



Summer 2024

ELI STUDENT VOICES

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Message from the Editor

Thank you to all who contributed to this edition of the *ELI Student Voices*. To the students who submitted their writing, thank you for your hard work and for having the courage to allow your work to be read by others. To ELI instructors and staff, thank you for always encouraging and supporting ELI students to develop not only as writers but also as people. To the Student Voices Judges: Tatum Homer—Dibble, Christine Voigt, Patrick Klager, Jen Ramos, Tara Mace, Lynne Clarke, Jane Keeler, and Patricia Moon, thank you for your time and consideration in reading the submissions.

Editor, Thomas Dolce



Winning Pieces

First Place Pieces

“STOP KILLING MY PEOPLE!!!” &
“My Umpteenth Cry Against Racism”

Clefton Simon

Second Place

“The Blind World”

Guiecniza Dehesa Blas



FIRST PLACE

Editor's Note—In an unprecedented occurrence, two pieces by the same writer tied for first place voting. As a result, both pieces have been awarded first place.

Cleifton Simon

Reading and Writing 60

STOP KILLING MY PEOPLE!!!

You are turning away, pretending not to hear, failing to respond to distress signals from around the world, and pursuing your own path with pride, despite the chaos you've caused. You should feel ashamed, but you don't, because your selfishness prevents you from seeing the suffering of those around you as a result of your actions. You are far too narrow-minded to see how many people are suffering from the disaster you've created and too self-centered to admit that you've done too much damage to humanity. For more than 300 years, you've stolen, raped, and plundered our ancestors, impoverishing our tribes. You've made them slaves to satisfy your whims and greed. In the modern era, you've forced us to accept thieves and wanderers as executives. You support amoral individuals and outlaws who dishonor our nation's reputation. You steal our resources and shame our land. You've done too much. My sisters, brothers, and I have had enough of you. We're exhausted from fleeing our homes, picking up dead bodies, and burying family. We can no longer tolerate your actions.

In 2024, over 2,500 people have been shot and killed in four months in Haiti, a country without weapons or ammunition factories. These guns that murdered my people came from your countries, sold like hot cakes in mine to enrich your economy. Every day, hundreds of people are dying in the DR Congo, yet nobody says a word. These people, my people, are dying because YOU want to have complete control over their natural resources, especially the coltan you use to produce your digital devices and increase your wealth. In Madagascar, there are almost 10,000 children who should be at school but are instead working in mica mines for your benefit. You exploit these children, who sometimes die in the pits, for your petty interests. Your cruelty has reduced Libya, once an economic and technological success story on the African continent, to ashes. One of the world's most developed countries in the 1980s is now a war zone where thousands of people die every year. The situation is similar in Somalia, where the population experiences food insecurity, yet you and your allies continue to exploit the country's minerals and fuel reserves. When will you stop? How many more of us do you want to kill? You've established institutions purportedly designed to protect children, the environment, and human rights. But what are the true purposes of these institutions when they consistently fail to shield my people from your cruelty?

I'm talking to you, those of you who call yourselves "imperialists." Please, stay away from us. Let us decide our future alone. Let my people in Africa breathe. Stop stealing our land and resources. Keep your guns and bullets away from my country, Haiti. We've had enough. Stop! Basta! Stop killing my people.

FIRST PLACE

Cleifton Simon

Reading and Writing 60

My Umpteenth Cry Against Racism

It is a beautiful Wednesday in July 2024. I am on the bus in Gainesville, leaving the university to head home after a long day (I had a debate in class this morning). I'm feeling a bit relaxed, and 80% of the bus seats are empty. Everything is fine. Five minutes later, the driver instructs everyone to carry their bags, citing the large number of students waiting at the next stop. When the driver stopped, about 30 students were jumping into the bus. Everything seemed to be fine, so I kept my head buried in my phone, sending messages. When I lifted my head, the crowd on the bus surprised me—it was full. However, the most surprising thing was the fact that some students were standing in the middle of the bus while two seats were empty—the one next to me and another one next to a young black lady. Yes, some students refused these two seats and preferred to stand. The only thing these two seats had in common was that they were next to two black students. It was not the first time this had happened, but on that particular day, it felt more challenging than it had the previous time—I didn't even know why.

I started thinking about my previous life, and that made me laugh. In my country, I am a respectful young professional with a successful career and several years of experience in the main private and public institutions, but here, some people just see in me “another black guy.” It seems like for some people, the only thing that defines me as a person is my dark skin. This sad event also makes me think of my future children. Obviously, they will be black, but I don't want them to suffer the same discrimination for something they didn't choose—their skin color. I want them to grow up in a world where everyone is equal regardless of skin color, where men and women have equal opportunity, and where everyone can make their own choice without the judgment of others. I want my children to feel secure when they are taking the bus in Gainesville or any other city in the world. I want my future daughter “Madrid” and my future son “Nazario” to be born in a world without colorism. Is it too much to ask for? I do not think so.

The young people who refused to sit next to that young lady and me, it was not their fault—it was ours. We have built a world full of hate, disparity, and discrimination, and this is what we have given them as a legacy. It's time to rectify this. We can do better, we have to do better, and now is the perfect moment to do better. We can correct that mistake by building together a world where my children and all other black people around the world will not have to suffer the same fate. We can improve the educational curriculum to address colorism and help our children understand and value others' cultures and experiences. We can create workshops involving teachers, parents, and students to address hate and discrimination issues. We should teach our children to think critically and avoid judging what they don't understand. Together, we can eradicate racism.

SECOND PLACE

Guiecniza Dehesa Blas

Reading and Writing 61

The Blind World

I used to look up at the blue sky from my planet,
I fantasized of someday traveling to the world I could only observe from Earth.

Over dreaming about this planet

I mysteriously found the way to land.

My dreams come true, unknowingly I had landed on "The Blind World".

I found some of the most beautiful works of art made by the hand of God. It is amazing the diversity of species, the environment, the inhabitants and their technology.

Things used to look different from my home. I am the Alien on this planet.

I walk through the streets like a ghost, like a shadow in plain sight to them. It is clear that they suspect I am an alien, but they are so used to ignoring aliens and ignoring themselves that my life goes unnoticed.

As an effect of their decision

All of them are blind.

All of them are deaf.

All of them are mute.

All of them wish to be seen but dare not look.

All of them wish to be heard but dare not speak.

All of them long for warmth but keep their blood cold.

In my mind lives the question

Are all the inhabitants of this planet like this, is this the consequence of their advanced technology or is it just because their absence of humanity?

Elena Tobar (RW 61)**Always at 8:45**

As every day, at 8:45 a.m., seated in his usual spot and without shoes, the man lit a cigarette. The smoke blended into his long, white hair. Rock music played on his old battery-operated radio. As every day, his friend arrived, sat down next to him, and they began drinking a beer as if it were their morning coffee. It seemed they never ran out of things to talk about. From the traffic light across the street, I watched the scene of the two men sitting at the bus stop as if it were the Best Cinematography from a Wong Kar-Wai film. And, as every day, I promised myself I would greet them tomorrow.

