

EDUCATION

AN EDUCATE JAMAICA PUBLICATION

matters



**The Pandemic
Impact is Visible!**



REFLECTION

Management, Teaching
and Learning During the
Pandemic

**HIGH SCHOOL
PERFORMANCE
INDEX 2023**

2023

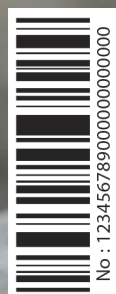
**Mrs. Stacey
Reynolds**

**PRINCIPAL
The Immaculate
Conception High**

Rivetting Articles!

Is AI here for
your job?

Harnessing
the Power of AI



The Pandemic Impact is Visible!

What is The Plan Going forward?

Looking at the recent performance scores coming out of the high schools, it is clear to see that the pandemic undoubtedly took its toll on the education system and this will become even more evident as we delve into the data more deeply at all levels of the education system. The data we will be using to evidence the impact of the pandemic will be the first post-pandemic high school performance index (INDEX 2023), however, it must be kindly noted that this impact spans all the key stages of our education system (early childhood, primary and high schools) and for the purpose of credibility we will only reference data that has appeared in our high school performance index.

We will start by saying that, it is exciting to see Immaculate Conception, Campion College, St Andrew High for Girls, Wolmers' Girls School, Montego Bay High School and Ardenne High appear seemingly unscathed and I believe the factors that have supported these schools in their journey of resilience can be clearly identified and they are the factors that we must aspire to have in all our schools at every level of the education system.

An event such as a global pandemic did very little to hinder the national outcomes for these schools, which speaks to the 'formidability' of these factors. If we look at the high school performance index 2023, we see that high performing schools in 2019 (prior to the pandemic), that were hitting cohort percentages of 80-90%, have seen as much as a 30% fall in the percentage of their cohort whom have met the success threshold. Most educators will state that they are not surprised by the fall in the performance percentages; in addition, they will also state that this is reflected in all countries globally.

If nothing else, this latest high school performance index highlights the need for a tailored response to 2 years of lost education across the entire nation and it's a charge that must be nationally led by the Ministry of Education (and not a disjointed process at the school level led by individual schools). With that said, it must be noted that the success of any intervention will require the commitment of all stakeholders including the parents and any attempt to leave the success of the outcomes solely at the feet of the Ministry of Education is also a non-starter.

So What Were The Success Factors in the Pandemic Resilient High Schools?

They were:

1. Good and Proactive Leadership
2. The excellent adoption and use of technology across the board
3. Excellent or very good home/school partnership
4. The creation of independent and proactive learners
5. A resilient and adaptable teaching and administrative staff





The five factors highlighted above were the key factors that enabled all the high schools nationally, who were able to achieve 70% or more of their cohort achieving the successful outcome as measured by the Educate Jamaica High School Performance Index (EJHSP Index). As an organization that focuses on the aspirations of schools we would like to encourage all schools to self assess against these 5 outcomes and create a formidable plan to achieve these 5 outcomes.



Ainsworth Darby M.A. B.Ed. Dip. Ed
Founder & Chairman
EDUCATE JAMAICA

Save Energy! Save Money! MyJPS!

The MyJPS Mobile App gives you the power to:

-  Track your energy usage
-  Manage multiple accounts
-  Chat with an agent
-  Receive outage updates
AND SO MUCH MORE!



Helping you have more
POWER AND CONTROL!



IS AI HERE FOR YOUR JOB?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made significant progress over the last few decades, and its impact on the job market is evident. However, while some view AI as a tool to enhance human capabilities and increase productivity, others are worried that AI could lead to job displacement or even replacement. The potential impact of AI on jobs and whether it is here to take your job is discussed in this article.

