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The Middle Earth



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COVER PAGE



Happy new year to all our readers. This year we will dedicate our cover page to fictional places that writers have created to place their literary works. This month of January we will be talking a little bit about the Middle Earth. If you have an awesome picture you think could be the cover of one of The ILE Post editions, send it to eherrera@utn.ac.cr. So far several readers have sent amazing pictures that we will be sharing with you soon. If you want to know what is happening in ILE, follow us in FACEBOOK.

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EDITORIAL

Teachers Do It All

by Eric Herrera (ILE Professor)



Teachers are the medium for the quality of life in every country because they help improve people's lives at some point. However, being a teacher is not easy. Times have changed and the role, responsibilities and motivation are very different to what they used to be.

People's Opinion

It is funny, but many people think a teacher's day at any school level is like the movies; therefore, a teacher may have bad days but only where s/he gets to know his/her 15 student class as it happens in *Dead Poets Society* or *Stand and Deliver*. First teachers' schedules are short. Second, class time is fixed, but the amount of work teachers do after class is amazing. Third, teachers have more vacation than many other people. Without taking into consideration the amount of time that a teacher needs to recover from a school year, people forget the time teachers spend in training and self studying in order to use new technological tools that teaching today requires, and the so many weekends teachers invest planning and checking during the school year.

Big Challenges For Old And New Teachers

Regardless of the specific subject an educator teaches, teachers should also have foundational knowledge in education. They should be familiar with different pedagogies and teaching methods. In addition, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), new policies, changes in curriculum, and the generational gap have turned teaching into a skillfully refined art. To get an idea about the kind of activity under which a teacher's work is carried out, here are some of the many roles the 21st century demands teachers to undertake: innovators, relationship builders, learning environment designers, curators, connectors, motivators, and technological learners. It is easy to see that teaching is not a normal job. The multidimensional expectations society puts on teachers makes people forget that to be effective in all these aspects teachers must be under a constant process of training and study, which, together with class work, brings with it high levels of stress, lack of time and quality life. Furthermore, schools seldom collaborate actively supplying teachers with everything

they need and opening spaces for teachers to express what their work environment is like.

Consequences Of These Changes

This growth in workload has increased stress levels among teachers, and it is leading to higher anxiety, physical health problems and depression. Furthermore, the fact that most teachers are overwhelmed with work makes comradeship and socialization among colleagues difficult to the point that while some teachers isolate themselves from the rest, some others sometimes complain about conflicts that arise in their interaction. A more serious consequence is that less qualified teachers are applying for teaching jobs to meet the demand, which may lead the country to face a reduction in its educational achievements.

Teachers' Feelings

There are several aspects people, institutions and government disregard about teachers. First of all, there is no recognition when they are doing a good job and no opportunities for professional growth, which makes them think and rethink what the value of their work is. In addition, authorities rarely take them into account when major measures that affect their work are taken, so in many cases these measures are not needed at all, or instead of helping them, they make their work more difficult.

In order to deal with this serious situation, it is extremely important for school systems to help teachers reconnect with the reasons why they went into education. Schools need good teachers and most importantly, students need good teachers. A teacher needs to feel qualified to teach, have enough time to prepare for their classes, and feel there are opportunities to be involved in team building and problem solving. On the other hand, when the conditions for teaching are bad, the conditions of learning tend to be worse. No matter the occupation, job satisfaction is known to have an impact on employee well-being, productivity. The fact that everybody knows the aspects previously mentioned, but nobody does anything to solve at least some of them leads teachers to a state of burnout and discouragement.



Paz y Flora Botanical Garden

UTN San Carlos Ecocampus, located in La Abundancia de Ciudad Quesada, includes a botanical garden. This initiative came from biology students and professor of UTN San Carlos campus to contribute with the conservation of native flora in the North Zone. These people dedicated long hours to prepare the ground, open trails, fence the area, and plant and label species. The first of the botanical garden phase basically includes medicinal plants donated by students.

A botanical garden helps address the issues relevant to restoring ecosystems. A botanical garden provides knowledge and expertise in plant taxonomy, horticulture, biodiversity inventory, conservation biology, restoration ecology and ethnobotany – all key elements



for achieving successful restoration.

In the near future, the botanical garden will have fruit trees, topiary trees, and a butterfly farm.

Agreement Between UTN And Orotina



On December 20th, UTN Chancellor Marcelo Prieto and Orotina City Hall Mayor Margoth Montero signed a cooperation agreement between these institutions.

The general objective of this agreement is the establishment of a general framework to carry out different activities of management, research, education, and extension together. Some of the specific areas in which coming projects will be developed include: municipal management, municipal officials training, implementation of programs of common competency areas, exchange of services, and internship programs for students. The agreement is for ten years, and shall be renewable. Strategic alliances allow us to get closer to the community, said Mayor Margoth Montero. Likewise, UTN Chancellor Marcelo Prieto expressed that great importance of these kinds of agreements, especially if we take into account the great development Orotina will soon experience with the construction of the new airport.

CONARE' s Position On Inter-American Court of Human Rights' Advisory Opinion



On January 19th, the National Council of University Rectors (CONARE) expressed its opinion about Inter-American Court of Human Rights' advisory Opinion.

In a democratic and pluralistic society, a harmonious coexistence demands both serious efforts to respect the differences among the groups and people that conform it, and a profound recognition and respect for the cultural and religious diversity traditions and aspirations. Our domestic institutions, rule of law and legal norms are the basis for democratic relations and the framework by which human rights are ensured.

In this context, the implementation of the recent Inter-American Court of Human Rights' advisory opinion OC-24/17 represents an individual and collective effort, conscious and deliberate, for insuring peaceful coexistence of multiple and diverse values, life and beliefs. Consideration for the rights of others is always a double edge way because it means all people accept with reciprocity characteristics our identities, the values in which we believe and the inviolable nature of every person's rights and human dignity.

We urge all social groups and people in general to undertake in full awareness the duty that implies the exercise of this advisory opinion. There is, therefore, a greater need today than ever before for Costa Rica to commit

around democratic values, respect, and the recognition and fulfilment of the human rights and peace.