Bruno Cardoso Gonçalves (RW 50)**About fear, hope and beyond**

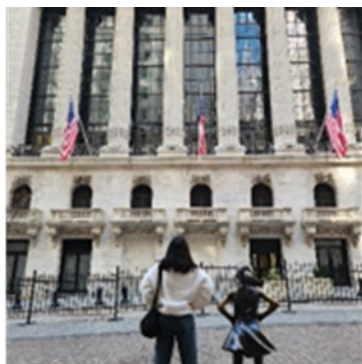
Humans have genuine feelings that protect them to threats. Fear for example is one of them and this sensation makes the humans go forward and conquest the main place in the earth approximately 750,000 years ago, second Smithsonian magazine. Other important feeling is hope that all of us had or still feel a lot of times in lifetime and it help the people keep chasing their dreams. I will show you an interesting fact about fear, hope and beyond.

The first chapter of this history is about the strong emotion caused by anticipation, called fear. To sense fear is inherent to human and anticipate a fact, an action, a sometimes what we don't know. The unknown is the trigger that release a lot of body's hormones that make humans feel threatened. Arriving in a country with its own and interesting culture was the biggest challenge, a year ago. The new, the different, the unexpected, simple facts as go to the market, or just talk, all of them were causes of fear. In the face of fear the people have two choices: they can run or stay and fight. The choice was, breath, looking ahead and keep walking.

The next step was finding hope in that new path. To cherish a desire with anticipation, to want something to happen or be true, to desire with expectation of obtainment are meanings of hope. It looks easy to understand, but very hard to implement. Find hope in small daily life is struggle and requires faith, persistence and resilience. The choice was thinking about the entire picture, a new country, an opportunity to learn an extra language, to chase a different path. That's it!

The last challenge is put all these feelings cited above together and make them work simultaneously. Is it possible transform the fear in hope and after that go ahead and looking for new opportunities to go forward? Maybe, if you find a safe place with respectful people, and where they can help you with the right tools. This is the key to understand that you can imagine the future and believe in yourself. I found it!

This is one chapter of my personal history. I don't realize it before because I couldn't show you just an ordinary history about me. But now, I am spreading my personal experience because I hope that it can be helpful for that moment which looks impossible to overcome some fears, or perhaps find hope in unexpected places. Take your fears and turn them in hope. Yes, you can go forward and beyond.

Minseo Go (RW 60)**My Journey In The United States**

My new journey began in January 2024. During that time, the countless stories and people encountered within the land of a single country are the true treasures of my experience living in the United States. Moreover, this summer semester, my environment changed a lot compared to last semester, so I could go through different vibes of the United States and ELI. I want to share my experience and emotions with you all. I can divide my stories into three parts: ELI, my friends and traveling in the U.S.

Firstly, studying at the ELI was one of the best choices I've ever made. Before I came to ELI, I was nervous because I had to use English everywhere, and it was a time to learn how to live by myself. After I started my spring semester, my mind had completely changed because students and teachers in ELI are very kind. When ELI had just started, I had problem with my SIM card, so I went to Christine, and she helped me a lot to solve it. I remember at that time, I was really worried, so she asked Min who works in the ELI office, to translate from English to Korean, and it helped calm my mind. While I live in the U.S., ELI office helps me whenever I have problems, so it makes me feel comfortable to live here. Additionally, the ELI is the best place for learning English. I have classes about reading and writing, grammar, listening and speaking, and after I finished my classes, using what I learned today with my friends during weekly activities was very helpful for improving my English. Also, LA class made me have interest in English and get confidence to speak. Especially, my last semester LA class was so much fun, and I looked forward to that class. That class's Language Assistants (Gavin and Mathis) and my class LS50 students (Udit, Yousef, Carmen, Didier, Diego, Ghareebah, Juan, Sultan, Mohammad, Cleifton, Joy, Minju and Summer) were so nice and humorous. I miss them and the vibe of that class. I've never forgotten the spring semester LS 50 friends!



During the 7 months, I met new friends from other countries, and It led me to open my eyes. The first week in the ELI, I was shy, and I didn't talk a lot in the welcome picnic. But I changed my mind because I came here to improve my English and go through other cultures. So after the welcome picnic, I tried to speak a lot to use English and actively approach new people. My positive change made me make new friends and it impacted my life. I normally met ELI friends in weekly and weekend activity. Out of all of the activities, the most memorable activity is Coffee Talk because I learned chess there, and it became my new hobby, and it became an opportunity to be friends with many students in ELI, so I tried to go there every week. Thank you, Joao, Yousef and Kevin. Furthermore, I hung out with my roommates last semester, but during summer, I spend my most of my time with friends: Rebecca, Ani, Cynthia, Vivi, Rodrigo. I cooked some Korean food for them, and we exchange our culture. One time I watched Copa America tournament final league in Ana's house with Rebecca, Ani, Cynthia Lina, Tere, Lexa, Ana, and Yuri. I didn't know a lot about American Soccer league, but I could enjoy it and the time hung out with my friends was unforgettable memory to me. Also, I live alone during summer semester, they support me to stay be safe and comfortable. Plus, I went to clubs in UF, one of my favorite club was KLT. KLT is Korean Language Club, so I taught Korean to UF students and we communicated a lot. It was good chance to get to know UF students and make new friends, enjoying not only ELI but also various programs at the University of Florida.

Lastly, During I study in the U.S., I've visited other states in the U.S. By exploring various states in the United States, I was able to experience the culture and charm of each city. The most anticipated city was New York. I went there during my spring break, and I was so happy to visit the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, Central Park, and many other famous places. In particular, Time Square's colorful neon signs and crowded streets were impressive scenes. And it was nice to feel the vibes of the city not only in Manhattan but also in Queens and Brooklyn. It looked like I came to a different world. Then, Texas was the most impressive. I have been to five cities



in Texas during this summer vacation: Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio. Texas was very different from other states, and I could see the cowboy culture. And I ate a lot of Tex-Mex food especially in San Antonio because it was close to Mexico, and I really like Latin foods. I could see the Old west period and Mexican cultures in Texas, so it was a good adventure for me. Recently, I went to Philadelphia on July 4th . Before I came to the U.S., I didn't know about Independence day and its history, so I decided to go there to experience it. The Fourth of July in the U.S. truly felt like the America I had imagined. In Philadelphia, I watched the parade and visit Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, and this experience brought me a step closer to understanding independence history. The fireworks were impressive. I had never seen so many fireworks, and it was a spectacle. I went on all the trips by myself, which helped me refresh from the studying and made me to see a new world.

I had various experiences in the U.S. but I think the most memorable experience will be fun ELI, memories with my friends, and travel. Life in the United States went beyond adapting to a new environment, and it was a process of discovering and growing myself. And my daily life here was a series of challenges every day, and the wisdom gained from it deepened my life. So, my experience in the United States is a very valuable and precious time for me.



