

THE LION'S ROAR

The Leffell School • February 2023



A Different Way of Learning;
Understanding history through
Reacting to the past • Page 6

Letter from the Editors

We are thrilled to be the Editors-in-Chief of The Lion's Roar for another year, and have been publishing many articles both online and in print. We are also proud to have a staff composed of all four grades. We are excited to present the third issue of The Lion's Roar under the 2022-23 editorial staff, and the second issue of the 2022-23 school year!

This edition, the double truck is a feature article about the immersive games conducted in history class. The article is written by sophomore Sophie Zuckerman and highlights the beloved history games that are played in all four years of high school, in addition to the senior elective created last year called, "Gaming the Government." Other topics in this issue include an editorial on the number of tests allowed per week, a feature on Ashkenazi vs Sephardi traditions at the school, and a spotlight of the Foreign Language chair, Rafal Krazek, on the back cover.

We hope you enjoy reading throughout our issue which includes articles by many new staff writers! Please continue to regularly check our Facebook and Instagram (@tlroar) for new articles published on our website. We are so proud of all the hard work that the writers, editors, and design team have put into this issue. Enjoy!

Robin Bosworth and Lily Lebwohl

Editorial Policy

The Lion's Roar is a student-run newspaper, published periodically throughout the year, as well as continuously online. Student editors make content decisions, and the newspaper is considered a forum written by and for the students. It is, however, reviewed by the administration prior to printing, and the administration reserves the right to withhold from publication any articles it deems inappropriate.

Suggestions and comments are accepted and encouraged, and they can be made anonymously. Signed Letters for the Editor are also encouraged. *The Lion's Roar* reserves the right to edit letters for space or content in order to maintain our standards, and letters will not be considered for publication if deemed inappropriate or if unsigned.

Mission Statement

We aim for transparency.
We aim for objectivity.
We aim for accuracy.
We aim for timeliness.
And most importantly, we aim for truth, while maintaining the utmost respect for our school.
We promise to voice public opinion.
We promise not to skew information to our own interests, and we promise to uphold the same high standards for every article we publish.
We hope to establish our publication's role as the voice for the student body, and we look forward to continuing the legacy TLR has left through the years.

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Slow and Steady Wins the Race;

Unlimited time on tests is beneficial for students' grades and learning

by The Lions Roar editorial staff

Have you ever taken a test and felt the clock was working against you? That you were only focusing on how much time you had left, rather than the test itself? Unlimited timed testing is beneficial for students, as the restricted time lacks many positives.

Many parents constantly wonder why their children do not finish their tests, or why they receive a grade despite their diligent studying. Soon, parents begin to speculate on whether their child has a learning disability, such as ADHD or dyslexia, or even a mental illness, such as anxiety or depression. As a result, countless parents spend thousands of dollars on finding a diagnosis for their child in order to explain why they are not finishing their tests in the allotted time, or to advocate for their child to gain more time on future tests.

In addition, untimed tests reduce stress and give students more of an ability to show what they really know. When taking timed tests, students tend to spend more time focusing on the clock, rather than the material they are being tested on. If there was an unlimited time for an assessment, students could focus more on what they had spent days or even weeks studying for.

Additionally, studies have continuously shown that students do significantly better when they have unlimited time. When someone takes a timed test, there are many variables that come into play that affect their performance. For example, students begin to feel stressed, and many can only focus on that stress, which causes them to forget all they learned. However, with an untimed test,

students exemplify a more accurate representation of what they know because of their ability to dive deeper with the extra time. Along with this extra time, students can not only dive deeper in their answers, but they also can ask clarifying questions to the teacher when a question may be confusing. On timed tests, many students often quickly skim through question, answer them briefly, and move on. If there is a question a student may not understand, oftentimes a student will assume what it means, and therefore not accurately answer the question.

Although timed tests have its drawbacks, they can also prove to be beneficial in the long run. Since building fluency is crucial for quick reading and math skills, not only in school, but also in real world instances. In addition, timed tests build automatic skills in order to prevent spending a long time processing the information. This helps for future classes because it allows for the students to answer questions faster as there becomes more complex problems and a need for skills to be automatic and fast. Lastly, timed tests are beneficial for scheduling reasons. If teachers had to give untimed tests, they would not be able to accurately schedule lessons because they would not know how many classes to dedicate to a test.

A solution to this problem could be to allow all students, whether they have extra time or not, to receive extra time during



Stress From Tests

Why TLS should consider different options for its assessment policy

by The Lions Roar editorial staff

With the high holiday season in the rearview mirror and school resuming from winter break, many students feel overwhelmed by weeks packed with tests, quizzes and other large assignments. TLS's current policy is that students are allowed to be assigned a maximum of two tests per day as well as no more than one plus the number of days in that specific week. For instance, in a normal five day school week, students could be assigned at most six assessments.

While it is rare for a student to have six tests in a week, there are definitely quite a few different weeks during the school year where students feel stress caused by the amount of studying they must do in order to receive good grades.

Some students recall specific weeks from last year when they needed to study late into the night every night of the week. They believe that this policy is a very demanding expectation for students. Instead, they believe that the policy should be a maximum of three tests in a given week.

However, this alternative idea would raise an issue for teachers when assigning tests. Delaying tests could make course material feel outdated, which could lead to students doing poorly on exams.

Many years ago, the high school attempted to change this policy to benefit the students. For the school year's first semester, exams were assigned on a week one or week two schedule. This means that certain departments were able to assign tests one week and the rest of the departments could only assign tests for the opposite week. However, the overwhelming feedback from students was that they felt even more stressed because there would constantly be assessments week after week.

Teachers also faced the issue that course material would feel outdated because certain weeks were unavailable to assign tests.

A reasonable solution that could benefit both parties would be through the use of a survey. The school would

kehilah, lunch, or any free period they may have, if they were struggling to finish the test. This would allow the students to read through each question thoroughly and be sure they answered the question to the best of their ability.

Since timed tests increase anxiety, stress, and create more of a focus on those feelings rather than the actual test sometimes, providing unlimited time to students can really show what they know and allow them to go deeper in their thinking. When parents spend a great deal of their money on trying to find a diagnosis for their children, this can cause financial hardships. Awareness of the tolls timed tests have on students is crucial when thinking about whether students should have a restricted time. Additionally, advocating for extended time can be very useful because it will allow one to not only give their teacher a deeper dive into their thinking in order to show what they know, but can also be beneficial to their grade performance.