Firstly, understand that AI is not a single technology and that we have been using AI for years. What is new is generative AI which is based on large language models (LLM). Second, AI is a collection of various sub fields, such as deep learning neural networks, machine learning, natural language processing, and robotics. Even separately, the subfields can automate many tasks currently performed by humans. In the past, this led to job displacement; however, humans also benefited due to enhanced capabilities and new job opportunities.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) posits that similar concerns regarding AI and automation causing job displacement were raised in the dotcom era, yet the internet created millions of jobs in the US and comprised 10% of its GDP. Moreover, a report by the WEF estimates that by 2025, automation and AI could displace 85 million jobs globally but create 97 million new ones. A PwC report suggests that Sixty-three percent of CEOs believe AI will significantly impact the growth of the global economies more than the internet. WEF noted that the impact of automation depends on how the transition is managed. As such, AI will not completely replace humans in the workforce but instead augment human capabilities. It is, however, essential to note the new opportunities for those who can adapt and reskill.

A study by PwC suggests that AI could increase global GDP by up to 14% by 2030, equivalent to \$15.7 trillion. This economic growth could create new job opportunities in the healthcare, education, and professional services sectors. WEF Future of Jobs Report 2020 indicated that employers expect over 70% of employees to reskill or upskill by 2025. Even with employee reskilling or upskilling, the benefits of AI, as with the internet, are not evenly distributed, and specific industries and occupations may experience job displacement. Some jobs are more susceptible to automation than others. For example, jobs involving routines and repetitive tasks are likely to be automated, while jobs requiring creativity, problem-solving, and social intelligence are less likely to be automated. A report by McKinsey noted that 30% of jobs globally could be automated by 2030, but the impact will vary depending on countries and occupations.

Finally, AI is here to stay, and its impact on human jobs is inevitable as some jobs may be displaced. However, there exist excellent job creation opportunities with higher-paying jobs available. For humans to be equitable and be part of the new AI-driven economy, policymakers, businesses, and individuals must work together to reskill and upskill the workforce, especially those in jobs vulnerable to automation. Ultimately, AI is not here for our jobs, and the impact of AI depends on how we manage the integration with humans. AI is not new, and we have been using it for decades, so humans need to reskill, upskill, and integrate it wisely. In my next article, we will examine helping businesses to engage AI for productivity.

About the Author

Dave Watson, PhD, is a lecturer at the School of Computing and Information Technology, University of Technology, Jamaica, and CEO of Tred Laboratories Limited.



Harnessing the Power of AI to enhance teaching & Learning



Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a transformative force across various industries, and education is no exception. As technology advances, educators increasingly explore innovative ways to integrate AI into teaching and learning environments. By leveraging AI, educators can complement traditional instructional methods, personalize learning experiences, and empower students with valuable tools for knowledge acquisition. Essentially, AI should be embraced, and teachers and students should be encouraged to find tools to support innovative AI teaching and learning.

One of the primary benefits of AI in education is its ability to adapt content delivery to individual student needs. AI-powered intelligent tutoring systems can analyze student performance data, identify knowledge gaps, and provide personalized recommendations for remedial content. For instance, platforms like Babbel and Duolingo utilize AI algorithms to create personalized learning pathways, ensuring students receive tailored instruction and support.

Assessment is a critical component of the learning process, and AI can significantly enhance its efficiency and accuracy. Automated grading systems powered by AI algorithms can analyze large volumes of student work, such as essays or programming code, providing timely and consistent feedback. This allows teachers to focus on higher-order tasks, such as providing personalized guidance and facilitating meaningful discussions. Additionally, AI can detect patterns in student performance data to identify areas where additional support or intervention may be required.

AI powered intelligent tutoring systems (ITS) offer personalized and adaptive learning experiences. These systems utilize machine learning algorithms to model and understand student knowledge, skills, and learning preferences. By tracking student progress, an ITS can dynamically adjust the instructional content, pace, and difficulty level to optimize learning outcomes. For instance, Carnegie Learning & Cognitive Tutor provides individualized math instruction by adapting to each student's unique learning needs.

NLP, a subfield of AI, enables computers to understand and respond to human language. This technology has revolutionized language learning applications. Language learning platforms like Rosetta Stone and Babbel employ AI powered NLP to provide interactive and immersive experiences. Students can practice speaking and writing skills with AI chatbots that simulate real-life conversations, offering instant feedback and corrections.

Intelligent virtual assistants, such as Amazon's Alexa or Google Assistant, have become ubiquitous in homes, but they also hold great potential in educational settings. These AI-powered assistants can provide instant access to vast amounts of information, helping students with research, fact-checking, or answering questions. Educators can leverage these tools to foster independent learning and critical thinking skills. Additionally, models based on Generative AI, such as ChatGPT and Google's Bard, are helpful and can be used as assistants.

