

An Innovative Virtual MYP-DP

In the wake of lockdown to prevent **COVID-19 pandemic** from community spread, schools have begun online teaching to their students. **Victorious Kidss Educares** will continue using this lockdown period for constructive learning for the new academic session 2020-2021. Our school year 2020-2021, resuming from June 1, 2020 will begin with a delightful difference. We continue to provide a stimulating, child-centered learning environment for our students, offering the best of international learning by integrating the **Vedanta philosophy** with the inquiry based **International Baccalaureate Middle Year and Diploma Programme**.

The **MYP-DP** academic happenings for the *past two months* is an astute blend of curriculum planning that involves designing curriculum framework and creative teaching strategies that makes virtual classroom effective and interesting. The planning of core components of IBDP – Extended essay and Creative Action and Service (CAS) has already begun with orientation for teachers and students. In context of MYP, planning of Personal Project and Interdisciplinary Units (IDU) has begun in full swing. MYP teachers are embracing the interdisciplinary unit planning in a variety of ways and exploring amazing connections for new learning of the students.

The pedagogical leadership team and teachers are geared up with enthusiasm and excitement to prepare online teaching through new activities, worksheets and assignments by using virtual platforms like Managebac, Google classroom, Skype and zoom. Our MYP-DP teachers are proactively going a step ahead to equip themselves digitally for the E-learning sessions. Teachers are exploring possibilities as to how they envision our students thinking and learning.

With the IBMYP-DP course requirements for all the subject groups, subject teachers are collaborating to plan and design unique and innovative ways to welcome the MYP 1 and DP –year 1 students with interactive PowerPoint sessions. Maintaining the demands of MYP-DP, teachers are exploring ways to enhance and extend students' skills through the rigorous curriculum. The subject teachers will be using strategies for online learning such as discussion forums, multimedia presentations, quizzes and surveys, virtual gallery walks, virtual labs and simulation to make this endeavour successful.

All in all, teachers are excited to prepare themselves with the blended learning and offer a range of learning experiences to our students!

Reinventing the Wheel

"We need to bring learning to people instead of people to learning." - Elliot Masie

After a long wait, our young enthusiastic learners are eagerly and impatiently waiting to get back to their learning environment which they have missed dearly. Having missed their friends, their teachers, their support staff and especially their wonderful learning spaces – their favourite classrooms, our students and the school are keen to unite and form that connection and attachment once again!

The VKE family has also missed their excited and enthusiastic learners and we yearn to bond with our skillful, admirable and affectionate students who mean so much to us. It is with pride and an ultimate sense of serving our young enthusiasts, that we use this opportunity to extend our learning environment into the digital space. Much as we would like to see them and hear their excited stories, we are sadly having to comply with the current scenario to keep them healthy and safe and yet the need to connect with them is so overwhelming that we look forward to welcoming them through this virtual world of interaction till it is safe for them to visit us again in school.

Needless to say, the Corona virus pandemic has resulted in a new hybrid model of education with significant benefits. It is believed that the integration of information technology in education will be further accelerated with online education which will eventually become an integral component of faculty education. On the other hand, it is without a doubt that there is no replacement for classroom teaching and learning but here is where digital learning has added that extra dimension of “technical prowess” for everyone during these trouble times.

The benefits of integrating technology into the classroom comes with the view that it offers a certain degree of flexibility not found in the traditional model of education and our students are well aware of that. Trying out new technology trends can actually be fun for not just the teachers but students too. As teachers adopt new approaches, they're going to find that it gives new life into material and creates excitement among their learners.

Our motto is to see to it that every young learner now has the opportunity of the “front row seat” as there are no apparent physical seating structures for online classes and each student has the experience to be able to interact on a one-on-one basis with their teachers. This is especially beneficial for those shy learners who are now able to find new confidence as they are able to shed their inhibitions by linking themselves to this powerful global learning platform.

As the IB curriculum encourages self-learning, our young enthusiasts are in a wonderful position to gain expert advice and guidance from a range of multiple sources available

online, driving their consciousness as responsible learners, interacting with teachers, peers and parents while at the same time being safe and protected in the confines of their homes, under the watchful eyes of their dear parents.

Through this “adventurous” digital learning journey that intelligently utilizes electronic technologies to access educational curriculum beyond the four walls of a traditional classroom we have incorporated a new way for ‘learning to love to learn’. The approaches to teaching and learning within the whole community of learners will be provided with a unique medium to develop skills; the wings to our champions to soar beyond the boundaries of their peers. So in short, the grimness of the current environment has in turn provided ample opportunities for us to ‘reinvent the wheel’ using newer technology to gain a firm foothold into the digital space and for students from all walks of life to share their knowledge and communicate with the world at large with an internationally-minded approach.

