



# ICSMILAN Insights

24  
MAY

ICS Milan

IV  
EDITION

A DAY IN A  
TEACHER'S  
LIFE

SPRING  
PLAYLIST

NEXT WEEK  
IN HISTORY:  
FALL OF  
CONSTANTIN  
OPLE

MID-YEAR  
EXAMS:  
WHAT  
STUDENTS  
THINK



Credit: Jan Kalabiska

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



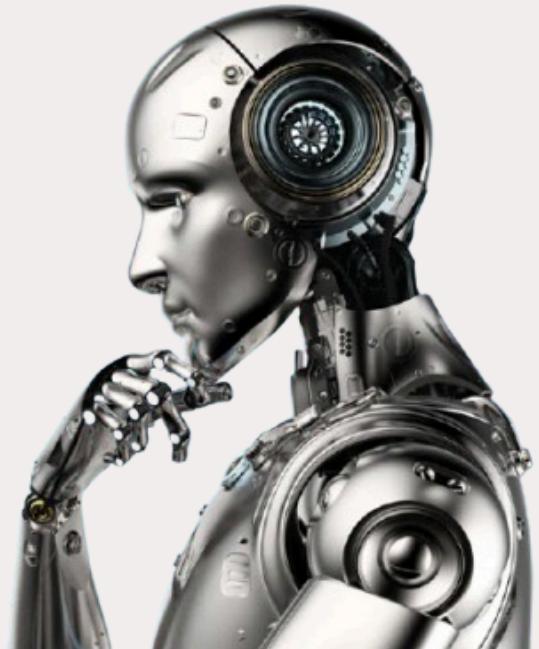
Here is an overview of our content. In this Spring edition of the ICS Insights newspaper you will be able to find out about upcoming events at ICS, some of our favourite Spring playlists, students' interesting opinion of the Mid-Year exams and more

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- 01** School and AI: Best Friends or Worst Enemies?
- 02** Student's Talk: Mid-Year Exams
- 03** How Teachers are Taught from Teachers that Teach Teachers How to Teach How to Teach
- 04** Next Week in History: Fall of Constantinople
- 05** Summer Vibes Playlist
- 06** Behind the classroom: A day in the life of Prof. Ballacchino
- 07** Understanding Burnouts in Schools
- 08** 5 Ridiculously Effective Tips and Tricks that will Save Your Exams
- 09** Suicides in Italy: Chilling Numbers

# SCHOOL AND AI: BEST FRIENDS OR WORST ENEMIES?

Artificial intelligence is changing the way students learn and teachers teach, but is it a revolution or a disaster? In classrooms worldwide, AI is both a powerful tool and a controversial disruptor, raising questions about its role in education and in the world. We know AI in its most common form: a chat bot, where the user inputs a prompt and a response is generated accordingly. Here at ICS Insights we find it an incredibly useful tool, and we use it to get inspiration for some of our articles. But we asked you and teachers: what do you think about AI?



## What do you think about AI?

Student 1: I think that if used in a proper way it can be a very good and innovative way to learn

Teacher 1: "I think that when used properly it can be a great and very useful tool"

Teacher 2: "I think that if used properly it can be very good"

Teacher 3: "I think AI has a place in schools but needs to be used with purpose and not as a way of taking a complete shortcut i.e using it for prompts or as a search engine and not to write essays "

## Do you think students should be able to use it and actually be encouraged to?

Teacher 1: I think that as long as students are instructed on how to use it then yes, they should be able to use it.

Teacher 2: Uhm.. well, I think that AI needs to be taught to a degree to know how not to abuse it. In some subjects like english I don't think it should be used while I think that in some classes like the sciences it can actually be very helpful and be integrated with the study material.

Do you think students should be taught how to use it?

Teacher 1: Yes, 100 percent!

Teacher 2: Absolutely! Especially the border between fair use and abuse.