Background

In May 2016, the Costa Rican government had asked the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to give its opinion on whether it had an obligation to extend property rights to same-sex couples, and also whether it should allow transgender people to change their name on their identity documents.

In response to this motion, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has ruled that same-sex marriages should be recognized. The judges said that governments "must recognize and guarantee all the rights that are derived from a family bond between people of the same sex." They also said that it was inadmissible and discriminatory for a separate legal provision to be established just for same-sex marriages. The judges demanded that governments "guarantee access to all existing forms of domestic legal systems, including the right to marriage, in order to ensure the protection of all the rights of families formed by same-sex couples without discrimination."



US: Climate Disasters Set New Record At \$306bn In 2017

Major climate disasters in the United States smashed previous records in 2017 at a cost of \$306bn while killing hundreds of people.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said on Monday, January 8th the destructive climate events came during the third-warmest year on record for the US.

At least 362 people died during the climate calamities that included three major hurricanes: Harvey, Maria, and Irma, NOAA said.

"During 2017, the US experienced a historic year of weather and climate disasters," the weather agency said.

"The cumulative damage of these 16 US events during 2017 is \$306.2bn, which shatters the previous US annual record cost of \$214.8bn established in 2005."

Losses from Hurricane Harvey that pounded Texas exceeded \$125bn. Harvey ranks second only to Hurricane Katrina, which at \$160bn is the costliest storm in the 38 years



that records have been kept.

Meanwhile, Hurricanes Maria and Irma had total damages of \$90bn and \$50bn, respectively.

Deadly wildfires in nine western US states caused damage totaling \$18bn - triple the previous record, the agency said.

Other costly climate events included severe storms, drought, and floods.

Scientists from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Information said 2017 was the third-warmest in the United States in 123 years since such data was recorded.

It noted the five warmest years for

the United States all have occurred since 2006.

NOAA did not link human-induced climate change to the major disasters that struck last year. However, many scientists argue the burning of greenhouse gases by humans has played a significant role in the increasing frequency and intensity of climate catastrophes.

A recent report - The Economic Case for Climate Action in the United States - noted the number of extreme weather events has surged in recent decades with 21 in the 1980s, 38 in the '90s, and 92 between 2006-16 - more than a two-fold increase.

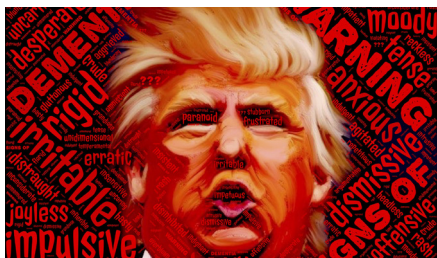
"Economic losses from extreme weather events are rapidly escalating," the study said.

"Despite the escalating economic losses and costs on lives, health, homes, businesses, and livelihoods, the United States continues to primarily rely on fossil fuels to produce energy - the root cause of climate change."



Information and image taken from: <http://mwcnews.net/news/americas/69890-us-climate-disasters.html> Image taken from: <https://pixabay.com>

Mine Is Bigger: Trump Dares Kim Jong-Un To Compare Nuclear Buttons



President Donald Trump has fired off a tweet against North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un, claiming to have a "more powerful" nuclear weapons launcher.

Trump's tweet, amid a barrage of angry posts, is a belated response to Kim's New Year speech, in which the North Korean leader claimed, "The entire United States is within range of our nuclear weapons, and a nuclear button is always on my desk."

"This is reality, not a threat," Kim

said, adding that "these weapons will be used only if our security is threatened."

Trump tweeted in return that not only is his own "Nuclear Button" bigger and better, but it actually works. He sarcastically pleaded Tuesday night for "someone from his depleted and food starved regime" to "please inform" Kim of those claims. In Kim's New Year message, he also offered some hope of a thaw in relations with South Korea, saying he is open to talks over the upcoming 2018 Winter Olympics. Late last month, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved more sanctions on North Korea, which the hermit kingdom condemned as an "act of war." The sanctions were approved in retaliation to an intercontinental ballistic

missile (ICBM) launch, which North Korea has since commemorated with a stamp showing Kim overlooking the defiant move.

Tensions have been building on the Korean peninsula, spurred on by combative US rhetoric. The White House has vowed to put "maximum pressure on Pyongyang," with America's UN envoy Nikki Haley saying earlier the North would be "utterly destroyed" should there be war. Adding fuel to the fire, the US and South Korea have persisted with their joint military drills on the North's borders.

Moscow, while also condemning North Korea's nuclear and missile activities, has been urging moderation and mutual concessions. Russia's call for calm has been blatantly snubbed by Washington.



Information and image taken: https://www.blacklistednews.com/'Mine_is_bigger'_3A_Trump_dares_Kim_Jong-un_to_compare_nuclear_buttons/62598/0/38/38/Y/M.html

Image taken from: <https://pixabay.com>

Asgardia: Space Kingdom

by Dave Mosher (Futurism)

The self-declared Space Kingdom of **Asgardia**, a nation founded by a Russian aerospace engineer and billionaire, just deployed its first satellite into orbit.

Asgardia is currently a non-profit non-governmental organization based out of Vienna, Austria. But its leaders want to eventually build a kingdom in space that **mines asteroids and defends planet Earth from meteorites, space debris, and other threats.**

“Asgardia will be a space nation that is a trans-ethnic, trans-national, trans-religious, ethical, peaceful entity trying to settle the humanity in space,”

Ram Jakhu, the director of McGill University's Institute of Air and Space Law and one of Asgardia's founding members, said during a June press briefing.

Its new satellite is called Asgardia-1. The blocky object is technically called **a nano satellite** or “nanosat,” weighs about as much as a newborn baby, and is roughly the size of a loaf of bread.

Asgardia's tiny spacecraft contains a 512-gigabyte hard drive loaded with “the nation's constitution, national symbols, and the personally selected data of the Asgardian citizenship,” according to a statement emailed to Business Insider.