AI can analyze vast amounts of data collected from students' interactions with digital learning platforms, providing valuable insights to educators. By examining patterns and trends, teachers can identify struggling students, tailor instruction, and implement targeted interventions. Moreover, AI analytics can enable predictive modeling to forecast student performance, allowing proactive support and early intervention strategies.

In concluding, integrating AI into teaching and learning environments offers many opportunities to enhance education. From personalized content delivery and intelligent tutoring systems to automated assessment and virtual assistants, AI technologies have the potential to revolutionize the way we teach and learn. However, it is crucial to balance technological innovation and human interaction. AI should be viewed as a complementary tool, empowering educators and students rather than replacing them. By harnessing the power of AI, we can create more engaging, personalized, and effective learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of students in the 21st century.

About the Author

Dave Watson, PhD, is a lecturer at the School of Computing and Information Technology, University of Technology, Jamaica, and CEO of Tred Laboratories Limited.





ZED TECHNOLOGIES

SUITE OF PRODUCTS

**Your Software Solution Experts
Serving schools, public and private
sector businesses for over 18 years.**



Renweb/Facts SIS

(School Management System)



- Powerful Student Information System.
- High Security Standards to keep your data safe.
- Cloud based, no need for maintenance of equipment at your school.
- Free Software Upgrades.
- Transform your school to be paperless and to reduce costs and become more efficient.
- Email reports and provide a student portal to parents to access records.



Online Payment Processor

- No need for voucher system, collect online payments or at islandwide branches to directly reconcile to student's account.
- Fast Transfers, Low Cost Solution.
- Collect Funds Immediately 24/7, No Lines, No Waiting!
- Open a donation portal from past students or school donors. Parents/Donors can pay fees/contributions/donations online with Credit Cards or Visa Debit Cards.

Online Application

- Students/Parents can apply online completely eliminating the need for paper applications.
- Students can be uploaded into Renweb/FACTS SIS. Get all the necessary mandatory data needed for accurate student records.



View Graphical School Performance Data

- Graphical Dashboards.
- View graphical performance data of students, teachers and subjects.

If you're not currently part of our FACTS SIS family of schools in Jamaica, and your current school management system doesn't meet the Government's Data Protection Standard as of **December 1, 2023**, your school may want to take advantage of our extended promotional offer.

This includes:

- ✓ Discounts off setup
- ✓ Two months of free maintenance post-implementation.
- ✓ A free online seminar for your school's data protection officer.
- ✓ Free setup of the student billing system.
- ✓ Training of school nurses and so much more.....

Call our team today for a demo and more information
our suite of products and how we can help you today.

☎ **876-880-3301/365-5074/499-3157/499-3155**

✉ **info@zedtechnologiesja.com** or visit our website at **www.zedjamaica.com**

EDUCATE JAMAICA HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDEX 2023

INDEX MOTTO: *'What gets measured gets managed.'*

	NAME OF SCHOOL	GENDER	PARISH	SCORE
1	Immaculate Conception High	Girls Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	98.8%
2	Campion College	Co-educational	Kgn & St. Andrew	97.5%
3	St. Andrew High School for Girls	Girls Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	93%
4	Wolmers' Girls School	Girls Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	92.4%
5	Montego Bay High School for Girls	Girls Only	St. James	91%
6	Ardenne High	Co-educational	Kgn & St. Andrew	90.1%
7	Wolmer's Boys School	Boys Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	80%
8	Westwood High	Girls Only	Trelawny	79.44%
9	Munro College	Boys Only	St. Elizabeth	79.1%
10	Manning's School	Co-educational	St. Westmoreland	79%
11	Hampton School	Girls Only	St. Elizabeth	76%
12	Glenmuir High	Co-educational	Clarendon	75.7%
13	Manchester High	Co-educational	Manchester	75%
14	Belmont Academy	Co-educational	Westmoreland	73%
15	Mount Alvernia High	Girls Only	St. James	72%
16	St. Hilda's High	Girls Only	St. Ann	71.6%
17	St. George's College	Boys Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	68%
18	Bishop Gibson High	Girls Only	Manchester	68%
19	Holy Childhood High	Girls Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	67.4%
20	Jamaica College	Boys Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	65.06%
21	Kingston College	Boys Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	64.4%
22	Covent of Mercy Alpha	Girls Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	63.2%
23	St. Jago High	Co-educational	St. Catherine	61.7%
24	DeCarteret College	Co-educational	Manchester	61%
25	Calabar High	Boys Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	58%
26	The Queen's School	Girls Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	55%
27	St. Hugh's High	Girls Only	Kgn & St. Andrew	55%