Teacher 3: I absolutely do think that students need to be taught how to use AI, especially in an ethical matter

## **Do you use AI? If you do, what do you use it for?**

Teacher 1: I use AI regularly. I use it for different things and tasks like : proofreading, help for assessments rubrics and sometimes it can be useful for study guides to give students.

Teacher 2: I don't use it that often. Usually when i do is to help me reword complicated sentences and word into simple and easy ones to understand

Teacher 3: I've only started using AI in December. I'm still experimenting with it, but it is pretty impressive how I had to spend 25 minutes writing an email while it now only takes two.

## **Do you think AI will replace you?**

Teacher 1: No, I don't think that AI will replace me because critical thinking and human relations are a key part of my job, which is something Artificial Intelligence is just not able to do at the moment.

Teacher 2: It would have to have a very good sense of humor and sarcasm ability. It will most definitely change elements of what it means to be a teacher, but the core of it, humanity and the relation with students, it can't be replaced.

Teacher 3: "We're all doomed and robots will take over us"

And on that terrifying note, I think it's safe to conclude that AI is definitely a very useful tool, when used properly, and both students and teachers should be taught on how to use it ethically and at the best of its possibilities.

# STUDENT'S TALK: MID-YEAR EXAMS

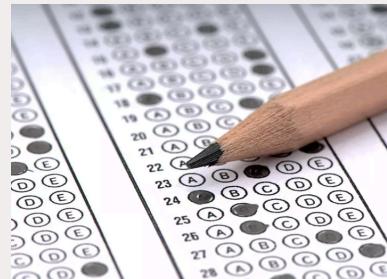
EDITED BY GIORGIO VALDMAN, YUNSEOK CHOI

The IGCSE program has only been introduced into ICS Milan as of this year and it's important to develop and improve our process of preparation and internal exams in order to best perform in the final Year 11 examinations. In this article we'll explore your opinions on the mid-year exams.

Following the first round of mock exams, a detailed survey was prepared for the two Year 10 classes which covered 3 different categories:

- General Organisation
- Teacher Assistance and Preparation
- Student Wellbeing

Here at ICS Insights we got the privilege of accessing the results and it was very interesting to read through the submissions and really get a perspective of what students actually need and want



## General Organisation

The survey revealed mixed feelings about the organisation of the January mock exams. While 44.4% rated the organisation as "OK", many students found instructions unclear, especially regarding room assignments. Overlapping exams and long gaps caused further confusion. A significant concern was the lack of a focused study environment between exams. 88.8% found it unhelpful, with many suggesting the need for two rooms: one silent and one relaxed. Students were split on using classrooms as exam locations; some felt they lacked seriousness, while others appreciated the familiarity. Notably, 80% wanted the option to leave school between exams, suggesting it would improve study quality. This is going to be allowed in the End of Year exams. Others better scheduling, clearer communication, and allowing breaks like weekends, which there is in the End of Year session, between exams to prevent burnout.

As this was the first experience with mock exams for the year group, 77.8% of students felt unprepared and unsure of what to expect. While 59.3% found teachers somewhat helpful, many expressed the need for more structured support. Key suggestions included clearer study plans, explicit topic lists, practice exams, and lessons dedicated to difficult topics. Some students felt lost during unstructured in-class revision time and suggested teachers lead short sessions reviewing complex material and offering study strategies. Additionally, students suggested regular check-ins to keep them on track and help avoid last-minute cramming. Overall, students seek more guided, targeted support from teachers to better prepare for future exams.

Wellbeing during exams is a crucial step to achieve any desired performance. In the survey, students were asked to what degree they were stressed about the exam.

Interestingly, 88.8% of the students responded that they were stressed - in any degree, from 'for a while' to 'very' - including 37% who answered 'I was very stressed.' The survey clearly demonstrated that the mock exam had a substantial room for improvement in the student wellbeing criterion.