Thank you,

My Korean friends: Daisy, Anika, Cherry, Summer, Jiyeon, Kyungmin, Anne, YoungJin, Amber, Eden, Joseph and Aaron.☺

My friends: Ani, Rebeca, Cynthia, Aziz, Ali, Kohei, Alexandro, Joao, Laura, Sami, Sydney, Vivi, Rodrigo, Abdela, Abdallah (Bolighechi), Kevin, Shourya, Luciana, Paula, Reina, Breana, Yuri, Hari, Ally, Lina,

my KLT friends and my Spring Semester LS 50 friends!

My best ELI teachers: Thomas, Matt, Jane, Zoe, Eva, Todd and Christine!

My best LA: Gavin, Mathis and Lexa!

My best CP: Alex and Isa!

AND

BYE ELI!!!!!! 안녕!!!! (Annyeong)

Rakan Alqahtani (RW 10)**New Experience**

I went on an enjoyable trip to Orlando, where the most exciting experience was riding a helicopter. The journey started from the helipad in the city center, and we began flying over famous tourist attractions. I saw the Disney World amusement park from above, and the views were beautiful. I enjoyed watching the vast gardens and magnificent buildings from a new perspective. Flying over Orlando's enchanting lakes was an unforgettable experience. I felt both excited and thrilled at the same time, and seeing the entire city from the sky was a wonderful experience that I recommend to everyone.

Suha Almuwayni (RW 20)**My Beautiful Neighborhood**

My neighborhood is a beautiful area. The neighborhood I live in is big. It is surrounded by trees and houses, and there are many beautiful areas, such as restaurants, parks, and schools. The neighborhood is great, quiet, and safe. At night, we go out to the neighborhood park to ride bikes or walk. The neighborhood is cozy and wonderful. I have been living in there for 20 years. The way to go some places from my house is easy. In front of my house, there is a pharmacy next to the neighborhood park, and a supermarket is nearby. There are many similar houses. There is also a large hospital in the neighborhood, so I like it because it has everything I need. The neighbors are nice and friendly. We always encourage each other to keep the neighborhood clean, so we plant trees and put a trash can everywhere. When our neighbors need help, we provide assistance for them. I often talk and meet with my neighbors after I return from work. I am very happy in this neighborhood and will continue to live here in the future.

Lizeth Perez Roman (RW 20)**My Country Mexico**

My country, México is beautiful and interesting with great traditions. There are many things that represent in Mexico, and they are distinguished as a unique country. In Mexican culture, within musical genres, Mariachi is expressed as a typical and traditional music of the country. Mexican Tacos are recognized worldwide, and this is due to their exquisite flavor. The tradition that most represents Mexico is 'The Day of the Dead', and it is the most anticipated holiday by all Mexicans. On November 1 and 2, Mexicans remember their deceased with beautiful altars full of flowers, candles, bread, and also exquisite gastronomy. Mexico has variety of beautiful typical dances. In Mexico, it shows off different dances, some faster, others slower, but they are all a great story to add to Mexican culture. Some Mexican dances are the Huapango, Mexica Dance, Tapatío Syrup. Mexico is a unique country and very rich in culture, and I'm proud of myself as Mexican.

Ian Russo (RW 20)**English Language Institute**

The English Language Institute (ELI) is a good program for English. There are many great professionals, such as the teachers. All teachers are very patient and useful, when anybody have one question, they explain and resolve doubts. The other professionals are very important too because they are that resolution any problem that the student has outside the classroom. There are students and peoples very friendly and cool. Every weekend the peoples organize an activity. For example, in the last weekend that's go to the Blue Spring. Those activities provide that the students training and improve their English outside the classroom and in real situations. There are optimized and objective classes. Eli is a really intensive program, so all class is designed to get the best utilization. The teachers give a lot of homework for the student because they know that it is very nice for them. For example, what don't is necessary to do in class the teacher give how homework. In the other words, ELI is the best program for English.

Ana Carolina Lopes Martins (RW 61)**Connecting life through printed books**

Technology has been innovating the way we communicate and interact with people since the day digital devices started making their way into society. It is not any different in education. Technology has been a source to apply different methods of learning in classrooms. Some people might say digital devices are part of society now and should replace print books, since teachers can use more devices to facilitate the learning process of the students because of the different learning tools and software that are found in digital devices. The truth is that print books should not be replaced because it brings a lot of benefits for the students, they are likely to immerse themselves in the story without distractions from digital devices and help to improve their concentration and longer attention spans. “Seeing information on the page may help a student see a book as something with a structure, rather than just text from which you grab some quick information.” (Klass, 2021, para.23)

The students in the classroom should learn how to be reflective in their reading, consequently, reflective in their life decisions. In fact, schools should be teaching them how to engage with stories and make connections with their life, what we call deep literacy, when the reader can understand the author’s deep meaning. As Adam Garfinkle writes about the effects of deep understanding, “Deep literacy has wondrous effects, nurturing our capacity for abstract thought, enabling us to pose and answer difficult questions, empowering our creativity and imagination and refining our capacity for empathy” (2020, para.5). This shows us the capacity of our brains to build important traits that are very important to live in society, such as empathy, a valuable quality in human beings that leads to compassion which helps us to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes and try to help, no matter what that person is thinking. Empathy is a very important attribute that someone can have, understanding people with different opinions and beliefs.

The feeling of holding a print book and turning the pages physically brings a reality to that reading. To put it more clearly, print books give us the idea of space so you are able to remember in what part of the book a specific situation happened or where specific words are and that might help the student build a better vocabulary and understand the meaning of words. As Avery Elizabeth Hurt explains, “Why is a sense of page important? Researchers have shown that we tend to make mental maps when we learn something. Being able to ‘place’ a fact somewhere on a mental map of the page helps us remember it” (2021, para. 12). This perspective supports the idea of how having a print book can improve students' potential to analyze and understand what was said in a meaningful way. Immersing themselves in the story and being capable of understanding the author in their deep meaning, building abilities of comprehension of different figures of speech.

Some people believe that technology is a resource for improving the learning process in the classroom, it can be a good tool for the teachers. Digital devices, sometimes, have interactive features like animations, audios and other digital resources that can make the learning process more fun and enjoyable for the students. It’s true that the students nowadays have more abilities with technologies,

so it's convenient for teachers to use digital devices since they can have the response of the students more easily while using software that provides good tools for the communication between teachers and students. Nevertheless, my point still stands because reading on print books encourages the imagination of the students, making them ask questions and think deeply about it. Also, print books increase the concentration of students since there is not much distraction coming from the notifications and pop-ups of the digital devices. "Screens also come with built-in distractions like frequent notifications, animated ads, pop-ups, auto-playing video, and links to take us away to other stories, and all these are competing for our attention" (Gowing, 2024, para.22). Those words represent well the reality of reading on screens, the distractions take from us the potential deep understanding of the reading.

