

# LOCKDOWN SECTION: 6 PAGE EXTRA



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## ‘Life in Lockdown’ Series 2

*A time to reflect and a time to connect*

**W**EEK three of lockdown seems to have a different feel. Many of us English speakers will have strong family connections with the UK and have at least half an eye on what is happening ‘over there’.

In our Escola Global community there is an increasing sense of calm, routine and reflection. Adapting with almost no notice to providing distance learning for students has been a tough challenge for all teachers and here Rebeca, our School Director, tells us what this has been like for her:

It has only been three weeks since the schools closed but it seems that we have been teaching e-learning much longer.

I remember the nervousness of the days before the school closure, the doubts about what was going to happen, the contradictory news coming from the press, the comments in the school corridors and the families’ uncertainty.

Finally, the official announcement came on Thursday evening at 7 p.m. Thank goodness that we had been proactive and, once we had the date of closure, we had the communication to parents ready to send.

Those first days were complicated. How could we organise an online learning system when our school philosophy is based on experimentation, manipulation and ‘learning by doing’?

All our teachers were up for the challenge. They began to investigate different resources and programs to help bring our classrooms closer to our students’ homes.

The following Monday, before noon, it was organised. ‘Google Classrooms’, video conference schedules and instructions to students and families were sent. By Wednesday ‘e-learning’ was running for all educational levels. We had done it! We were so proud!

I have to confess that the first week was a bit stressful from an organisational point of view (families learning about how to use the online resources, issues with access codes, students finding it hard to enter into the different software applications and teachers with internet connection problems). My personal mantra during the early days was to tell myself to ‘Keep Calm’ in as many different ways as possible! This, along with the dozens of hilarious internet memes that were circulating, kept me positive and upbeat.

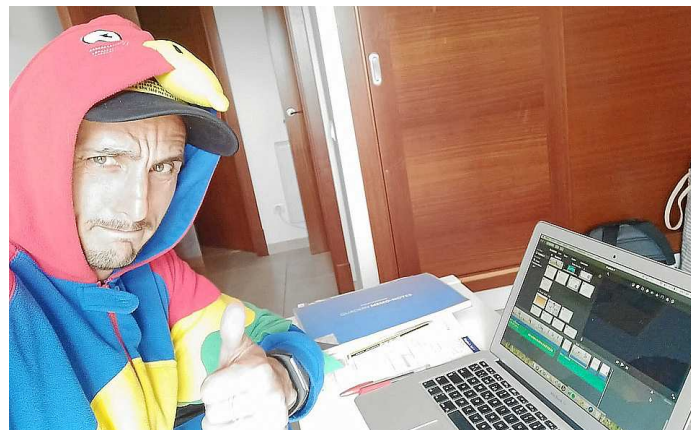


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Besides being a teacher, I am also a mother so I see different sides of the same picture. My daughter (a Y12 student) was faced with hours and hours of homework, activities and assignments as if there was no tomorrow. What was happening to us as teachers? Were we aiming for students to study 18 hours a day? Did we want students to hate us? What about their well-being? How were they coping with con-

finement? Did anyone ask about it?

So, despite the fact that feedback from families showed that more than 75% agreed with the workload that the school set up for students, we slowed down. We planned optional activities for those who preferred to work more and we adjusted the tempo for the majority of our students. We needed to care less about students progressing in subjects and care



more about them feeling good. We widened our focus to include our pupils’ well-being. From the second week onwards, the pressure was off.

If something defines our team at Escola Global it is asking ourselves ‘Why not?’ In this situation why not try to organise fun and motivating activities for our students?

From asking ourselves this question we created ‘Mr Chicken’! Our PE teacher dresses up as a chicken to inspire our youngest children and their families to get moving. We have also created a story ‘The Monster of Colours and the Coronavirus’ to help children understand their emotions. Some teachers have opened YouTube Channels to upload their videos on the Internet.

With this ‘can do’ attitude and our team spirit, an endless number of activities and proposals are being created with more focus on our students’ well-being”.

As a community we are keen to receive feedback and this email from a parent was just what we all needed: ‘My daughter is aware that we are not on a permanent holiday at home and that is due to the fact that she feels connected to her class/school and at the same time teachers are entering our homes and finding out a lot about us. I have to say that I am very proud of how the school managed this situation. It is in the bad times where a school shows its strengths and this is one of those’.

We know we can all determine our own view on this situation. From my perspective as School Adviser, I am in awe of the incredible work our Escola Global teachers and support staff have done and continue to do in such a fast changing and demanding environment. I am sure that across our island, families are filled with admiration for their school teams too.

Continuing our spirit of caring and sharing, this link gives you access to a wellbeing guide for students: A Kids Book About Covid-19 [www.akidsbookabout.com](http://www.akidsbookabout.com)

From **Home** - scroll down to the last book ‘**COVID-19**’ - click ‘**Learn More**’ - enter your email then download free!

Next week we are going to listen to what our youngsters are saying about this whole ‘lockdown’ thing!

In the meantime keep safe and keep well.

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