**SCHOOL 4**

Directive 1

T- They had to really enjoyed the session with the cartoonists from South Africa. Learning the techniques from looking left to right. Yeah, importance of information that was really useful for them, I think.

S- Because it shows how empty all the streets were around the world. Every time I went out there was no one there so it was like that.

F- Where were you during the lockdowns?

S- Germany.

F- Was that different to what other people were experiencing in other parts of the world?

S- So many countries had lockdowns so it was like all of us in lockdown, just kind of similar.

F- What were the rules like in Germany?

S- Well, you weren't about to go out if you didn’t have a purpose. So if you weren’t going shopping or as the doctor, you weren’t allowed to go out. It kind of was depending on the situation.

F-Were you allowed to go out to exercise?

S- No.

F- So that was different from the UK rules then?

S- Well if you have dogs. If you had a dog you go walk and I did.

S- Because during lockdown, this entire system was created to avoid spreading a disease. So you have ones making sure you wear your mask everywhere. So those that told you when you could go out with a friend you have to stay in the things you would use and get to make sure you and your family are safe or to avoid ending up in a hospital bed.

F- Did you find that confusing?

S- Well you read it as a story it kind of makes sense. It starts with the first person in the hospital bed, we have online school, you have Coronavirus, like affecting the world. Then you've got the these identified for them like as a scientist in their suits and then you've got the factories producing tissue paper and then you've got like deliveries to people getting takeout then you've got the money.

F-What part of your experience do you think is most represented here?

S- This bottom part with school. And this with the delivery.

F- Did you have a lot of takeout food?

S- Yeah.

F- And how was schooling at home for you?

S- It was really easy, possible the best school experience I’ve had because I only had to do school from like March to June and then summer and then we went back to school in September so I only was out of high school for about 3 months. I did a full school day from eight to two o'clock.

F- Did anyone else pick the online schooling?

S- Doing online classes was quite hard for me because I got distracted quite easily. Just trying to keep everything together with the books.

-muffled responses

F-Did you have to do exams in that time?

[all answer yes]

F- and how was that?

S- It ended up being alright because they don't like report it and you just keep going on. And they gave us support.

F- When you say support what kind of support did you get?

S- I think for me anything relating to my coursework. Like, I think in English

F- Was there any kind of support for returning for any type of mental health support or counselling or anything like that?

S- No [shaking heads]

S- No and I had online school for two years.

F- Can you tell us about this?

S-The right on [pointing to an image] one is really like how online school for me, because you can just hear everyone laughing in the class. And I'm like, oh haha. Because I was in Hong Kong, and there was never a lockdown. So it's not like, I felt isolated or anything, it’s just made me feel because all my friends were at school or just in different countries. So that's why I picked it. And then the other one is just how, I was. I just felt so distracted. Whenever I had online class, I would just go on my phone. And then yeah, my grades were going down. [laughs] That’s just how it felt.

F- You said two years. Is that because you couldn't get back here?

S- I could put them my parents didn't really want me to. Also because my flight kept on getting cancelled.

F- How was that uncertainty?

S- I didn't really mind because it was safer in Hong Kong. But it was just like, kind of sad to miss just two years of school just like that.

F- So you felt safer in Hong Kong than here? And why was that?

S- Because I think it's just a thing in Hong Kong that whenever you get sick, even before, everyone would just wear a mask and things and we didn't need like people to say ‘oh, you can’t’ because everyone followed the regulations like very strictly. Like for example, I go into restaurants and stuff. The cases were just a lot less and that's why we never needed a lockdown.

F- Do you feel like the populations in Hong Kong are more conscious of each other? Or more compliant? Why do you think people follow the rules.

S- Maybe the culture. We just all wear masks. Like, if you get like this simple cold, you always wear a mask. So I don't think anyone minded like people in the UK because a lot of people don't really like it, they really hate wearing masks here.

F- Have you been able to share that cultural sensibility with your friends since you've come back?

S- Oh, yeah, I think most of them are used to it.

F- Do you think we'll still have mask wearing?

S- In the UK, no. I don’t think they’ll continue to. But, I think, at least in Hong Kong, people are going to be wearing it for a few more years. Just because that's just how they are.

F- What about in the room here? Is this mandated? Or this is your choice?

S- It’s our choice.

F- It's your choice. And for those of you who are also wearing masks what makes you choose that?

S- To be safe, it’s just better to be safe.

S- I have a cold now, so I don’t want to spread it.

F- Do you feel unsafe when you're not wearing it?