Overall, we can conclude that the benefits of reading on print books are still more valuable than the benefits of reading on digital devices. As some people will say, the print book increases students' attention and comprehension of the world, which is essential to living in society. Understanding the different figures of speech that are found in books is a good skill to understanding others. In order to improve the students' understanding we should, as a society and teachers, offer more options of print books. Of course, not exclude technology, since it's very present in our daily life these days but teach the students how to use the digital devices in a responsible and effective way. It's ideal, nowadays, that people think out-of-box and be capable of understanding others and print books certainly helps with that.

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Ian Russo (RW 20)

My Favorite State

My favorite state is Florida. It is in a good location and has many different attractions for people. People often go to Florida because it's known for its big and radical roller coasters. Another positive point is that Florida's residents are very receptive to people from different cultures. It also has excellent options for education. The best public university in the USA is located in Florida; its name is UF. Another option for study is English, as Florida has many universities with intensive programs for English, such as the ELI. Florida has many beautiful beaches, but it sometimes has sharks; in other words, it is beautiful but not always safe. My family went to Miami Beach last week, but they didn't enter the water because they saw a shark. However, sharks are an attraction too because people like to see dangerous animals. In other words, this state is the best.

Valentina Delgado Portocarrero (RW 20)**The Magic of Studying at ELI**

Studying at the English Language Institute (ELI) is truly amazing. From day one, the place feels warm and vibrant. The classrooms are full of life, with friendly classmates from all over the world. This cultural diversity makes every conversation, debate, and group activity richer, allowing us to learn not just a new language but also about each other's unique cultures and perspectives. The teacher at ELI is like a mom to us. Her kindness and protectiveness create a safe and welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and supported. She is always ready to listen, offer advice, and help out whenever needed. Her endless patience and love for teaching make learning English an exciting and rewarding adventure. She is not just a teacher but a mentor who genuinely cares about our success. The UF campus is amazing, with beautiful study spots, modern facilities, and lots of resources that help us thrive. The supportive environment, combined with the vibrant campus life, makes studying here a fantastic experience. Days at ELI are filled with laughter, challenges, and unforgettable moments. It's a place where we not only improve our English but also build friendships that cross borders. Every lesson, activity, and interaction adds to an educational experience that transforms both our language skills and our hearts and minds. Our classmates are awesome, bringing in different perspectives and experiences that make learning more fun and meaningful. The mix of people and ideas helps us grow not just academically but personally too. Studying at ELI on the UF campus is more than just attending classes—it is about being part of a diverse and caring community that feels like a second home.

Lizeth Perez Roman (RW 20)**Day of the Dead**

The Life and Death Traditions Festival seeks to keep alive the various ancestral traditions of the Day of the Dead in Mexico, as well as be a window to show the world the vast culture of our country. Through ancestral customs and different contemporary artistic expressions, this very Mexican tradition is preserved. In this Day of the Dead celebration, death does not represent an absence but a living presence; Death is a symbol of life that materializes on the offered altar. In this sense, it is a celebration that carries great popular significance since it includes various meanings, from philosophical to material. On November 1, All Saints' Day is celebrated according to Catholic tradition. On this date, all those who died are remembered, in addition to those who died at an early age such as children. In Mexico, the traditions of this celebration include visiting departed loved ones in cemeteries and preparing altars with food, candles, incense, photographs and flowers to remember them. An altar for the dead is made up of a wide variety of objects, some traditional and others personal to the deceased. Among the necessary elements are candles, incense, salt, candy skulls, bread of the dead, chopped paper and cempasuchil flowers. In addition, personal items are placed, food that was enjoyed in life, some liquor, or even a toy or candy if it is a child. The Day of the Dead is considered a celebration of memory and a ritual that privileges memory over forgetting.

Ana Carolina Lopes Martins (RW 61)**The Connection**

In December of 2021 I moved to the United States to be an au pair, work and live with an American family with the purpose of learning English and traveling around the country. What I did know at that time was that I was going to meet the most amazing people, my host family, not only the host but my future second family. Sara is one of my host kids, she was only 8 months old when I arrived. I could tell from the very first day that I had a special connection with her.

Sara knows what she wants, no matter what, she has a strong opinion about what she thinks, speaks, wears and goes. It can be challenging dealing with this kind of trait, but on the other side she is very kind, thoughtful, smart and always living in light.

What makes this girl so special? Well, when you see her, you can tell she is a free spirit. Of course, as a baby and now toddler she is not happy all the time and does have a hard time dealing with her emotions and all the changes in her short life, so far. However, her personality allows her to pass through situations in an easy way. That free spirit and the light way to live bring peace for the daily life of those who live with her and affects everyone else's mood for the good. Some Days you wake up feeling a little off and when you see Sara, all changes.

As a consequence of being a daughter of two moms and having a girl au pair, it absolutely changes her way to deal with people, the female energy and the kindness present in the woman contributes to her caring personality. She is kind and can be very thoughtful in any circumstances. At school she cares a lot about her friends and teachers, if they are upset or hurt, she always finds a way to try to make them happy again. All this kindness results in having a lot of friends and everyone always wants to play, talk, and spend time with her, because most of the time the moments are fun and happy.

As we all know, 3-year-old kids sometimes say things out of order or in the wrong context because they are still developing the brain and the thought process. But Sara is a little more mature in that point, the things she says sometimes make total sense in the context, usually she can put her words together very well and even copy words from the adults and use them in the context. Consequently, she brings people close to her all the time because of her sassy and smart way of speaking, even helping friends to grow their speaking skills and vocabulary.

All these cheeky ways of being can cause some problems too. When she repeats words from adults or songs that are not appropriate for her age, it can be very offensive for some people because of the strong meaning and it's important for her to know how to be respectful and thoughtful in a social community. She is a smart girl and teaching her how to be respectful and thoughtful it's not a hard job.

In the world that we are living in it's essential to be a strong and confident person, especially a woman, and seeing Sara having this personality gives me hope of a better world for tomorrow. Having strong opinions about everything but still cheering for others shows us all of this will result in a better world to live in, at least if you are close to Sara.

Norah Alghamdi (RW 10)**Homesickness**

I miss my homeland, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is the place where I was born, lived and educated. My homeland is Saudi Arabia where I feel safe. It gave me a lot of good things. The heart of the Islamic world is Mecca, and it is located in Saudi Arabia. It is the city where I lived since I was young. It is a large city and connects the cities of Jeddah and Taif. In this city my family and my husband family live. I like to live where my family live. I am very happy because my husband family is also in the same city. Homeland is the place where a person lives and belongs, so I feel homesick.

Perla Morales Chavez (RW 40)**Breaking the Cycle: Solutions for Overcoming Insomnia**

Many people have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep for an adequate amount of time. This problem is known as insomnia. If you do not sleep very well, insomnia can cause serious health problems. The problem of insomnia can be solved by doing some exercise, taking a shower, and taking some medicine.

