, Che Guevara and his legacy, nothing is simple but around every unexpected bend is a haven of new information, each time shedding new light onto the truth about the world in which we live.

I emailed Aleida and received a reply from a different email address, emailing from Bulgaria, where she was continuing the tour to remember the impact and lasting importance of her father's influence. I sent the questions in November in reply to Aleida's email.

Two months passed without an answer, so I sent a quick email to let her know of the release date for this issue. Again, no reply. With February half term close approaching, time until the magazine's release was disappearing but my determination to reach an answer was growing. I began to question the email system, as, although I had only briefly met Aleida, I did not believe that she was simply not responding. I became certain that the emails had not been received so I emailed the original email address, that of the Centro de Estudios Che Guevara in Havana. The email bounced immediately with an obscure error code so I tried to access the website for the Centro Che only to be blocked by the internet provider. Blocking that also occurs when visiting sites providing aid to Cuba.

My desire to contact Cuba became a venture, which I would not just ignore and forget about with no response. I printed the emails out to post them to the Centro Che, taking two weeks to find the address, finally piecing it together via three different websites, also discovering an exhibition in Milan to commemorate Che, organised by Camilo Guevara, Che's son, an event which although I couldn't attend, further broadened my view on the extent of Che's legacy and the incredible high esteem in which he is held in European countries.

Eagerly running to the letterbox whenever post arrived for the next four weeks, I anticipated a response. Nothing. There was one form of communication left, which nobody can stop – the telephone. I don't speak much Spanish but I was led by the determination to receive a response.

Using the landline (number was restricted on mobile), I got through to Cuba... 'habla usted Inglés?' I asked gingerly, 'no' came the response from the man at the Centro Che. I spoke some Spanish to explain the situation and was advised to send an email... Five days later I called again, this time more prepared. A different voice answered, who provided me with a different email address.

I emailed the new email address on April 8th. I received a reply from Aleida Guevara on April 12th. It was clear none of the other email/letter communications had got through.

Aleida was apologetic that she was only able to answer a few of my questions as she was very busy and had been out of the province. She was able to answer three of the questions before a patient she needed to see returned to the hospital in Havana.

I am honoured and incredibly grateful that Aleida took the time to reply and to answer some of my questions. The prospects for Cuba rest on the shoulders of a structure, a political model, a system for sustainability yet the true future of the nation is grounded in a deep sense of belief. The belief that an individual can change the norm, that they can challenge powers greater than themselves, armed with justice and a desire for truth. The belief involves everybody helping everybody else, even a world-renowned doctor, daughter of a revolutionary, who answered questions from an 18 year-old, nearly 5000 miles away, for a school magazine.

I stuck to my belief and I persevered. I came up against obstacles but they taught me to keep trying and to keep pushing past where society wants you to stop. I look forward to visiting Cuba to discover more about such an incredible country and to continue learning in order to work towards a future for equality of opportunity and sustainable lives for people.

Below is the interview with Aleida, which I have included in the original Spanish and English:

1. ¿A qué edad entendiste el alcance de la influencia de tu padre, en Cuba, América Latina y globalmente, y como fuiste afectado por esto?

At what age did you understand the extent of your father's influence, in Cuba, Latin America and globally, and how were you affected by this?

Desde muy pequeña, cuando él murió, me di cuenta de que era un hombre muy querido por muchas personas y me llegó siempre parte de ese amor, por suerte mi madre nos preparó muy bien en ese sentido y nos enseñó a pararnos firmemente sobre la tierra, teníamos que recibir todo eso pero dejar pasar lo que no nos ganamos por nosotros mismos. Tuvimos una infancia muy linda junto a nuestro pueblo, con las mismas carencias y la misma alegría de vivir. Ya una adolescente comencé a conocer mucho más a mi padre y a leer sus escritos, hasta hoy continúo aprendiendo de él y sobre él.

From a very young age, when he died, I realised that he was a man very dear to many people and I was always part of that love. Luckily my mother prepared us very well in that sense and taught us to stand firmly on the ground. We had to receive all but let go what we did not earn for ourselves. We had a very nice childhood with our people, with the same shortcomings and the same joy of living. As a teenager I began to know much more about my father and to read his writings, until today I continue to learn from him and about him.

