

HELYOS Sun Times

Feira de Santana, BA – BRAZIL

#17

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HELKYOS SCHOOL

AV. EDUARDO FRÓES DA MOTA, S/N – SANTA MONICA

FEIRA DE SANTANA – BAHIA – BRAZIL

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The *Helyos Sun Times* brings its 17th edition with events and news from our school. A special place on the first page for our student Ryan Funch, who was accepted at the University of Wisconsin - Madison and at Michigan State University. The wonderful projects we had in the Middle and High School highlight the best of our world in the year of 2024. Enjoy reading!

Wendell S. Rios

GOING ABROAD - RYAN MARK SILVEIRA FUNCH

For those students attending Colégio Helyos, going to college abroad is more than a dream. For Ryan, studying in the US was always his plan. Great academic achievements during high school, outstanding character and personality were attributes that Ryan will bring to The University of Wisconsin at Madison. Ranked as the 39th best higher education

institution in the US (US News) and the 116th best in the world (QS World Rank), UW was Ryan's choice after he got his second acceptance: Michigan State University. While in High School, Ryan attended the Project U Program as part of his preparation for the application process. With an amazing ACT score of 35, high grades and

strong recommendations from his teachers, he applied to several universities at the end of 2023. As expected, he got into a renowned American university. Congratulations, Ryan! We hope you have an unforgettable experience in college and become a successful professional!



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY



The University of Wisconsin. Source: Ryan M. S. Funch

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THE HELYOS MUN - MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2024

By Sany Stephanie Rios, 1st Grade

On August 10, first graders took part in the Helyos MUN 2024, an immersive simulation of the United Nations General Assembly, focused on the urgent issues surrounding refugees. Through dynamic debates, student delegates examined the global refugee crisis, seeking collaborative solutions to address the complex political, economic, and environmental challenges faced by displaced populations worldwide.

Representing a range of countries, students discussed issues such as the socioeconomic integration of refugees, support for host nations, and the need for international policies that protect human rights. Furthermore, the simulation highlighted real-world issues, including conflicts and crises in regions like Palestine, Ukraine, and Syria, prompting students to consider both the causes and the profound impacts

of mass displacement on individuals and communities.

The Helyos MUN project was an invaluable educational experience, not only broadening students' understanding of global affairs but also helping them develop essential skills in diplomacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving. By engaging in constructive dialogue and negotiating diverse viewpoints, students learned the importance of empathy, active listening, and teamwork. They were challenged to step into the role of global leaders, making decisions grounded in respect for human rights and the principles of international cooperation.

Under the subjects Geography, History, and Sociology, the MUN experience offered students a comprehensive approach to understanding migration and displacement, helping them to see the intersection of



environmental, social, and historical factors in these global challenges. This event encouraged students to view international issues through a balanced lens and provided a platform to practice the skills needed to contribute meaningfully to global conversations. Therefore, the Helyos MUN was a transformative experience that empowered students to not only recognize the complexity of the refugee crisis but also to become a thoughtful, engaged citizen, ready to face the interconnected challenges of our world.



IMMERSE EDUCATION ESSAY COMPETITION

By Clara Mendes, 1st grade

Winner of a 50% Award



Social Media and Friendship's Decline

Social media is accountable for drastically changing how we perceive both ourselves and those around us. Ever since the rise of platforms such as MySpace and Facebook, establishing and maintaining friendships has become significantly easier, requiring less effort to build as well as to keep a larger number of connections. However, as this same ease made building a community relatively easy, it also decreased our appreciation of those, leading to a tendency to replace friendships rather than putting effort into maintaining them. As a result, a noticeable trend characterized by a shift towards loneliness and superficial group dynamics emerged.

Historically, building and maintaining a community beyond one's family or local circle was a considerable challenge. In the 18th century, friendships relied on physical presence and time investment, requiring quite a lot of effort to maintain. Resulting in these connections being viewed more positively than what they are today, considering how recent friendships in general are perceived as replaceable, and temporary by most. Relationships used to be based on the number of shared experiences and lifelong commitment, making them both significant and stable, a reality that has unfortunately faded from the average present-day experience. In his book¹, Robert D. Putnam wrote that, although modern technology made it easier to both manage and keep a bigger number of social connections, it had also contributed to a decrease in both the quality and reliability of such relationships. The easy access to new connections has lowered the value given on bonds, as people believe their replacement will come with ease.