“Asgardia-1 has now been deployed in a low earth orbit,” the statement said, **“making Asgardia the first nation to have all of its territory in space.”**

But at least one space law researcher says that, legally speaking, the feat may be “much ado about nothing.”

The plan to launch the satellite was announced during a press briefing and June 13, and the effort was funded by Asgardia co-founder Igor Ashurbeyli, a Russian aerospace engineer and billionaire.

Asgardia worked with several companies to make its mission possible. NearSpace Launch helped design and build Asgardia-1, and aerospace company Orbital ATK launched the nanosat inside a Cygnus spacecraft bound for the International Space Station.

Asgardia-1 won't do much more than orbit Earth from about 280 miles above the planet, though it does store data submitted by Asgardian citizens. There are currently about 154,000 citizens of Asgardia, and **the first 100,000 to register were promised 500 kilobytes of space each for upload on the hard drive (500 kb is less than the data used**



by one frame of a typical DVD video).

All the files Asgardians uploaded are visible to fellow citizens, and the platform is accepting more for future spacecraft. So far, nearly 14,000 Asgardians have contributed files, including poems, personal letters, songs, and photos of weddings, cats, dogs, birds, aliens, and even President Donald Trump shaking the hand of India's prime minister, Narendra Modi.

Asgardia-1 will slowly fall toward Earth over the next five years and eventually burn up in the planet's atmosphere. But Ashurbeyli said in June that the data uploaded will be copied to future Asgardian satellites, as well as spacecraft that go to “the moon and anywhere in the universe ... Asgardia will be.”

With the satellite successfully deployed into space, the nation will now turn to **its parliamentary elections** that run through March 2018, according to Asgardia's statement.

“Anyone who is 18 or older, and has accepted the Constitution of Asgardia, will automatically be assigned to an electoral district which represents their spoken language,” the statement said.

Asgardia has enough people who've applied for citizenship to qualify for consideration as a state by the United Nations, since the minimum is 100,000. But it's unlikely the world will acknowledge Asgardia as a sovereign nation, even now that it has claimed territory in space.

For now, Asgardia's proclaimed territory — i.e. Asgardia-1 — is actually bound by US law, since American companies launched it from US soil aboard a primarily NASA-funded mission.

But Asgardia's founders eventually want to launch a space station and have people live there permanently.

Intermittent Fasting And Nutritional Ketosis

By Andrés Bejarano (ILE Professor)



All my life, I have struggled with my weight, and this had, for some time, physical and psychological repercussions. I guess you can say I was pretty much bullied and as a result of that, I grew up feeling insecure about my physical appearance all throughout grade school and part of high school. In addition to that, I remember how terrorized I was every time my Physical Education teacher told us that the final exam was going to be based on the Cooper Test Training which was meant to evaluate our aerobic endurance. This was undoubtedly an unfair tool for evaluation because those of us who could not keep up with the standards of such a test, ended up having a bad grade in PE and this also affected the overall average when putting together all the grades I had in the different subjects. For many years, I did all I could to lose some weight. I tried a bunch of diets but failed at every single one of them. I also tried exercise programs and turned to a few doctors but nothing seemed to work. I remember this one time when my brother, who was also having weight issues, told me about a doctor who had this “revolutionary diet”. This so called dietary program, included some drastic measures such as taking a pill that would suppress your

appetite so that you would be able to not have breakfast and lunch. At about 6 or 7 pm you were allowed to have the only meal of the day. It would be important though to clarify that nowadays some people practice the one meal eating style with all the appropriate changes in the diet but certainly without recurring to the use of psychotropics for suppressing your appetite.

It was not until the second half of the year 2017 that I discovered the wonders that a Ketogenic Diet together with intermittent fasting can do for your body and your overall health.

First of all, I would like to make it clear that none of the things that I will mention here are intended to be prescribed as the ultimate solution for those who wish to fix an obesity problem.

This is mostly because every human being is different and each body reacts differently to the different dietary approaches. However, these two eating approaches are proving to be working for many people around the world. There are even channels on You Tube from various parts of the world which content are either solely or mostly about the Ketogenic Diet and Intermittent Fasting.

Let’s begin by briefly explaining what the ketogenic diet is and a few of its benefits. This diet consist of obtaining your nutrients from an approximate 5 % carbohydrates, 25 % protein and 70 % healthy fats such as those found in avocados,

nuts, coconut oil, dark chocolate, cheese, grass fed butter and to a lesser extent, meats.

Those of you familiar with the Atkins or the Paleo Diets might relate to this diet, except that the Ketogenic diet leans more towards the healthy fats. The overall principle that supports this dietary style is that the body has two ways to obtain its energy. One is from glucose which is regulated by the insulin present in the body. And the second one is from dietary fats as well as the fats present in some cells in your body. To avoid getting into too many technical details, what the ketogenic diet does is that it drives the body into using fat as its primary source of energy which results in weight loss, and a more steady flow of energy throughout the day along with several other health benefits. To reach a state of Ketosis and stay on it you need to make sure you respect those percentages mentioned above and to protect your health you need to do other adjustments like eating food with a high nutritional value and drinking plenty of water, including some warm lemon water in the morning to help your liver with the clean up processes.

This is indeed food for thought, and I would encourage you to do some further research regarding the benefits of the Ketogenic diet which by the way has also been used to successfully treat cases of epilepsy in children.

Now onto the subject of intermittent fasting and to begin with my major points, I would like to bring up a quote that was found in a Egyptian pyramid inscription, 3800 B.C that says: **“Humans live on one-quarter of what they eat; on the other three-quarters lives their doctor.”**

It goes without saying that modern times is, in many parts of the word ,characterized by an excessive consumption of food and that most of it is of the lowest quality. Processed foods with lots of sugar and harmful fats are at your disposal on a daily basis.

Nevertheless, the concept of eating very healthy foods but within a time window of your

day is also starting to gain acceptance in the world. And this is basically what Intermittent Fasting is all about. The general idea is to go thorough periods of 16 or 18 hours without eating and then eating high nutrient foods within a period of 8 or 6 hours. These eating styles also promote Ketosis and therefore weight loss but that is just one of the many benefits of it.

