



Dear parents, carers and students

Welcome to this edition of the 6th Form Fortnightly Focus.



It is a busy time of year in the sixth form with student interviews taking place for Year 11 students who want to join our successful sixth form, from Tavistock College as well as other schools. Our recent performance in the government league tables (above national average) underpins our success and is testament to the hard work of students and staff alike. I would like to praise all the students for their recent efforts and achievements and particularly congratulate Joe Carver, who won the latest "Student of the moment" award for his excellent work across all of his subjects.

I would like to share with you some of the high quality work our students are producing, I intend to include examples of work from across the curriculum every fortnight. This edition has an erudite History essay by Jessamy Clemens.

We are taking 30 students to Cardiff University and the University of South Wales this week and the places for the Bath Spa University trip are quickly filling up. The Year 13 students applying to university have completed their UCAS applications, but for students who are seeking an alternative to higher education, "Skills South West", a careers and apprenticeship fair, will be held at Plymouth Pavilions and Mrs Sharpe will be able to take any interested students.

January is over, (Although hail continues to tumble down my chimney) it is getting lighter earlier each evening and it will be Easter before we know it. So for all our students, keep focused, keep working hard and do the very best you can. *Mr Galli*

The Extended Project Qualification

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a Level 3 Qualification which allows students in the sixth form to study beyond their A-Level syllabus and prepare for university or chosen career. It is worth half an A-Level so can be used to earn extra UCAS points. The EPQ takes the form of either a 5000 word essay or producing an artefact together with a 2500 word essay. In both cases, students need to fill out a production log which involves recording their initial planning as well as detailing how they intend to research the project using primary and secondary sources. Students can start the EPQ in Year 12, submitting their initial proposal for approval, and need to have finished it by the end of the spring term in Year 13.

For the EPQ, each student is assigned a supervisor who meets with them on a fortnightly basis providing guidance and support. Supervisors also offer study skills advice to help with organizing ideas as well as managing time and resources effectively. Students are able to choose an area of interest which is related to a curriculum subject they are studying in the sixth form. They need to be genuinely committed to their selected topic because the course involves extended independent study challenging them to work independently as they would be expected to at university or in working life. On completion, they are required to deliver a presentation explaining how they compiled their project as well as answering questions about their findings and how they overcame any challenges. A key part of the EPQ is the provision of evidence for all planning

stages of the project development and production. For this, students need to record their meetings with supervisors as well as the ways in which they are using their primary and secondary research sources. We ensure that supervisors and centre co-ordinator check the student production logs regularly to ensure they are being completed at regular intervals. The production log is a key component for the success criteria as much as the project itself so by maintaining high standards of recording students can achieve a higher grade.

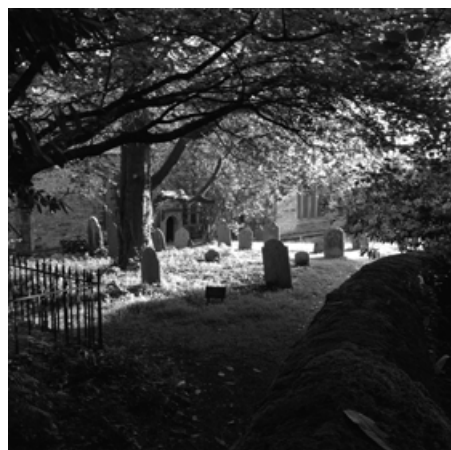
It is important for all students taking the EPQ to take their final presentations seriously as they are important evidence to show students have used a range of skills, including, where appropriate, new technologies and problem-solving, to take decisions critically and achieve planned outcomes. Students deliver the 10-15 minute presentation to a non-specialist audience and practise beforehand with their supervisors. We have found that students succeed when they understand the true relevance of the EPQ to their chosen university course or pathway in further education. Many put it on their personal statement and last year a number of students who dropped a grade at A Level got into their preferred university because they achieved an A or B grade at EPQ. Finally, EPQ has proved a rewarding qualification for sixth form students who wish to extend their knowledge and understanding about a given topic beyond the parameters of the A Level curriculum. *Mr Chambers*

Gallery Space



Edith Lipscombe

Sam Beard



Anya Anstey

Student Perspective

People don't wield power; power wields people

By Sam Chambers

Pondering why an individual does the things she does is, for me, quite a bemusing experience. With there being so many social norms that we all adhere to, I would really like to know what it is that makes us decide to engage in cultural conventions that we won't have originally conceived ourselves. The point to this question doesn't lie in weighing the merit of any particular tradition in and of itself, but rather to resolve how these ideas were put in our heads in the first place. For example, I expect you grow grass in your garden and that it gets shaved periodically. Why? Why do we do this? You didn't dream up the concept of having a regulated green square of your own; it was given to you. Yet this is an idea that literally controls your actions, at least in the sense that you exhibit specific behaviours, simply because the idea is in your head. I find it unsettling to consider just how many things we do each day without really understanding or assessing why we do them.