Among numerous reasons, the lack of information and advice aroused as the main reason for the stress. One student replied, "Yes, it would be extremely helpful if teachers gave us more ways to study and things we should do to minimise stress levels." The response highlighted both the need for academic and mental advice which should be equally considered of their importance. In practical terms, the report suggested a more guided practice of IGCSE-styled questions at school to enhance student confidence.

When students were asked about parent support, the answers mainly mentioned that the parents did not know how to assist their children with the exams or simply didn't feel the need. These responses imply the necessity to provide information about the exams to parents, fostering a powerful support from the parents.

Overall, it seems that a more thorough explanation of the exam, provision of study materials and tips are necessary to ensure student wellbeing and confidence during the exams.

### Parent feedback

Parents, to provide an external and objective view of the exams, were asked too.

Similar to student responses, the outcome addressed the need for a structured study system and a detailed information about the exam.

Notably, 30.8% of the parents answered 'Not so good' when they were asked about the organisation of the exams.

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# HOW TEACHERS ARE TAUGHT FROM TEACHERS THAT TEACH TEACHERS HOW TO TEACH HOW TO TEACH

THEY'RE TAUGHT FROM SOMEBODY ELSE?

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We all know about teachers, the ones who should teach us, educate us and prepare us for the wild world. The real question is: who teaches teachers how to teach?

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Let me ask you this question, when you go to the gym to train your muscles or do vocal training, when you enter a football game, do you start lifting weight instead of playing football or run towards the ball trying to kick it into the opposing goal? This is exactly what teachers do, they teach and train your brain to become stronger and faster, giving your brain the needed skills for daily challenges.

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Though this is the main purpose, class subjects also serve to be a kind of wave that everyone is riding for the course of their lives, that is the scholastic career, learning and studying puts you on that wave, and its to be ridden for the entirety of the lives, making something that comes across that wave, your purpose which is being a student, an employee or an entrepreneur or whatever individuals might decide to do in the future.

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Now, at times you might wonder how teachers end up in this horrible position you'd think they'd hate because of all of the disrupting students and annoying work they have to do all day though the thing is people become teachers because they might have a passion of delivering information and education to people, and actually could enjoy doing their job.

The actual path commences from university since there isn't any meaningful progress to be done before instead of just focusing on studying and getting good grades to prepare themselves for their future job

## Primary School

To become a primary school teacher, these students work hard for five years to get a five year undergraduate degree in "Primary Pedagogy Sciences", which includes 600 hours of attendance and a final thesis to be written.

## Secondary School

The second level of teaching, much more difficult to achieve for people, is secondary school which includes middle school and high school, for people to get to this level they have to have a master's degree or more in the specific subject that they're expecting to teach, for example modern philology to become an Italian literature teacher in middle school.

Another requirement is the completion of the 60 ECTS program, which holds pedagogy, inclusive teaching, digital use skills and methods used specifically in the subject

The last obstacle of theirs is two stage national competition, including a multiple choice test and an oral exam, finishing this competition results in a one year probation, followed by a permanent contract if results and evaluations are positive

## University/College professor

The highest importance professor instead requires a PhD in the subject and a minimum 3 year period of postdoc or assistant professor, though also this kind of professor requests the evaluation of a national competition, the same one as the secondary

## Pre-elementary teachers

Pre elementary teachers require the same levels of achievements, a single-cycle master's degree, 600 hours of internship ended with a final thesis

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Wrapping it up, teachers pour their heart and soul into their jobs and expect to be recognised for it. They don't do it because they have to, but because they want to. They work really hard to educate us, it doesn't happen by mistake!

## NEXT WEEK IN HISTORY: 29TH MAY

### WHEN THE WORLD CHANGED: THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

WRITTEN BY YUNSEOK CHOI

This month, 572 years ago, in today's city of Istanbul, 3,000 Ottoman elite infantries called Janissaries eventually collapsed the walls of Constantinople that seemed formidable for a millennium.