Perfectly Prepared

Middle and high schools to teach life skills

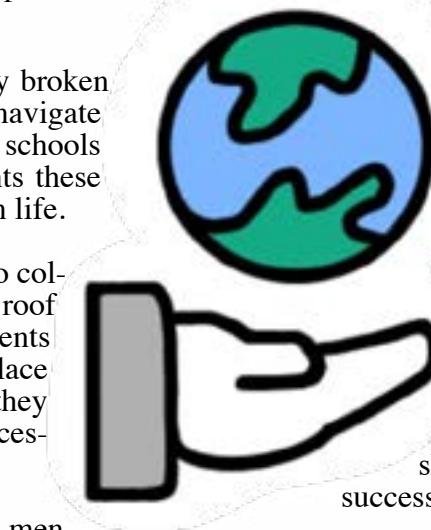
by The Lions Roar editorial staff

At school, students learn a lot of information that will help them for further school later in life. It is important to be educated in subjects like science, history, and math in order to gain knowledge of the past and understand the present. However, this knowledge does not have much practical use after one's schooling is complete.

Skills like knowing how to pay taxes and fix commonly broken household items are what it takes to be successful and navigate the world when living on your own. Middle and high schools need to implement classes dedicated to teaching students these critical life skills, which they will inevitably need later in life.

When students graduate from high school, many go off to college or move out, where they are no longer under the roof of their guardians. In these new living situations, students become responsible for the general operation of their place of residence. When appliances break, it is critical that they know how to fix them so they don't have to spend unnecessary money on hiring a professional.

Additionally, although many schools teach about various mental health disorders during health class, they do not inform students on how to find a therapist, psychiatrist, or other necessary mental health professionals. Furthermore, not all medical professionals in this field take insurance, so learning the options for how much certain solutions cost and how to navigate



this field successfully. Especially after moving out, many young adults struggle with mental health disorders and must be properly prepared to advocate for themselves.

After high school and during college, many students find themselves eating less healthy food because they do not have people cooking at home for them anymore and are exposed to more kinds of food. If schools taught how to make healthy recipes students would not face this problem. Additionally, implementing these cooking lessons in high school curriculum would make students learn to be more independent in the kitchen and helpful members of their households.

School administration may say that there are not enough hours in the schedule to dedicate time to learning these skills; however, they can be incorporated into classes that are already held during the day. Personal finances could be taught during math, writing a resume during English, and personal health during PE. These skills, while time consuming, must be taught for the wellbeing and success of students.

In order to solve the problem of young adults not knowing how to thrive and be productive on their own, schools should create classes which educate students on basic life skills or incorporate these lessons into classes that already exist, saving time in the schedule.

feature

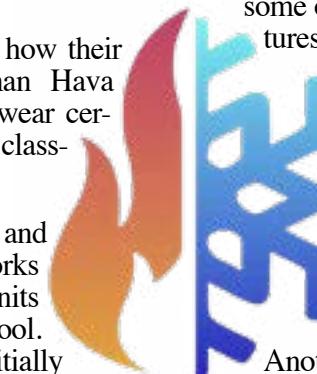
ANTARCTICA OR AUSTRALIA

Why are TLS's classroom temperatures so inconsistent?

by Lila Bernstein

You walk into the TLS building from the cold outdoors, head to your locker, and unzip your coat. You shove it into your locker, knowing you won't need it for the rest of the day. That is until you remember that some of the classrooms at TLS are freezing. You keep your coat on for the whole morning. But then, during a free period, you head to the lounge to hang out with your friends, and instantly take your coat off due to the heat. You wonder why TLS has such inconsistent classroom temperatures?

"I have seen teachers talking about how their classrooms are too cold," freshman Hava Katz said. "And that they have to wear certain clothes everyday because of the classrooms they teach in."



that there are some trials and tribulations of the heating and cooling system.

"Teachers sometimes say it is too cold so we turn up the thermostat," Operations Associate David Young said. "Others will then say that it is too high, so anytime we change it someone gets upset because not everybody has the same taste."

While a lot of the classrooms at TLS are extremely cold, some of them can get too hot, or even change temperatures throughout the day. Upper School music teacher Ariana Tullai, shares her experience teaching in the band room, which can have varying temperatures throughout the day.

"Usually this classroom is very cold in the morning, and it gets very hot in the afternoon, after more people have been in here," Tullai said. "We also get a lot of sunlight in through the windows."

Another downside to the extreme classroom temperatures is that a classroom that is too hot or too cold can make it harder for some students to focus. Temperature can impact productivity and mood.

"If the classrooms are too hot, I will not be focused," freshman Sophie Slonim said. "Then I will just be sweating, and that would not be fun."

While cold classrooms aren't something the teachers might bring up in class, a lot of them find the strange classroom temperatures distracting too.

"I find it actually very distracting," Tullai said. "Especially when it's really cold in here because then I want to put my coat on and it's harder to do all the things that I'm doing in here, like play instruments and lead rehearsals."

The way that the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system works in the school is that there are 17 units each that each cover a zone of school. However, some rooms were not initially designed as classrooms, so they were not constructed with heating or cooling in mind which can add various challenges. When given a request about changing the temperature in a classroom, Director of Maintenance at the Upper School, Sal Bueti, is able to oblige.

"Everything is basically controlled by one computer, so if a teacher wants to change the temperature in their room, they can let us know and we can easily fix it," Sal Bueti said. "However, the middle and high school were built at different times, so there's a discrepancy in the two systems. In addition, we have something called perimeter heating, so any room that isn't in contact with an outside wall won't get as much heat flow."

Other members of the Operations team at TLS agree

Leaving the Bubble: Exploring antisemitism on college campuses

by Kyra Esrig

Jews make up a mere two percent of the United States population, yet according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's 2020 hate crime statistics, antisemitism constituted over 60% of all religious hate crimes nationwide. Most TLS students are not exposed to direct antisemitism on a daily basis, and when we do experience these events, they are isolated incidents.