2. ¿Cómo le gustaría que su papá fuera recordado?

How would you like your dad to be remembered?

Como un hombre completo, con una gran capacidad para amar y de los que nunca le piden a otra persona que haga algo que no es capaz de hacer él primero, muy valiente y justo.

As a complete man, with a great capacity to love and who never asked another person to do something that he was not capable of doing first, very brave and just.

3. ¿Es la imagen internacional de su padre siempre relacionada inextricablemente con tu memoria de él o sientes que mucho de la imagen esta separada de elemento humano de su legado?

Is the international image of your father always inextricably linked to your memory of him or do you feel that much of the image is separated from the human element of his legacy?

Han intentado vaciar su imagen del contenido, pero por la acción de muchos hemos podido ir frenando esto, una forma es por el trabajo del Centro de estudios Che Guevara, que radica en La Habana, Cuba y que ha publicado más de 16 libros y folletos con lo que el propio Che escribió y estudios sobre l.

They have tried to empty his image of the content, but through the action of many we have been able to stop this, one way is through the work of the Che Guevara Study Centre, which is based in Havana, Cuba and has published more than 16 books and brochures, featuring that which Che himself wrote and studies about him.

Love

By Keira Stopher

Love is chaos. But that's okay. This may seem to be a strange article and I hope that I don't sound either pretentious or like a hopeless romantic but I wanted to express some of the things that I have been thinking about for a long time now and maybe no one will read this but if someone does then I hope it makes them think or see a different perspective.

The prospect of love is terrifying, especially after a heart break. Love appears to be a terrible, painful idea and shutting yourself away both physically and emotionally seems like the perfect idea. You never know when things could change, go wrong, you never know how long your love will last. Months, years, decades? Love is just too unstable. However, I think it would be a great shame to think this way. It's definitely easy to think like that, to dwell on the fact that the person you once loved with such endless passion has suddenly become a distant memory that you may never hear from again, but I think you miss out a lot if you continue to think like this for a long period of time.

The truth is that love is chaos. Love is perfect and unpredictable and beautiful and terrifying and magical all at the same time. It can be the most agonisingly painful yet life-changing experience and nothing can compare to the feeling of both love and heartbreak. Yes, it will crush you sometimes. It will pierce every single nerve in your body, it will beat every single breath out of you and it will leave you in what feels like a hellish state. Despite this, it will always change your life in ways that you would've never imagined, it will open up new opportunities and the ability to be completely true to yourself with the person you're in love with, and there are few feelings better than that. People are unpredictable; it's a double-edged sword. It's absolutely terrifying that no-one is permanent; knowing that one day despite your hopes and dreams, your world could turn on its axis and you'll be left to pick up the pieces, but I think it's worth it. It's worth it because those special people that you fall in love with will make the best memories with you. It's worth it because having someone that knows you inside is so utterly comforting and relieving. It's worth it because there is no other feeling like being in love or being loved by someone in that way.

It's hard to explain fully why being in love is worth it. The feeling of being in love is indescribable. Love is a unique brand of euphoria. It's not about the big moments that you see in the movies but instead it's about the small things. It's about the embarrassing moments the both of you have shared, the inside jokes that would sound absolutely mad if you said them to anyone else, the hours that fly by when you suddenly realise you've been sitting in a park together for 6 hours. Suddenly, there is nothing more joyful than seeing your partner happy and smiling or seeing them light up with passion. Their happiness becomes your happiness. You become one unit. Your daily routine begins to shift as you adapt to them, as they become the constant centre to your thoughts. Naturally, you end up being able to recite the lyrics from their favourite songs and you know absolutely everything there is to know about their latest obsession and you know exactly how they like their tea or coffee. You will stay up with them laughing until 3am because you can't stand the very idea of having to say good night. Good-byes become your worst enemy.