It promotes cell restoration and rejuvenation as well as higher levels of energy among others. This too is a topic that although it has been promoted for thousands of years and encouraged by some of the major spiritual leaders in history, you

need to explore it in more detail before drawing your own conclusions.

As far as I am concerned, I have never been better. My medical tests back me up and I am planning to continue monitoring my progress. I feel like I can eat the world, no pun intended, but there is no doubt these matters need to be taken with a grain of salt. That’s why you need to try it for yourself but considering all the variables and asking your doctor before you do anything radical. Just remember that some doctors are way too old school and these ideas may not click with what they have learned.



Things A Student Wishes Their Teachers Understood

By Verónica Oguilve (ILE Professor)



How long has it been since you were a full time student? 10 years? 20 years? I bet that you might have forgotten what it is like and what this implies. I dare to say that school dynamics have not changed much in Costa Rica. Personally, the issues I endured as a student are still present to this day. I recently had the chance to sit again in a classroom with students who were the same age of the students I teach. But this time, I was one of them, which allowed me to see things from their perspective. Most teachers claim that to have changed from the old teaching-learning paradigm to one in which the teacher's role is to facilitate learning.

Therefore, their goal should be to guide the process, provide the tools and create the conditions to help students develop their competences. Does this fully happen in real life? Do we do we really support their needs? Are we really facilitating? I created a space for students to express themselves and this is what they wanted to tell us. So, let us hear some student voices:

Things a Student Wishes Their Teachers Understood



Jorge: “I wish my professors understood that, even though they each think their class is the most important and should be prioritized, I have a bunch of classes and a bunch of work. Sometimes I have to make a decision on what class falls to the wayside, and what class is most important for my future. It's not because I'm a lazy student!”



Sergio: “I wish my professors understood that that there are different ways people learn. None of my teachers understood I learn and remember things best when they're hands on. Yet, all my teachers would just have slideshows and the groups follow along.

There's auditory, tactile (hands on), and visual. There's a way for almost everyone and not everyone learns the same as the student next to them”



Ana: “I wish my professors understood that that students who might seem to be progressing slower than everyone else might have a learning disability that they don't wish to disclose. That for some students with troubles at home, school is the only safe haven they have. Your classroom can be at home to them more than their own house can, sometimes. Being human and vulnerable is a good thing. It makes you more relatable, and more approachable, too”



Mary: “I wish my professors understood that stuff really does happen, and I’m not just making an excuse to get a deadline extension. I’m really tough on myself with school work, and I do not my best to not miss any. But sometimes, yes, I do forget it at home, forget it exists, or literally run out of time to do it during my all-nighter. Yes, I’m about to graduate, but I’m still a kid and we’re all still human—there’s no need to be entirely unforgiving. If it happens every day without extenuating circumstances, that’s one thing. But once every couple of months? Come on!”



Marco: “I wish my professors understood that this is not my only class! I have lots of other stuff to do, so don’t take up half of my time with homework and projects”



Maria: “I wish our professors would be fair when grading our assignments. This is not a Miss Congeniality contest; it is about learning. If I have achieved the objectives, I should get a good grade. Points might not mean anything to you, but for us, it could mean losing our scholarships”



Sarah: “I wish my professors understood that we use our cell phones in class to look for relevant information related to the lesson, not just to ‘waste our time texting’. Also, that this is a new era and they should use technology meaningfully.



Jaime: “I wish my professors understood that, often times, your passion for the subject you teach is contagious, and so is the lack thereof. Most importantly, your work is thankless, but many of us still deeply admire and appreciate you for what you do”

To sum up, dear teachers, keep your eyes and ears open and listen to what students have to say. Remember that our main goal is support student's learning and help them succeed.

21st Century Skills

by The Glossary of Education Reform

The term 21st century skills refers to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed—by educators, school reformers, college professors, employers, and others—to be critically important to success in today’s world, particularly in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces. Generally speaking, 21st century skills can be applied in all academic subject areas, and in all educational, career, and civic settings throughout a student’s life.

While the specific skills deemed to be “21st century skills” may be defined, categorized, and determined differently from person to person, place to place, or school to school, the term does reflect a general—if somewhat loose and shifting—consensus. The following list provides a brief illustrative overview of the knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits commonly associated with 21st century skills:

- Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information
- Research skills and practices, interrogative questioning
- Creativity, artistry, curiosity, imagination, innovation, personal expression
- Perseverance, self-direction, planning, self-discipline, adaptability, initiative
- Oral and written communication, public speaking and presenting, listening
- Leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, facility in using virtual workspaces
- Information and communication technology (ICT) literacy, media and internet literacy, data interpretation and analysis, computer programming
- Civic, ethical, and social-justice literacy
- Economic and financial literacy, entrepreneurialism
- Global awareness, multicultural literacy, humanitarianism
- Scientific literacy and reasoning, the scientific method

- Environmental and conservation literacy, ecosystems understanding
- Health and wellness literacy, including nutrition, diet, exercise, and public health and safety

Debate

While there is broad agreement that today’s students need different skills than were perhaps taught to previous generations, and that cross-disciplinary skills such as writing, critical thinking, self-initiative, group collaboration, and technological literacy are essential to success in higher education, modern workplaces, and adult life, there is still a great deal of debate about 21st century skills—from what skills are most important to how such skills should be taught to their appropriate role in public education. Given that there is no clear consensus on what skills specifically constitute “21st century skills,” the concept tends to be interpreted and applied in different ways from state to state or school to school, which can lead to ambiguity, confusion, and inconsistency.

