

JUNE 2021

AMISA NEWSLETTER

American International Schools in the Americas



WE HAVE MOVED

NEW WEBSITE
www.amisa.us

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From the Executive Director

by Dr. Dereck Rhoads



Greetings AMISA (formerly AASSA) Friends and Colleagues!

Thank you for reading our 1st AMISA Newsletter! We are excited to share our new website (www.amisa.us) with you. Our new website will be fully functional very soon. We are also happy to share our new social media accounts with you in this newsletter. We will share our new emails with you soon and ask that you begin to contact us at the new emails, but of course we will have our old emails forwarding during our time of transition.

The 2020-2021 academic year has continued to present many challenges to us all. Yet, as we finish out this school year, we can be optimistic as we look forward to the coming year ahead. Our hope is to be in person for our annual recruiting fair in Atlanta this coming December, 2021.

We have some exciting changes happening to our Recruiting Database as we make the database mobile friendly and include a live chat feature so that we can continue to offer the Virtual Meet & Greet events that we held this year as part of our Recruiting Service.

The power of teamwork and collaboration can never be underestimated. Therefore, I once again extend a special invitation to all AMISA Heads of School to join in our weekly Thursday Zoom calls. I email the link out to all Heads of School each Tuesday. You can also receive the link to the Thursday calls by registering on our website or on the AAIE website. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about accessing the Thursday calls.

Yahoo hooray! ZOOM licenses for the coming year are confirmed and all schools that requested licenses have been contacted with details. Again, we extend our most sincere thank you to Thomas Shearer, Dr. Robin Heslip and the Office of Overseas Schools for the amazing assistance and support they continue to provide.

As always, I leave you with one to think on...

After 30 years, and 40 million copies sold, the principles in Stephen Covey's best-selling book, the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, still ring true. Indeed, Habit 7, Sharpen the Saw, is perhaps more important for us today than it was in 1989 when the original book was written.

"We must never become too busy sawing to take time to sharpen the saw" – Dr. Stephen R. Covey.

THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING COLLEAGUES FROM THE REGION WHO SERVED AS AASSA CONNECT GROUP LEADERS THIS YEAR

Judy Imamudeen
Juliana Marsigli
Billy Thomas
Gustavo Segui
Shannon Beckley
Elias Barlow
Kristen Morelan
Andre Wiggins
Betty Lin
Alison Gould
Michael Ennis
Stephanie Beck
Rena Barlow
Andrew Lin



A TRIBUTE TO

Silvia Tolisano

our beloved colleague, friend, and educator

On March 1, 2021, AMISA suddenly lost one of its own, Silvia Tolisano. Monday, March 1, 2021 seemed like just any other Monday, with the AMISA team meeting to kick off the week. As usual, Silvia was fully engaged sharing ideas, resources and encouragement with the team as she had been doing since joining AMISA full-time in July 2021. Prior to joining full-time, Silvia served as the social media consultant for the organization. However, Monday, March 1, 2021 would not be a normal Monday. Later that afternoon, at approximately 4:30 p.m., our colleague and friend unexpectedly passed away peacefully at home.

To say that Silvia left this Earth too early is an understatement. Her impact was wide felt and long-lasting. Her contributions to AMISA (formerly AASSA) were significant, as were her contributions and impact to so many institutions and individuals across the world. She will be sorely missed. However, we celebrate the fact that she leaves behind a legacy that her family, friends and colleagues can be so very proud of – and continue to be proud of – as we all seek to make learning visible, to push our thinking to better the world, and to help make our world a better place for generations to come.

We love you, Silvia, and we miss you dearly.



New Look New Learning New Year Ahead



by Adam Slaton, AMISA Chief
Learning Officer

Saying that the 2020-2021 academic year was a difficult is an understatement. Our lives were tipped completely upside down in a matter of days. Schools had to pivot. Leaders and educators had to adapt. Communities had to learn to adjust to abrupt change that brought with it fear, a sense of loss, and uncertainty. Trauma and loss quickly spread through our communities, and continues to linger. It is a situation that no textbook had ever prepared us for.

It also taught us the importance of time, the beauty of practicing the art of reframing, refocused our personal and professional priorities, and shifted our thoughts and actions about humanity and education. These experiences help develop our resilience and allow us to continue a new path forward.

Beginning anew.

As our organization pushed through the end of this academic year, we are excited to offer a sense of newness to our membership: a renewed focus on connecting, learning, and supporting our member schools.

NEW LOOK

Our new website www.amisa.us is up and running and ready and includes special privileges and offerings for AMISA member schools!

