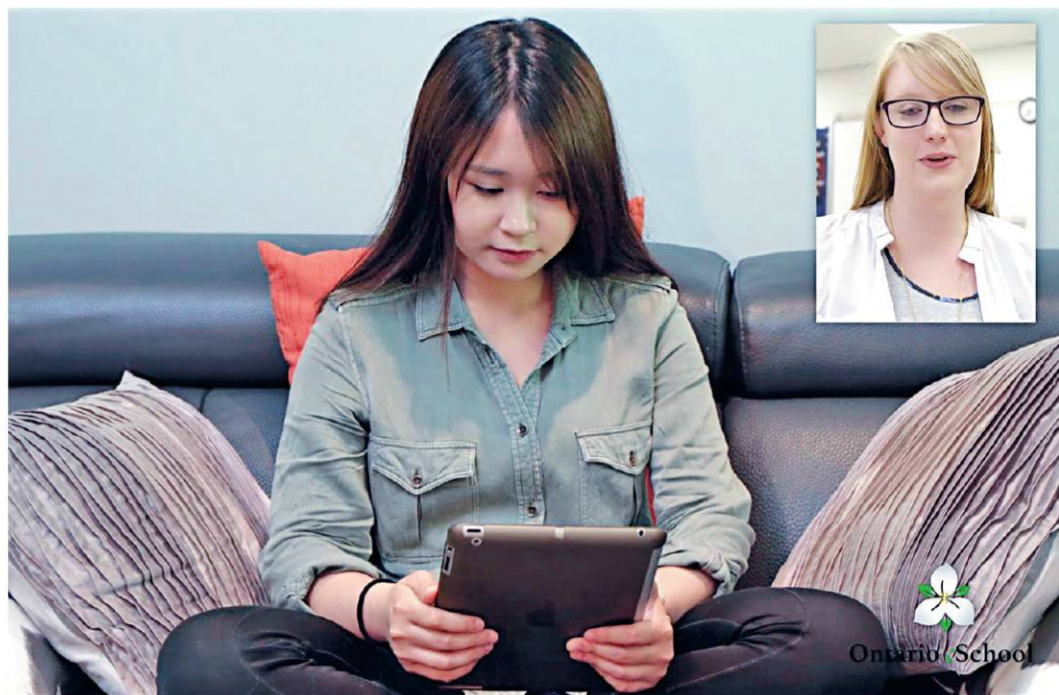


Overseas Education



Ontario eSchool principal Nazzareno Fisaletti presents graduation certificates to Ryan Yip, far left, and John Lee for completing the Ontario Secondary School Diploma.



Your time, your target

Jordan Ma

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS can now secure pathways to prestigious universities online. Ontario eSchool, one such institution that was founded in 2007, is open to students in grades nine through 12 all year round and is ideal for athletes.

Principal Nazzareno Fisaletti explains: "Hockey is a national passion in Canada. Lots of students are heavily into tennis, golf and soccer. They struggle to schedule such activities around traditional school hours."

"We are a flexible school. Students enroll anytime and complete courses at their own pace. We now have about 1,200 students."

The school aims to equip students with critical thinking, creativity and communication skills.

"Teenagers around the world are the same," Fisaletti said. "They all need guidance from teachers. We are here to help them succeed."

A one-on-one class, involving 20 hours of live teaching, costs HK\$24,800 while a one-on-four class costs HK\$15,200.

Students are expected to spend five to seven hours a week on online practice, including group projects.

The school offers a total of 54 courses. The curriculum is well-structured. Students take English, business, mathematics and science courses.

At grade 10 they can opt for a career studies course centered on work opportunities and post-secondary learning options.

Currently, Ontario students make up the vast

majority of the student population. International students hail from Europe, China, India, Dubai and Nigeria.

The school provides five levels of English as Second Language courses.

"Some international students feel shy about speaking in English. One-on-one sessions with teachers can build their confidence. We found that



"We are a flexible school. Students enroll anytime and complete courses at their own pace"

those who have worked with us for an extended period of time tend to need less preparation for the IELTS exam," Fisaletti said.

Students graduate with the Ontario Secondary School Diploma accredited with the Ministry of Education under the Ontario government.

In the 2015-2016 year, more than 90 percent of Ontario eSchool graduates secured a university offer.

"Online education does not hold you back from universities you want to apply to," he said.

"Our students have got into McGill University,

University of Toronto, Western University, McMaster University, Queen's University and York University."

The diploma is also recognized by top institutions like the University of Oxford, Lancaster University, Durham University, University of Sydney, University of Michigan, UCLA and University of Auckland.

"Hong Kong students are looking for options. The Diploma of Secondary Education may not work out for one reason or another. Getting the Ontario Secondary School Diploma online allows them to apply to Hong Kong universities without traveling," he said.

The University of Hong Kong, the Education University and the Chinese University have received applications from diploma holders.

Ontario eSchool recently launched a scholarship program, eTalentship, for students with outstanding talent in creative arts, sports and music.

Said Herman Hu Shao-ming, vice president of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong: "This program prides itself on a flexible curriculum and a high-caliber faculty that will encourage athletes and even artists and musicians to focus on their profession yet allow them to be able to obtain a high school diploma. The students in turn feel more self-confident and able to achieve work life balance."

The school is now working on a new interface to improve student learning. It also plans to launch an online music course.

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Misleading marshmallows



Brighten Youth Education Centre

IN THE 1960S and 1970s Stanford psychologist Walter Mischel handed out a lot of marshmallows to a lot of children aged between three and five.

The test participants were told that they were allowed to consume the treat immediately, but if they could resist the urge for 10 minutes, they would be awarded with a second marshmallow.

According to a subsequent study completed by Mischel and his colleagues in the 1990s (psycnet.apa.org/record/1991-06927-001), those with the willpower to resist the marshmallow displayed intelligence and behavioral traits significantly more advanced than those who ate the snack immediately. The test was subsequently linked to everything from trends in SAT scores to BMI and educational attainment in later life.

However, a more recent study indicates that Mischel's conclusions regarding the relationship between self-control and the ability to delay gratification in the very young and later life success, might be questionable.

A team from New York University and the University of California-Irvine has largely failed to replicate the results (journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0956797618761661?journalCode=psa&).

This new study allowed participants to select their own treats, including chocolate, and explored the reactions of 900 children, chosen to better reflect contemporary US society, including 500 whose mothers did not have higher education. The original study featured fewer than 50 youngsters.

Results showed that, while there were still some benefits for children who were able to wait for the larger reward, the impact was nowhere near as significant as that indicated by Mischel.

By the age of 15, once family and parental education were accounted for, even those small benefits seemed to disappear. After a child's background characteristic and environment were corrected for, any difference in the ability to delay gratification at an early age had no significant impact on success in later life.

This suggests that the predictive ability of the original test should not be overstated, and the parents of toddlers who like to reach straight for any available treats need not be overly concerned.

The test also failed to replicate any of the behavioral links suggested by Mischel, meaning that the ability to resist a treat as a toddler had no discernible effect on the creation of a well-rounded teenager a decade later.

This suggests that the ability to delay self-gratification, and even self-control in general, might not be a stable trait. Perhaps it is more like a skill that can be developed and sharpened.

Despite these new results, the original marshmallow tests will continue to have a pervasive impact on approaches to parenting (Mischel's most recent book on the subject was released in 2014), not least because of its simplicity, and the significance of its conclusions, even if more recent research renders them problematic.

• If you have any questions about our column, or the issues raised within it, please e-mail them to us: enquiry@englishlearning.edu.hk