As well as this, the ability to be completely and utterly yourself and to expose your vulnerability to someone is comforting in countless ways. To have someone who you can always turn to, someone who you can express every feeling to no matter how angry, dark or strange it may be is a blissful relief. Having someone who you feel a lack of shame, or discomfort with, a lack of a need to hide with is beautiful. Not only is it comforting, but it begins to change both your life and perspective on the world. Even though your partner may not intend it, they open up your mind to new ideas, alternative ways of thinking and even enlighten you on opportunities you never even considered taking.

Especially when you fall in love for the first time, it leaves you completely awestruck as to how one person could have such an affect upon you.

This isn't to say that relationships aren't hard; they are in so many ways. There is miscommunication and an incredible frustration when they don't understand what you're trying to say and there are passive aggressive comments and times when you want to scream at them that they're being unreasonable. Then that horrible feeling when you have an argument and you know you've hurt them and that overwhelming guilt that leaves you in despair because you would've done anything to prevent their pain yet you've been a cause of it. There will inevitably be tears, days gone without a single spoken word, overwhelming guilt and unimaginable rage. Sometimes despite the love you both share the personal struggles that you'll face, whether it be miscommunication, fear or anything else, just becomes too much. Love does not triumph all. And after the enormous pain of a heart break, you think "Why in the world would I do that to myself again?" But this completely ignores all of those special memories that you made with that person and all the new special memories you'll make with a new person.

Heartbreak is a pain like nothing else. The worst part is that because you feel so much pain all you want to do is talk about it to your person, your rock, your everything but suddenly they're not there and that already agonising pain suddenly becomes a hundred times worse. When that awful heartbreak comes, for whatever reason, don't try to extinguish the pain in one big swoop or try to suppress it, because it will take a long time to overcome that pain, so to try and immediately dismiss it will do more damage than good. There is no remedy, no medicine, no quick fix. Losing someone you've been in love with for however long leaves a wake of destruction because everything around you reminds you of them and you suddenly realise how much they've affected your daily routine and how much you feel as if you can barely cope without them in your arms. It feels as if there is nothing left but pain and regret. Although after all, to be human is to feel pain, to feel vulnerable and fragile because that's all we can do. Feel that pain, embrace it, and nurture it. Be human. Cry and rage and feel despair. Be kind to yourself and be aware that while however unbearable that pain may be it is necessary to feel it, express it, process it so when you are ready you can open your heart to someone new.

Yes that pain is so unbearable that you sometimes feel like you can barely get through the day and the anger boils inside you constantly and you feel as if you're tearing yourself apart from the inside out but that pain isn't going to instantly disappear, no matter what you do, so you have to embrace it to a certain degree. Unfortunately, we hurt the people we love the most and that enormous guilt can weigh on your conscious and it can feel like weight of the entire earth has come down upon your body leaving you in a sea of guilt and despair for what appears to be all of eternity. Guilt is a heavy burden and there are few feelings more crushing than it, so forgive yourself. No matter how much time it takes, forgive yourself. You are only human and we all inevitably hurt the people we love most and they will inevitably hurt us because nothing and no-one is perfect and that applies to you as well. Because wouldn't it be such a waste to let a heartbreak defeat any future chances of meeting someone else who will change your life for the better?

I find nothing braver than someone who can open up their heart over and over and over again. It may not be what we traditionally think of as courage but to experience heartbreak yet still be able to be completely vulnerable and open with the next person you fall in love with takes a humungous amount of courage. The unique kind of courage that is small yet enormously inspiring when we see it in those around us. Obviously it is important to learn from your mistakes, but understanding that being open with the people you are closest to and who will make you a better, happier person is crucial. If you shut your heart away, or hide new parts of yourself every time you find someone, it would be a great tragedy. While it is difficult to be in love with someone after a painful experience, while it is terrifying and unnerving and unpredictable, it is worth it.

Embrace the chaos. It's what makes falling in love so memorable.

Manic Street Preachers - Resistance is Futile

A Review by Julia Wardley-Kershaw



There's something about the Manic Street Preachers that makes the world seem a little bit more real and not in the boring, monotonous sense but with the impression of human emotion on the picture show of image we see as our everyday life.