In Favor

The following list provides a few additional examples of representative arguments that may be made in support of teaching 21st century skills:

a) In today’s world, information and knowledge are increasing at such an astronomical rate that no one can learn everything about every subject, what may appear true today could be proven to be false tomorrow, and the jobs that students will get after they graduate may not yet exist. For this reason, students need to be taught how to process, parse, and use information, and they need adaptable skills they can apply in all areas of life—just teaching them ideas and facts, without teaching them how to use them in real-life settings, is no longer enough.

b) Schools need to adapt and develop new ways of teaching and learning that reflect a changing world. The purpose of school should be to prepare students for success after graduation, and there-

ore schools need to prioritize the knowledge and skills that will be in the greatest demand, such as those skills deemed to be most important by college professors and employers. Only teaching students to perform well in school or on a test is no longer sufficient.

c) Given the widespread availability of information today, students no longer need teachers to lecture to them on the causes of the Civil War, for example, because that information is readily available—and often in more engaging formats that a typical classroom lecture. For this reason, educators should use in-school time to teach students how to find, interpret, and use information, rather than using most or all of the time to present information.

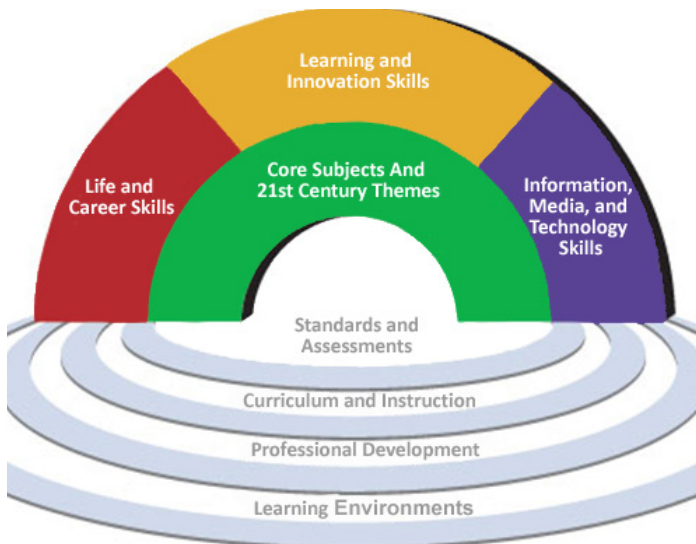


Figure 1 - P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning

Against

The following list provides a few examples of representative arguments that may be made against the concept of 21st century skills:

a) Public schools and teachers have always taught, and will continue to teach, cross-disciplinary skills—they just never gave it a label. The debate over “content vs. skills” is not new—educators have been talking about and wrestling with these issues for a century—which makes the term “21st century skills” somewhat misleading and inaccurate.

b) Focusing too much on cross-disciplinary skills could water-down academic courses, and students may not get “the basics.” The more time teachers spend on skill-related instruction, the less time they will have for content-based instruction. And if schools privilege cross-disciplinary skills over content knowledge, students may be denied opportunities because they are insufficiently knowledgeable. Students need a broad knowledge base, which they won’t receive if teachers focus too much on skill-related instruction or “learning how to learn.”

c) Cross-disciplinary skills are extremely difficult to assess reliably and consistently. There are no formal tests for 21st century skills, so the public won’t know how well schools are doing in teaching these skills.



The UTN community includes professors, administrative staff and students. Each individual has something to say about everything. In this section, we give the university community the opportunity to express what they feel about different school, country and world issues that in one or another way affect or impact our lives, feelings and opinions. This month we asked students:

What is your opinion of politics? Are you going to vote?

Politicians have a big and crucial responsibility. Costa Ricans have been facing a lot of corruption which has made people distrust politicians. I am going to vote for the first time in February 2018, and I hope my vote can make a difference.

Ana Yaney Sequira

I believe in the democracy of Costa Rica; however, the last events have brought scandals, and corruption is now what most people associate politicians with. I am going to vote because it is a right and duty I have.

Brayan Madrigal

I don't know much about politics because I don't pay much attention; however, everybody knows they usually lie. Honestly, I am not sure if I am going to vote.

Nicole Madrigal

Politicians in Costa Rica are seriously bad; they have shown that stealing is what they want. I am going to vote because if I don't do it, there is more chance for the worst one to win.

Paula Vargas

I believe politicians are dishonest people who want the best only for themselves. I am going to vote next February because I think the change is in us; we have the opportunity to cause a change in the way our country is heading.

Maciél Alvarado

Politicians basically take advantage of their positions in the government for their own benefit. So far I have not known about a good politician to support. I am going to vote, but just because it is my responsibility as a Costa Rican.

Daniela Segura

I think most just pretend when they are asking for votes, but they do not pay attention to their promises once they are elected. People are tired of listening to fake promises and messages. I will vote, but not because I want to do it, I will vote because I want to avoid abstention.

Donald Barrantes

There is a lack of honest politicians in Costa Rica. A few people really want to work for the benefit of the country. I am not sure if I am going to vote in February. I need to think carefully to see if there is a candidate whose intentions do not look greedy.

Josseth Chavarria



The Months

By Jazmin Rojas and Daniela Segura

January brings a new year,
And in my eyes you will see some tears.

February brings love and a rose,
Which are beautifully decorated with red bows.

In March, people happily walk around the city
Because the weather is really pretty.

During April we celebrate Holly Week
As we go to church to listen to the preacher speak.

In May, it starts to rain,
And the homeless people feel more pain.

On the third Sunday of June,
We celebrate our fathers under the moon.

In July, it is raining cats and dogs,
And you can hear around there some frogs.

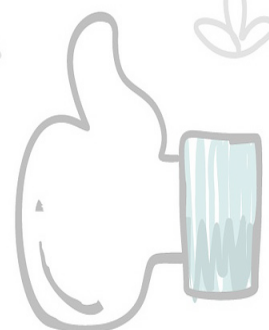
In August, we celebrate Mother's Day
And that is why we thank God and pray.

We have some free time in September,
Which It gives us chance to remember.

In October Christopher Columbus came
Since then we are not the same.

November feels almost like Christmas night,
We enjoy watching decorations and all the lights.

December brings the joy,
Of getting together with family and friend to enjoy.