This has led to a tendency to invest less time and emotional energy in nourishing trustful bonds. As a result, we are seeing relationships becoming increasingly superficial, and now more than ever individuals feel isolated even though they are theoretically connected to a greater number of people than ever before. As Putnam wrote, this reduction in meaningful and long-lasting relationships makes not only one-on-one bonds but also the sense of community fragile entirely. Additionally, Zygmunt Bauman talked more about this phenomenon in his book "Liquid Love"² arguing that relationships are growing fragile, leading to our perception of connections as moments momentarily and replaceable rather than a timeless commitment. When relationships are viewed this way, our social identity and group dynamics suffer from a severe loss of stability in both our personal and social lives. Furthermore, Rosie Spinks explored in her article³ the emotional consequences of these fragile connections, arguing how social media has not only lowered the value given to friendships but also significantly increased the pressure on keeping them. Interestingly, having more superficial 'friends' often results in a greater sense of isolation, as individuals curate their online personas to appear more approachable. Spinks also argued that this constant connection often leads to a path of anxiety and increased insecurity levels, as people are keeping up with superficial relationships rather than focusing their efforts towards meaningful bonds, making them feel lonely and empty. Nevertheless, social media reshaped the way we perceive our relationships, making connections accessible but, at the same time, superficial. This shift led to an increase in isolation and weak community bonds. Ultimately, it is essential to balance digital convenience with the effort needed in order to maintain meaningful, stable relationships and consequently preserve our sense of community and emotional fulfillment.

¹ Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster, 2000

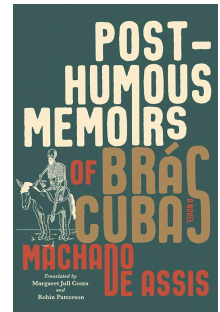
² Bauman, Z., *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*, Polity Press, 2003.

³ Spinks, R., *The Friendship Problem*, Platypus Press, 2023.

POSTHUMOUS MEMOIRS OF BRÁS CUBAS: A LITERARY AND ACADEMIC ARTICLE

By Alana Souza, 3rd grade

The book "Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas" by Machado de Assis, a famous author of the Realism literary movement in Brazil, stands out as an important novel because it offers not only a good story, but also humor and provocation. Published in 1881, the work differs from previous narratives through the creative and innovative use of a deceased narrator, Brás Cubas, who tells his life from beyond. As we delve deeper into the book, we find criticism of society, exploration of timeless themes and a narrative voice that breaks the fourth wall with authenticity and objectivity.



Machado de Assis's works show the depth of the cultural and intellectual world of 19th-century Brazil. In this book, through the protagonist's flashbacks, we deepen our understanding of the period's social hierarchies, prejudices, and behaviors. Assis is precise and punctual in his criticism of the Brazilian elite and portrays a society full of hypocrisy and arrogance. As readers, we can identify the ways in which such socioeconomic structures continue to influence Brazil, thus increasing our understanding of the country's historical heritage.

Furthermore, the philosophical ideals of the novel cannot be ignored. Brás Cubas, in his posthumous state, reflects on the meaning of life, the inevitability of death, and the absurdity of human efforts to achieve both financial success and romantic satisfaction, which he calls "fixed idea." Such reflections represent the philosophical pessimism theorized by philosophers such as Schopenhauer, by expressing thoughts about life being painful and frustrating, and that suffering is inherent to the human condition. In this way, Assis' narrative leads readers to question the ultimate purpose of their actions, thus promoting a deeper appreciation of the philosophy underlying the work.

The main character is an example of verisimilitude, as he presents himself as flawed and self-aware, acknowledging his selfishness and shortcomings. This self-deprecating honesty endears him to readers, despite his flaws. The author's ability to create such a multifaceted character speaks to his literary genius and his commitment to presenting a unique reading experience.

The narrative voice itself is a characteristic of Assis's authenticity as a writer. His use of irony and direct speech to the reader creates an intimate and engaging reading experience. He does not shy away from exposing the absurdities of his protagonist's life, nor does he spare society from his critical gaze. This can be seen in the chapter "The Whipping" in which Brás Cubas reflects on human selfishness, using the image of a whip as a metaphor for the way people treat each other:

"There is nothing more obtuse than selfishness; more cunning perhaps, but obtuse. Selfishness is a great shadow that covers our eyes; as it only lets us see what interests us, our sight loses perspective, which is the great effect of light."