26 years on from their riotous debut album, have the Manics grown old, weary perhaps? Have they sunk into old chord progressions or familiar catchy choruses, reminiscent of old hits? In fact, they have continued to achieve the opposite, forever striving into new ground, for themselves and in turn taking us along with them.

Despite the predominant theme of 'Resistance is Futile' stemming from the presence of memory and the influence of the past, the album and the band continue, ever progressive, to move forward, dwelling not on past achievements but on past experiences, drawing on the emotional fringes of memories and harnessing the subtle context of the physical atmosphere of a setting, beyond the forefront of a particular event.

'Resistance is Futile' is like Italian rain; it cracks the sky, thunders on the pavement, sparkles in the street lamps and bounces. It appears to come from nowhere but at the same time is flawlessly deliberate and measured. It transitions like the sky, sometimes so blue, it's tinged with green, permeating through the depths of purple and sparking across every vivacious orange but it never goes dark. It takes flight against the abyss and soars, euphoric and anthemic yet ceaselessly thoughtful.

The album becomes crunchier around 'B.R.O.K.E.N Algorithms' but mirrors chord changes of 'International Blue' and harnesses harmonies of 'Distant Colours', bringing the first half of the album into the present. It's on topic yet brimming with nostalgia where ingeniously sameness or staleness are completely absent.

The final track is laced with double significance and meaning, fascinated by time, posing the question of whether the Manics are planning to be there till the end of time to continue their unique commentary, or is this the grand finale to forever be remembered by time?

The presentation of the album itself is a piece of art, the discs tastefully enclosed in an A5 hardback book of sorts, where the story plays out through the lyrics, dancing alongside quotes in a perfect capsule of thought, contemplation and close-paid attention, itself a poetic odyssey. Demos featured in the deluxe edition are like the back-room tour of an art gallery, piecing together the story of the exhibition and glimpsing the backstage busyness around a well-set play.

It's stunning, and I don't say that often. It's a journey you don't want to stop, that envelops you and holds you somewhere new and bright yet still so familiar. It is a headphone sort of album, entrancing and encapsulating, it feels like your best-kept secret, as if you are the first to ever hear it. There is the feeling that you want to stay there, deep in its melodies and atmosphere, wanting to let people in but not relinquish this space in time it has let you embody. A den of wonder, the emotion battered and wearied by time but continuing to burst through the corners and folds where time forgot to tire the fabric of spirit.

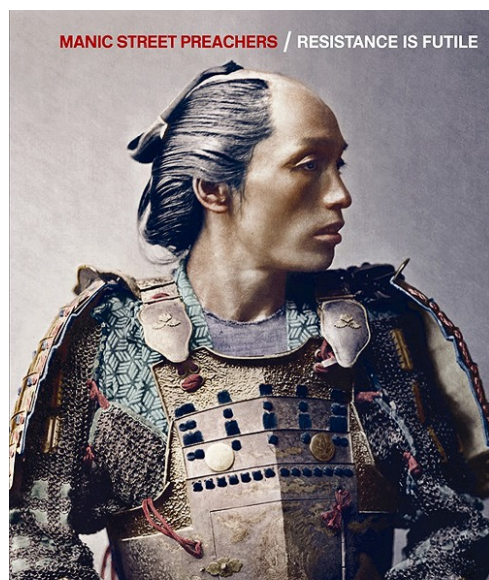
The duration falls in a beautiful Goldilocks zone, where it feels so entire and perfect, you are desiring it to go on forever in its glorious existence and you must commit to it, embrace it in its entirety and it holds you. Holds you in a special nirvana, a paradise, a trance where you only see reality, not tainted by the relentlessness and triviality of everyday life.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with it, nothing at all; no chorus that starts to grate, no disagreeable chord change – it is right, as it is...and that is rare.

'Resistance is Futile' is a parcel of consideration and dedication, thought about for every note and word as if that word could be their last and the music the only sound in a noisy world, a bell chime amidst a cavern of white noise. It makes you want to laugh, it makes you want to cry and it leaves you just happy to be able to experience it, wholesome and truly fantastic.

