

Staff Editorial

Issues of equity deserve more than a day

MLK day may have been rather incoherent this year, with many students attending only one or two classes that touched on America’s historical racial wrongdoings. But this most served as a reminder that structural curriculum changes are the most important factor in developing a more equitable school environment.

This year's treatment of Martin Luther King Jr. day left us disappointed, as the majority of classes brushed aside the issues in favor of studying for final exams. While some in STEM suggested that it was too difficult to interweave an examination of historical prejudice with the class material, others managed to study the under-recognized contributions of Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson to NASA’s Mercury 7 mission (portrayed in the film “Hidden Figures”), or the white washed contributions of Arab and Islamic scholars to the fields of geometry and trigonometry.

The Seminar days held in the past were not perfect, they suffered low attendance, and there was considerable variation in the quality of each seminar. Most importantly, material that students study for one day a year isn't likely to stick with them, and its impact is minimized by this factor, as well as each day's poor attendance.

Unfortunately, these are interventions that were not considered until racial tensions rose this year. Unfortunately, this is a usual pattern of institutional response. These are conversations that did not feel necessary until a month ago when multiple incidents of racist graffiti occurred.

According to a Chicago Tribune article from April 18, 2017, when the decision not to repeat seminar day was announced, the school committed to instead integrate examination of historical racial prejudice into the year-round curriculum, but without meaningful proposals from the departments on what this will look like, particularly in STEM classes, this is an empty gesture.

According to a Southern Poverty Law Center report “Teaching Hard History: American Slavery” found that “High School seniors struggle on even the most basic questions about American enslavement of Africans.” While we don't presume that New Trier would score as poorly as the national average, our school should ensure that its students aren’t sheltered from this historical reality, and its inherent connection to white supremacy.

Gerald Danzer’s “The Americans” a popular textbook used by many level three US history classes received a score of only 23% from the SPLC for its coverage of slavery. And while it is a matter of expectation that NT teachers do more than just teach the textbook, the selection of this text is not indicative of strong upper-level support for these efforts.

It is not the school's fault that racism exists in the community, it’s a different story if they don't try to do something, not just after an incident, and not just on MLK jr. Day, but proactively all year round.

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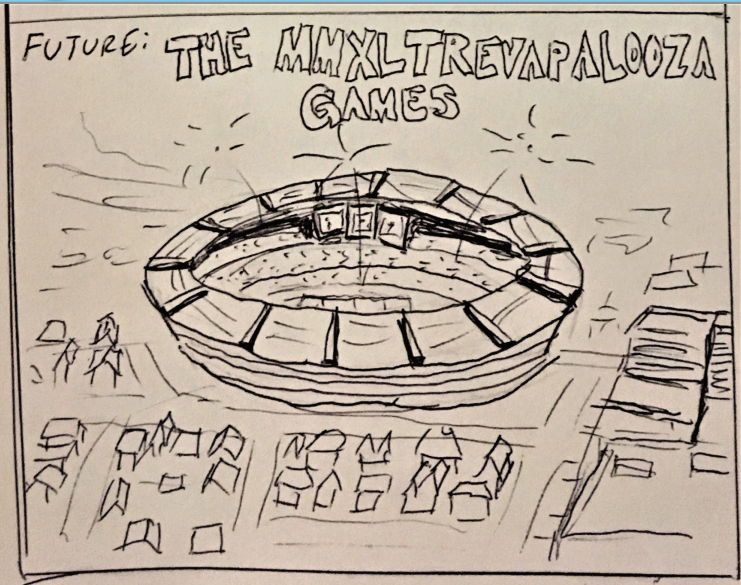
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Procrastinating seems worse than it is

by Michelle Yurovsky



It’s 12 am. As a deadline for an English paper due the following day creeps ever closer, my palms begin to sweat and anxiety heightens. I’m sitting in bed, determined to get started, but all of a sudden this urge to go on a YouTube spiral takes over and I decide to watch a video about tryphobia (someone who fears tiny holes).

I understand that my English paper is important. I also acknowledge that it would be so much less stressful if I just sat down and wrote the paper. Then again I’d much rather go to the kitchen and get something to eat, but let’s be real, I’m probably not even hungry.

If you’re reading this and finding similar patterns between your work ethic and mine, you most likely have a case of severe procrastinating syndrome. Self diagnosed of course, but I myself am living proof that it must exist.

I have been a procrastinator since day one. If my mom asks me to make my bed, I would argue with her about how there is no point in making the bed if I’m just going to mess it up again when I go to sleep.

All of this, of course, was just so I could further delay the process of actually having to make my bed.

I procrastinated writing a speech for my cousin’s rehearsal

Humankind, not mankind nor womankind

by Husnain Raza

In the wake of the Women’s March, a lot of attention has been placed on the issues that face women in the U.S.