In "Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas," Machado de Assis manages to create a narrative that is at once intellectually stimulating, authentically human, and objectively critical. Through the eyes of Brás Cubas, we are invited to explore the depths of Brazilian society, reflect on real issues through theoretical foundations such as nihilism and philosophical pessimism, and appreciate the authenticity of a good story. As readers, we emerge with a greater understanding of our world and the world around us, making this book a timeless masterpiece of literature.



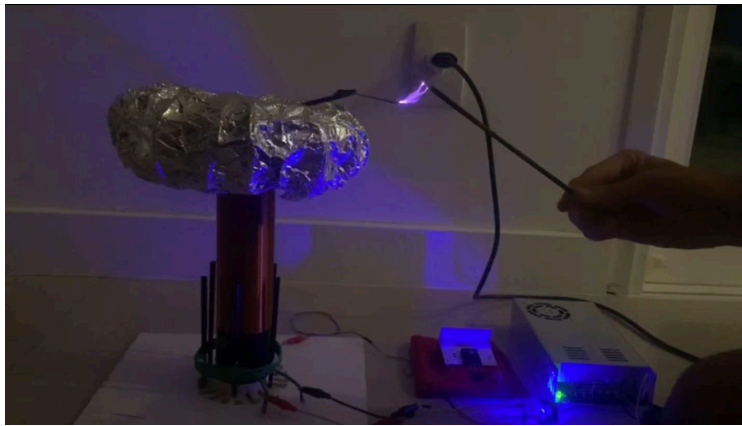
TESLA COIL PROJECT

By Cauã E. Pitta Lima, 3rd grade

What do you think might happen if you touched a high-voltage power line? Both you and I know it would be a quick way to reach the other side. But let's imagine a different scenario keeping the high voltage. Would it be possible?

One of the ways to create a high voltage source is through coils. I love them! I even made one myself—actually I made four of them. Also, apart from transformers, an iconic way to use coils to generate high voltages is through a Tesla Coil. Such a device works by inputting a lower voltage, like a 36-volt signal, through the

primary coil (the one seen in green) that induces a difference in electrical potential in the secondary coil (the one seen in shiny orange). This difference in potential



does not start as much, but, by timing the signal impulses from the primary coil, we can push the voltage in the secondary coil like a swing that keeps increasing its energy. This circuit, called the slayer exciter,

does this automatically for us. Thus, the secondary coil quickly ramps up the voltage from 36 volts to 50 thousand volts in mere milliseconds.

The result is a wonderful light show as electrons ionize the air around them due to the high voltages. Finally, to your surprise: no, it doesn't kill you! The amount of power produced by it is not enough, so much so that it is similar to suffering from a static electricity shock. But don't be fooled by its beautiful tones, as the ionized air is extremely hot and can easily fry your fingers if touched!



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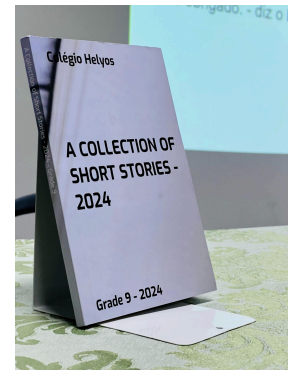
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PROJECT: A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES

By 9th Graders

Short Stories are a literary genre that brings a short narrative, with beginning, middle and end. Then, the author can tell an entire tale in a short time. As part of our bilingual program, the 9th grade curriculum encompasses the reading and discussions about cinema and literature. That is how we came up with the idea of incorporating short stories into our regular classes from unit one. In the final step of the project, the students write their own stories and draw their own illustrations.

The idea is set so that students feel confident to learn about this genre, observe how several authors elaborate on their works, and write a genuine short tale. Besides English, the project also involves Arts, through which students learn drawing techniques to create their own illustrations and use them in the book, which is then published and made available for purchase. Families support the project and come to school before the end of the year for a Book Author Signing event. Here are some moments of the show!





SURVEILLANCE AND AI

By Maria Rita B. R Azevedo, 3rd grade

Smart machines capable of making autonomous decisions were always present in science fiction series - such as "The Jetsons", with Rose, the robot house manager, and other highly technological equipment. However, the dangerous effects of these innovations were also on highlight. It is this side that most distresses the society when the topic is artificial intelligence (AI) and, especially, its relation with surveillance systems.