The first solution of insomnia is doing some exercise. When people do exercise, they spend a lot of energy. Therefore, people will sleep much better. Due to exercise, it can help people tired and have a better rest.

The second solution of insomnia is taking a shower. Some studies reveal that when people take a shower before going to bed, it can help them to feel relaxed. Therefore, taking a shower has good benefits like relaxing the body and better rest. This is why many people like to take a shower with hot water before going to bed.

The third and most important solution of insomnia is taking some medicine. There are some people that have a serious problem with insomnia that cannot be solved with anything. Consequently, people go to the doctor because they need to take medicine for sleep.

In conclusion, these are three solutions to reduce insomnia, such as doing some exercise, taking a shower, and taking some medicine. If people follow these solutions, insomnia can be disappear and people will sleep better. If people do not follow these solutions, insomnia can cause serious prob-

Cao Fangfang (RW 10)**My Favorite State**

Hi everyone, my name is Fangfang Cao. I came to the ELI program in May and saw the beautiful campus and classic red buildings. My teacher, Witty's patience in teaching and the smiles she gives me every time I meet her make me feel warm. In addition, my lovely classmates always help me when I need it. I gradually love the journey from home to school. The teacher is friendly and interesting teaching style and the friendship among classmates made me no longer feel unfamiliar and nervous like when I first entered school. Instead, I look forward to class every day. I enjoy participating in the ELI program and the experience it brings me.

Veronica Acosta-Loli (RW 40B)**LEARNING AT ELI**

My journey with English Language Institute at the University of Florida began some weeks ago, I am thrilled with my classes, and I am devoted to improving my knowledge of English. I can get access to all the resources available on campus. Studying here changed my perspective about learning languages because I met many people from different countries who interact with me all the time, this makes me feel more confident when communicating.

I arrive to my classes early every day so I can use the free library computers at any time. I have seen that all the teachers and staff have a strong work ethics. The common goal is to make it easier for students to understand and make them feel comfortable while learning. The concept that a student is just a passive listener is wrong, the classes are dynamic by professionals.

The schedule is very organized, essentially, the students are separated according to the level of knowledge. I am very happy to be here. And the best part is the field trips we are visiting many places that I've never seen before. ELI is a great place to learn English.

**Aseel H. Almalki (RW 10)****My Classmate**

I want to introduce my new friend. His full name is Ian Russo. He is 18 years old. He was born in Argentina. He doesn't have a job. He's a student. His field of study is administration. His hobbies include going to the gym, playing volleyball and ping pong. He has one brother. His favorite color is red. He has a pet named Furia. His favorite food is sweet pizza. His favorite sport is volleyball. His favorite music genre is funk. His favorite movie is 'Brother of a Spy.' He likes to travel. His favorite destination is Orlando. His native language is Portuguese, but he speaks very good Spanish and English as well. He doesn't have a favorite book. He has close friends, and they are very good. His favorite memory is his 18th birthday. His goal in life is to be rich. He can't live without going to the gym. I'm happy with my new friend.

Marcelina Cauca Joao (RW 61)**Angolan Most Famous Recipe**

Hello, my name is Marcelina Cauca Joao, and I am from Angola, which is a beautiful country, and it is located in the south-west part of Africa. The country is full of wonderful places to visit, and it also has a very interesting gastronomy. Since we live in the coast, one of the most abundant food available, besides agriculture products, is the sea food.

I live in the capital of Angola, which is Luanda, and one of the most interesting places to go and have good time with friends and relatives are the beaches. There, we can find a variety of restaurant that have a lot of sea-food menus and the most famous dish is called “Mufete”. “Mufete” as we call, is a dish that is compound with grilled fish; a tomato or onion salad; white or yellow beans cooked in palm oil; sweet potato, banana bread and manioca; and musseque flour, which is a singular flour that can only be find in Angola. I have been far from home for more that 6 months, and if you ask me what I miss the most beside my family and friends, I would definitely answer the food, specially “Mufete”, which is my favorite food. For that reason, I would like to share the recipe of that delicious typic Angolan’s food.

Recipe for six persons.

Ingredients

- 1 – A half kilo of fresh white or yellow beans
- 2 – Six fishes (preferable those that can be grilled)
- 3 – Two large Manioc
- 4 - Three or four banana bread
- 5 - Six sweet potatoes
- 6 - Two large onions; tomato for salad; and cucumber,
- 7 – Garlic and parsley
- 8 - Palm oil
- 9 - 1 cup of musseque flour
- 10 - Vinegar, olive oil and salt

How to prepare the dish:

First of all add in a pot the fresh beans, the palm oil, the garlic (smashed) and enough water to cover the beans and take it to cook until the beans get soft and cooked. After the bean is cooked, take a onion to with a little bit of vegetal oil to the cooker and let it get translucent. Add the onions to the beans cooked and finally the salt as your preference and let it cook for more 20 to 25 minutes, adding water as it is necessary.

Secondly, wash the fishes and add a past of smashed garlic and salt, a little bit of vinaigrette or lemon juice. Let it rest on the fridge for at least one hour. After that, the fish is read to be grilled.

Third, cook the banana bread, the sweet potatoes and the manioc on boiled water. After they are completely cooked, remove them from the water and let it rest.

Lastly, is the time to make the salad. After washing, cut in tinny cubs the onions, the tomatoes and the cucumber. Cut the parsley and add to the previous mix. Finally, season the salad with some lemon or vinaigrette and salt as your preference.

Now that every part of the dish is cooked, the final step is to serve in a very large plate and some tiny bowls because it has a lot of components. Do not forget the musseque flour. Organize all the elements as it is showed in the image below and then it is ready to be eaten. Enjoy your “Mufete”



Valentina Delgado Portocarrero (RW 20)

Lizeth's Unwavering Pursuit of Knowledge

Lizeth is an excellent student and a wonderful coworker to have. She is very dedicated to studies English at the university and improve her language skills. No matter how much homework she has, she always takes the time to complete it thoroughly. Lizeth is constantly seeking out new opportunities to practice speaking English and learn more. One of her biggest dreams is to become a nurse in the future. She has a big heart and really enjoys going out of her way to assist others whenever she can. Lizeth is an amazing cook, and sometimes she brings me delicious homemade meals when I need some extra help, which is so kind and thoughtful of her. Lizeth loves playing sports and engaging physical activities in her free time. She frequently invites me to join her in playing ball games or going for runs together, and we always have a great time laughing and staying active. Spending time with Lizeth is consistently a highlight of my day that I really look forward to. When it comes down to it, Lizeth is simply the best friend and coworker anyone could ask for.