S- Not exactly unsafe but more exposed. It does feel weird to go outside and not be wearing it.

S- I’m just reducing the risk of getting it.

F- Did anyone in the room get covid?

S- I don’t think I had it but I had one positive test and I literally went for another test after two days and I was negative.

F- And what about the testing? Does everyone have to do testing? S- Not anymore.

S- You don't really have to do that.

S- I'm pretty sure they handed out boxes. Yeah, so we could like do it right away and test.

F-Within the residence, residential school, has it not spread in there?

S- There was a lot of houses locked down so if one person became unwell. The whole house had to do online lessons while the day students were boarding houses were in the lessons. So it did impact quite a lot in that regard.

F-And did anyone have that experience in your house where you had to lockdown

[3x no]

S-the quarantine zone was next to my room.

S- I think that's also why people wear masks now because especially in boarding house, it's so easy to spread. Now it's fine because nobody in our house has COVID but before there were people with covid walking around to get to the shower.

F- When you say the quarantine zone What did that look like?

S- It's just like a few rooms the they set aside. We have an atrium so like this side the side of the wording house was like this square and there's like doors that separate it on the other side.

S- [ other student continues to explain the architecture] there's like a huge like hole on the top floor as well. Yeah, and the air is like circulating.

S-It’s a boarding school and it’s so small like there's literally nothing else they could do. So they did try their best in terms of keeping us separate.

F- Did you feel worried having a quarantine zone in your building and as your neighbours

S- Not really.

S- You just, like, accept it. Before we used to go like 10 close contact notifications but it's just because they're right next to you.

F- When you say close contact notifications tomorrow, what is that?

S- from the NHS

S- On the COVID app

S- It will tell you if someone's like been like five metres for more than five minuets. And then you have to do a PCR if you have that, but now what you don't need to.

F- So was a lot of the management of it through the app. Did everyone use the app?

S- I didn’t have the app but I’d get calls. I’d literally be in a session and get a call from an unknown number. And then she would call and leave messages. About contact.

F- And was that a bit unsettling?

S-No, because when I came from back in the summer, when I came from Nigeria to England, when they had that rule of day-two testing I wasn’t allowed to leave my house. They would call my house all the time, and they actually physically came. So by that point I was desensitised to the calls, I was like ‘okay’.

S- How did they know where you were?

S- Wow that's a very good question.

S- I always feel that the concern is this a genuine call?

S-Yeah, that's what I was thinking, always asking how do you know she was who said she was, from the NHS?

S- She was consistent because she called my phone as well and was the same lady.

[F turns to another student]

S- So I feel like the zombies represents lockdown like school because I felt really exhausted being behind a computer all day. It's just like not being able to go outside as much and just have fresh air. Then the other one on the right, I feel like it resembles how was kind of chaotic all the past years have been and sort of just being repetitive. Also, it's like family, I’ve been trying to balance family life. And that was a bit chaotic doing home schooling at the same time.

F- So did you get screen fatigue?

S- yeah, I felt very tired all the time.

F- And how long did you have online schooling.

S- At first it was spring all the way to the summer and we definitely had it next year then we had it in December for three months.

S- I just don't remember what happened in 2020?

F- You don't remember? Yeah. Why do you think that is?

S- Especially with remote work, every day was just the same. I would just a wake up I go to have lessons and I sleep- that’s it. There was like nothing memorable at all. And if you asked me what I did in the summer I don't even know when the summer was like I just don't ever remember there being a summer.

S- It took me a long time to remember that there was summer back then. [other students agree]. What as I doing in that block of three months, and then I was like ‘oh it was summer’.

[F- turns to another image and student]

S- While we were suffering from COVID natural world was doing better than they've ever had.

F- Did you notice any of that around where you were?

S- No, didn't have lockdown?

F- Where were you?

S- I was in Taiwan, and we never had lockdown. But we still like kind of stayed inside most of the time.

F- And in terms of the environment, was that something you were paying attention to virtually? How are you getting information about it? S- News, online. Seeing that there were more animals in cities. I remember seeing a new thing, one of the endangered species was able to have like, more population growth because of COVID.

F- What species was that? Do you know?

S- No.

F- Can you tell me about this other image?

S- Well, basically the time that we spend on lockdown, or doing online school was just kind of meaningless. It was very repetitive, everyday just the same routine.

F- And does anyone notice what some of the references are in this image?

S- prison.

F- So it's kind of metaphor about being locked down. Did you notice that when you pick this image?