UWC Visit

By María José Solano (ILE Student)

What I learned about UWC Costa Rica is the importance of having a great institution like this in our country. Their mission is to make education a force to unite people, no matter their skin color, religion or culture. They want to make young people the leaders of tomorrow, people who love peace, people with open minds and open hearts, people who care about others, people who have empathy and share a global perspective of a sustainable development.

In a world that has suffered the beating of hate, wars, injustice, hunger, environmental pollution, indifference, it is almost a necessity to change the way people think and how they act. I couldn't find anything wrong about this "movement of peace". The best part of everything is that visiting this place, you realize there are still some people who have paused to think about the power of respecting and loving everyone, no matter where they come from. There are teenagers who are strong and young enough to change their minds and build a better world together, and they're doing this through education. As Mahatma Gandhi said "Real education consists in drawing the best out of yourself."

UWC Visit

By Mariano Chaves (ILE Student)

The United World College is an institution that offers an international bachelors program. Many young people from other countries attend this school to reach their dreams and goals. Some ILE students had the opportunity to visit this college and learned about different topics concerning the world. Besides, they got the chance to see those problems from a different perspective. Students from many distinct backgrounds, beliefs, and religions gathered in order to debate and discuss topics such as ISIS, world conflicts, human rights, and the environment. This activity is known as the MUN (Model of the United Nations). Its purpose is to help teens to develop communication skills and open mindedness. Those conferences stage controversial topics, and it is quite interesting to see how each participant stands up for their ideals and morals. They talk about the problems the world is facing and, they try to find a solution to those dilemmas.

It is a very interesting activity! I hope someday we get to organize our own MUN at the UTN.

UWC Visit

By Michelle Miranda (ILE Student)

I only had the opportunity to be in two debates. One was about human rights that people have in different nations, and the second was about what is happening in Venezuela and how other countries would help this country, but the most important part of these activities was how these young people learned to debate and propose different solutions as they developed their knowledge about these important issues. Beyond that, I like the idea of knowing that there is a school like United World College in our country where teenagers come from different nations not only to learn academically, but also learn to live with each other. Besides, I think it is a great opportunity because each of these people have something to teach, and it is extremely important to learn how to respect, value and raise awareness to the fact that no one is superior to others and strengthen the link between different cultures.

His Kindness

By Ana Yancy Sequeira

When I hear the sound that the birds sing today
I can feel the love that you have for the Earth.
When I see the sun shining every day
I can have in mind that you aren't away.

The sunshine is wearing a beautiful dress which
Always has flowers with powerful shapes.
Today in the morning I could woke up, and
I is something I cannot describe.

Softball Game

By Jose Alfaro

The softball game has begun.
Ready or not the annoying rebels are out.
All their hopes soon will be gone
Because before Friday, the job will be done.

Everyday has become a bloody war
To show who's the one above all.
Until one team demonstrates who's winning the award
Our willingness will keep batting the ball.

The sun is rising again.
Teams are coming together.
Everyone wants to win
After all the effort in the gym.

Rastafarianism

Rastafarianism is a 20th century phenomenon originating from the shanty towns of Kingston, Jamaica, and spreading among the African (and non-african) diaspora on the wings of the international music industry and the ganja trade routes. The Rastafarian movement began with the teachings of Marcus Garvey who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in the 1920's. He advocated a "back to Africa" consciousness, awakening black pride and denouncing the British colonialism that made blacks feel ashamed of their African heritage. "Look to Africa", said Marcus Garvey in 1929 in his last address to the UNIA, in Jamaica, "where a king would be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near." When on on November 2nd of the following year Ras Tafari, was crowned emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia and assumed his name meaning "the power of the Holy Trinity". it seemed like the prophecy was fulfilled. Haile Selassie claimed to be a direct descendant of King David, the 225th ruler in an unbroken line of Ethiopian Kings from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. He took great pride in being black and wanted to regain the black heritage that was lost by loosing faith and straying from the holy ways. He was also, mind you, considered a ruthless dictator, by some of the neighbouring african countries and was oposed by the Eritreans who were fighting for their freedom. He did however allow his subjects to draw up a constitution, established a parliamentary and judiciary syystem, abolished slavery, and revised the constitution. In 1974 following worsening political and economic conditions he was deposed by the unsavory Marxist military dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam, later toppled in turn in 1991

The prime basic belief of the Ras-

tafarians is that Haile Selassie is the living God for the black race; the avatar of the present day. Rastas believe that Selassie was the Jesus that Christianity speaks of. He has been called many names including King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah - all of which are taken from the book of Revelations. Ironically, Selassie was never a Rastafarian himself, and no one is really sure what he thought of his following.

When Haile Selassie died in 1975, as is so often the case with messianic religions, there was a tremendous crisis of faith. It was at first believed to be a trick of the white media to try and bring their faith down, because true Rastas are immortal. To compensate for his death they believe that his atoms spread through out the world and became part of new babies, therefore, his life is never ending.

Rastafarians consider themselves to be the ancient Hebrews who were exiled in Babylon. The Rastafarian name for God is Jah. Ethiopia specifically, African in general, is considered the Rastas' heaven on earth. There is no afterlife or hell as Christianity believes. Babylon is the Rastafarian term for the white man's world, as the present day Babylon of greed and dishonesty. The Bible is considered a sacred text, apart from those sections that have been written and changed by Babylon. Also of sacramental significance is ganja, or marijuana, the sacred herb, reference to which can be found in Genesis 1:12. Many Rastas outlaw the combing or cutting of the hair, citing Leviticus 21:15: The hair is worn in long, knots, called dreadlocks, after the image of the lion of Judah.



Rastafarianism had a profound influence on reggae music, which has now become synomomous with the movement and is its chief medium of communication with Blacks around the world. in turn reggae became a chief avenue of Rastafarian self-expression. Reggae artists such as Bob Marley - who became a prophet of Rastafarianism in 1975 - and others like Peter Tosh, Burning Spear, Toot and the Maytlas, Big Youth, Inner Circle and Third World, were responsible for the phenomenal growth of the religion.