Tomás Soto Jara (RW 61)**Reading on paper surpasses digital reading: comprehension, retention, and academic performance**

With the growth of technology and mobile devices, the use of screens has increased considerably in the field of education, which leads us to an important debate about how effective digital reading is when compared to reading on paper: are we sacrificing understanding for the convenience of using technology? Reading has been progressively advancing from print to digital for different reasons, such as the fact that the vast majority have mobile devices, the ease they have to access different sources of information and the Internet, the convenience of carrying electronic devices instead of books, among many other reasons. Due to this situation, this transition from print to digital has been widely researched in recent years because its implications for education and cognitive development are crucial for learning and training. Some people argue that digital reading is a necessary innovation and should be adopted as the new norm; however, despite the varying benefits of digital reading, research shows that paper reading is still superior in terms of comprehension, information retention, and academic performance. Thus, this essay will explore how reading on paper surpasses digital reading on these fundamental points.

Reading on paper has better results in understanding and retaining information. Recent research has shown that people—regardless of age and gender—understand and retain information better when reading on paper compared to when reading digitally. According to a study by Delgado et al. (2018, as cited in Hurt, 2021), the comprehension of a long text—academic and non-academic—decreases when people read the information on a screen because the brain has adapted to differentiate the digital medium from the printed medium, moving to a superficial and fast scanning mode on digital devices. This superficial scanning results in a decrease in deep understanding of what is being read. To obtain these results, the study by Delgado et al. evaluated the reading of more than 171,000 readers from Spain and Israel—which certainly makes it a methodologically robust study. Additionally, Patricia Alexander, a psychologist at the University of Maryland at College Park, supports this point, noting that “students often think they learn more from reading online. When tested, though, it turns out that they actually learned less than when reading in print” (Hurt, 2021, para. 3). In other words, this means that digital reading is not having the same impact on students' comprehension as reading on paper. Similarly, other studies with meta-analysis methodology have found similar results—significant and considerable effects—on the comprehension and deeper cognitive processing that reading on paper for long texts has compared to digital reading (Singer and Alexander, 2017; Delgado, Vargas, Ackerman, and Salmerón, 2018; Kong, Seo, and Zhai, 2018). These studies warn that the widespread use of digital reading can negatively impact students in the medium term. Therefore, based on this empirical evidence, digital reading often leads to superficial processing and rapid scanning, which undermines comprehension. Thus, for optimal comprehension and retention, according to various studies, reading on paper is superior to digital reading.

A second important argument is that reading on paper is less prone to causing distractions and, therefore, more immersive. Much of the decrease in comprehension when reading on screens, in addition to superficial reading, has to do with the fact that there are various distractions that affect concentration. This is explained by Jenea Cohn (as cited in Hurt, 2021), professor at California State University and specialist in the use of technology in education: "It can be difficult to concentrate [for people who read content on digital devices for academic reading] when something interrupts you every few minutes. She's referring to pings and rings from texts or emails, pop-up advertisements, and TikTok updates" (Hurt, 2021, paragraph 19). Thus, these interruptions caused by distractions result in fragmented reading, a reduction in immersion in the content, and consequently, less in-depth reading. According to Courage (2017), when people are frequently exposed to different digital stimuli, they reduce the ability to maintain concentration for long periods of time. Furthermore, Mangen and Kuiken (2014) highlight that constant interruptions to reading on screens affect text comprehension and affect immersion. This is detrimental considering that, in fact, different studies show that distractions are common and also caused by multitasking on electronic devices—that is, doing more than one thing at the same time—and because the devices are designed to constantly bombard users with information (Liu, 2022). This evidence, therefore, shows the challenge of staying focused when reading on screen compared to reading on paper, allowing for a deeper immersion into the content, improving the overall reading experience.

Some people might say that reading on digital devices is more accessible and convenient. It is true that digital reading offers various benefits such as accessibility and personalization of the text for people with visual disabilities, or as Hurt explains: "Digital books generally cost less than printed ones ... you have to consider the environmental advantages of the digital [because] trees are not necessary to make a digital book" (Hurt, 2021, para. 21). However, these benefits still do not outweigh the advantages of reading on paper. First, various studies have found better performance and comprehension results in paper-based tests (Wang et al., 2008; Kong et al., 2018). These experimental studies explain that digital technology can foster more superficial processing, negatively affecting deep comprehension. Moreover, these studies mention that the advantage of paper over digital media could increase over time, highlighting the need to develop effective methods for digital reading (Wang et al., 2008; Kong et al., 2018). Also, Klass (2021) points out that even those who believe they have high efficiency in screen reading would have better performance and academic results if they did the same reading on paper. Additionally, despite the widespread use of screens, a significant part of the population still does not have access to them. According to the International Telecommunication Union report (2023), around 2.9 billion people do not have access to the Internet (representing about 37% of the world's population). Internet connectivity and access to digital devices are limited in many developing regions, creating a significant digital divide. Therefore, while digital reading has its benefits, it is not a substitute for the cognitive advantages of reading on paper or the depth and effectiveness of print reading for serious academic learning.

In conclusion, this essay has shown that reading on paper offers advantages over digital reading. Several studies have shown that reading on paper provides better comprehension and retention of in-

formation, fewer distractions and deeper immersion in reading, and better academic performance. Therefore, in the future, we should focus on promoting reading practices that maximize comprehension, without forgetting that screens are here to stay and that we must also move forward in improving deep reading strategies in these digital media.

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Heiner Mauricio Rodríguez (RW 61)**Saving Reading from the Tyranny of Screens**

You might not be aware of it, but screens are progressively taking control of the human mind. The modern life is now depending on the constant use of technology; we are using digital devices more than ever to “make our lives easier.” Since the invention of the personal computer and smartphones, humanity has delegated to those devices the solution of complex problems and the execution of simple tasks, making them daily-use gadgets. As a result, we are transitioning completely into a digital age. Almost everything can be found digitally or projected on a display. Screens are totally changing the manner of how we interact with others and the format of reading as well; screens are replacing newspapers, magazines, and books are not the exception. Reading on screen has raised an interesting debate; while there are some that argue that reading on a screen is becoming the “new norm” and that digital reading is a human innovation that we must embrace, others believe that humans are losing something important when we do most of our reading on a screen rather than on paper. Despite the argument in favor of digital reading, the fact is that reading on screen is changing more aspects in our lives than we might realize; this, the new norm, might take a toll on our minds; therefore, when we are learning from reading, printed books are a wise and superior choice.