Enhanced Networking and Connecting

Educators, leaders, and staff from AMISA member schools can join our site as members gaining exclusive access to enhanced networking capabilities.

AMISA Connect Groups

Our Connect Groups are designed to facilitate networking space for members that hold similar roles within the school community. Think of these groups as virtual "job-alikes" where members can share ideas, files, videos, resources, and connect instantly with other members in the community. No more waiting for our virtual meetings with the community accessible at the click of the button!

AMISA Connect Forums

Our Connect Forums are self-facilitated networking spaces for members to share resources, thoughts, ideas, and expertise with one another around a specific topic or set of topics. Forums are not categorized by roles or positions, but rather by themes and topics of interest. Members can interact with multiple forums on the site.

Member-Only Resources

Our Member-only Resource pages will offer a variety of material that is curated, created, and available exclusively to AMISA member schools.

NEW LEARNING

We are excited to offer a revamped structure for learning opportunities that include member-only benefits and experiences. Our focus is to make learning accessible and meaningful for all learners focused on the needs of our member schools.

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Year-Long Learning Experiences

Our year-long learning experiences are designed to:

- Engage school teams in ongoing cohort-style learning
- Provide level-up learning opportunities over the course of a year
- Create tangible products based on learning outcomes
- Immerse learners in one of AMISA's Professional Learning Strands

This new initiative will allow schools a unique, intense, and purposeful professional learning experience on one topic in each of our Professional Learning Strands.

[Check out our 2021-2022 Year-long Learning Experience Offerings!](#)

AMISA Showcase Speakers

Throughout the academic year, AMISA will feature a Showcase Speaker in each of our Professional Learning Strands: Visionary Leadership, Progressive Learning, and Vibrant Communities. Learn with some of the top leaders, thought-partners, and performers! [Check out our 2021-2022 Showcase Speaker Line-up!](#)

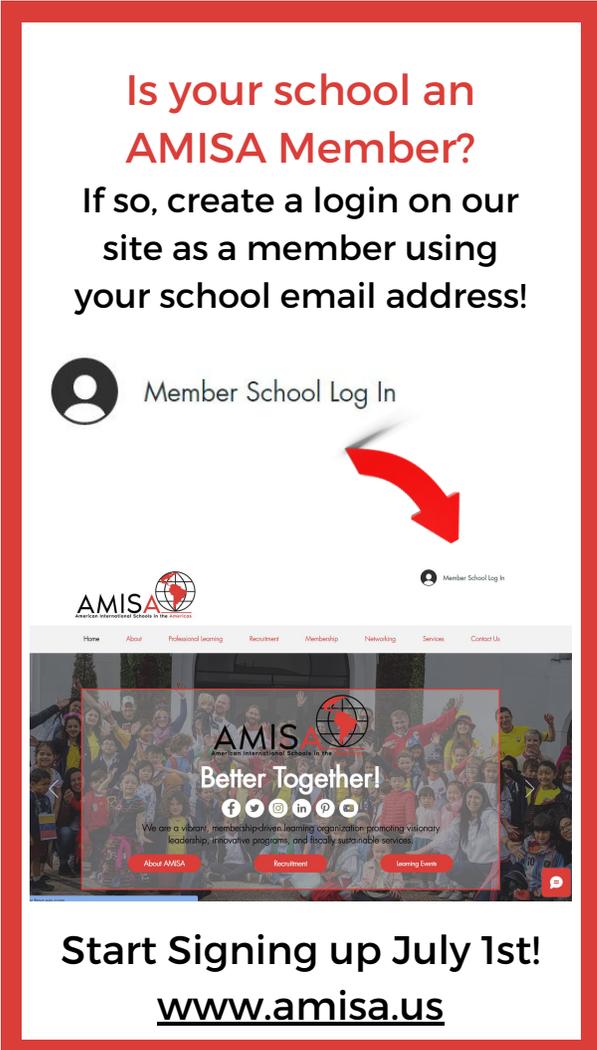
AMISA Spotlight Learning

We will be offering a featured Spotlight Learning opportunity in each of our Professional Learning Strands during the academic year. These opportunities are a series of events facilitated by consultants around a specific topic within the learning strand and are offered at a discounted price for member schools.

NEW YEAR

As we continue to plan learning events for the new year, we are hopeful that opportunities will present themselves for in-person learning. Rethinking in-person learning structures continues to be at the forefront of our planning, as does continuing to innovate, transform, and adjust learning for our member schools.

We are fueled by the deep desire to serve and are hopeful that the new academic year will bring a renewed sense of belonging, of community, and of collegiality. Wishing you a restful and well-deserved summer break!



