

# THE DRAGON

Vol 5, No 1 · Design Tech High School · @dtechdragonnews

MID MAY ISSUE



Art By Cynthia Shi

## Graduation and Events This Year By Katya Olshansky

The Class of 2021 has certainly not had the normal senior year experience. But thanks to Melissa Mizel and many others, the seniors will still have a few celebrations to ensure that they get to see each other before moving on to their next big thing.

After this crazy year we have had, it's time to celebrate the class of 2021! There will be a full graduation ceremony this year; Mizel says, "We're planning it right now, it's gonna be the Saturday after school's out. We plan to have an in person graduation. We are planning it to resemble as closely as possible ones that we've done in the past. The only difference will be that families will have to stay in their cars, kinda like last year where they just made a big circle." She continues on to say "We wanna have students out in chairs socially distanced." She and organizer Michelle Trumpler have been the primary organizers of this event and making this year's dtech senior send off a reality.

In addition to the graduation, another event for our seniors is coming up. The event will be a senior dinner held on May fourteenth. Mizel described it as, "A sit down experience; really just doing awards, and special memories, and things that I think will get people feeling nostalgic." This event is being put on by the seniors' parents as an opportunity to honor and remember what the seniors have had these past four years. Mizel repeatedly mentioned that all safety precautions will be followed to ensure two safe and memorable nights.

Overall, we all know this year has not been easy on anyone, but at least we get to celebrate the class of 2021 together! Four years of hard work, dedication and contribution to our d.tech community should not go unnoticed. We all wish the seniors the absolute best, and know that they will make us proud.



## Maeghan Haywood : Helping Students in Need

By Liam Deacon

Maeghan Haywood came to d.tech for an "opportunity that allowed students with IEPs (the document given to those who require special education services) and learning differences to be included in the general education setting." While her formal work title is "educational specialist," but she says she's really "just a teacher who loves her job." Since her arrival at d.tech, Haywood has had a great impact on 9th grade students with IEPs, adapting and creating the scaffolding to keep the curriculum accessible to everyone. Additionally, she helps teachers effectively teach and include every student in their class, regardless of the student's background.



Photo Taken By Maeghan Haywood

Outside of work, Haywood is passionate about Hula dancing, and has attended competitions all around California since she was 14 years old. Another big hobby she has is traveling; Haywood adds she loves to "meet new people and learn about the many cultures of this world".

Before d.tech, Haywood worked at a Title I Elementary School, teaching 4th and 5th graders with mild to moderate disabilities. Not long after that, she transferred to d.tech, bringing this story to the present, where her road ahead is still unknown. Currently, she is planning to go back to school and achieve her doctorate degree at the start of 2022. When she ultimately leaves, Haywood hopes to have a lasting impact on d.tech's education program that everyone can benefit from.

## Eric Vences: d.tech's Newest Spanish Teacher

By Clarissa Gamez



As the Spanish language is globally on the rise, d.tech welcomes a new Spanish 2 teacher, Eric Vences. According to the Engro Model of Language Forecasting, the Spanish language is predicted to be the top second language in the world by 2050, with the United States being the largest Spanish speaking country by then. As the language becomes a larger part of our lives, d.tech has gained a teacher who not only sees Spanish as a means of communication, but also as a key to another world. Vences says, "Knowing a second language kind of unlocks the opportunity to connect with a whole other world... So many people you can connect with."

Vences has spent most of his life in the Bay Area; completing his Middle and High School in Santa Clara County, and even continuing his college education at San Jose State University. Growing up in a Spanish speaking household, he sees the language as part of his identity. Throughout his education, Vences had teachers and administrators in his life that granted him many opportunities to succeed. After being impacted by how well they treated him, he wanted to do the same for others. "I wanted to do the same, as a teacher I want to provide students that opportunity and motivation to succeed despite certain setbacks."

Photo Requested from the d.tech Yearbook Team



## Eric Vences : Continued

One of his values that he wants to teach his students is that "Failure is part of the process of success, and success isn't linear." He hopes to be the same for his students as his administrators were for him, saying, "When they go to college or navigate through life, they will know — hopefully thinking back to my class — and think, 'This is just part of the process. As long as I don't give up, I learn from my mistakes. I can do this.'"

Vences was doing his credential program at another charter school that is similar to d.tech in the way of teaching students. "What drew me to Design Tech, was definitely that similar model, but more so the Advisory," Vences states how he valued mentoring students in a similar manner at his previous school, "I really enjoyed the mentor time, where I really got to connect with students, when I am not teaching."