All one needs to do is look at college campuses to see the sheer amount of antisemitism plaguing American Jews. One Instagram account, Jewish on Campus, is devoted to exposing the antisemitism Jewish students face at college. Their Instagram describes horrifying reports of verbal and physical abuse against Jewish college students.

The stories range from students at Tufts University screaming, "F*ck the Jews," with cheering support in the background, to a Penn State professor praising the Nazis and saying how they should be looked at as an example for society. Even here in New York, an academic advisor at NYU said, "I hate Jews – they're rich and spoiled."

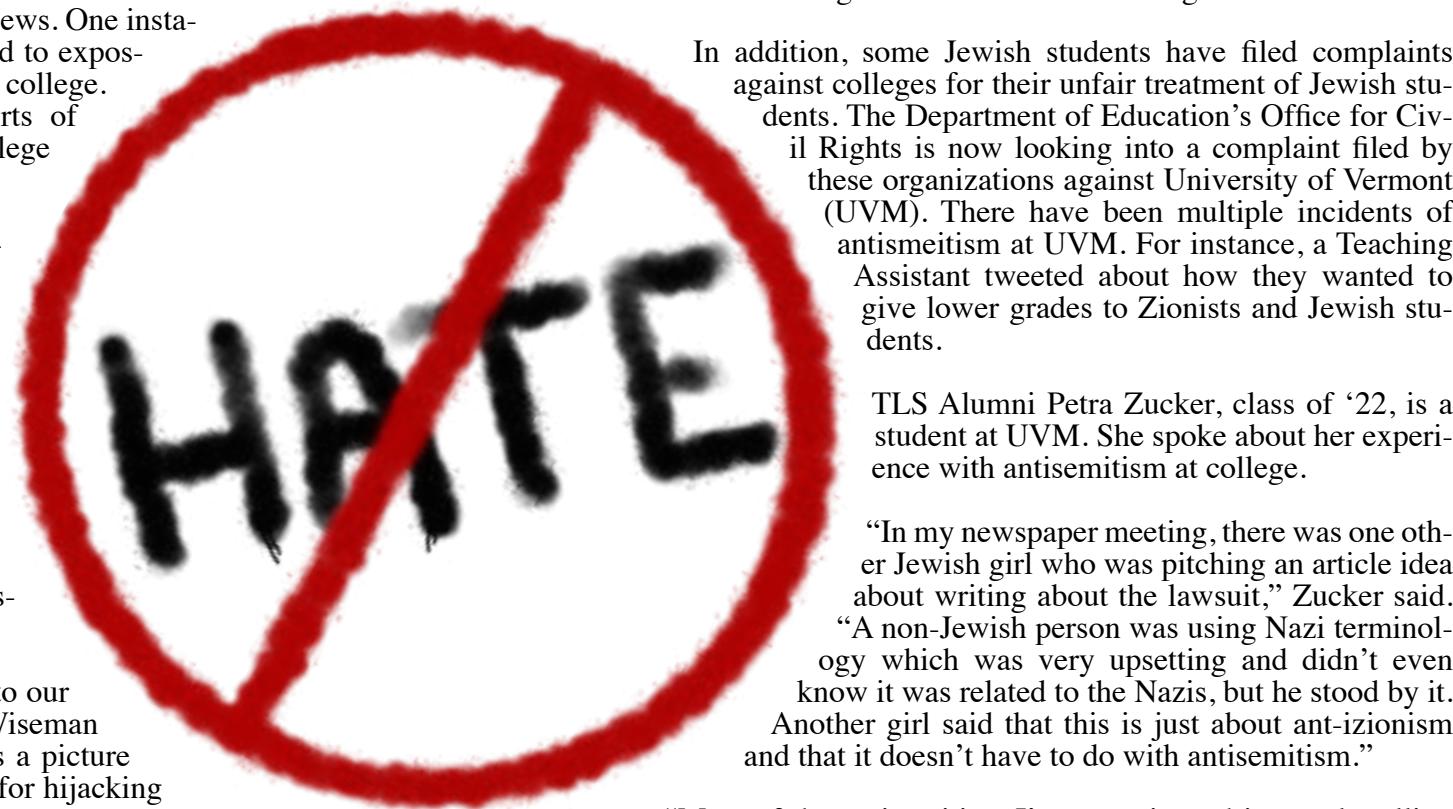
Elijah Wiseman, class of '22, is a student at the University of Michigan where in just the second week of school, there was an Anti-Israel rally.

"Protesters held up a board that said 'glory to our martyrs, glory to our freedom fighters,'" Wiseman said. "One of the things [on the board] was a picture of Leila Khaled," a terrorist who was jailed for hijacking planes carrying Jewish civilians.

"In terms of blatant antisemitism, last week I was talking to a non-Jewish friend and she said, 'oh yeah, all Jews are filthy rich.' In a school where the

student body is over 14% Jewish, these harmful stereotypes can have real consequences for Jewish students."

There are organizations dedicated to helping Jewish students on campus. Two of these organizations are the Louis D Brandeis Center, a law firm that advocates for Jewish People and combats antisemitism, and Jewish On Campus, a student-led Jewish organization that advocates against antisemitism.



In addition, some Jewish students have filed complaints against colleges for their unfair treatment of Jewish students. The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights is now looking into a complaint filed by these organizations against University of Vermont (UVM). There have been multiple incidents of antisemitism at UVM. For instance, a Teaching Assistant tweeted about how they wanted to give lower grades to Zionists and Jewish students.

TLS Alumni Petra Zucker, class of '22, is a student at UVM. She spoke about her experience with antisemitism at college.

"In my newspaper meeting, there was one other Jewish girl who was pitching an article idea about writing about the lawsuit," Zucker said. "A non-Jewish person was using Nazi terminology which was very upsetting and didn't even know it was related to the Nazis, but he stood by it. Another girl said that this is just about anti-Zionism and that it doesn't have to do with antisemitism."

"Most of the antisemitism I've experienced is people telling me what is and what isn't antisemitism which feels wrong."