The term hegemony comes from the Greek word for leadership. Cultural hegemony refers to domination achieved through ideological means (as opposed to violence). A man named Antonio Gramsci developed the concept of cultural hegemony extensively. Gramsci did so in a series of essays written while imprisoned for being an opponent of Mussolini's Fascist dictatorship. His view was that the consolidation of Fascist rule in 1920s Italy was dependent on a special kind of agreement between Mussolini and the populace. An agreement in which those agreeing didn't necessarily understand what it was that they were agreeing to. Gramsci recognised that controlling a person's loyalty was the key to power. Those who hold power over our respected social institutions, such as media, politics, religion, law, family and education, can spread the dominant values and assumptions because institutions do the work of socialising people into the norms and beliefs of the dominant social group. By manipulating the culture of a society, those in power justify their rule.

I thought the best way in which to imagine cultural hegemony would be in terms of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. In the wondrous Harry Potter series, Lord Voldemort is universally feared and cuts an ominous figure, despite being physically absent for the first half of the heptalogy. Most of the characters can't even bring themselves to say his name out-loud. From a hegemonic point of view, we can see how this behaviour wasn't just an expression of the Dark Lord's power; it actually was his power. If you wouldn't say his name then you were indirectly consenting to the belief in his authority, and expressing that belief through your actions. Dumbledore teaches Harry to never concede to Voldemort's power, even in a social convention, and, therefore, to stand up to cultural hegemony.

The Lord of the Rings trilogy contains another metaphor for cultural hegemony for those who might prefer a different wizard. Gandalf, or rather, J.R.R. Tolkien, does a clever job of never really going into detail what the ring's magical powers actually are. That's because, in much the same way as your lawn, the thing in and of itself is rather mundane. It's the idea of the thing and the ways in which that idea affects the characters' behaviours that demonstrates power. Frodo is governed by this power and only becomes free once he finally relinquishes his burden (which is for us the socio-economic narrative vended by the ruling class). Likewise, Harry's triumph arises as he (literally) gets Voldemort out of his head.

In the media, hegemony is used in abundance. It makes us consent to the economic status quo: the middle class has power over the working class etc. The established media frame this, the worldview of the ruling class, as perpetual and ultimately beneficial for all. The ruling class ideology about society and our place in it is presented to us as 'common sense,' says Gramsci. For example, the notions that our economic system is legitimate, that we live in a meritocracy and that you can succeed financially as long as you work hard enough have all flourished into dogma under capitalism. These ideas foster the belief that success and social mobility are strictly the responsibility of the individual, and by doing so obscure the real class, racial, and gender inequalities inherent in the capitalist system. Cultural hegemony functions most appallingly when those ruled by the dominant class come to believe that economic and social conditions, for both the poor and the rich, are natural and inevitable. It therefore follows that a high concentration of media ownership in the hands of one or a few sycophantic magnates—who therefore have an agenda to preserve the power of the elite—would be potentially very dangerous. An innocuous acceptance of a favourite popular newspaper as an espouser of facts and common sense obliges one to follow the dominant ideology. This dominant ideology reflects the beliefs and interests of the ruling class. You did not come up with the concept of class stratification, or the notion of wealth as a determiner of success. These ideas were provided in order to justify the superior position of the ruling class, and they are the ideas that literally command our treatment of others.

Elections and referenda are ideal times to see hegemony in action. The typical voter, engaged but faintly nonplussed, will at some point be presented with a political ideology. This ideology will include pleasant sounding ideas and beliefs that she may agree with, often defined in only very vague terms. Once the voter decides that she agrees with this ideology, political party or personage then all her political decisions from then on will be made, not from her own critical judgement, but from the solutions that her political ideology has decided for her. Those elected into power may then exert control over the political narrative by expressing their dominant ideology through social institutions. If a group controls the institutions that maintain social order, such as police, law and the border force, then that group rules all others in society. Control these and you can predict how subordinate social groups will interact. For example, by teaching one group to hate the word 'terrorist' and then labelling another group 'terrorist,' irrespective of what is true, the dominant class now has an enormous impact on how both groups will act.