It is a wonderful journey towards intellectual or cognitive development by academics and meta-cognitive development. Imagine a system of education where children are taught to judge a person by beauty around and within the heart, and not just by physical appearance. Imagine a system of education where developing intelligence goes hand in hand with developing character, a system of education where they can learn to navigate with their own minds. All this is not just imagination, but it is possible if we genuinely begin to value our ethics. With a blended learning program, we have the ability and scope for adding interactivities in our virtual classrooms, initiate group discussions, presentations, debates or role-playing games to facilitate exchange of ideas, experiences, skills and perspectives. It is safe to say that this could be the right time for institutions to embrace distance education not as a mere substitute, but as a blended program to deliver the best options to our excited learners.

“Television didn’t transform education. Neither will the internet. But it will be another tool for teachers to use in their effort to reach students in the classroom. It will also be a means by which students learn outside the classroom” – John Palfrey

Learning is fun.....

In these challenging times when the whole world is facing the effect of novel corona virus, the government and other officials are doing their best to slow down the outbreak.

But let us not forget, our teachers who are equally working hard to continue to provide quality education to the children so that they don't have to compromise on their learning journey.

Here at VKE, we believe in the motto of "Learning to love to Learn" and with the same vision, teachers are continuously working to make our new academic session fun-filled and exciting for our students.

Looking at the current conditions and the evolving role of technology in teaching methodologies, teachers at VKE will continue to incorporate effective use of technology by trying to include the vital elements of experience, discovery, excitement, engagement, fun, and interaction to the classroom by using various technological tools.

Student engagement is the key to a successful learning journey and therefore, various online platforms will be used to make learning fun-filled yet meaningful for the students. Several tools through which students will be actively engaged are Managebac, Skype, Google Classroom, YouTube videos, Quizlet, Kahoot app etc. These innovative apps and websites will provide visual learning through videos, organize student learning, remind students about upcoming assignments and homework, provide group collaboration, and provide check-ups on learning through games and online quizzes.

We are equally aware how important it is to bring life to the lesson as students learn best by experiencing and visualizing. Considering this, teachers have planned to introduce virtual field trips and online lab activities to make learning effective and meaningful during these times. We hope to have a challenging yet wonderful session ahead!

VKE is a model school and always sets benchmark in teaching and learning. Since the lockdown was announced due to COVID-19 global crisis, all our classes are happening online through various modes of teaching. We successfully managed the term end examination and report cards were sent online to parents. Our entire teaching staff is working consistently to come up with innovative ideas and techniques for the new academic session starting in June, 2020.

WHAT'S NEW AND EXCITING IN THE NEW SESSION?

In the new academic session, we will have young, dynamic and talented DP teachers. We will have a balance of academic and extracurricular activities. All the sessions and activities will be conducted online through Skype, Zoom, Padlet and Google Classroom. Tasks and assignments will be uploaded on managebac for students.

- The DP orientation will happen online in the first two weeks of June, 2020.
- Students and parents will be given general orientation about the Diploma Programme.
- There will be online orientation sessions for all the six subject groups along with three core components of TOK (Theory of Knowledge), CAS (Creativity, activity and service) and EE (Extended Essay).
- This will be followed by Career Counselling sessions and students will be given subject selection forms online to discuss with parents and fill and submit.
- Each student along with the parents will be given a time slot to discuss subject choices with the Career Counselling team.
- Students will be given time slots to discuss online, their CAS activities with the CAS Coordinator.
- This year, we will organise Student Exchange Programmes with other IB DP schools.
- There will be online language clubs for French and Spanish.
- Student Council Elections will be done online where contestants will give a short introduction about themselves and receive votes. The final results will be announced by the school committee.
- Educational Field trips will be planned in advance and after lockdown, students will be sent along with teachers to different destinations to explore learning beyond classrooms.
- Like every year, VKE students will initiate, plan and organise Model United Nations (MUN) conference in school (this will be done online if Lockdown continues).
- Students will explore new subjects like Film and Music, (Theatre is already in place). They will interact with the subject teachers and start online classes.

“Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important.” – Bill Gates

Teachers are in steady quest to adapt to the change and make learning effective, entertaining, and engaging through virtual classes.

To implement this in practical world, we would focus on conceptual inquiry, as it is the concepts that drive the planning and learning in Diploma Programme. Students would collaborate and involve in learning engagements that would build their conceptual understanding.

It is carefully planned for and co-structured with students in the virtual classes for an indeed smooth transition from the conventional classes. Online courses appeal for a better amount of motivation and self-discipline than a classroom-based course.

Transition to the virtual mode is a result of collaborative efforts of the school management, teachers, students, and parents. Scrupulous planning, frequent connects between parent and teacher through means of WhatsApp, Zoom and Skype meetings would lead to a strong partnership. We also have a lot of open-source Learning Management System models like Moodle, Edmodo, Google Classroom, Chamilo, and Canvas.