A DIFFERENT WAY OF LEARNING: UNDERSTANDING HISTORY THROUGH REACTING TO THE PAST

By Sophie Zuckerman

For almost three years, *Reacting to the Past* has been incorporated into the TLS high school history curriculum. *Reacting to the Past* is a series of games for students to take on roles, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of different events in history. *Reacting to the Past* provides a different structure for history lessons that has gotten a lot of attention recently at TLS.

Reacting to the Past was first introduced at TLS by high school history teacher Harry Shontz. Although Shontz was the one to bring the games to TLS, the program was actually created at Barnard College over twenty years ago.

"At Barnard College, back in the 90s, a professor realized that during a traditional discussion of Plato's Republic, he himself was bored, the kids were bored, the papers were uninspiring, and nobody was enjoying it," Shontz said. "So this professor came back the next semester and turned that same discussion of the same text into a trial of Socrates. That is where *Reacting to the Past* was born."

Post pandemic, the dynamic in classrooms was very different. Similarly to the professor at Barnard College, Shontz knew the students needed something new.

"When we came back from COVID in the fall of 2020, we had to do something different in the classroom to change things up," Shontz said. "You were all away for months on Zoom, and the year was going to be very uncertain."

Now, *Reacting to the Past* is a core part of students' history class experience. Although it is in the form of a game, there is so much to learn from *Reacting to the Past*.

"Even though we had a lot of fun, it was also super educational," sophomore Sam Duke said. "I learned a lot about what people had to go through, had to do, and how people's actions in history impacted the outcome of events."

Reacting to the Past was such a buzz at TLS, that Shontz introduced a senior elective course, solely consisting of the various *Reacting to the Past*



You really get to feel like you are a part of history instead of taking a backseat and just learning about it, and I am glad I had the opportunity to participate in it as a senior.

Playing a game in an academic setting can be difficult to understand. Yet, through the speeches and participation that is required of students, there is actually a lot of work that goes into being an active player in the *Reacting to the Past* games.

"I appreciated the speeches that we had to hand in and give to the class," junior Lyla Souccar said. "Those speeches require a lot of research with historical documents, which is where I really learned a lot. Some people really got into them and were

games. Before students play the game, they receive a certain number of "set up lessons" that give them historical context to participate in the game, and they use that information throughout the whole game.

"There is still an element of lecturing because you do have to learn some background knowledge to be able to do the games. However, you have creative control over your speeches and choices."

using accents, props, and dressing up. Those were really fun and interesting."

Despite the fact that the same game is played in each class year to year, Shontz sees a difference in the outcomes every time. Through the way students take on roles in the game, and the choices they make, there is always an element of surprise.

"The course of history is altered in this game everyday, and I just love seeing different crazy plots develop," Shontz said. "The other thing as well is that I like seeing kids come out of their shell a little bit more. There are kids who you cast for certain roles for this game, unsure if they will rise to the occasion. When they hit it out of the park, it is so exciting to watch."

Students also notice the fact that the game is a surprise, and is in your hands the entire time depending on the choices that the classroom makes.

"You can make your own history in the game while learning about how it actually happened, because regardless of the game's outcome, afterwards you learn what truly happened in history," Borenstien said.

The big question was what the students took with them after the game ended. After the first *Reacting to the Past* game was launched, Shontz wanted to know if the information really sank in with the students.

"A year after playing the first game with the then-freshman, now juniors, Mrs. LaGreca and I sent out a survey asking what students remembered," Shontz said. "A majority scored relatively high in a quiz on something they had done a year before. I do not think they would have had the same results for a unit done in a different way."

Shontz hears that conversations often leave the classroom, and sometimes even leave the school campus.

"I have heard from parents in conferences that the games are dinner table talk," Shontz said. "Parents were telling me that kids would come over on the weekend, and they were still talking about the game."

Effective Electives: Inside a unique part of TLS's senior year

by Jakey Lebwohl

There are specific images which come to mind when people think of senior year. Maybe it is the feeling of difficult classes and increased responsibilities.

"In terms of the classes individually, the classes definitely seem more laid back. But as a whole, it's a lot more work," Gurvitch said. "But it does definitely feel like I'm enjoying school a lot more than I would if I weren't taking electives."

Something about the electives that stands out is how different they are from the required courses offered the other three years of high school.

While, like all classes, the workloads, intensities, and purposes vary greatly, there is opportunity for more novel forms of teaching. Junior Mira Schulman, who is currently enrolled in Psychology, is utilizing an opportunity that allows eleventh graders to take some senior electives. She has had the chance to compare these special lessons with regular courses side by side.

course load. However, as expected, there is also a cooling effect on the general feeling of senior year.

and Literature of Lyrics.

High school Tanakh teacher Daniel Mond teaches Philosophy, a more intensive and complicated social science elective. The nature of the subject matter already makes it a rigorous course, which competes with the short, one-semester time frame allowed.

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High school Tanakh teacher Daniel Mond teaches Philosophy, a more intensive and complicated social science elective. The nature of the subject matter already makes it a rigorous course, which competes with the short, one-semester time frame allowed.

"When I first did the curriculum, I probably wrote a course that would have taken four years, and then I slowly kind of took things out and took things out," Mond said. "But you still want to give an overview of Western philosophy"

Teaching a course like this gives both the students and teachers a chance to explore a topic of interest. Together, they can investigate a subject that is of passing interest to one, and a fundamental field of study to another. Students can use this freedom to further an interest they already have, to prepare for college, or to decide what they want to pursue in the future.

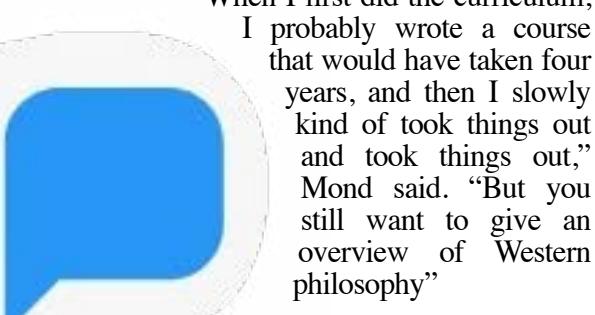


"It's different from all my other classes," Schulman said. "It's a different group of people and a different group of minds. And it's interesting to see the different dynamics from classes I take now."

As someone who is going to choose which elective courses she is going to take next year, Schulman also offers some insight into her decision process. The two main factors influencing the procedure are her interests and her future plans.