All the relevant schools were contacted and solid attempts were made to verify the data of each school. Schools that have unfortunately NOT been include were as a result of the school achieving less than 50% of their students meeting the criteria or we were unable to verify the accuracy of their data. **EDUCATE JAMAICA DOES NOT USE SITTINGS IN ITS CALCULATIONS. SITTINGS DISINCENTIVIZE SCHOOLS FROM ENTERING STUDENTS FOR EXAMS. USING SITTINGS AS THE BASIS FOR CALCULATIONS REDUCES THE FOCUS ON IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE.** Each school was measured using the percentage of their total grade 11 cohort that achieved 5 or more subjects (inclusive of BOTH Mathematics and English at CSEC). It must be noted that all subjects sat prior to grade 11 (7,8,9 and 10) were taken into account.

ZED JAMAICA & TECHNOLOGIES



Zed Jamaica Limited (Zed Technologies) is a company that was established in 2001 at the Technology Innovation Centre. Through our partnership with FACTS SIS (Renweb), we offer a comprehensive suite of technologically advanced solutions to schools, enabling them to effectively manage their processes. In addition to our software, we provide training, technical support, hosting, cyber security, data protection, and various value-added services. Schools that utilize our products and services experience improved efficiency, enhanced teacher performance, increased parent engagement, reduced costs, and a greater focus on student performance due to streamlined operational processes.

We cater to approximately 110 schools in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region, including the Bahamas, St. Maarten, Cayman, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia, Antigua, Grenada, US Virgin Islands, St. Croix, and St. Vincent. Our mission is to bring advanced technology solutions to Caribbean schools, matching or surpassing what is available in developed economies, and making it universally accessible.

In the current year, we are placing a strong emphasis on Data Protection and Cyber Security. Our conference held on April 19, 2023, at the Pegasus Hotel received positive feedback and can be viewed on our website, www.zedjamaica.com.

In recent years, schools have become increasingly targeted by cybercrimes, including ransomware attacks. With the advancement of artificial intelligence, the threat level has risen. Factors such as limited funding, a lack of cyber experts in schools, increased student online activity, and outdated IT systems with limited upgrades have made schools more vulnerable. Cybercriminals primarily target financial and medical records, making bursaries and nurseries high-value targets. FACTS SIS consistently provides the necessary security and protection, including for bursaries and medical records, and we fully comply with the Ministry's data protection standards. Zed Jamaica and FACTS SIS will be organizing a series of online seminars, free of charge, for the school's data protection officers.

Is Your School Prepared for Jamaica's Data Protection Act? We Can Help.

Stay ahead of regulations and protect your student, staff, and parent data with peace of mind. FACTS Student Information System is fully compliant with the Data Protection Act 2020, ensuring the safeguarding of sensitive information.

In April, we brought together school administrators, Jamaican businesses, government officials, and FACTS clients and associates who are working together to improve cybersecurity and data protection for schools and families. Speakers provided insights on how to keep data secure, what the government is doing to support schools in this effort and how FACTS Student Information System is facilitating data protection for schools in Jamaica.

View the event at zedmakeyla.com/showcasing-the-conference.

Upgrade your school management system today.
Contact us for a demo at 876.880.3301 or carlton@zedjamaica.com.