Outside of school, Vences has many hobbies to keep him occupied. Vences likes playing video games, exercising, and he is passionate about skincare. He likes to read books as well, saying, "I love to read. Historical fiction... memoirs. Sometimes I like to revisit my childhood favorites such as Harry Potter."

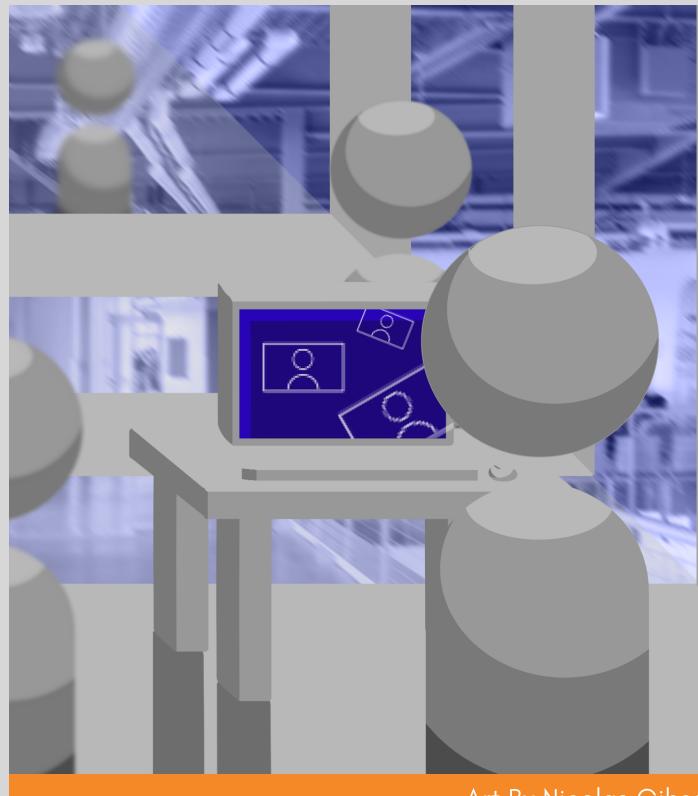
Throughout his time at d.tech, he hopes to really get to know the staff and students, and truly refine his teaching practice in this new and welcoming community. Although it is difficult, especially to be introduced to a whole new environment over zoom, Vences is excited to be working with and at d.tech.

## In-Person D.Lab

By Nicolas Gibson

When Covid-19 hit over a year ago, no one would have predicted that the quarantine would last quite this long. Although many have gotten used to this new virtual world, the time to come back to in-person learning is slowly approaching. With new, less-restrictive guidelines coming into play, and vaccines being released to the public, d.tech decided that on March 23rd, students would be allowed on campus for in-person d.lab classes. Now, students had two options to choose from. They could stay home and continue to learn in their virtual classes, or they could go in-person with their classmates and teacher to learn on campus. Students had decided this beforehand through a form sent out in mid March. Both groups of students were still connected via zoom call, although being in-person would allow students to engage with others more easily. In-person also meant following many Covid-19 safety guidelines, such as maintaining the standard six feet, and wearing a mask properly at all times.

d.tech staff member Ken Kileman felt confident about the level of safety that these d.lab classes had, saying that, "the Design Tech Leadership Team and Board have wonderfully prioritized health and safety as we all transition to a more personalized, nimble work environment." Executive Director Ken Montgomery was optimistic about the classes as well, commenting on the way he thought students would handle them. "We are excited to bring students back and we also have full confidence that [everyone] will follow all of the guidelines needed to keep everyone safe."



Art By Nicolas Gibson

## In-Person D.Lab : Continued

Dr. Montgomery elaborates further by stating some of the reasons why in-person learning was implemented at this time. "d.lab was identified by students as one of the classes that is most difficult in a distance learning format..." This is also touched upon by Hanan Holloway, a d.tech admin, saying that 80% of students had said yes to going in-person for d.lab, or at least showed interest in the idea. However, Holloway also comments that it is much harder for d.tech to transition to in-person than other schools. The amount of higher-up approval needed, time used waiting for state-updated Covid-19 cases to decrease, and most importantly, the fact that d.tech has not opened in the past have all delayed a re-opening. According to official guidelines, if a school had opened before a certain time, then it would be able to reopen even while its area was in the purple tier of Covid-19 regulations. Not only did this prevent d.tech from not being able to open up until just this March, but, according to Holloway, it has effectively held d.tech back ever since they were ready to go in-person, all the way back in July. However, we held off due to the priority at the time being to keep students safe, and due to the need to gradually re-introduce school after the summer break.

d.tech has been trying to open for a long time, and the wait is finally over, if at least partially. Various teachers stated they were excited and eager for students to return to the d.tech campus, many adding that they hoped that students would be able to connect with teachers better and receive quicker feedback for their work by being in-person. As Melissa Mizel, the School Director of d.tech said, "My thoughts about going in person are that I cannot wait to get back to school to see the kids. ... We want to make sure kids feel supported who have decided to stay home, and [we] want to provide an experience for everyone — both at home and school — that meets the needs of the student."