"Next year is a good opportunity to be able to tailor the classes to what I like," Schulman said. "I feel like that's kind of a good bridge for college, and there are not as many requirements."

The electives offered vary from year to year, but currently they include traditional topics such as World Literature, Economics and Statistics, to more unique and innovative topics such as Forensic Science, Biblical Art



Teaching a course like this gives both the students and teachers a chance to explore a topic of interest. Together, they can investigate a subject that is of passing interest to one, and a fundamental field of study to another. Students can use this freedom to further an interest they already have, to prepare for college, or to decide what they want to pursue in the future.



Complete Collaboration

Exploring students' and teachers' opinions about group projects

by Robin Bosworth

Imagine you walk into class and you see that wheel with everyone's names on it, or popsicle sticks with colors that determine your group, and the teacher is ready to randomly assign partners for a project. Your heart rate increases as you anxiously anticipate who you will be paired with for the assignment. This is how many students at TLS feel when they hear the announcement that there will be a group project.

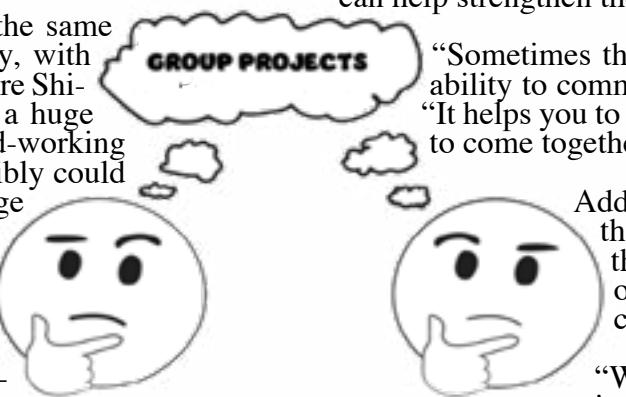
A contributing factor to this anxiety is the fact that everyone on the team receives the same grade in group projects. Some students feel that teachers do not take into account the amount of effort each group member actually puts in.

"It feels unfair that students working together can get the same grade, when in reality not everyone contributes equally, with people putting in much more effort than others," sophomore Shira said. "When groups are randomly assigned, luck plays a huge factor in the final grade. You could be given a very hard-working partner who will make your project better than you possibly could alone, or you could be given a partner who takes advantage of the group setting and does practically nothing."

In tenth and eleventh grade E-Squared classes, students are placed in groups with three or four members to work together on one project for the entire year. This year, the E-Squared department is experimenting with task management software where students have to report on what they do each period in order to hold themselves and each other accountable for the work they put into the project. This is supposed to ensure that each teammate is assigned specific tasks and that they are completed.

"I think one of the best things about the program is it gives you the time to be able to explore everything a team needs to do," Director of Engineering and Design Dr. Danny Aviv said. "One of our main goals is to have students walk away at the end of the program and say 'I know how to work with anyone and be goal oriented. I know how to plan my work. I know how to distribute tasks and I know how to be accountable.'"

One of the main challenges teachers have when assigning group projects is figuring out how to assess them fairly. Some teachers give teams group



grades, while others try to evaluate each student's contributions and opt to give individual grades.

"As every person who's ever been in a group project knows, sometimes people don't pull their own weight," Aviv said. "That either means that the grade goes down because of that, or one person does the work of another person. So that's a problem that we are trying to fix. What we tried to have now, at least, is that there's a group grade and an individual grade for each person in the group."

However, despite their hesitations, many students also see that group projects can help strengthen their collaboration skills.

"Sometimes there's value in group projects because it increases ability to communicate with others," junior Andrew Amona said. "It helps you to make bonds between two people because you have to come together to work on something."

Additionally, for bigger projects, some students believe that working in groups makes it easier to complete the project because if one group member is unsure of how to begin, they can get assistance from their classmates.

"When I was in eighth grade, we did debates and it was in groups of seven or so," Perler said. "By working together, we were actually able to have a bunch of good arguments because we were able to share ideas and bounce off of each other."

Despite the mixed opinions about the benefits and drawbacks of group work, it is definitely a highly valued aspect of academics at TLS.

"The idea is that you as an individual can only go so far, so there's an advantage to working together to try to figure something out," Aviv said. "I think group work is probably one of the most important things that we do in school. Rarely in life do people work in isolation; it's all about collaboration. And that's a simple power skill that most people don't have."

It's More Than Just *Kitniyot*

How both Sephardic and Ashkenazi traditions are represented at TLS

by Natalie Allon

Tired of gefilte fish? Here is a recipe for Moroccan Moufleta: 3 3/4 cups flour, 1 1/2 cups warm (not boiling) water, 1 Tbsp yeast, pinch of sugar, pinch of salt, vegetable (not olive) oil, as needed. This classic Sephardi dish is usually made and enjoyed by Moroccan Jews on the holiday following the last night of Passover called Mimuna. This celebration marks the return of eating chametz after a long week of being forbidden to do so.

The study of Jewish traditions at TLS are taught the moment after walking through the school doors. Judaism from all different backgrounds is celebrated at TLS, and the administration strives for all students to feel represented. Despite this, there is still a search for inclusivity as its traditions were already established. Religious experiences such as Tefilah and weekly Torah readings are practiced with Ashkenazi customs.

"The siddur that we use is Ashkenazi and the majority of the teachers at the school are Ashkenazi," junior Aliza Sapiro-Polishook said. "Whenever we learned halacha and trope in the lower school, it was always the Ashkenazi way. The majority of people in our school are Ashkenazi, me being one of them, and I definitely see myself represented."