According to Jam Canda, AI can be a great ally in ensuring security to the population, by recognizing criminals or even possible threats to public safety. But, how is it possible to guarantee that a machine has ethical principles and will not make mistakes that might ruin someone's life? It is important to remember that a creation is a reflection of its creator, and artificial intelligence developers may also have anti-ethical thoughts and judgments (racism, for example) that they will unconsciously (or not) teach to the machine. As a result, there are several cases of facial recognition



systems that predict a threat just because of the possible criminal's skin color. So, we need to improve as humans to improve AIs.

Moreover, it is essential to mention the legitimacy of who can wield such power and use it for common welfare. As the article of The Economist describes, China's artificial intelligence based surveillance system is being used to reinforce governmental authoritarianism, by tracking ethnic minorities and controlling people's sexuality. Based on that, it is clear how a technology, mainly applied to avoid public threats, can be, ironically, a threat to one of the most fundamental human rights, according to

the philosopher John Locke: liberty.

Despite the advantages and the fascination surrounding the use of AIs on surveillance, there are essential ethical concerns in this debate. On a first glance, technologies like Rose seem infallible. But, nowadays, being completely immersed in their world, we can clearly perceive the odds. The first step to avoid them is to improve our minds and values so machines can be used for good learning, with good intentions.

THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS

False information spreads more rapidly than true ones.

By Nicole de Oliveria, 3rd grade

According to the article about a new study by three MIT scholars, it has been discovered that false news spreads more rapidly than the true ones.

The researchers were surprised with this conclusion, especially because they thought that the spread of false

information was due to bots that are programmed to disseminate inaccurate stories. But it turned out to be because of people's retweets about inaccurate news.

By taking this study into a critical perception, it is possible to relate it with the "confirmation bias" concept, which means that people only navigate sites or news that defend their position or only consume the content based on their perspectives. This way, if someone finds themselves looking at a tweet that approaches their view and bias, they immediately tend to retweet, not even caring if it is true or false news. Consequently, this



helps to spread false information more rapidly.

In addition, the article brings the answer to the question "Why do falsehoods spread more quickly than the truth, on Twitter?" People like new things, and false news causes more surprise and enthusiasm when readers find them. This data shows that sometimes people can identify false news, but they prefer to disseminate them, not only because of the confirmation bias, but also because they love to see novelty and drama among the society.

The research done by the MIT shows that false news stories are disseminated six times

faster than true stories. In this case, it is about false information, but when you have real fake news it can be even worse, because all of what happens with the urban legends, science myths and others, it also happens with fake news in big articles and sites. The bigger the fake, the better to retweet

THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS

How powerful is fake news and can we defeat them?

By Cauã E. Pitta Lima, 3rd grade

We always hear fake news is like a locust infestation that can spread over large areas and bring losses to the poor victims affected, but most people usually underestimate their impact. Only now we came to discover the outstanding ability of fake news to spread over the internet. Thanks to three MIT scholars, new research shows how effective misinformation is at attracting attention, and how the truth is lacking behind. This raises an uncomfortable question: will we ever get rid of fake information?

In the research, the MIT scientists conducted tests on how fast misinformation could reach internet users. To their surprise, fake information can be orders of magnitude more efficient at being disseminated than the truth. Not only were fake news retweeted seventy percent more, they even managed to infiltrate cascades of retweets twenty times faster than facts. With this in mind, it is clear this is a

losing battle. The underlying reason for this unmatched power of fake news is deeper than simple retweets, it is our own human nature.

After much thought, the researchers, determined to find a reason for said results, analyzed a random sample of misinformation-spreaders on Twitter. This analysis granted them with a hypothesis: fake news brings a greater “shock value” than real news, which are usually more predictive. This hypothesis directly relates to confirmation bias—even if not explicitly mentioned in the paper—, whereas people receive dopamine shots upon hearing

about shocking new information they “always had a feeling was true” even if, in reality, it is not.

Thus, the takeaway from this study is: no, we will never be able to completely eliminate fake news. They are intertwined with the errors of the human mind. However, even if it might be discouraging that we can not quite have a “pesticide” for fake news, we can learn to dampen the damage dealt from them. Just like how farmers learn to adapt to locusts destroying their crops every so often, we will learn to adapt in the (mis)information era.



SCHOOL EVENTS

HELIVOS II ART DAY (5th GRADE)

On May 25th, our school became a stage for a lot of art and fun with 'Art Day' with the 5th-grade students! The date was also the celebration of World Africa Day. These young artists participated in super engaging thematic workshops about African culture, which involved various subjects. During the week, the students read the book "Africa is not a Country" in their English classes and had a very special lesson about Africa with the History, Geography, and Portuguese Language teachers. 'Art Day' provided an amazing morning

where the children set aside their phones and truly got connected, creating, laughing, and learning together. An unforgettable event that showcased the power of art in uniting hearts and minds!