#### 'Nova Roma,' A Long Gone Fame

For the ones who remembered the Byzantine empire, which once dominated the mediterranean and its capital was entitled as 'the New Rome' (or Nova Roma in Latin), would have been hard to believe the state of the empire in 1450s. The empire initially dwindled by the sack of the crusades in 1204, and its capital Constantinople was left in ruin. Furthermore, starting from 1299, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire alarmed the Byzantine empire's irreversible downfall. The newly emerging Islamic power took most Byzantine's eastern and western territories outside of Constantinople. Consequently, when Constantine XI was declared emperor of the Byzantine on 6 January 1449, his empire's influence merely reached a few islands in the mediterranean and the city of Constantinople.



#### A Desperate call for Christendom



Mehmed II

In the Ottoman empire, Mehmed II succeeded the throne in 1451 from his father, Murad II. Promptly, the new emperor started to concentrate the empire's military power and resources to fulfil his and his dynasty's long-awaited dream: conquering Constantinople. Subsequently, he begins the construction of Rumeli hisari, which would be his keystone to block Byzantine and Christian ship sailing through the strait of Bosphorus which connects the greater mediterranean sea and Constantinople. Noticing this movement, Constantine XI entreats Christian powers for military aid. The Pope reacted, however demanding the unification of Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic as a condition to be met. Apart from that, Venice and Genoa were the only two states to send troops, of 800 and 700 soldiers respectively. Constantine appoints the Genoese commander Giustiniani as the commander of Byzantine land defence.

“It is not for me to decide to surrender”



Constantine XI Palaiologos

The siege of Constantinople began on 6 April 1453. The Byzantine Empire was evidently inferior in terms of number – about 7,000 trained soldiers and 35,000 civilians, compared to Ottoman preponderance of 80,000 skillful soldiers. The Ottoman Empire continued its bombardment of the city using the cannons, but the walls of Constantinople were as formidable as their fame. It was double layered, of 5m thick, 4 miles long and with a moat outside almost making impossible to fully dismantle. Yet, the city was losing its strength as the battle flowed into May from April, due to the absolute magnitude of the Ottoman army. To end the lingering battle, Mehmed II proposes a surrender, suggesting peaceful treatment of the citizens of Constantinople and even the appointment of Constantine XI as the governor of Peloponnese. Nevertheless, the Byzantine emperor replied to the proposal with his famous remark; “As to surrendering the city to you, it is not for me to decide or for anyone else of its citizens; for all of us have reached the mutual decision to die of our own free will, without any regard for our lives.” Hence, now for Mehmed II there was only one option: attack.

### The Fall of the City

The emperor of the Ottoman empire employs one of the most renowned tactics in the history of wars. To pass through the chains at the gate of the Golden Horn, he moved the vessels through land! Literally, Mehmed II constructed a wooden ramp crossing the land between the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn. This unique tactic enabled the Ottoman force to surround the city at three-sides and thus spreading the already-little troops left of the Byzantine empire. In the early morning of 29th May 1453, Mehmed II sends the elite troops of Janissaries to conclude the battle for once and for all. Constantinople at last fell in the hands of the Ottomans. Byzantine emperor Constantine XI is said to have died after his last surge into the wild battlefields. Soon after, Mehmed declared Constantinople as a new capital of his empire and proclaimed himself as ‘Kayser-i-Rûm’, meaning Caesar (Emperor) of Rome.



Mehmed II entering the captured Constantinople

## The Event that Changed the World

Like many other historical events, it is difficult to calculate the impact of the Fall of Constantinople which it had on the course of history. However, it is possible to say that such event had a considerable impact on our life today, no matter who you are. First of all, many historians agree that the event marked the end of the Middle age and signaled the beginning of the Renaissance. In fact, the revival of Roman and Greek culture in Italy – especially Florence – is deeply rooted in the fleeing of Byzantine scholars which in turn was triggered by the fall of Constantinople. Furthermore, the blockage of travel routes from Western Europe to India and the Middle East by the Ottomans led to the Age of Discovery in long term. In conclusion, the Fall of Constantinople was one of the most important turning point of world history from which the geopolitical and cultural landscape of Europe and the Middle East went through a profound change.