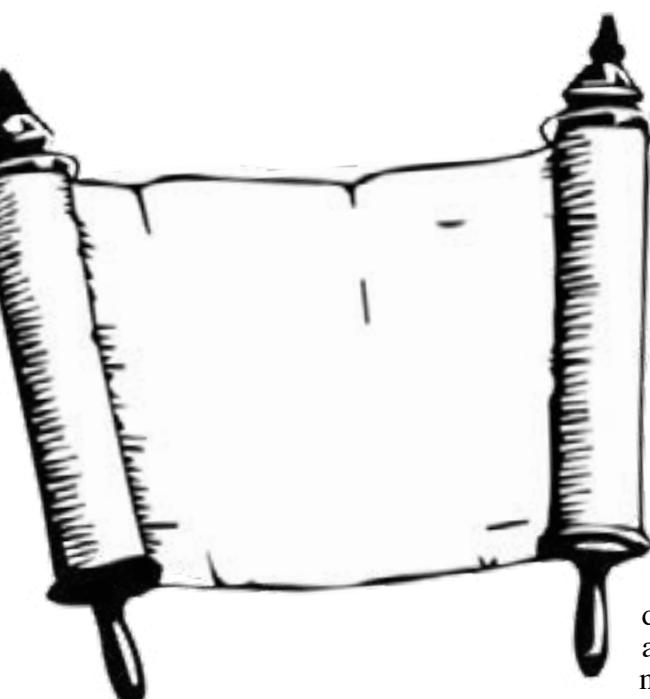
Because traditions taught at school are for the most part Ashkenazi, the imbalance of Sephardi teachings and many traditions affects the Sephardi students in our community, like junior Abe Amar, as it is not quite what he practices at home.

"I learned different types of melodies to some of the songs in Tefilah out of school when I was younger," Amar said. "It is difficult sometimes to identify what song we're up to when we are praying in Tefilah."

When the school was founded 60 years ago, most of its traditions were catered to its community which was mainly Ashkenazi. Sephardic traditions were not considered purely due to the fact that only in recent years Sephardi Jews wanted to be integrated and represented in a community that is not just their own.

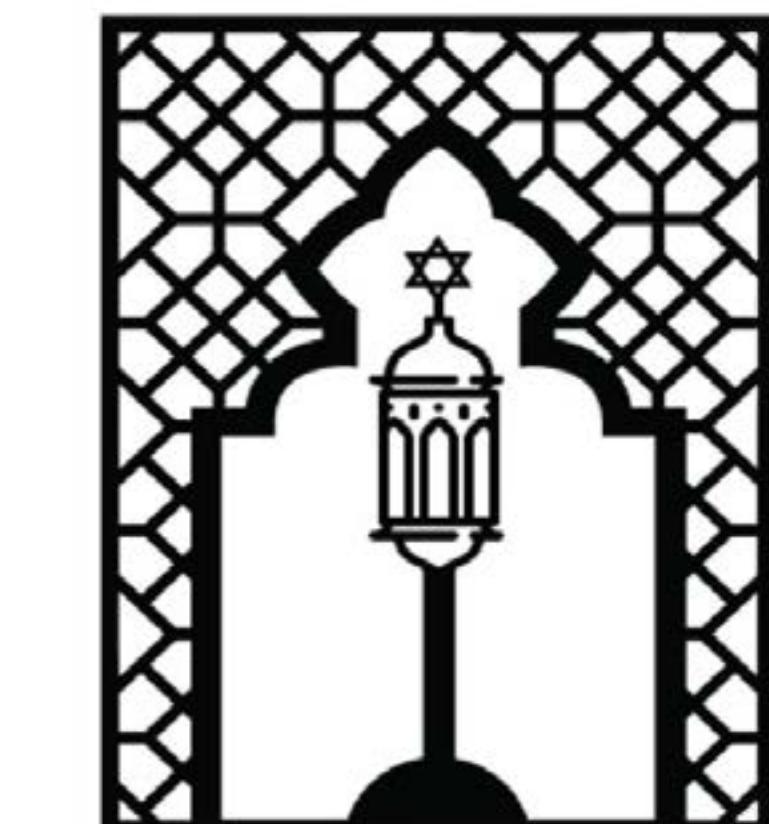
"It was only in the past maybe 10 or 15 years that the mainstream American Jewish community has sort of woken up and realized that there are many Jews who participate in mainstream Jewry who identify as Sephardi," Associate Head of School Rabbi Harry Pell said. "It is only in the past decade or two that Sephardim in America have sought out communities that are not exclusively Sephardi."

However, in other parts of the world, Sephardi Judaism is more widespread.



"In the school that I was teaching in Israel, we had more Sephardi related events and material that we learned together," High school Judaic studies teacher Ariel Menashe said. "There's also a larger percentage of students who are coming from a Sephardic background."

For a school that has a strong Ashkenazi foundation, Menashe believes students need to speak out about their desire to learn different aspects of Judaism that are not their own.



"The students need to have a will to learn about the different cultures and different traditions," Menashe said. "I think that's the most important thing."

In fact, the class of 2022 showed just that. A tradition at TLS is that every group of seniors purchase the school a meaningful gift. Last year's senior class bought the school a Sephardi tik. A tik is an encasing used to store a Sephardi sefer Torah, which is read differently than an Ashkenazi Torah, as it is read upright rather than flat on a table.

"The really important part of the story is that last year seniors intentionally bought the school a Sephardi tik because they wanted to send the message that not all Jews are Ashkenazi," Pell said. "As a school we could benefit from embracing more Sephardi minhagim (traditions)."

Another essential focus is how to balance the learning of all Jewish traditions. The school is actively trying to figure out how to give Sephardi students space in their day to day life in school to share their customs.

"What if we encourage kids from Sephardi backgrounds to daven with a Sephardi nusach?" Pell said. "If you're reading Torah, why don't you read with Sephardic trope? Sometimes that does happen but I think that it's not as common as it should be and it should just be the norm."

For Sephardi students, it is important to have more opportunities and options to learn about their customs in a school setting.

"It would be much more inclusive to open a separate tefilah for Sephardi Jews," Amar said. "I think everyone wants that."

The main values of TLS are *lilmod*, *lilamed*, *lishmor*, *velasot*; to learn, to teach, to guard, and to do. The combination of all these aspects, in an attempt to include both Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions, are what makes the school what it is today.

"I feel that it's important for us as one nation, one people, to know the different parts of the puzzle and to learn about the different traditions of each community," Menashe said.

Orientation to Graduation

Exploring the senior year experience

by Naomi Kellman

What do you think of when you hear the phrase “senior year”? Maybe you think of senioritis? The end of an era? While these assumptions may be true, senior year is a different experience for each student who goes through it.