Most of the teachers will supplement this with lecture videos on YouTube, scanned notes sent through WhatsApp messages, Managebac and numerous websites and apps which would allow students to progress at their own pace.

As we get more and more devices in our classrooms, it is important that we realize how we can use them to do wonderful things like making student thinking visible and allowing us to amplify student voice by hearing from all of our students. This way we can know where each of them is in the learning process. One of the most important things we will do is use of “Seesaw” to better understand what our students know and what they don’t.

Tool: Seesaw (The making of Thinking Visible Machine). [Hollyclark.org](https://hollyclark.org)

The quarantine period has helped us recognize the importance of virtual teaching and learning. Video and reference links will be shared with students before the class to give them an idea of the whole session; flipped classroom will provide them time for preparation leading to enhanced contribution during class assignments.

The teachers will motivate students to explore creativity, cherish family bonds, play indoor games, learn novel skills, imbibe yoga as a daily habit, read e-books, consume nutritious food and stay safe at home.

Online learning for VKE students will help follow their individualized learning programmes, possibly even college-level courses through autonomy and intellectual freedom.

Virtual library would also play a pivotal role in helping students with hands-on exercises, real-world exploration, and thorough assessments which will easily enhance their learning.

Career counselors at VKE would help students in academic settings, aiding students in building future educational or career paths. They would assist students evaluate their abilities and interests, overcome challenges and obstacles, and develop necessary skills.

What Extra Can Be Included In the sessions during lockdown-online sessions

- During our online class, we may request students to wash their hands properly at regular intervals.
- We may share a template or poster regarding precautionary steps for COVID-19 published by WHO or the government during our sessions.
- Share some positive quotes during our sessions.

“Let’s go invent tomorrow instead of worrying about what happened yesterday.”
– Steve Jobs

A sneak peek into Virtual Learning at VKE

'I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.' – Albert Einstein

The lockdown is testing the ability of humans to evolve – as parents, as homemakers, as friends and as professionals. Everyone, irrespective of their current profession, is trying to make the most of the lockdown. They're learning new skills and techniques that would make them efficient professionals in spite of the obstacles and challenges posed by the lockdown.

The same goes for teachers. The start of the next academic year will bring with it the possible continuation of online classes in case of a lockdown extension. Thus, teachers will have to think of innovative and exciting new techniques to engage with students and deliver the content in an efficient manner. It is the inherent skill of a teacher to adapt, think on his/her feet and come up with unique and efficient solutions in the face of challenges. Below are some techniques that teachers can consider while designing their lesson plans for the next academic year, be it a virtual or a face to face classroom.



Conducting a class online can severely limit the types of activities that teachers use to deliver the content. Utilizing different platforms to conduct classes can help break the monotony that may accompany online content delivery. Allowing students to work simultaneously in collaboration may require them to use more than one online tool to accomplish their goal. This can help students strategise and come up with constructive problem solving strategies by themselves. Tools such as Kahoot, Quizlet, Padlet, Google

Classroom and Skype among many other platforms can provide an engaging and interesting way to help students understand the concepts in a better way. These tools can be used effectively even during offline classes to make the lessons more interesting.



According to Thomas Caruthers, ‘A teacher is one who makes himself progressively unnecessary.’ This quote emphasizes the quality of the teacher to inculcate the habit of independent research and self study among students. Independent research is another strategy that teachers can employ during both offline and online classes. In the absence of constant supervision and monitoring by the teacher, the onus lies with the student to engage in self-study and independent analysis. Teachers can devise engaging and age appropriate assignments that encourage research and analysis of the concepts being taught. Through this technique, the teacher is merely a catalyst. The child itself brings about his/her own growth.

Differentiation is a key aspect of every classroom. Differentiation takes place on three levels – content, process and product. By focusing on the learning objective as the end goal, teachers can formulate tasks that are flexible with regards to how the content is being delivered, the process that will guide them towards reaching their learning objective as well as the end product which will showcase their learning. Just because a class is conducted online doesn’t mean differentiation takes a back seat. Teachers can plan classroom strategies in such a way that differentiation in terms of content, process and product can be achieved through an online class as well.



Checking for understanding before concluding a class can be a vital strategy to understand whether the student has absorbed the information. Online classes are not exempted from this. Giving students some time to collect their thoughts, summarize their learning, share their insights as well as clearing their doubts can help teachers gauge the effectiveness of the online learning strategy employed during the class.

The next academic year will bring with it a new set of challenges. One of these could be the possibility of continuation of online classes. It may seem like a challenging task, however in the hands of a flexible and open-minded teacher, online classrooms are just regular classrooms that include innovative new techniques that bolster student engagement.