A message from Hon. Fayval Williams,
Minister of Education and Youth



A message from Damion Crawford,
Opposition Spokesperson
on Education and Youth



University of Technology, Jamaica
 Accredited by The University Council of Jamaica

FIND YOUR PLACE AT THE *Birthplace of Greatness*

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND
MANAGEMENT

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND
COMPUTING

COLLEGE OF HEALTH
SCIENCES

FACULTY OF LAW

JOINT COLLEGES OF
MEDICINE, ORAL HEALTH
AND VETERINARY SCIENCES

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND
SPORT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
AND LIBERAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT



Excellence Through Knowledge



www.utechjamaica.edu.jm
prospectinfo@utech.edu.jm

REFLECTION & COMMENTS:

Lead, Teach, Learn and the Use of Tech During the Pandemic

Reflection 1: School A - Champion College

1. The Champion administration began planning for the possibility of the closure of physical school and the transition to online teaching and learning in January 2020. This meant procuring the necessary Zoom licences; integration of Zoom, Moodle and Renweb for more efficient online teaching, ensuring all teachers and needy students had devices as well as the training of staff in online delivery of lessons. When the announcement was made to close schools on Thursday, March 12, 2020, we were able to use Monday, March 16 for training students in the use of Zoom and the Moodle platform and we started full online engagement with all students by Tuesday March 17th.
2. Timetables were adjusted to maximize student learning in examined subjects while minimizing screen time. Collaboration among teachers for effective lesson delivery was intensified.
3. There was on-going training of teachers in the use of the various apps and tech tools for improving student engagement during extended online teaching.
4. Students were brought on campus, as early and as safely as possible, to complete all SBA labs, and most importantly for in-person invigilated exams. Online exams did not yield valid, reliable results.
5. The Learning Management System was extensively used for the posting of learning resources to facilitate students' independent study.
6. ALL teachers were exposed to strategies for promoting good mental health in their students. The Guidance Dept. had special classes addressing this concern, but every subject teacher was asked to make this a key component of every lesson.
7. The school advocated for a delay to the start of the CXC examinations in 2022.
8. There was frequent and detailed communication with parents.
9. In the few instances where a student was deemed unfit for promotion to the next grade level because of significant learning loss, parents were encouraged to have their child participate in a special Retention Programme. This involved supervised homework at school, extra classes and special sessions with the Guidance Department for emotional support. Because of the stigma attached to repeating a grade, convincing students and parents to participate in the Retention Programme was very difficult. However, the initiative was very successful.



Grace Baston (Mrs)
Principal



**CAMPION
COLLEGE**
FORTES IN FIDE ET OPERE

continued on next page

REFLECTION & COMMENTS:

Lead, Teach, Learn and the Use of Tech During the Pandemic

Reflection 2: School B - Ardenne High School

1. There was an Inclusive Leadership approach to how the school's vision was crafted, articulated, managed and led. A good mix of the negotiables and non-negotiables in design and implementation, which led to growth and development, was clear to everyone. Our initiatives were policy driven and result oriented. Creativity and innovation in all areas were valued and protected. The Leadership was responsive and not reactive, which resulted in cohesive and purposeful outcomes. This worked very well during the pandemic

2. The on-going ICT integration of teaching, learning and assessment were prioritised as a response to industry developments and trends. Preparation of all stakeholders was recognized as critical as were relevant infrastructure development and resource upgrades and management. Staff's professional development and subsequent accountability framework for implementation and review were also a strong priority. Human resource management was also critical; for example, the systems administration team was a new group that continued to emerge more skilled, greater competency and importance. All staff and students knew how to use ICT and used it for both curricular and co-curricular activities including daily devotions.

3. A strong PTA presence and participation at the school allowed for clear communication and support for the ICT initiatives of the school such as the Bring Your Own Device policy and e-testing. Constant feedback and reviews were critical to remaining relevant and this enabled the stage for learning and growing in the space during the pandemic.

4. School at Ardenne was about a broad-based educational experience that led our students to passing examinations. We did not offer a grade-mill experience. All activities, curricular and co-curricular were designed to foster creativity, innovation, leadership capacity and the ability to be proactive and self-regulatory. This we believe was critical to our above 90 per cent (90%) performance academically over the period. We saw this at play during the two years spent online and in the sometimes hybrid approach since then.