Is your school an AMISA Member?
If so, create a login on our site as a member using your school email address!

 Member School Log In



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American International Schools in the Americas

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Start Signing up July 1st!
www.amisa.us

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Shifting from Passive to Active Learning

by Trillium Hibbeln, M.Ed., Associate Director, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Commission on International Education

One of my favorite activities to do with school leaders are focused learning walks. There are many ways to focus brief learning walks and longer learning observations. At NEASC, we train school leaders to look for evidence of learning impacts along the lines of our NEASC ACE Learning Principles, for example. But sometimes, school leaders need a very simple but powerful approach to help them unearth the core of learners' experiences in their school.

I was recently working with one such school. The mission, vision, values and teaching standards of the school professed they were preparing learners to be global citizens who were engaged in and responsible for their own learning. Their website and promotional materials made the school sound like the kind of place I'd like to learn as a child. After three days of observations, I found that the reality was not at all aligned with the image

the school was promoting nor how leaders described the learning at the school. I made a last-minute change to my workshop plan for the group. I asked the leadership team to go into various parts of the school with a pad of sticky notes and a pen. I instructed them to write down only verbs on their sticky notes. Specifically, what did they see learners doing? I told them not to focus on what the teacher was doing, which is a natural instinct for mid and senior level leaders who are accustomed to evaluating teacher performance.

Twenty minutes later, the group returned with 50 or so sticky notes among them and they posted them on the wall for all to see. The verbs included: watching, listening, taking notes, answering teachers' questions, yawning, doodling, "work-sheeting", waiting, and even sleeping! We spent a few minutes letting that sink in. Next, I asked the group to brainstorm on their sticky notes what they would like to see if learning experiences were transformed to mirror their guiding statements and indeed their aspirations. The new sticky notes included: debating, creating, reflecting, building, solving, questioning, brainstorming, researching and presenting. One wall represented their current reality (passive learning) and the other wall their aspirations (active learning).

The first step in moving a school toward more transformative learning is to understand and truly believe there is a misalignment. Sometimes it is best to reduce the jargon and education-speak and keep it simple. Are our learners *actively* engaged in learning or are they passively receiving what we are delivering?

If I could simplify my one greatest wishes for learners across all schools, it would be that their learning becomes much more ACTIVE. As simple as this sounds, it requires a fundamental shift in the role of the teacher and the learner. I challenge you to go out and honestly record the verbs that describe what learners are doing at your school and then reflect on the extent to which your current reality is aligned to your school's aspirations.

Trillium Hibbeln, M.Ed. is the Associate Director for the Commission on International Education at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). In this role, she inspires schools to transform learning for the 21st century and beyond. She has been instrumental in the development and implementation of NEASC's ground-breaking ACE Learning Protocol, which has replaced traditional compliance-based accreditation with a focus on impactful learning for all. She has lived and worked in five countries; her professional career includes international development work, hospital administration, and international education.

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How Can Digital Education Positively Impact Learning?

By James Moon, International Business Development Manager, Edmentum

The pandemic has had a big impact on schools. They have had to adapt and adjust to the significant challenges of maintaining health and safety, ensuring education continuity, and providing social and emotional learning and wellbeing support. Some schools could continue in-school learning while others had to rapidly transition to virtual learning, with some even offering in-person and online hybrid learning simultaneously.

This has put a strain on teachers. In addition to the extra hours of work, there's the mental fatigue of worrying about their students' safety, ensuring everyone follows the guidelines. Even before the coronavirus pandemic, there was a predicted teacher shortage, which will only worsen with more educators retiring early, visa queries, or switching professions due to COVID-19-related issues.

So how can your school best address the oncoming teacher crisis? And how can digital education have a positive impact on learning?

[UNICEF reports](#) that, on average, children in Latin America and the Caribbean have lost nearly four times more days of schooling than children in the rest of the world (174 school days). That's not all; the World Bank released data on [the number of trained teachers in](#)

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primary education across Latin America and the Caribbean (as of September 2020). The graph shows a significant decline in teachers since 2018, which has continued to decrease. Teachers are among the most influential forces for equity, access, and quality in education and key to education development. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 69 million teachers must be recruited to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030, making the supply of well-trained, supported, and qualified teachers one of its top priorities.

Some trends are emerging from these reports. There is a gap in teacher enrolment, and students are missing out on an adequate education. Development of an educational approach that will finally service our learners' needs and strengths is needed. It is an opportunity for education systems worldwide to reimagine learning to meet the 21st-century learner and workplace needs.