The Rasta movement has been very succesful in the Caribbean. Six out of ten Jamaicans are believed to be Rastafarians or Rastafarian sympathizers. It also spread quickly in Barbados and was hugely attractive to the local black youths, many of whom saw it as an extension of their adolescent rebellion from school and parental authority. The period of the most phenomenal growth for the Rastafarian Movement has been from 1975 on. As of 1988 the total following was believed to be around 700,000 worldwide, obviously it would be more now.

Rocky Mountain National



Rocky Mountain National Park in **northern Colorado** was USA's tenth national park, a status it achieved in 1905. The park is approximately 40 kilometres from north to south and 32 kilometres east to west and covers a particularly wild and scenic part of the Colorado Rockies. Much of the area is 3,600 metres above sea level and here the landscape resembles the arctic tundra. Main access is via Estes Park on the eastern side and the smaller Grand Lake on the west. These are the only towns bordering the region and both offer a good choice of accommodation.



Sights and Activities

Hiking

Hiking is one of the main activities here with almost endless possibilities for routes, the best known is perhaps the ascent of the park's highest mountain Longs Peak. At 4,345 metres, Longs is a major summit of the Rockies and the normal route via the Keyhole is classified as non technical when ice free - it's still a tough scramble though so if you're inexperienced try an easier

trail. From the same starting point of Bear Lake, the Flattop Mountain Trail leads off into the mountains with possibilities to cross the Rockies to the Grand Lake side, while trails lead up to magnificent high mountain lakes and small glaciers. Further north the Lawn Lake Trail heads off into the pristine wilderness of the Mummy Range topped by Hagues Peak. These are just a few opportunities.

For the less energetic, the Trail Ridge Road crosses the Rockies' main ridge reaching an altitude of 3,713 metres making it North America's highest through-route road pass. This is a fascinating drive between Estes Park and Grand Lake with opportunities for short walks at stops on the way. The Alpine Visitor Centre near the road summit has wonderful views of the surrounding mountains including the remote Ypsilon Mountain in the Mummy Range and the mysteriously named jagged peaks of the Never Summer Range. All the park's visitor centres offer excellent information on the area.

Look out for the wildlife too. Elk can be seen at many locations while if you're lucky you'll spot a moose. Black bears and mountain lions do live in the park too but they're pretty secretive.

In winter the whole area is invariably snow covered and provides opportunities for cross country skiing and snow shoeing. Bear in mind that there are not the ski lifts like Aspen or Breckenridge. Trail Ridge Road is generally closed in the winter

months which here is usually November to May or even June.

Opening Hours

The park is open year-round, but some parts and roads might not be open outside of the summer season.

Cost

Entry fees for the park are \$20 for a car and \$10 if you're on foot or cycling. These are each for a pass valid for seven days. In addition, there is a \$40 pass available that allows entry into Rocky Mountain National Park for one year. A National Park Pass costs \$80 a year so if you are planning to visit quite a few parks, this might be better value.



Sleep

Accommodation is limited to campgrounds within the national park and an overnight permit is required if you plan to camp in the wild. Estes Park has the largest choice of hotels and it is here most people visit from. Over the mountains the charming Grand Lake with its wooden houses and boardwalks also has some accommodation.



The Middle Earth



Tolkien's middle-earth is a fictional fantasy world invented by J. R. R. Tolkien. Several of his books take place there, such as *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. It is supposed to be a long gone mythological time of our earth.

Although Middle-earth is only one continent in Tolkien's world, it is often used for the whole fictional world and all stories Tolkien invented for it. Tolkien created and worked on Middle-earth through most of his life, and it is this creation for which he is most famous.

Middle-earth has its own geography, several different species and peoples (elves, dwarves, humans, hobbits), their languages, and a history that spans thousands of years. The stories of Middle-earth are also a kind of 'artificial myth'. "Middle-earth" is called Endor (or Endóre) and Ennor in the fictional Elvish languages Quenya and Sindarin.

The oldest people of Middle-earth are the immortal Elves. Second were the Dwarves. After them came mortal Men. In the Third Age, there appeared another people, the Hobbits. There are also the tree-like Ents.

The history of the Middle-earth

world is thousands of years long. Sometimes, when big historical events happen, a new Age is begun, which starts counting again with the year 1.

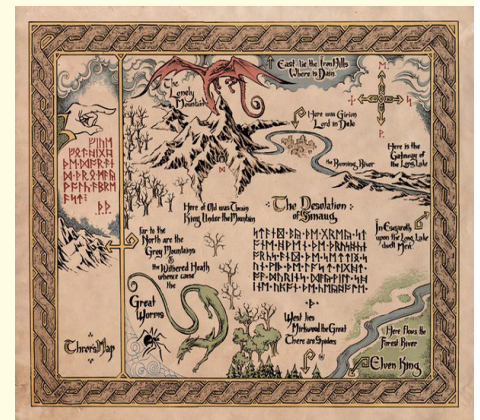
Languages

J. R. R. Tolkien was a philologist, and he was interested in language since he was a child. He invented several languages, which he then used in his Middle-earth writings. Aside from the external history, most of his languages have also an invented "internal history". The internal history means how the languages evolved and were used inside the fictional story by the fictional people who spoke them. Some of Tolkien's languages have a detailed grammar and vocabulary. Other languages are not very detailed, and some languages have only a few words and names. Quenya and Sindarin are the best and most developed languages, while others like Rohirric, Khuzdûl, or Black Speech, are not as much developed.

Tolkien's Middle-earth, **mid-dangeard** in Old English, was inspired by the term Midgard of Norse mythology, which was used to describe the land inhabited by humans. Tolkien also used other names, such as Endor and Ennor to refer to the continent in which most of his stories took

place. The Middle-Earth is a continent in Arda, the world, situated between Aman, across the Belagear sea, to the west and the Land of the Sun to the east. This continent is inspired by Europe. Tolkien used several locations in England, Italy and other countries as reference. Middle-earth is populated by Elves, Dwarves, Orcs, Ents, Dragons, Hobbits, Humans, and several other races of fantastic creatures. Tolkien developed a complex history, geography and a pantheon of gods as a background for his novels.