However, while there needs to be attention given to women's issues, there is a double standard when it comes to addressing the issues that men face versus the ones that women face.

This stems from the idea that men have cultural, social or legal benefits simply because of their gender -- a type of “privilege”.

This has made it such that the issues that men face are not treated seriously but laughed at.

In October 2015, at the suggestion of having an International Men’s Day in the U.K. to discuss issues that affect men, Labour Member of Parliament Jess Phillips said “You’ll have to excuse me for laughing. As the only woman on this committee, it seems like every day to me is International Men’s Day.”

She later stated “men are celebrated, elevated and awarded every day of the week on every day of the year. Being a man is its own reward. You hit the jackpot when you are born a boy child.”

This is objectively false - statistically, men are disadvantaged in society in many ways. In terms

dinner so I had to make it up on the spot.

I’m not going to act like procrastinating always reaps rewards, because obviously it does not. Sometimes we are faced with consequences for delaying something to such a significant extent.

However, there are other times that I feel myself working better under pressure. There are times when I feel more rewarded after finishing a huge assignment in one night as opposed to breaking it up into chunks as another, more normal person would do.

Everyone procrastinates. There will always be more for us to do than there is time, but the difference is whether or not one is procrastinating well or poorly.

If I know that I have my paper due but I have to go to a birthday dinner with my dad instead, that is active procrastination. Active procrastination is when you prioritize something that you really can’t delay. The line crosses from good to bad when you know your paper is due but you choose to do absolutely anything else besides the paper. For the sole purpose of yes, you guessed it, avoiding to write the paper.

There has never been a positive association with procrastinating. It has been drilled into our heads that it is definitively bad. In my eyes, as long as it gets done, what’s the difference if it’s the night before, or two weeks before?

The problem arises when you procrastinate past the deadline. That’s when procrastinating really

of education, women received 61% of associates and 57% of bachelors degrees in 2015. Men are the primary victims of violent crime as well as war casualties, and women get lesser punishment and are more likely to not be criminally charged than men even after controlling for type of crime committed.

Also, men are underrepresented in child custody cases with men winning only 17.8% of cases. Though breast cancer and prostate cancer affect relatively equal amounts of women and men respectively, breast cancer receives more publicity and four times the funding than prostate cancer gets.

Men account for 97.7% of combat deaths, 77.4% of homicide victims, 77.9% of suicide victims, 93% of workplace deaths; and the list goes on.

Now, I am not saying that this implies that females collectively have privileges over men - doing so is fundamentally flawed for the same reason that it is fundamentally wrong for women to say that all men have some kind of “privilege” that puts them above women. Men and women are, as groups, different and therefore have different issues that need to be addressed.

This was illustrated in a memo that was put out by a former engineer at Google, James Damore, in his controversial memo, where he argues

becomes an issue. You missed the deadline of the paper. You know you have to turn it in, but wait! Not only is there other homework you have to work on, but you’ve also been meaning to start season four of “Black Mirror.”

Life is full of decisions that we make. For those of us that procrastinate, we seem to jump towards the decisions that seem more rewarding in the moment, and we don’t base our decisions on what would be beneficial in the long run.

Procrastination could be interpreted as having short term benefits and long term costs. For the sake of being happy, everyone needs a balance of short term benefits here and there.

For the record, by no means do I like the feeling of knowing I have missed a deadline and further procrastinating. This is an example of bad procrastinating.

To get back on track of being a good procrastinator, the most important skill that I’ve learned is actually quite simple: it’s just to start. For most of us, the problem isn’t writing the paper itself, it’s just knowing that it has to be written and wanting to delay it to the last possible moment.

Whether or not you wait until the very last minute to get the job done, we each have our own ways of doing so. If I knowingly put myself in the position of having to cram 8 pages in one night, that’s fine as long as it gets the job done.

Procrastinating will only be a setback if you let it manifest itself in every aspect of your life.

that “differences in distributions of traits between men and women may in part explain why we don't have 50% representation of women in tech and leadership,” and that artificially pushing for more women in STEM fields is “unfair, divisive, and bad for business.”

He then argues that to get more balanced gender representation in STEM fields, we should focus on tailoring STEM jobs to make them more compatible with these traits instead of hiring women for the sake of being women.

For releasing this memo, Damore was fired from Google citing the violation of anti discrimination laws.

If bringing up statistics and making suggestions as to how to better tailor a business is discrimination, then in my opinion there is no clear path to bettering these issues since no productive discussion can be had.

Acknowledging differences between the sexes is not discriminatory, only observational about general trends - there can be very masculine women and feminine men but on average, men and women exhibit different traits. Treating women and men like they are the same undermines the reality that men and women face different challenges; unless we acknowledge this, these challenges cannot be overcome.

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