Hopefully, in-person d.lab will be the starting point of a new Covid-19 culture, where in-person events are more common, and zoom calls aren't the only way we connect with others. Many teachers, parents, and students are willing to embrace the shift, and it is only a matter of time, a matter of how we work together, to start that shift in our d.tech experience.

## Creativity Blasts By Kyle Fong

On March 18th, 2021, a handful of students returned to school in person, many for the first time since March, 2020. However, they didn't go back to school to attend regular classes, rather, they attended a new event, known as the Creativity Blast. The goal of these Creativity Blasts were to help students define themselves and then create something to represent themselves, such as a painting, a picture, or physical piece.

The first day that the Creativity Blast was held was Tuesday, March 16th, and was held on zoom. Instead of regular d.lab classes that take place on Tuesdays, students stayed with their ad.tech for the whole school day. They answered questions to "find themselves", and developed a piece to represent their creativity. By Thursday, students were given the opportunity to attend an in person meeting although students could stay home and continue their creative endeavors on zoom. Of the students that were interviewed who stayed at home, the online class on Thursday was the same as the one on Tuesday. Those who went to school in-person stated that they could see their friends in their advisories and anyone else who went, either during lunchtime or after school, which was exciting.

The plan was to have everyone stay with their advisory during all the class times, so that they would be working on their creativity blasts from 9:30 to 12:00, and again, from 1:00 to 3:00. Safety was, of course, a priority due to the pandemic; everyone was required to wear a mask, and got their temperature checked before entering the building. Students and staff were required to stay 6 feet apart, and the walls in between classrooms were opened up so that each class would have about two classes worth of space in order to keep everyone safely distanced from each other.

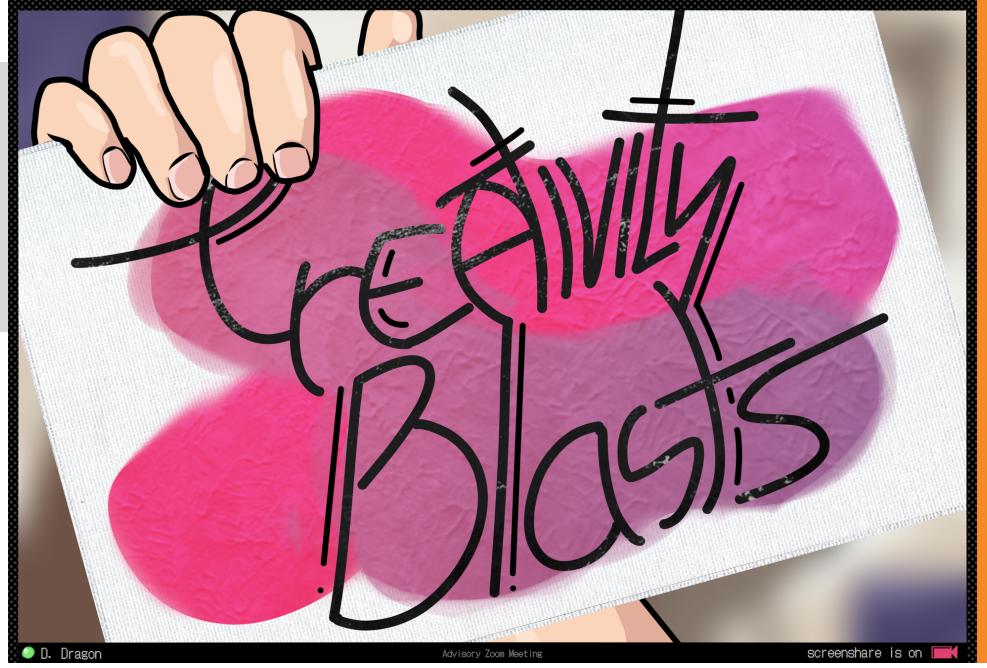
The majority of students said that the experience was helpful, as they were able to take a step back to reflect on themselves. One anonymous student described the "self interview" they did, stating that "[It] made me think about my mental and physical health, and helped me reassure where I was." This time of self reflection allowed some students to make sure that they weren't overwhelmed and, if they were, they had the ability to find themselves. Other students used the time to relax, draw, paint, or be creative in their own way.