You can find the sources for this article at [icsinsights.rf.gd/transparency](https://icsinsights.rf.gd/transparency)

Further resources (Check out if you're interested)

- Rise of Empires: Ottoman - A cool TV series on Netflix that you should watch if you want to feel the tightening tension of the Battle of Constantinople



## SPRING PLAYLIST

Music is essential to encapsulating the spirit of spring's vibrant energy as the season of revival and rebirth approaches. Music has a unique ability to strengthen our connection with this time of growth, whether it is through the upbeat tunes that reflect longer, sunnier days or the joyful melodies that accompany the arrival of spring.

It is an essential part of celebrating the arrival of spring because it generates emotions of freshness, hope, and renewal. Music encourages us to appreciate the beauty and energy that spring brings into our lives, whether it is heard outside in the cool breeze or at vibrant festivals.





Up&Up  
Coldplay



Love of My Life  
Queen



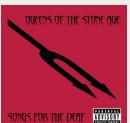
Viva La Vida  
Coldplay



Can't Hold Us  
Macklemore



I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor  
Arctic Monkeys



No One Knows  
Queens Of The Stone Age



One Of My Turns  
Pink Floyd



Walking On Sunshine  
Katrina & The Waves



Dancing Queen  
ABBA



Drain You  
Nirvana



Shut Up and Dance  
WALK THE MOON



On Top Of The World  
Imagine Dragons

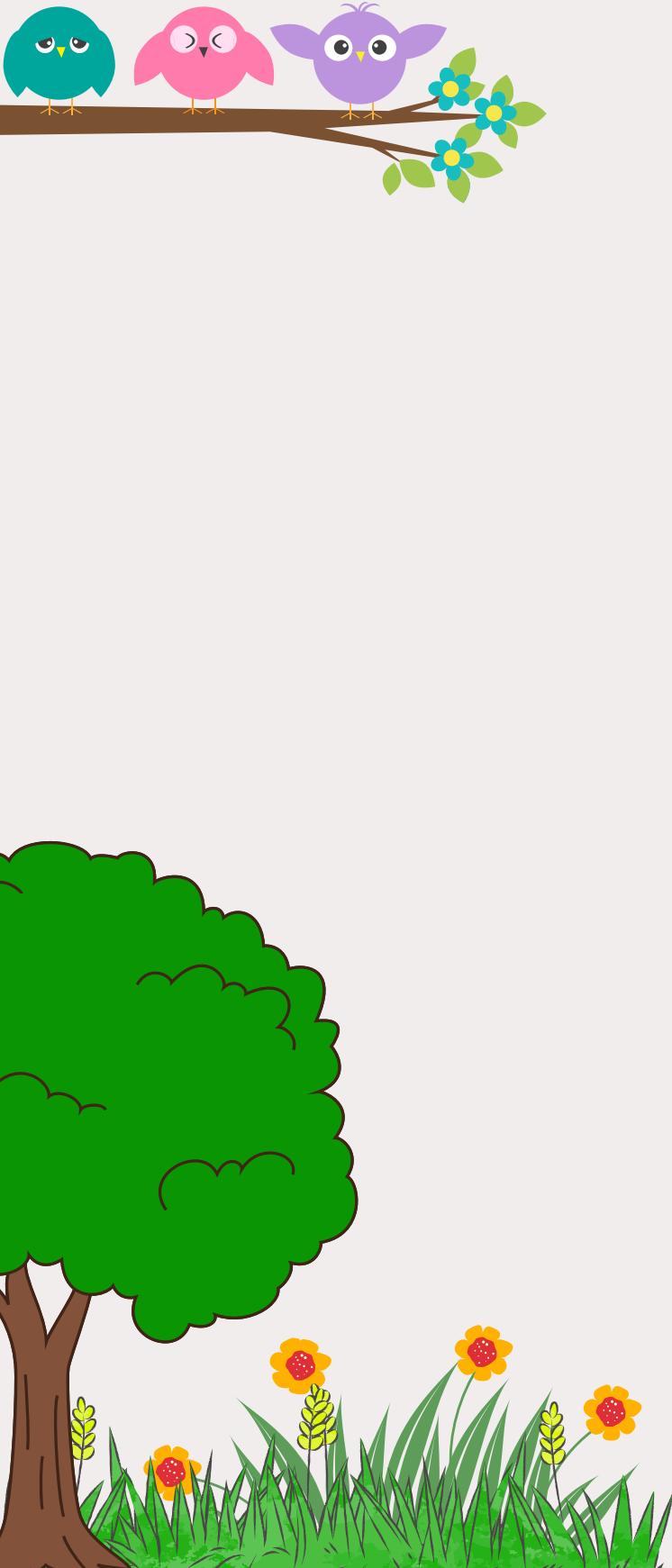


Hard Times  
Paramore



A Sky Full Of Stars  
Coldplay

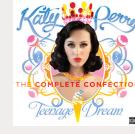




Fluorescent Adolescent  
Arctic Monkeys



Last Friday Night  
Katy Perry



Friday  
Riton



We Found Love  
Rihanna



Don't Stop Me Now  
Queen



Here Comes The Sun  
The Beatles



Stolen Dance  
Milky Chance



Buddy Holly  
Weezer



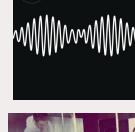
I Ain't Worried  
OneRepublic



Go With The Flow  
Queens Of The Stone Age



Do I Wanna Know?  
Arctic Monkeys



Dance Little Liar  
Arctic Monkeys



Miracle Aligner  
The Last Shadow Puppets



Body Paint  
Arctic Monkeys



# A Day in the Life of Ballacchino: Behind the Classroom

## By Jan Kalabiska

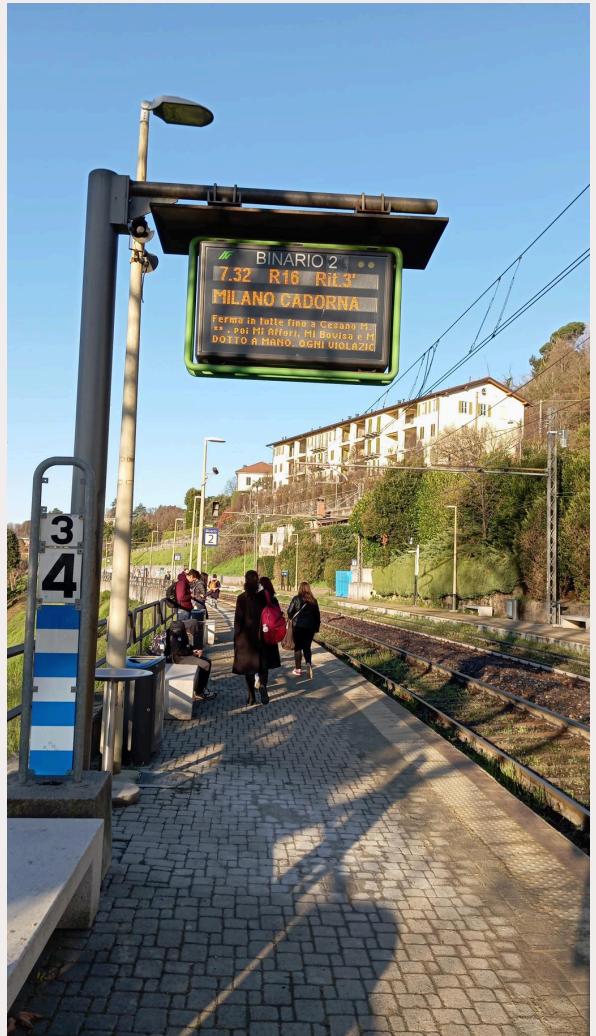
Meet Ivan Loris Ballacchino, a devoted teacher who uses discipline, balance, and dedication on a daily basis. His schedule, including early mornings and late nights, gives a glimpse into the life of someone balancing duties and personal time.

