

Experiences of students in China, Italy give a glimpse into ASL's future

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While ASL is just starting its second week of distance learning, international schools in China and Italy have been

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closed for several weeks. Hearing what some of those students have experienced during their time doing distance learning might give ASL students an idea of what to expect in the weeks ahead.

Shanghai American School and Nanjing International School are both located in China, where the corona virus outbreak started. Students had their last day of school on

February 4, not knowing that they would not return after the Chinese New Year break. Marymount International, Rome closed soon after in mid February, and H-International School Treviso in Italy closed in early March.

Five out of eleven students from these four schools travelled out of the country where their school is when distance learning began. Ethan,* an eighth grader at Nanjing International School, went to Australia at the start of distance learning and has been there ever since. "We're Australian citizens and the government said the best decision was to come home," he said.

Estelle, an eighth grader at Shanghai American School, went to Sweden for the Chinese New Year break and did not return to China until two weeks ago. "While we were on vacation, the coronavirus

started spreading, so we decided it was safest to return back to Sweden where we come from. But, then the virus started coming there and started spreading over Europe," she said.

Distance learning is new for everyone at first, and schools in China were the first to adapt to closing schools. Kendall, a seventh grader at Shanghai American School, said, "I think it was a big step in a direction I wasn't really comfortable with, but I think now there's been a lot more communication with teachers and friends. I think my feelings have changed in the way that I have a more positive outlook on it."

Even though these students have gone through several weeks of distance learning, some of them still struggle with being away from the regular classroom. Ethan said, "I

do appreciate what the teachers are doing for us... but just personally I don't like it. I'm an outside person. I love collaborating and things like that."

Chloe, a ninth grader at Nanjing International School, said, "I think it's okay, like it's definitely not my favorite. Definitely not like going to school and going to normal classes, but I've done eight weeks of this now, and it's all right."

Each school is managing distance learning in a different way, using varying software and choosing whether to do synchronous or asynchronous learning. Some schools have set timetables and video chats for each lesson, whereas other schools have mainly individual

work with occasional check-ins.

Another thing schools are trying to manage is how to have assessments online. Gaia, a sixth grader at H-International Treviso in Italy said, "On the oral assessments we have to look at the teacher in the eye." This is to make sure students are not looking at the information to the side of the screen and upholding academic honesty.

Students have varying opinions on online learning and what they prefer. Some students feel like the workload has increased, whereas others feel like the assignments have become easier. Isabella, a ninth grader at Nanjing International School, said, "(The assignments) are sort of more challenging, but I

don't think that teachers really understand that and how much work they're actually giving us."

Similarly, Cosmo, a sixth grader at H-International Treviso, said, "You have to put more commitment into your work."

As time goes by, online learning becomes more and more normal as the transition period passes. Giulia, a sixth grader at H-International School Treviso, said, "When I first started, I couldn't really understand, but now it's normal to wake up and there's lessons online."

national Treviso, said that everyone should do their best to stay at home because "this is an important thing, to stop this coronavirus."

A common piece of advice from the eleven international students is to be positive. Carola, a sixth grader at H-International School Treviso, said, "All the teachers are working so hard, they're making the students happy, so you need to appreciate this. This is difficult for everyone and it is not our fault, and we need to have a positive attitude for everything."

Another important piece of advice is to exercise and get outside whenever possible. Rosa, a seventh grader at Marymount International, Rome, said, "Whenever you have the chance, go off the computer and do something outside or do something that doesn't involve any electronics, just to give your eyes a rest

and just so you get some exercise and some fresh air."

The right mindset will make the transition to online learning easier, said Chloe. "When I first went into online learning, and it still sometimes feels like this now, it feels like you're just doing a lot of homework. And you kind of have to be like okay, it's not homework. I'm going to get graded on it. You have to really put yourself in that mindset," she said.

**To protect the privacy of students who do not attend ASL, The Scroll has agreed to publish only their first names, grade, and where they attend school.*



Giulia, MYP1 at H-International School Treviso



Francesco, MYP1 at H-International School Treviso



Carola, MYP1 at H-International School Treviso



Rosa, seventh grader at Marymount International, Rome



Gaia, MYP1 at H-International School



Estelle, eighth grader at Shanghai American School



Ethan, eighth grader at Nanjing International School



Chloe, a ninth grader at Nanjing International School



Isabella, a ninth grader at Nanjing International School



Kendall, a seventh grader at Shanghai American School