S- Yeah.

F- you did? And so even though you weren’t in a lockdown, you still had that experience of being confined?

S- yeah, just because my parents wouldn’t let me go out. They thought it was quite dangerous to go out. But there was actually only 100-200 cases.

F- Why do you think they were so worried?

S- Cultural reasons. Because of the news and everything. They were worried in general and wouldn’t let me go out anyway.

F- Did you think that was a rational fear or an irrational fear?

S- I would say they don't have to be that worried but it's good to like it's good to have a level of awareness regarding the virus.

F- How many people in here felt like you had rational fears?

S- [raise hands]

F- Irrational fears? Did you find yourself like washing things from the shop for example?

S- My dad did, he had a cleaning station stocked with everything. And I was like, I don't need spray one shirt with 30 different sprays; I think I'll be fine. And then he would, put alcohol into the pipes next to the bathroom, because there was a news story on how like COVID could come up through the toilet.

F- Oh, really?

S- It was a bit much.

F- And was it fake news?

S- I don't understand how that works. But if science says so.

F- was it science, or was it just news?

S- I don’t know.

Politics and Power.

S- So this is the Doctor who discovered COVID was muted in China the facts of the pandemic was only revealed the situation was not under control. Kind of delayed how people could have contained.

S- I chose this one. I thought it was funny. (Ref image )

F- So did you think Donald Trump's response was a good one?

S- He just kind of pretended that it did exist. And then he got it and it still didn’t exist.

F- What about here in the UK? Did you trust the politicians?

S- [no head shakes]

S- I basically wanted the government but I couldn't find anything else that represents them. Okay. So, like in Germany, the power was the government, they have all the power over like lockdowns and rules and everything. And even though say like, ‘oh, we invite scientists conference, we have reasonable factors why we do this’. But then they decided what scientists they invited to share their properties. (Ref image )

S- So it's almost like putting a real symbol of America. And, I guess the contrast between him and then slingshotting him, almost as if he doesn't resemble America. I guess she's more powerful, she's reinforcing what we should do.

S- I chose this because it’s like how countries rushed to get the vaccine first, because between late 2020 or 2021, finding the vaccine basically wielded you political power? Because people were desperate for like that salvation of the vaccine or whatever country was first ruled them out would have control over how people perceive the vaccine opinions about it and basically, who was considered the new superpower. (Ref image

F- [explains origins of Black Friday]

S- that’s interesting because I think in 2020, where this news channel leads to cringe scientist who we're talking about bringing experimental vaccines to like test on in Africa and they’d use the people there to test out the vaccines.

S- So this is kind of like how it would be with the doctors struggling. And everyone thinks they have the power but it's really the government, I think the NHS was underfunded, and staff underpaid, and it’s really up to the government to fix that. So they don’t just have all the power.

Sketch and Reflect

T- I guess it's also thinking about the negative experiences you've had, and trying to convert those into positive experiences as well.

*Side discussion with teacher- It’s amazing how passionate they are about their experiences. I think two concerns had come in my discussions was how far can you take freedom of speech without it being offensive to other. And what the boundaries of freedom of speech are.*

S- I think covid is here to stay.

S- I think it will just be like a common cold.

S- its about travelling because usually I go to my family to different countries so it’s somewhere I can move without the policies. Rather than staying at home.

F- in your utopia future do we have COVID tests or COVID passports or just…

S- No, no covid. And no WWIII.

F- Do you feel like you're better able to filter news as a result of this? S- Yeah. But it was stressful looking at the news.

F-Why does it stress you?

S- because like there's so much, especially during the pandemic, like, so many hate crimes and stuff. You feel exposed. And like people think like, oh, it's new, but it's not. It's just that so many… like everyone started like showing it on these platforms. And there's always something happening.

F- And do you think there's also been efforts for solidarity even though there's been certain amounts of hate?

S- Not sure.

S- Sometimes but every time for us, we try to come together, we get criticised for everything we do. So then people are like ‘this is my opinion’, ‘this is my opinion’, and then you kind of don’t have room for an opinion and whether someone who deserves to be treated as a decent living creature.

F- Is there a way in which you're able to, at least in a school setting, see that shared humanity?

S- [silence]

F- So the things you talked about in the course around freedom of expression, fake news, do you talk about that kind of stuff in other classes?

S- No, No

T- Would you want to talk about it?

S- No,

S- no, I don't really like to talk about the news a lot, because it's just really stressful. I wish we were in terms of not necessarily solely agreeing with what we're always told.