Without doubt, the Manics are still a force to be reckoned with and every song throughout their back catalogue still a relevant and revealing socio-political and emotional commentary. Although we all live in the same world, the Manics show it is still possible to see it in a different way. The Manics have taught me history, politics and culture, beyond what could be formally learnt, but above all taught me how to express it. Even though the guitars have somewhat mellowed, the attack and conviction are stronger and more forceful than it's ever been. They have evolved into a quieter form of loud but are still, as ever, louder than war.

What would life be without the Manic Street Preachers?



ICE

by Hannah Berck-May

I am trapped under ice.

It's freezing cold and I am frozen still. Everyone I know is sat on the ice cap above happily paddling with only their feet submerged; sometimes they get pulled below and I swim towards them trying to push them back up while I sink; deeper, lower, where the pressure is so great my chest feels like it's being clamped together.

Alone.

I am all alone in the vast wide water. I know there are others trapped under here too, everyone of us trying to stay above the water while we try and battle the weight of it all... but I can't see them. The thick layer of ice seems to be pushing down,
down, I can't hold the ice up. I just can't anymore, but I have no choice. I repeat the mantra that I can and must do this, to myself over, over and over. It helps for a while, and I stay afloat, but it's not enough, soon I have lost all hope again and I sink lower. It's so cold down here, freezing. It begins to hurt.

Someone hands me a rope.

I take it with a sad smile, and try and help her hoist me back above the water. It feels good for a little bit, I start to take notice of nice small things, like the sun hitting my face or her laugh as we both hold the rope. Although I am still freezing and my body is still immersed in the icy water, my head is above. My grin returns, a genuine smile for once, coupled with laughter and a little more joy. *I missed this*, I say. It's a relief to feel this close to happy again, and the weight reduces; staying afloat seems a little easier. It's exhausting to keep my head above the water still, but I have her to help. And I can help my friends, who are in the water too now, pushing them up out of the water, or try to at least. We're coming out of the water, some of us paddling our feet, or better still not even a drop of water on them. I feel halfway to feeling better now. Then the rain comes, drenching everything in its path.

Alone again.

Suddenly my surroundings seem desolate; it's not long before I fall beneath the surface of the water once more. It seems colder than previously, bitter and spiteful now after the warm sun. I shiver, scream and shout to try and stay afloat. It's all to no avail as I sink further below the water, clinging and hugging my knees for warmth or comfort. There are voices from above; I rise for a moment only to hear the sounds become clearer, but they turn out to be only yells at me, and I cry even more. I cry until it feels like I don't even have the energy to do that anymore. I have no motivation to try and swim higher.

Isolated still.

The pressure on my chest has risen so much that it hurts. I want to give up, I need to give up, but I *can't* give up. Even though I crave the feeling I had before, floating above the ice and waves, it doesn't feel possible at all to get up to the surface now. Now all I see is the bottom of the water. The dark, black, abyss at the bottom. It's close, within my reach. But as soon as I try and grasp at it the sharp, icy pain immediately forces my hand away. I look back at the dark, the weight on my chest tightens, and I close my eyes. I try and channel some warmth back to my hands, concentrating on the memories of the warmth of the sun from before. The glowing orange, red or yellow contrasts with black void. I grasp at the darkness again, and I nearly reach it. But I look back up to the ice above. I can see people's feet, paddling in the water or making shadows on the ice. The ice seems thinner, and easier to crack and break through from here. I can hear voices again, laughter so loud it's deafening. The noises stop me, frozen in the water. I chew on my lip and wait. I wait for the laughter to stop. For the weight to push me down all the way. But nothing. *Nothing*. I stop and then swim a bit further up. I start to hear calls from above, willing me, pulling me to the surface. All of a sudden the deep, dark bottom seems too scary.

Less helpless now.

It's still hard of course even now. Sometimes the weight pushes me back down below the water a little bit, just a little bit. But I don't sink low enough that the pressure is too high. I try and break the ice, pounding on it with my hands, but I have friends to help on the ice above and I am pulled out of the water by them. The sun shines, drying my clothes and hair, which cling tightly to my body. I laugh and smile again, it feels like ages since I have, the weight lifted off my chest so I am very relieved, while my feet splash in the water. Occasionally I'm engulfed in water once again, but I know I can get out again even if it takes a long time, as I have a ladder or a rope which pulls me back up from the water. *I never sink as low as I once did*. I do sink down low but it is nowhere near as far.