“Senior year sounds a lot older than I actually feel,” senior Elijah Gilbert said. “You always think of seniors as mature, borderline adults, and close to being done with childhood, and it doesn’t feel like that for me. I just can’t imagine myself having to be an adult anytime soon.”

The end of a chapter in life is oftentimes surrounded by reflection on the past, and senior year is no different. As TLS seniors prepare to say goodbye to their high school years, they remember the memories they made that have shaped them into the people they are today.

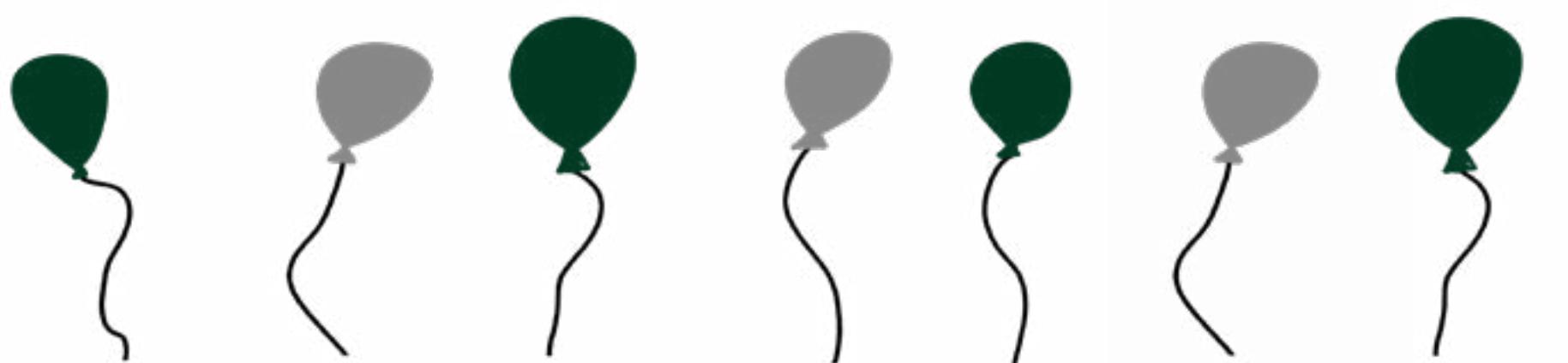
“On the Senior Shabbaton, we all sat in a small room lighting each other’s candles as we shared our favorite memories from the past four years,” senior Arielle Maliniak said. “My favorite memories are the experiences I have had in my Hebrew class. I have had the privilege of being a part of the same Hebrew class since my freshman year and making memories with my classmates that bring us so much joy.”

A commonly used phrase to reference experiences is “hindsight is 20/20.” Looking back, senior Matan Katz shares advice that he would have given his freshman self.

“I would have told myself not to be afraid of what other people were going to think if I did a certain thing,” Katz said. “Do what you want to do, not what other people want you to do. I think if you just be true to yourself, people will come to respect that.”

Another crucial aspect of the senior year experience is the imminent arrival of the next chapter. Many seniors will attend college after graduation, and others will go on gap-year programs or even serve in the IDF. However, seniors will collectively learn what it means to be a part of the real world.

“I sometimes get a little bit overwhelmed when I think about the future because I do not know exactly what I will be doing,” Katz said. “But, at the same time, I feel excited. I loved high school, but I know that the next four years of my life are going to be even better.”



ANOTHER MUNCH AWAY

Vending machines deliver snacks to hungry TLS students

by Rafi Josselson

With the return of the student lounges, students now have the option to purchase food from the vending machines to satisfy their snacking needs. Current freshmen, sophomores and juniors are unfamiliar with vending machines due to previous COVID-19 restrictions. Many of them have strong feelings about the vending machines. Many of them shared what they enjoy and what they believe can be improved.

Many hungry students appreciate the option of vending machines and tend to buy snacks from them. Among these students is sophomore Shira Hope who enjoys Snapple and Party Mix.

“I use the vending machines about three times a week and I normally get a drink if I forget my water bottle or if I am hungry, I get a snack,” Hope said. “If I forget my water bottle I will get a drink in the morning and I fill up the bottle with water after I finish. If it is just a snack I will either get it during lunch or at the end of the day.”

Some other students, such as sophomore Tova Zucker opt not to use the vending machines as often.

“I think that I used the vending machines once this year and it wasn’t my own money that I used, it was someone else lending me money,” Zucker said. “I just don’t like using them that much, I prefer to bring my own snacks from home because I don’t want to spend my own money on them.”

Zucker added that while she does not personally use the vending machines, she understands how they can be a convenient option for some.

“Yes, for some students I know that they haven’t packed up enough food or they get hungry during the day,” Zucker said. “It is good to have that option there instead of having them asking around other kids for food.”

Operations Associate David Young seems to agree with Zucker, both because of their convenience as well as the revenue generated by the school.

“I feel like vending machines are features that schools just should have,” Young said. “Profits are split between Healthy Vending New York (who owns the machines) and the Leffell School. The vendor cuts a check every month for the business office, and the proceeds fund student government.”

Senior Holden Werner also proposed that vending machines may have a positive impact on students’ academic performance.

“I think it has had a positive impact because it has allowed kids to put food into their system,” Werner said. “Making sure that they are not dehydrated is always a good thing. It may be a little distracting but I haven’t noticed anything.”

One critique of the vending machines is that the food is not very nutritious.