5. Managing change was always difficult, however, when support was given from both an emotional and professional standpoint, it made a difference. While there were perhaps too many moving parts to navigate to achieve perfection, the space was provided for staff members who wished to grow and excel to do so. Most took advantage of these opportunities and the results are nothing short of amazing. A very big thank you to the staff that worked as a team, learning, unlearning and relearning so much along the way.



Nadine Malloy, JP
Principal



ARDENNE HIGH SCHOOL

continued on next page

REFLECTION & COMMENTS:

Lead, Teach, Learn and the Use of Tech During the Pandemic

Reflection 3: School C - Immaculate Conception High

In my reflection on our experience of school leadership at Immaculate Conception High School during the pandemic, I used the opportunity to discuss the topic with the general academic staff during a staff meeting. They were asked to share some of the things they thought we executed well in order to manage the day-to-day operations despite being online for the most part. These were some of the responses that were shared.

1. Systems were implemented to ensure that all students and teachers had a device and were online. This was as a result of team work/constant communication with the Home and School Association (HSA) Executive and the New York Chapter of the Past Students Association. The HSA enabled students to log onto classes, through the provision of data to needy students as well as purchasing laptops/tablets along with the Alumni (New York Chapter). The school also facilitated some students who had device and/or internet challenges, as well as those who lacked parent supervision at home to come into the school and were accommodated by the Guidance Counsellors in one of the IT labs to sit and participate in online classes. Upon request, the HSA also assisted the school with the purchasing of cameras to provide the students with a more efficient atmosphere for online learning as teachers could facilitate asynchronous and synchronous sessions.
2. Systems were implemented to ensure teacher attendance to classes and were present for the duration of classes. Teachers were held accountable and had to sign in online to record their attendance. Parents were encouraged to communicate with the Principal once a teacher did not turn-up for sessions.
3. The Administration and Senior Management facilitated constant classroom observations/evaluations of teachers in the online space and an instrument was created to facilitate this.
4. Teachers with device and internet issues, despite assistance, were accommodated at school.
5. Students were mandated to be present for all classes and a system put in place to track them. Once a student was absent from two consecutive sessions, a report was to be sent to the Guidance Department/Dean of Discipline for home visit and feedback provided to the Administration.
6. New Student Handbook (rules) was created for the online setting.
7. Staff workshops were consistently held for the different platforms and their applications; training sessions led by ICHS Master Teacher Mrs. Malladi on using online apps. These were used for learning asynchronously and synchronously.
8. While labs were facilitated online as much as possible, workshops were also put in place for students to get work done on campus, to complete labs and especially for revision sessions, in small groups and with parents' consent.
9. Once permission was provided for students to resume face-to-face sessions, every effort was put in place to resume campus activities and ICHS was one of the first schools to be provided with permission for face-to-face sessions and graduation.
10. Students created online study groups and tagged their teachers and despite the discomfort of online learning, the girls kept on task.

continued on next page

REFLECTION & COMMENTS:

Lead, Teach, Learn and the Use of Tech During the Pandemic

Reflection 3: School C - Immaculate Conception High

- 11.** The Administration ensured that day-to-day activities were as normal as possible and activities like General Assembly, prize giving, parent/teacher consultation, form time/registration, HSA meetings, block meetings, club/co-curricular activities, house meetings and sports day were held as regularly scheduled on the timetable, virtually.
- 12.** Psychosocial sessions were regularly scheduled with the assistance of the HSA and Guidance Department, for the entire school (Teachers and students).
- 13.** The Principal facilitated regular online meetings with the different year groups to directly hear concerns from parents.
- 14.** School offices remained open the entire time and school administrators were present, on the compound, every day. Teachers were also encouraged to come in to work once they needed time away from home for a different setting. They were able to take their children with them once the need was there. While a full team effort was displayed, we do not think we accomplished all tasks to perfection. We faced a lot of issues, however, we must thank all the stakeholders for their commitment.



Stacey Reynolds
Principal



**IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION
HIGH SCHOOL**

EDUCATION MATTERS 2023

An Educate Jamaica Publication
EDUCATE JAMAICA 2023

Website: www.educatejamaica.org

Email: info@educatejamaica.org



Design done by
Lambert Turner
Graphic/Vector Designer
lambert.turner@gmail.com