I am forever grateful I didn't sink as far as I nearly did. I'm mostly happy now. Sitting on the ice, my feet in the water, with a hand grasped in my friend's, and the sun and a smile on my face.

Why Languages?

by Ruby Howard



Origins of ‘to educate’: from Latin *educates*, past participle of *educare* “bring up, rear”, which is related to *educere* “bring out, lead forth”.

Language is such a fundamental attribute of humans, that life without any form of communication would be terrifyingly lonely for us. To look at how far we have come; from pictures painted on stone with mud to advanced speech and written text, is truly inspiring. It is a topic that the human race seems to be naturally programmed to make more complex. On average, the Oxford dictionary says that we add around 1,000 words to our vernacular each year (although many of these are either rarely used, slang or predominantly useless!), proving just how much we aspire to expand our everyday vocabulary. However, most are not content with just one language, instead learning as many as possible (in fact, the current record is held by Ziad Fazah, who is thought to be fluent in 58 languages).

Most people find languages hard and when teachers or parents say, “Oh, it’s all part of the challenge”, you think, “well it’s all right for you”, or some similarly vexed retort. But it is a skill, just like playing an instrument or riding a horse; everything appears to be complete nonsense...until it clicks. As with all skills, some are more predisposed to suit it than others, but with time and enthusiasm, it will all come together, showing you patterns, cohesive structures, underlying logic that you would never otherwise have noticed.

I am currently taking French, Spanish and Latin GCSEs, meaning that I am finally reaching a stage at which I can begin to recognize links, not only in vocabulary and alphabet, but also in grammar and culture. And yes, I do get confused sometimes, and start writing my French exam in Spanish, but the more that I practise, the easier it is to differentiate and separate. Persevere, because sooner or later, it all falls into place. One day, you look at a text or listen to a speech, and realise that it is no longer all gobbledygook to you!

I did a bit of research into why other people chose to learn languages, finding a lot of the same old 'It helps you find a job' or 'It helps prevent brain decay'. Important as those things are, they all feel a long way in the future for many of us. What about now? At the top of this page is the etymology of the verb to educate: to bring out or lead forth. This is exactly what languages do; they break down barriers and expose us to new cultures, bringing us out of society's bubble.

When choosing their GCSEs, many of my friends were annoyed at the prospect of a compulsory language, saying that surely in this day and age, English is enough, surely there were better subjects etc. In my opinion, that is a rather confining, predominantly Anglo-American view to take. When you go to another country some people will be able to speak a few words of English, and to them you are just another English tourist passing by. Being unable to understand what they are saying, or unable to respond fluently, is nothing to be ashamed of. Not if you have tried.

Another point that may appeal more to the majority of teenagers is the presence of languages in arts and sports. In ballet, most positions, moves and dances have French names, such as 'grand allegro', 'port de bras' and 'adage'. For piano, notes and directions are given in Italian, for example 'cantabile', 'dulce' and 'legato' and karate requires basic Japanese for instructions and positions.

I asked some of my friends what they think is important, and together we compiled a list of tips, which are as follows:

- Perseverance - you cannot learn a language overnight, no one can
- Commitment - sometimes you just have to get on with a task as opposed to procrastinating for hours on end (we've all done it)!
- Interest - there is no denying that you have to be interested in a subject to succeed
- Actually learn vocab - boring as it is, you won't regret it!
- Dedication - try doing a bit extra on your work, as well as being satisfying, it helps your learning
- Don't compare yourself - someone is always better or worse than you and nothing will come of making yourself or others feel bad
- Use online learning - instead of repeatedly ignoring the target on your report, try using Duolingo or Memrise, they are surprisingly good!
- Media - try reading books, watching foreign films or tuning in to a radio station
- Making memes - apparently this is really useful, I've never actually tried it myself
- Make mistakes - yep, cheesy, but you do remember corrections better than correct first time

Thank you for reading! I hope that you enjoyed this article and that it has shown you a different perspective on languages.