I find the most unsettling aspect of cultural hegemony to be the fact that, on an individual level, we all make a tacit choice to agree to accept various norms that surround us. This is the crux of cultural hegemony and I think we all would do wisely to act in future more as Harry did: call out cultural hegemony when we see it, adopt a critical, questioning attitude towards those in positions of authority and always be prepared to fight for the rights of others.

'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.'
— Karl Marx

As part of the Fortnightly Focus, I would like to share with you some of the fantastic work being done in college on a daily basis. This History essay, by Jessamy Clemens for example is a response to the question: 'To what extent was the fear of Socialism the main reason for Mussolini's rise to power?'

'To what extent was the fear of Socialism the main reason for Mussolini's rise to power?' By Jessamy Clemens

The fear of socialism played a large part in Mussolini's rise to power. However, other factors severely helped: such as the role of Mussolini himself, the failures of the Liberal Government, and the impact of WW1. It seems clear that without these other factors, the fear of socialism would not have been so powerful as the reason for Mussolini's rise to power.

The fear of Socialism was great during Mussolini's rise to power. Many of the Middle Class, and landowners were afraid of, and also angry about Socialist talk of higher wage rates, collectivisation, and perhaps a Socialist Revolution. Mussolini was able to use this fear to his advantage by making Fascism seem like a sort of saviour to all of this chaos. His Fascist squads were out fighting against Socialists, burning down their offices and buildings. This brought great comfort to Socialism's opposers as the government had been maintaining a policy of neutrality which angered many people, including employers struggling with striking workers. Mussolini used his powers of persuasion to convince people that Fascism was the only group who could fight back, control and dismantle the Socialist threat.

The failures of the Liberal Government also made it easier for Mussolini to rise to power. Many Italians were beginning to lose hope in the Liberal Government as amongst all of this chaos caused by the Socialists, the government remained hesitant to step in and fight back. This was because the Socialists were their main supporters, so in order to stay in power, the government had to keep them happy. The party also lacked cohesion and discipline which made the party look unattractive to the people of Italy, and their obvious fear of Socialists made them look weak too. Fascism appeared to be a vastly more attractive party- it was already out battling against the socialist threat, and it was working.

The role of Mussolini obviously played an important role in his rise to power. His strong, persuasive skills and cunning nature meant that he could exploit every last problem Italy had and he played them to his strengths. He presented Fascism as a

national movement with a vision of a new Italy which would have won over many Italians struggling under the Socialist threat. He remained friendly with the Liberals and the Catholics, whilst never presenting any clear policies about Fascism so he didn't offend too many political groups. He said that only Fascism could restore order and discipline in Italy, convincing people that Fascism could be trusted in government.

The persuasive powers of Mussolini were able to be fully practised in the difficulties of life after the First World War and the economic issues that followed. With many Italians feeling as though the war had been a 'Mutilated Victory', Fascism appealed to many when D'Annunzio marched to Fiume and took over. With Mussolini now the front man, his Fascist party remained attractive. The war also gathered new supporters to Fascism such as de-mobilised soldiers. The economic problems that ensued after the war, such as inflation and large debt made the government look weak which would make it easier for Mussolini in his rise to power later on. Amongst all of these problems, Socialism arose and thrived, with disputes in factories turning into strikes. Unemployment also rose during this time meaning people felt they couldn't rely on the government any longer and so turned to other parties. Those unimpressed and fearful of Socialism found confidence in Fascism.

In conclusion, the fear of Socialism probably was the main reason in Mussolini's rise to power, however it must be noted that many other factors, such as Liberal weakness and economic problems following the war are closely linked with this fear. For example, the Liberals were considered weak when they refused to intervene with the Socialists, and instead focussed on keeping them happy which suggests that they feared a Socialist backlash. Therefore, to say that it was solely the fear of Socialism that contributed to Mussolini's rise to power would be untrue. These other factors seem to make the fear of Socialism a much stronger factor and without them it would not have been so prominent.

EES 2017

Tavistock College has again entered a team of year 12 students into The Engineering Education Scheme (EES). The scheme links teams of students with Rittal CSM to work on a real engineering and technological problems that the company faces. This year the problem was that one of the company's customers was concerned about the amount of hot air that was leaking from computer servers. The team was given the brief to design an improved cable seal for server cabinets.