## Creativity Blasts : Continued

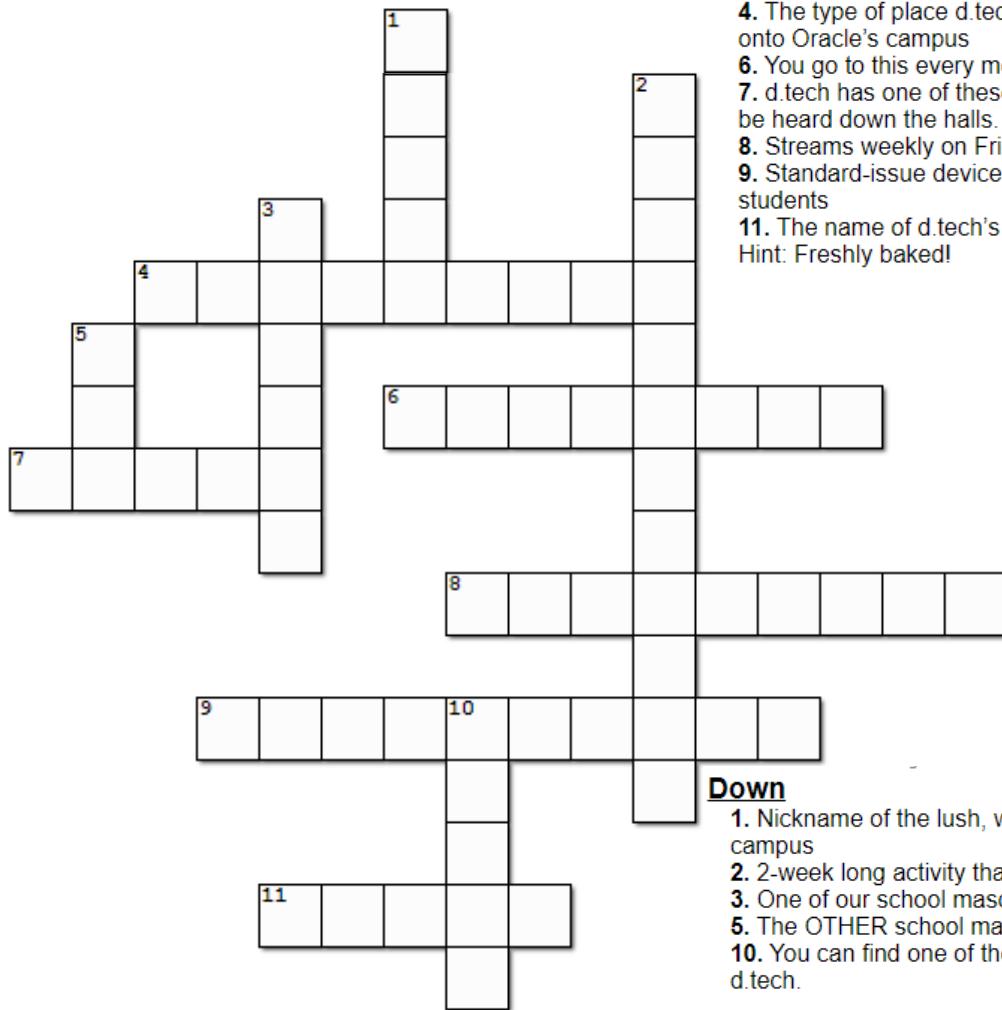
Overall, the Creativity Blast was a really great experience that allowed for students to keep their mental and physical health in check, find how they felt about themselves at that point in time, and create something to represent themselves.

Art By Nicolas Gibson



## The d.tech Crossword

By Kaelan Yim & Nicolas Gibson

Across

4. The type of place d.tech was in before we moved onto Oracle's campus
6. You go to this every morning.
7. d.tech has one of these in its lobby, and can often be heard down the halls.
8. Streams weekly on Friday with d.tech updates
9. Standard-issue device provided by the school for students
11. The name of d.tech's robotics team (no periods)  
Hint: Freshly baked!

Down

1. Nickname of the lush, wet area behind d.tech's campus
2. 2-week long activity that occurs thrice a year
3. One of our school mascots; this one can fly
5. The OTHER school mascot, which can swim
10. You can find one of these on the interior walls of d.tech.