The *Lord of the Rings* and the Middle Earth have had a profound and wide-ranging impact on popular culture, beginning with its publication in the 1950s, but especially throughout the 1960s and 1970s, during which time young people embraced it as a countercultural saga.



“English For You CR” presents, The Tag Questions



Tag questions are used in English at the end of a sentence (clause) to **ask for confirmation or to express irony** when we know the answer. For example:

- This is the English class, **isn't it?**
(real question because I don't know the answer)
- You didn't do homework, **did you?**
(I know you didn't, so I use for irony)

Tag questions are structured by **inverting the affirmative or negative form of the clause**, and using the same auxiliary verb or modal auxiliary. Like this:

- You don't like onions, **do you?**
(negative auxiliary don't, affirmative do)
- She will come with us, **won't she?**
(auxiliary will, negative auxiliary won't)
- He has been here before, **hasn't he?**
- We should hurry up, **shouldn't we?**

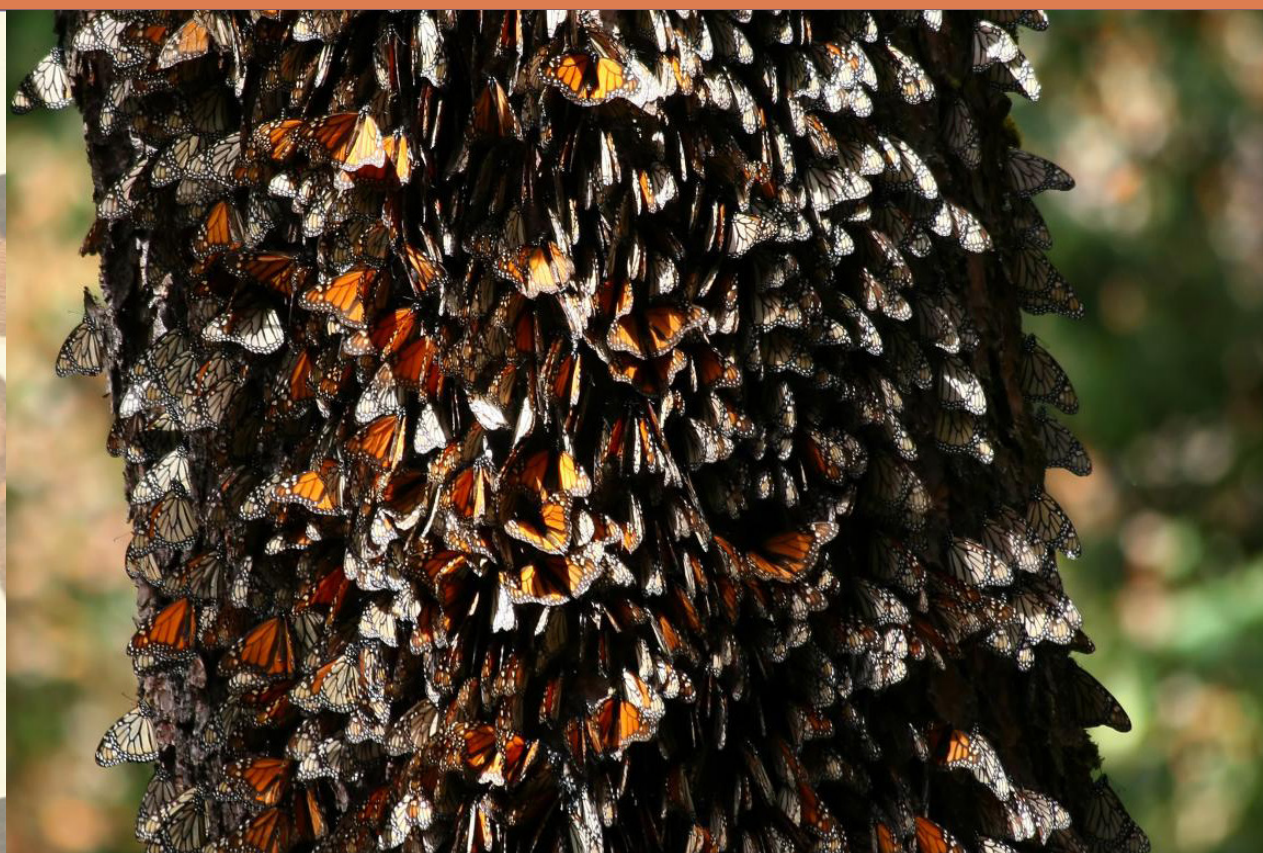
You can listen to our podcast including this section, music in English, news, and more in:
<http://www.EnglishforYouCR.com> and www.facebook.com/english.foryoucr

abubble

characterized by intense enthusiasm or activity

EXAMPLE:

The store was **abubble** with last-minute shoppers.



Monarch Butterfly Wintering

The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is quite possibly the most widely recognized and widely admired insect in the United States. Its large, distinctive black and orange wings, its ability to migrate over thousands of miles to its over-wintering sites, and its life cycle that is intertwined with the ecology and distribution of the milkweed plant all make this species endlessly fascinating to a broad segment of our population. The two migrating populations of monarchs in North America are separated by the Rocky Mountains. The larger area east of the Rockies supports a much larger population of monarchs. All of these butterflies overwinter in the coniferous forests in the mountains of the Mexican states of Michoacán and Mexico. For the monarchs that reach the northeast states of the United States and the southeast provinces of Canada, this migration to and from this very specific overwintering site in Mexico covers several thousand miles. The monarchs that live in the smaller area west of the Rockies, on the other hand, overwinter in coastal sites in Southern and Central California. Their migratory route only measures hundreds of miles at the most. In both overwintering sites, however, the numbers of monarchs covering the trees and shrubs while waiting out the winter months in their diapause states can be truly staggering!

Information taken from: <http://www.psu.edu/dept/nkbiology/naturetrail/speciespages/monarch.html>

Photo credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/pleautaud/4385660873/in/photostream/>