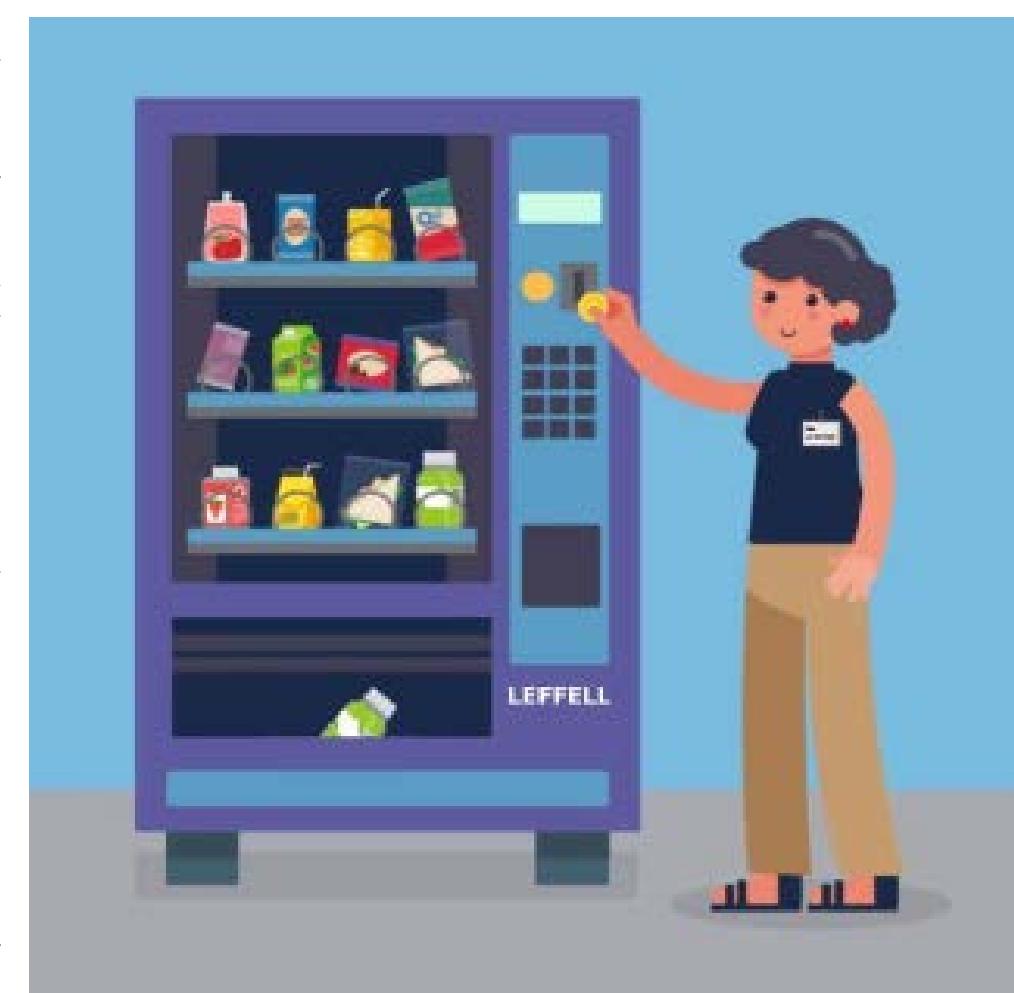
“I think there should be more healthy food,” said Hope. “The food that could be included might not be necessarily ‘healthy’ but ‘healthier.’ There could be fewer chemicals in the snacks or less sugar to make sure the snacks are a little healthier.”

Zucker agrees with Hope and adds that the vending machines should include a greater array of healthy options but notes that this may be difficult.

“If the options were healthier, I think I would have more food from the vending machines,” Zucker said. “I would probably pay to have the food from the vending machines if they were healthy. But I also don’t think it is super realistic because certain food needs to be refrigerated, like cucumbers and carrots.”

Werner disagrees with Hope and Zucker. He thinks that the food is already healthy enough.

“I don’t think there needs to be more healthy food, to be honest,” Werner said. “I think the vending machines are fairly healthy already and there is a wide variety from healthy to less



Rafal Krazek

An interview with TLS's foreign language teacher

What is your favorite travel experience?

A few years ago I traveled to the most beautiful colonial town in the Americas: Antigua, Guatemala, where I lived with a Spanish host family for two months. I visited a remote mountain village, where I stayed with a Mayan family for a few days, they cooked me delicious food. I consulted an old shaman woman there and she predicted my future... Her shrine was semi-dark, illuminated only by candlelight. It was decorated with many sculptures and paintings of ancient mind guards and exotic animals. This was quite the experience.

Do you speak Hebrew?

I don't, but I would love to learn a non-European language such as Hebrew or Swahili for example. It would be quite a challenge for me. Once I went to Barnes & Noble's to pick up some Hebrew books, but they didn't look very user-friendly to me. I found the Hebrew characters in grammar rather difficult. Maybe I should join the Hebrew class here at Leffell and take advantage of many great Hebrew teachers at our school.

Where did you go last summer?

I went to the city of Tallinn, capital of Estonia, one of the three Baltic republics. This town is just amazing, with 80% of the medieval city walls and towers still intact. In Tallinn, I visited the oldest European pharmacy operating nonstop since 1422, at the picturesque little Main Square. But the food wasn't as good there.

What is your favorite cuisine?

I love all kinds of food and I am a major foodie. I like Ethiopian, Thai, Mexican, Polish, Japanese, French, Chinese, just to name a few. When I was a student in Paris, I went to a Jewish neighborhood: Le Marais, with great Jewish bakeries and cafés. Their pastries reminded me of my childhood in Poland.

Have you considered moving recently?

And since I am a dual citizen: US and the European Union, I can live pretty much anywhere in the world. But right now, I really enjoy the East Coast with so many historic towns and villages, in the capital of the world: New York. Many Parisians are fascinated by New York, and I could never understand why. But once I started exploring New York myself, I can now understand why so many French people love the city.

What languages do you speak?

I speak Polish French Spanish and broken English. I also studied Russian, German, and Italian in the past, but once you don't use it you lose it. I learned ancient Greek and Latin in high school, but I don't remember these anymore. So overall, I study nine different languages at some point in my life, but different degrees of success.

What other languages would you like to teach?

I am open to any suggestions, but it really depends on the students. Right now, I teach French and Spanish. I would love to teach other languages, maybe Italian or Polish.

What advice do you have

for someone learning a new language?

Sometimes, it can be difficult to start learning a new language, but it gets better over time. Traveling to the country that speaks the language is very helpful. Also having a native speaker penpal or a conversation partner can improve your language skills quite a lot.

Can you talk a little about your background?

I went to a classical high school in Poland. My dad also worked in Iraq so I spent a lot of time there. I learned Italian while visiting my uncle in Rome. In 1993 I moved to America and got my PhD in romance languages. I taught at high schools and universities in the West Coast and then decided I wanted to change my life and moved to the East Coast.