BUSINESS FAIR (6th GRADE)

By Mr. Wendell Rios

What makes a business? How should we plan before setting it up? What factors do we need to know beforehand? These are some of the questions that guide our classes towards a more aware generation of future entrepreneurs. Our 6th graders have Financial Education classes

as part of their curriculum. In this program, they learn to plan and set up a business. It is a simulation where they learn how to come up with a logo and slogan, how to plan their fixed and variable costs, their predicted revenue and final profits, as well as the SWOT

analysis that will tell how to enhance their prospects. In 2024, 6th graders worked hard to prepare a Business Fair and present their ideas to families and school staff. They did a wonderful job! So, want to invest in their business?



HELİYOS LITTLE BAKERS (5th GRADE)

By Mr John John

After discussing healthy eating, the 5th-grade students were challenged by their English teacher, John John, to become bakers for a day. The kids got special cupcake recipes, with ingredients like brown sugar, oat

flour, banana, carrot, skim milk, cocoa powder, and coconut oil. In a fun and engaging way, the students got to explore healthier alternatives and try new flavors by making banana and oat, carrot, or chocolate cupcakes. They also had

the opportunity to practice English with their classmates and teachers. It was certainly an unforgettable moment in the lives of these Little Bakers!



YOUNG NUTRITIONISTS (5th GRADE)

By Mr John John

How much sugar do we find in cookies? What is the fat content in the fries we buy at the market? These and other questions led the 5th-grade students to think about our diet during English

classes with Teacher John. In this project, called "Young Nutritionists," the students did some calculations to understand the amount of total fats and sugars in processed foods. The

goal of this activity was to help our students become more aware and critical of the foods we consume—a way to promote health and prevent childhood obesity and sedentary lifestyle.



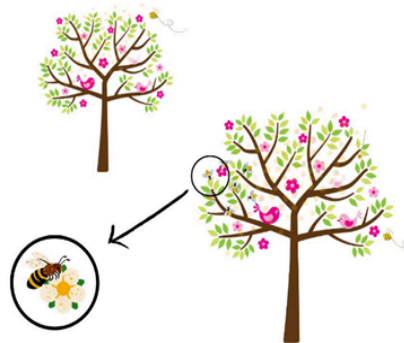
NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL POLLINATION

By Beatriz de Freitas Miranda, 8th grade

The numbers of pollinators are declining, mainly because of global warming. So, farmers are using methods of artificial pollination for flowers that reproduce sexually. Flowers that reproduce sexually need pollinators to transfer pollen grains to the female organ called the stigma. Artificial pollination is done through manual methods or with technology such as drones and robots. They are faster and more efficient than natural pollinators and can pollinate more flowers. For example, robot bees do the same job. However, there are disadvantages as well, such as high cost, potential pollution to

the ecosystem, and the possibility of causing genetic changes (mutations), among other things. In my opinion, it is "better" to use artificial pollination than natural because farmers can earn more money, the fruits are usually bigger and have better shapes.

Additionally, as previously mentioned, it is more efficient and increases productivity. However, we must remember to use it with responsibility to maintain a balanced ecosystem on our planet.



AN IMPORTANT MOVIE, JUNO

Mariana Oliveira de Santana, 8th Grade



JUNO



The movie Juno, directed by Jason Reitman, starring Elliot Page (Juno MacGuff) Michel Cera (Paullie Bieker), Jennifer Garner (Vanessa Loring) and Jason Bateman (Mark Loring), is a comedy-drama

released in 2007. The story of Juno consists of a teenager that got pregnant at 16 years old. She gave up getting an abortion, and with the support of a friend, father and stepmother, she decided to find a "perfect" couple to adopt her baby, showing Juno's interaction with her family, friends, the adoptive couple, and the father of the baby during the pregnancy. Also, it shows the relationship with the adoptive parents of Juno's baby.

The film Juno is in a small town, the soundtrack matches with the film even though I don't like it so

much because it's not my type of music. The performance of the actors was great, especially when the baby is born. The story is adorable and shows sensitive themes. I recommend this movie because it's simple to understand, and it portrays sensitive topics like abortion, adoption, and teenage pregnancy. The film alerts the teenager to take care of relationships, warns some risks of not protecting oneself and approaches some topics that should be discussed.