### Morning Routine

Ballacchino begins his day at 5:30 AM as part of his morning routine. He sets the tone for the day with his careful morning routine, which includes waking up, cleaning his retainers, and waxing his hair. At 6:15 AM, he gets ready, leaves his house, and goes to the station.

### Commute

After driving to the station, he boards a train at 6:30 and reaches Affori at 7:15. At 7:25, he heads to the metro after enjoying a quick breakfast—just a basic croissant—near the station. He gets to Brenta by 7:50 and is prepared to begin teaching.



## School Day Work

Prof. Ballacchino arrives at school by 8:00 a.m. In order to get ready for the day, he starts by brushing his teeth and putting in his contact lenses. He spends time getting his teaching materials ready for upcoming classes before they begin.

Students arrive to ask questions about maths and other subjects during his teaching hours, which run from 8:45 AM to 10:45 AM, after which there is a brief break. He returns to teaching from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM after a brief relief. Lunch is a short pause during which you have enough time to eat in between classes.

## Afternoon and Evening

He quickly cleans his teeth once more after lunch and goes back to teaching from 2:00 PM to 3:55 PM. He gets home at 5:55 PM, eats a light meal, and then gets ready for the gym. He goes to the gym at 7:00 PM and works out, concentrating on his legs, biceps, triceps, shoulders, back, and chest. He works out until 8:30 PM, after which he takes a shower and rests.

## Nighttime Routine:

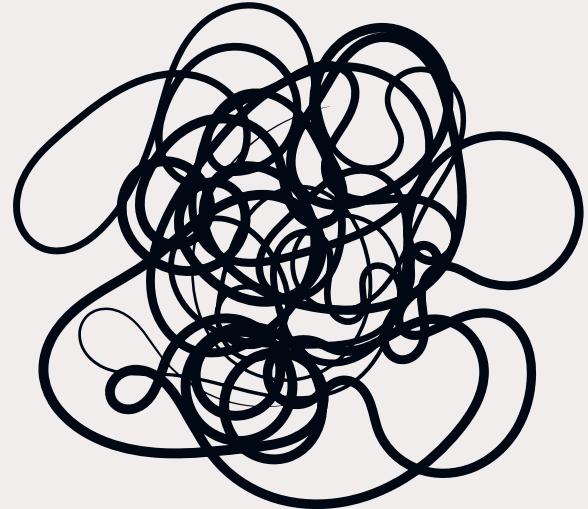
By 9:05 PM, he's back home and makes some dinner. The day concludes around 11:30 PM to 12:00 AM, when he heads to bed, ready to start the cycle again.



# Understanding Burnout in Schools

## By Jan Kalabiska

Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. In the context of education, it shows up as a lack of academic responsibilities, and motivation. While some degree of stress is normal in a learning environment, prolonged exposure to pressure can lead to burnout.



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### Causes of Burnout in Schools

1. Academic Pressure: High-stakes exams and the curriculum's growing demands can make for a demanding environment. Students frequently experience chronic stress as a result of feeling like their future is hanging over them.
2. Social and Peer Pressure: Social dynamics have a big impact on students' wellbeing in addition to academic pressures. Stress levels can be considerably raised by the pressure to blend in, keep friendships, and negotiate a competitive social environment.
3. Lack of Support: Students thrive in supportive environments. When they feel isolated, unsupported, or disconnected from their peers and teachers, the risk of burnout escalates.