Excessive screen reading is destroying the human concentration span. Turning reading into screen-based activity significantly decreases the attention; as result, reading deeply is becoming a difficult achievement to reach. According to Garfinkle (2020), the absence of deep literacy negatively affects creativity, the ability to connect to authors and delve into the text, similar to our capacity for abstract thought, resolving complex questions, and undoubtedly, the comprehension of what we read. In her article “*Will you learn better from reading on screens or on paper*”, Avery Elizabeth Hurt points out that when reading on digital devices, pop-up notifications and advertisements come to the screen can easily ruin concentration, thereby making it challenging to stay focused on the reading (Hurt, 2021). Some might argue that turning off notifications helps to keep the focus on the reading; however, concerns about concentration go beyond not having notifications activated. Portable-digital devices are made to be addictive through the constant use of apps, they are developed in a form that makes users feel eager to open them at frequent intervals. As Adam Garfinkle claims, “technology companies know that swiping trains the brain in certain ways; designers know what produces quick bursts of dopamine and oxytocin” (Garfinkle, 2020, p 9). Trevor Haynes, a research technician in the Department of Neurobiology at Harvard Medical School, explains that our brain produces a chemical substance named dopamine, which is a hormone that gets released when we perform activities such as having sex, exercising, eating something good, and conducting positive social interactions (Haynes, 2021). This hormone can also be triggered “by every notification, whether it’s a text message, a like on Instagram, or a Facebook notification, which has the potential to be a positive social stimulus and cause a dopamine influx.” (Haynes, 2021, p 7). To better understand, dopamine, according to Watson (2024), plays a significant role in human behavior because it makes us feel pleasure due to the brain's reward system. In oth-

er words, our brain makes us “feel happy” by swiping between platforms; nevertheless, while we read on screen, this action makes us lose which affects our reading comprehension.

Screen fatigue, also known as digital eye strain, is another relevant drawback of screen-based reading. It refers to the mental and physical strain that results from prolonged use of digital screens while reading. According to Joyce Macaraeg, an academic Coach at Rutgers University we experience digital eye strain due to the fact that our eyes are attempting to focus on all parts of the screen simultaneously; as a result, it affects us physiologically and emotionally (Macaraeg, 2023). Additionally, “we may feel fatigue from our devices due to their blue light which may cause “disrupting sleep patterns, feeling of weakness, blurred or reduced vision, eye pain, headache” (Macaraeg, 2023, p3). The blue light emitted from the screen can wreck the sleep routine necessary for having a good rest, which is vital to be active and focused the day next. This occurs because blue light exposition can make our mind believe that it is still daytime when it is time to sleep; therefore, it maintains the body in a state of alert making it harder getting enough sleep (Sleep Foundation, 2024). Mental fatigue is another sort of fatigue derived from repeated screen reading. Garfinkle (2020), suggests that with the use of screens we are prone to feel mentally fatigued because digital devices offer a large variety of external stimuli that compete for the brain attention. This can result in a higher consumption of calories, leading to be exhausted by the end of the day and affecting normal human daily performance. Furthermore, Garfinkle (2020) documented that there exists evidence that the use of digital devices also causes “social-media fatigue”; in Garfinkle’s words, screen-based devices can trigger other problems such as depression, loneliness, and isolation. In contrast, reading on paper does not lead to these issues.

Those on the other side of the issue of reading on screen may say that we are reading more than ever, and readers now have more access to knowledge and information since digital platforms have democratized reading. While this argument is true, when reading on screens, one of the biggest concerns, which is the quality of reading, still remains. To put it in simple words, we are mainly discussing about what is being lost when we read digitally. Additionally, it is well documented that our ability to read deeply and comprehend what we read is at risk with the use of screens. Results of a study conducted in Spain and Israel in 2018 in which more than 171,000 readers were analyzed, concluded that most people comprehend better when they read print rather than digital (Hurt, 2021). To a similar conclusion came a psychologist at University of Maryland in College Park, Patria Alexander, who after testing what student learned from a reading, concluded that students learn more when reading in print (Hurt, 2021). Printed written allows readers to remember the location of what they read because physical reading enable the creation of mental map that store and retain much information; in contrast, this is not possible when reading digital because readers lose the sense of place due to the scrolling (Hurt, 2021). Besides that, Hurt (2021) also notes that digital reading is changing our mindset when reading, which determines the intention we assume at the time to read. Most of what we read on screen is piece of information from social media and short texts that are not difficult to understand, and we can read fast or just skim; as result, speed reading and skimming are becoming a habit when reading on screens (Hurt, 2021). In simpler terms, when reading on screen, our brain assumes the mindset that digital reading

does not require deep reading to be comprehended it. It is also relevant to mention that skimming and speed reading are reading methods usually executed on Internet, social media, and digital devices in general; however, according to Garfinkle (2020), we are as well applying this method into the print's material. As a result, screen reading is leading to worse quality even if we read on paper.

In conclusion, even though digital reading offers great access to information and knowledge, it also brings significant challenges that cannot be overlooked. Reading on screens is reshaping our reading habits, diminishing our capacity for deep reading, and contributing to mental and physical fatigue. The distractions that come with notifications, the use of apps for social media, and the blue light emitted by digital devices disrupt our focus and sleep patterns, and it may affect our overall well-being and cognitive abilities. Several studies have found that the quality of our reading experience is compromised because people tend to learn less while reading on screen rather than paper. The digital has come to last; however, it is crucial to recognize the value of printed writing and stimulate the paper reading because it fosters deeper comprehension, better retention, and a more focused, immersive reading experience.

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Dumar Beltran Lopez (RW 20)**The Best University**

UF is the university with the greatest cultural diversity. When we walk through the hallways, we see and hear different languages. There are many green places to exercise or museums to visit. The university has its pet. An alligator that we see on their flag, and that is important for the sports and student community. The University of Florida has its public transportation. It has nine bus routes that are free for everyone with their UF ID card. The university has its own stadium and American football team. When the sport season begins, the streets are decorated with people who walk in uniform to watch each game and support their team, The Gator. To end, the University of Florida is a perfect option for students and professional life.

Rafaella Toral Danin (RW 40)**Education in Ecuador and Saudi Arabia**

Education is the basis of any society, shaping young minds and preparing them for the future. Yet, the way education is delivered can differ vastly across cultures and countries. Ecuador and Saudi Arabia have many differences in their education systems, such as teachers, school time, and extracurricular activities.

The first difference is teachers. In Ecuador, when you start elementary school, you have two teachers for all the subjects: the principal teacher and the auxiliary teacher. Then, when you are in middle school and high school, you have many teachers for different subjects, and all the teachers have their own classrooms. On the other hand, in Saudi Arabia, from when you start elementary school until you finish high school, there are many teachers for different subjects. However, they go to your classroom.

Another difference between Saudi Arabia's and Ecuador's educational systems is school time. In Saudi Arabia, all the levels go to school time. From elementary to high school, students go seven hours per day. In contrast, Ecuadorian students have different schedules depending on the level. Primary has six hours per day, junior has seven hours per day and senior has seven to eight hours per day.

The final difference is extracurricular activities. In Ecuador, most students do something after school. They play sports, join clubs, or attend study groups. Many schools have their own extracurricular activity programs where the students can develop different skills. In Saudi Arabia, it is very different. There, all the students go home after school and spend time with their families.

In conclusion, teachers, school time, and extracurricular activities are different in Ecuador and Saudi Arabia. Both countries have different systems to prepare young minds for the future and to follow their culture and backgrounds. However, the main similarity between both is that they want to give the best for future professionals.