Revision Tips from Student Voice

by Lara Pieczka

Exam season is approaching, and however scary it may seem, the exams will soon be upon us! We have compiled a list of our favourite tips to help you get through your exams this year. If you are struggling with stress, don't suffer in silence. Go and see someone you trust and tell them about how you are feeling- everybody has been there at some point in their life and a little bit of reassurance and comfort goes a long way!

1. Don't panic

It may seem very hard not to get caught up in a whirlwind of stress as exams approach, but you must stay calm if you are going to revise properly. It doesn't matter if it is three months before the exam or the night before, panicking won't help you. Whether it is your first set of Summer Exams in U3 or you are a seasoned pro in 6.2, everyone feels the pressure of exams at some point. Creating coping mechanisms can help power you through.



2. Set realistic targets

There is no point scheduling three maths past papers every morning if you know you won't wake up until 11am. If you overestimate the amount of work you are able to do, then you will only end up feeling miserable when you don't complete every target you set yourself. Instead, set a list of everything you want to get done in a day and make sure you have achieved it.

3. Make it interactive

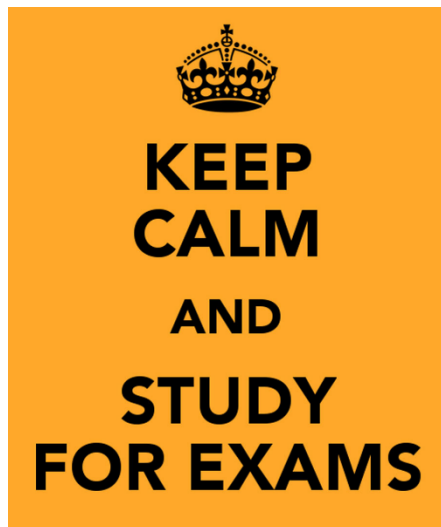
Copying out your notes again and again will not make the knowledge go into your head (as much as you'd like it to). It is important to have a complete set of notes and a shortened version which you can refer to if you get stuck on a question, but a great way to test your knowledge is by doing something interactive like making flashcards or group testing.

4. Take a break

Especially in our school, the workaholic is a common phenomenon. These students seem to always be working and never have any time off. This is not a healthy way to live your life and can lead to vision problems and headaches. We suggest having a day off each week when revising to give your brain a rest. During this time, do something completely different to stimulate your brain in other ways.

8. Remember to eat and drink

Picture the situation: you have been revising for two hours with nothing to eat or drink and you didn't have breakfast this morning. Unfortunately, this is a popular approach to revision when you want to cram everything in at once. You must keep eating and drinking to power your brain- if you are running on empty then nothing will be going in! If you are worried about your health, then there are many healthy drinks and snacks such as almonds and blueberries, which you can sink your teeth into.



6. Create a working environment

As much as revising in bed seems a good idea, you will probably just feel sleepy. We find it very helpful to set up a designated area in your house where you go to work. This space is yours and encourages you to revise. Decorate it with some pretty colours and stash some of your favourite snacks to keep you going when motivation is lacking.

7. Stay motivated

The older you get, the more it feels like the government is turning you into an exam machine. It is all too easy to forget why we are revising and learning. Stay motivated by picturing yourself at university studying a subject you love, or in your dream job having a great time. This should help give you an extra boost you might need to keep going if your motivation levels have dropped and you are in a slump.

5. Have fun

It may seem like this is the worst point in your life, and that nothing could make it any better, but when you look back you will realise that your school days are the best days of your life. It is such a waste if you find yourself hating every second of school. Try to find a positive in every day such as making yourself your favourite dinner or learning something interesting while revising with your friends. This way you can stay happy and survive your exams at the same time!

At the end of your exams, celebrate surviving another year of school, revision and homework!