## Effects of Burnout

1. Decreased Academic Performance: Students who are burned out frequently experience a decline in their overall academic performance and grades. It is difficult to concentrate on studies when one lacks energy and motivation.
  2. Mental Health Issues: Anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions can be interpreted as burnout. A vicious cycle of despair and emotional exhaustion may result from the severe stress.
  3. Physical Health Issues: Prolonged stress also has an impact on physical health. Students who experience burnout are more susceptible to illness because they may experience headaches, stomach problems, and a weakened immune system.
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## Solutions to Combat Burnout

1. Encourage a Balanced Curriculum: Schools should aim for a well-rounded curriculum that prioritises not just academics but also the arts, physical education, and life skills.
2. Promote Time Management Skills: Teachers can help students improve their time management abilities by providing them tools, resources, and lessons that will help them better balance their activities and academic responsibilities.
3. Involve Parents and Guardians: Students can have strong support networks outside of school if parents are educated about the symptoms of burnout and are encouraged to have open discussions at home.

# 5 Ridiculously Effective Tips and Tricks that will Save Your Exams

## By Arthur Cornalba

Have you ever felt that the effort you put while studying is not effective, almost as what you are doing is pointless and you'll do bad in the next exam anyways?

Well don't worry, because I have some advice that I always adopt that will help you.



1) Pay attention in class. I know that the latest Netflix series is tempting and that challenging yourself at videogames it's something everybody would gladly do, but the first step to achieve good marks in an exam is paying attention to lessons at school. Listening carefully at school avoids a ton of study at home. Paying always attention during classes, but if you think about the time you'll save at home you'll be way more encourage to stay focus.

2) Ask questions. If during any lesson something is unclear, it's better to raise your hand and ask the teacher as well as a friend. In my opinion, what a lot of people do is being ashamed of not understanding something but trust, not understanding something and doing nothing about it is way, way worse.

3) Keep that phone away. Smartphones are wonderful devices that let us to communicate with our friends, share photos and staying in a continuous state of connection with the world. However, it is a huge distraction while studying. The sound of a notification or reading on the friend group chat the program for the next weekend takes the focus away on your study. I'm focusing on a subject and after two minutes I find myself wondering about what to do on Saturday, a tennis match with my friend or a weekend to the seaside. The time available for us students of ICS Milan is shorter than the one of the students whose school ends at 13 pm, therefore we have to get the best out of it.

4) Organize your study. This might seem obvious but is a step that a lot of people miss, which is to organize your study. Don't just sit down at your desk at home and say "Ok, I have two hours, so today I'll revise for my end of year exams". The secret for an affective study session is to set clear goals in specific topics. For example, you might sit to your desk at 17 o'clock and say "All right, I'll study for 1 full hour the new unit of physics we started on Monday, which seems tough. I'll then take a break of 5 minutes and revise for 45 minutes the past Biology units. In the last 10 minutes, I'll revise all the math formulas I need to remember. Do you see the difference? In the first case there is no goal set and the risk is you get lost, overwhelmed and easily distracted by other things, while in the second case you have a plan in your head, you've set a goal and not only following it will help you in your revision, but achieving the goal you've set will boost your confidenceand make you want to improve.

5) Revise with your friend. Once you have studied, a good idea is to revise with someone. Studies have shown that explaining a topic to someone improves drastically the way you understand the contest. While reviewing with a friend, time flies away!

And now you are ready for the exam!!!

Empty your mind. One thing I've learned during the latest years of study, is that the best way to prepare your mind right before an exam is emptying it from any other thought other than the test's topics. I know, it's not easy at all, especially if you have a lot of exams next to each other, however, emptying your mind is fundamental to give the best results.



**ICSMILAN** Insights

Thank you for reading this edition  
of ICS Insights. Stay informed, stay  
connected and stay engaged.

Have a story, tip, or feedback?  
Let's hear from you!

Contact us at:  
**icsinsights@proton.me**

From the members at ICS Insight,  
we appreciate the support.  
Read you in the next edition!