Norah Alghamdi (RW 10)**Homesickness**

I miss my homeland, the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is the place where I was born, lived and educated. My homeland is Saudi Arabia where I feel safe. It gave me a lot of good things. The heart of the Islamic world is Mecca, and it is located in Saudi Arabia. It is the city where I lived since I was young. It is a large city and connects the cities of Jeddah and Taif. In this city my family and my husband family live. I like to live where my family live. I am very happy because my husband family is also in the same city. Homeland is the place where a person lives and belongs, so I feel homesick.

Perla Morales Chavez (RW 40)**Breaking the Cycle: Solutions for Overcoming Insomnia**

Many people have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep for an adequate amount of time. This problem is known as insomnia. If you do not sleep very well, insomnia can cause serious health problems. The problem of insomnia can be solved by doing some exercise, taking a shower, and taking some medicine.

The first solution of insomnia is doing some exercise. When people do exercise, they spend a lot of energy. Therefore, people will sleep much better. Due to exercise, it can help people tired and have a better rest.

The second solution of insomnia is taking a shower. Some studies reveal that when people take a shower before going to bed, it can help them to feel relaxed. Therefore, taking a shower has good benefits like relaxing the body and better rest. This is why many people like to take a shower with hot water before going to bed.

The third and most important solution of insomnia is taking some medicine. There are some people that have a serious problem with insomnia that cannot be solved with anything. Consequently, people go to the doctor because they need to take medicine for sleep.

In conclusion, these are three solutions to reduce insomnia, such as doing some exercise, taking a shower, and taking some medicine. If people follow these solutions, insomnia can be disappear and people will sleep better. If people do not follow these solutions, insomnia can cause serious problems in their health.

Luciana Modica (RW 61)

How Less Reading on Paper and More Screens Affects Children: Decreased Skills, Enjoyment, and Academic Performance

Can you imagine a world without books? Can old school libraries be replaced by a cell phone? Schools and learning environments play a critical role in influencing how we interact with texts and develop our reading skills. The ability to read and understand in childhood is fundamental to the cognitive skills that will develop in adulthood. But here is a big question: does learning change if we use digital technology instead of traditional paper books? How much does technology help or hurt learning in school? Although technology has enabled significant advances in education, especially during the isolation of the pandemic, there are concerns about how it affects students' ability to focus and deeply enjoy reading. Digital reading may seem modern and convenient, but it is changing the way we interact with text and may be negatively affecting our thinking skills. Thus, it is crucial to consider how the transition to digital devices is influencing the quality of literacy and academic development. The increasing use of technology and the decline in paper reading have led to three concerning trends in children: decline in cognitive skills, reduction in reading enjoyment, and lower academic performance in schools.

Reading on paper uniquely stimulates deep thinking, creativity, and imagination, providing a mental process that digital reading cannot achieve. Immersion in extensive and profound texts through paper books involves a mental activity that promotes a greater capacity for abstract thought and creativity. Maryanne Wolf, a neuroscientist at the University of California who specializes in the cognitive processes involved in reading, studies the loss of deep literacy. She asserts that deep literacy has extraordinary effects, fostering our ability for abstract reasoning, helping us to tackle and solve challenging questions, activating our creativity and imagination, and enhancing our empathy. "It is also generative of successive new insight, [and] it touches off a 'revolution in the brain,' meaning that it has distinctive and describable neurophysiological consequences" (Garfinkle, 2020, parr 5). Deep reading of paper books stimulates areas of the brain associated with reflection and empathy, resulting in a more comprehensive cognitive development. Conversely, digital reading, filled with distractions such as notifications and messages, tends to foster a more superficial and shallow reading experience. Also, reading on paper allows for more focused concentration and a less interrupted experience, which not only promotes deeper and more creative thinking but also contributes to more robust cognitive development. This highlights the importance of maintaining the traditional book format in children's literacy.

The transition to digital reading is contributing to a decrease in reading enjoyment among teenagers, which can negatively impact their overall literacy development. The decrease in recreational reading among young people can be largely attributed to the technological advancements that have changed their reading habits. According to Palki Sharma, a journalist for the BBC, in the episode "Why People No Longer Read Books" (2023) of the program Firstpost, "young people are not reading enough. Many of them said they did not enjoy it. They found reading to be a futile task" (3:55). A study conducted by Common Sense Media -an American nonprofit organization dedicated to informing and researching technology in children's lives- reveals that not only do reading rates decline as children grow older,

but they have also significantly decreased over the past three decades. According to Alter (2014), in the article "Study: The Number of Teens Reading for Fun Keeps Declining," in 1984, 8% of 13-year-olds and 9% of 17-year-olds reported that they "never" or "hardly ever" read for pleasure. By 2014, those numbers had nearly tripled, rising to 22% and 27%, respectively. Furthermore, girls generally read more than boys, with 30% of girls reading daily compared to 18% of boys. These changes may be negatively impacting their enjoyment of reading. Electronic devices not only reduce the time young people spend reading but may also affect their ability to enjoy it as a fulfilling activity. It is crucial to find strategies to ensure that children and teenagers continue to have the desire to dedicate time to reading for enjoyment and pleasure, in order to preserve a deep and satisfying reading experience.

Those on the other side of the issue may say that the use of technology has been crucial for maintaining education during the pandemic; however, there has been growing concern about its negative impact on academic performance. Admittedly, technology allowed educational systems to adapt and continue during the pandemic in 2020; nevertheless, my point still stands because there has been a decline in test results in countries that were previously known for their educational excellence. For example, in Finland, a country renowned for its educational innovation, PISA test results have shown signs of stagnation or even decline in recent years. According to *The Economist* (2024), "A stronger case can be made that screens are affecting their studies. More than 60% of rich-world pupils say that their phone or tablet sometimes distracts them during school lessons. Pupils who report spending a lot of time fiddling with devices in school score lower than others in international tests" (parr 8). This decline in performance may be related to the excessive use of digital devices, which impacts concentration and focus in the classroom. Evidence suggests that frequent screen use in educational settings can distract students and negatively affect their performance on international tests. While technology has been valuable for education during the pandemic, it is crucial to recognize that its excessive use may have detrimental effects on learning and academic performance. In other words, although technology has been essential for educational continuity in times of crisis, it is important to address its potentially harmful effects on concentration and academic performance to ensure high-quality education.

In conclusion, reading on paper remains essential for deep understanding, creativity, and imagination, offering unique benefits that digital reading cannot match. The experience of reading on paper facilitates greater focus and a more immersive engagement with content, contributing to the cognitive development of readers. Even with its benefits, screen reading cannot completely replace the unique advantages of paper books. It is not about resisting technological advancement, but rather finding ways to integrate both reading formats to maximize educational potential. Technology can complement education, but it should not replace traditional methods that foster deep and enriching learning. Returning to the initial question: Can you imagine a world without books? If your mind can conceive it, it is precisely because of the impact those books have had on your imagination. Therefore, we must preserve and value paper reading while leveraging technological innovations to enhance our education and understanding.

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