Selecting this year's team was the first challenge as there was a large field of applicants willing and ready to take on the six month task. Four months on the team members, Rebecca Banks, Joseph Carver and Steven Isaacs, have met with an engineer from Rittal each week and spent many happy hours developing ideas and deciding on their possible solutions.

In December the team spent three days in Plymouth University's engineering department further testing, developing and finally manufacturing the prototype cable seal. The final part of the project is to write a report, produce a display and present their findings to a panel of judges at the end of March. The team know that

last year Tavistock College won the competition in the South West of England so they have a lot to live up to, but are confident that they have produced something that Rittal and its customers will value and, hopefully, implement in their products.



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LAMDA Success

In late December 31 Year 7 to 11 students took prestigious London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art examinations and we are delighted to announce a 100% pass rate. Examinations were taken across a range of areas, Public Speaking, Acting, Mime and Speaking of Verse and Prose. Students have

to prepare and perform a selection of pieces, perform sight work which is given to them on the day and undertake an interview with the external examiner. Vanessa Mccarty (LAMDA teacher) said 'I am absolutely delighted for the students at Tavistock College! The pass rate reflects their excellent attitude and hard work. The exams demand much of the students and they really get to focus on how they communicate and present themselves. It's fantastic that the college supports and values these crucial life skills as they will be invaluable to them as they go on in life'. Several students from Tavistock College 6th Form gained not only their LAMDA qualification, but also UCAS points which will help them secure university places. Year 13 student Zach Woodward said 'Doing LAMDA is such an enjoyable experience, doing it has given me confidence in performance and communicating in different ways, these qualifications give me a real boost and the UCAS points are a great added bonus'. LAMDA sessions are offered via the Creative Arts faculty and open to any student- please see Mrs Pearson for further information.



Dance Event

Year 4 children in the Tavistock area have been learning about the joys of dance, thanks to an event run by OCRA and led by Tavistock College sixth form students.

A total of 298 pupils took part in a dance-a-thon on Monday, January 16 at King's Community Church and the Scout hut next door. The sessions were led in part by dance teacher Mrs Madeley, and ably assisted by dance specialists from Tavistock College's sixth form.

The college's transitions team also put in an appearance, bringing a branded water bottle for each child that took part.

Mhairi McCall of OCRA said: 'It was something we tried last year and it seemed a big success. The whole point of OCRA is to keep kids active, but not all kids like sport. 'Every single comment we've had has been positive and everyone has given very good feedback. It's all possible thanks to our great instructors.'

Mhairi expressed her thanks to everyone involved in making the event a success.

Meet the Tutor

Mrs S Shepherd

I have been teaching psychology here for 18 years and am fast becoming one of the longest serving teachers in the College! I attended this school myself and coming back made me feel like a student again. It was a very strange experience to work here after 26 years or so away as the College hadn't changed much and even smelt the same. A real sense of déjà vu! I trained as a nurse when I left school and worked in Exeter and Torbay for many years on a variety of wards. My favourites were surgical and A&E. However I became interested in psychology and, after doing an evening class to get my A level, I went off to University as a mature student. I loved it especially being around young people and sitting in the student union drinking hot chocolate with them and I also discovered a real love for learning. I think I would be an eternal student if I had enough money; my next degree would be archaeology or a PHD in clinical psychology! When it's results day and students are excited about taking their place at University I can get quite jealous. I have also had a research company in the past and have run many pieces of research in Tavistock including one at Tavistock College. I feel fortunate in my present post as I am still fascinated by psychology and I love teaching 6th form students – I find you all interesting, funny and (on the whole) hardworking. Many of my past students keep in touch and I love to hear about their successes at University and their careers. Away from College my favourite pastime is being a Granny – I love soft play, ball pools and Peppa Pig! When I am being more grown up I am an opera fan, enjoy eating out, trips away and DIY. If I could do anything I wanted I would be an opera singer and sing Verdi all over the world – unlikely as I can't sing in tune!



Diary Dates

9-10 Feb

Sports Tour

13-17 Half Term

22 Feb

Year 12 parent evening

23 Feb

Careers Fair at Tavistock College

24 Feb

University visit to Bath Spa

13-17 March

Year 12 work experience.

22 March

UCAS Fair in Exeter

Tavistock

COLLEGE