Editor's Note

Platform's Farewell



I joined the magazine in Lower Four and last year I became editor. What did this mean to me? I never thought I could have been this role. I have been lucky through my school experience to have the opportunity to express, through the written word. I can only thank those who inaugurated the magazine as 'The Magpie' all those years ago. 'The Magpie' met hurdles, limits to publication and deliberate reluctance to allow the magazine to be released...but it is still here. It has grown, evolved, and changed its clothes but never its soul or its beliefs. It has a voice. That's all – a voice.

The magazine has fought over the years and this school year it has, again, faced competition and I have fought on its behalf, not for myself, but to hold onto the remnants of a space for expression and individuality, in a world descending into sameness and monochrome. I tried to keep the platform available for people to communicate, to write, to express.

The magazine industry is fighting on the losing side, battling to hold journalism and the written word is a struggle. Rouleur has shrunk in size, The Modernist changed format, the NME this year has gone out of print after an issue a week since 1952, The Independent is now a virtual existence, meanwhile Time Inc. UK has been sold to a private equity firm. Those in support of magazines are now in the minority but we write, it is what we do and we will continue to fight with the best weapon we know – words. It is not easy but nothing worth fighting for is ever easy to achieve.

I started writing to stop music from becoming crowded by plastic pop and the dishwater music of the forced music industry – I was scared about the future of music, its power and identity-defining ability. I know feel fearful knew that the words might flounder before the music dwindles.

It is about caring and there is no mark scheme, no assessment criteria to judge that. The world is bigger than curricular and that is what the magazine is about. I would like to think this magazine, as The Magpie and as Platform, went some way to bringing the world closer, to letting us imagine. We have been believed in, anticipated, looked forward to and the glimmer of spontaneity it provides has gone a small way as a catalyst for opinion.

I do not foresee that the magazine will be able to retain its identity after this issue. This is not a criticism of those who would be capable of running the project next year and beyond, merely the understanding that I have a duty not to let the magazine's true spirit wither and slowly diminish and fade. I cannot envisage a merger with any other society/project in the school being true to the magazine itself and as the last of the original team, I will not be here to protect it in the future when I leave school.

Times they are a-changing and so the magazine, Platform, must bid farewell now; it has to stop before it has to conform – I would not wish conformity on it or anybody.

It has been an honour to edit this project and this decision has been immensely difficult to make as this project represents so much and has such meaning. There have been tears as I am so proud of this and so proud to have had the opportunities to spread messages. It has taught me what I love, and that's not just to write but also to bring people together and I have found I am most able to do that through words. I encourage everybody to have a cause, to discover truth and nurture the drive to not let the opportunity for expression and voices disappear.

Platform, we're about writing to communicate with no entrance criteria; we are by the students, for the students as the original students' magazine – it always will be, even if not in print.

Thank you for reading, thank you for listening. Thank you to those who have contributed, those who have proofread, those who have been genuinely interested over the years.

This magazine is all about your voice so I invite you all to create your own platform - name your own magazine, create the team, and start from scratch. Find your way to say what you want to say because I know that everybody does want to say something, it's just hard sometimes to know how.

----- This is the final issue of Platform/The Magpie -----

Who's On The Cover



On this issue's cover is the very image of thoughtfulness, the difficulties and joys of emotion and the essence of being human. The image is of Johnny Cash. Known to many as 'The Man in Black', Johnny Cash was not only one of the most prominent and significant country musicians of all time, he crossed boundaries, between musical genres and through the invisible wall between fame and real people.

Johnny Cash was often locked inside a vicious internal battle that crafted his music but tormented his mind and the songs gave him relief, in turn bringing us truth. Famous for 'Ring of Fire' and 'Walk the Line', Johnny Cash should be explored beyond these hits, into the protest of 'Singin' Vietnam Talkin' Blues' and the frustration of 'San Quentin'. Writing about prisons says a lot about how you feel as a person; the interesting part is what it says about people who, having never been to prison or committed a crime, relate to it. We're all trapped, but the hard part is when the bars can't be seen and Johnny Cash made anguish a point to be expressed, not covered behind.

'Well, we're doin' mighty fine, I do suppose, In our streak of lightnin' cars and fancy clothes, But just so we're reminded of the ones who are held back, Up front there ought 'a be a Man In Black.'