According to a press release published by The World Bank, urgent action is needed to address the education crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the report, following school closures, as of February 2021, around 120 million school-age children had already lost or were at risk of losing a full academic year of presential education, with serious educational impacts.

"This is the worst educational crisis ever seen in the region, and we are worried that there could be serious and lasting consequences for a whole generation, especially for the most vulnerable sectors," said Carlos Felipe Jaramillo, World Bank Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Governments

must take urgent actions to recover the lost ground and seize this opportunity to improve education systems by taking advantage of new technologies." Policies should focus on guaranteeing that all students have access to reopened schools and create adequate blended learning conditions.

Even before COVID-19, education was already heading towards a more tech-enabled future. Other ways to prepare your school for success after the pandemic are to continue offering hybrid learning for students who prefer it, supporting technology-based curriculums, and using this technology to build stronger connections with students and parents alike.

Education technology has had a positive impact on teaching and learning. Its effectiveness has varied by age group, and there is a consensus that online education for the older learners has been particularly beneficial. Many schools had already begun integrating technology and developing their own blended learning model, but what impact have EdTech solutions made?

The most successful solutions have common characteristics, which include facilitating personalized learning, being pedagogically appropriate and aligned to curriculum standards, including elements of instruction. Progress checks and real-time formative feedback for both students and teachers driven by adaptive technology and the automatic creation of grade books are also essential.

As we have already uncovered, teacher enrolment

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is a challenge many schools are seeking a solution for. We partner with online teachers, who are certified to teach a vast range of subjects, reducing the workload for staff at the school. This is a powerful partnership that enables the students to recover quickly and protects their in-school teachers' wellbeing. Some schools are already looking to develop bespoke online spring break and summer schools utilizing our teachers to provide targeted support for their learners.

I am currently working with schools across Latin America to implement hybrid learning through our digital learning programs. Edmentum [Exact Path](#) identifies learning gaps, personalizes learning, and provides instruction, practice, and mastery opportunities that adapt to the student while continually feeding back progress and attainment data to teachers. Many schools opt to combine Exact Path with [FEV Tutor](#), a personalized one-to-one tutoring service. Our partnership with FEV Tutor means we now have an on-demand tutoring service that can support students 24/7, ensuring engagement is maintained. Motivation increases as they experience more success and improve grades.

Our priority at [Edmentum](#) is designing learning solutions that help educators become more effective and enable students to learn

wherever teaching is taking place. We are ideally placed to support American curriculum schools as they embark on their journey toward inclusive and hybrid learning and are already partnering with schools and educators to provide personalized education models. Our Cognia accredited online school partners with existing schools to offer additional courses, provide credit recovery and Advanced Placement courses, all taught by certified online teachers. We also have a standards-aligned digital curriculum that supports schools to deliver online, face-to-face, distance, and hybrid learning. This digital curriculum is rapidly replacing traditional textbooks and contains all the learning content a student would require. It provides built-in assessments and is customizable, enabling teachers to combine material from different courses or grade levels.

Our partnerships with schools add flexibility to their education provision by providing age-appropriate solutions driven by adaptive technology and pedagogy that can be accessed anywhere, anytime. Teachers are, and will always be, critical to education, and it's an essential factor that technology will never replace them. Similarly, Mark Estrada, Superintendent at Lockhart ISD in Texas, comments in [Education Week](#) what EdTech will look like 25 years from now. "While I believe technology will never replace a great teacher, there will certainly be advancements in how we use educational technology to assess learning, communicate/report learning, learn content, learn skills, and improve the capacity of our brains to learn." Technology is becoming ever advanced and

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will undoubtedly allow teachers to become more effective by relieving some of the planning, administration, and assessment burden, enabling them to focus their skills on improving the quality of learning that is taking place.

James Moon is the International Senior Consultant, managing and supporting schools, school groups, associations, and colleges across Central & South America and the Caribbean. He aims to help students gain the education they deserve, wherever learning is taking place. In his role with Edmentum, he partners with and support schools worldwide as they introduce a range of Edmentum's flexible digital curriculum and learning solutions. Edmentum's solutions are award-winning and perfect for blended, hybrid, distance, and face-to-face teaching and learning and are being used by governments, large school groups, and individual schools to accelerate learning, recover credit, improve attainment and growth. James.Moon@edmentum.com

Metamorphosis: Thriving in Education Beyond 2020 7th Annual PAIS Educators Conference

by Erin Hester, International School of Panama

The International School of Panama was proud to host the 7th Annual PAIS Educators Conference “Metamorphosis: Thriving in Education Beyond 2020” sponsored by the Panamanian Association of Internationally Minded Schools (PAIS) and American



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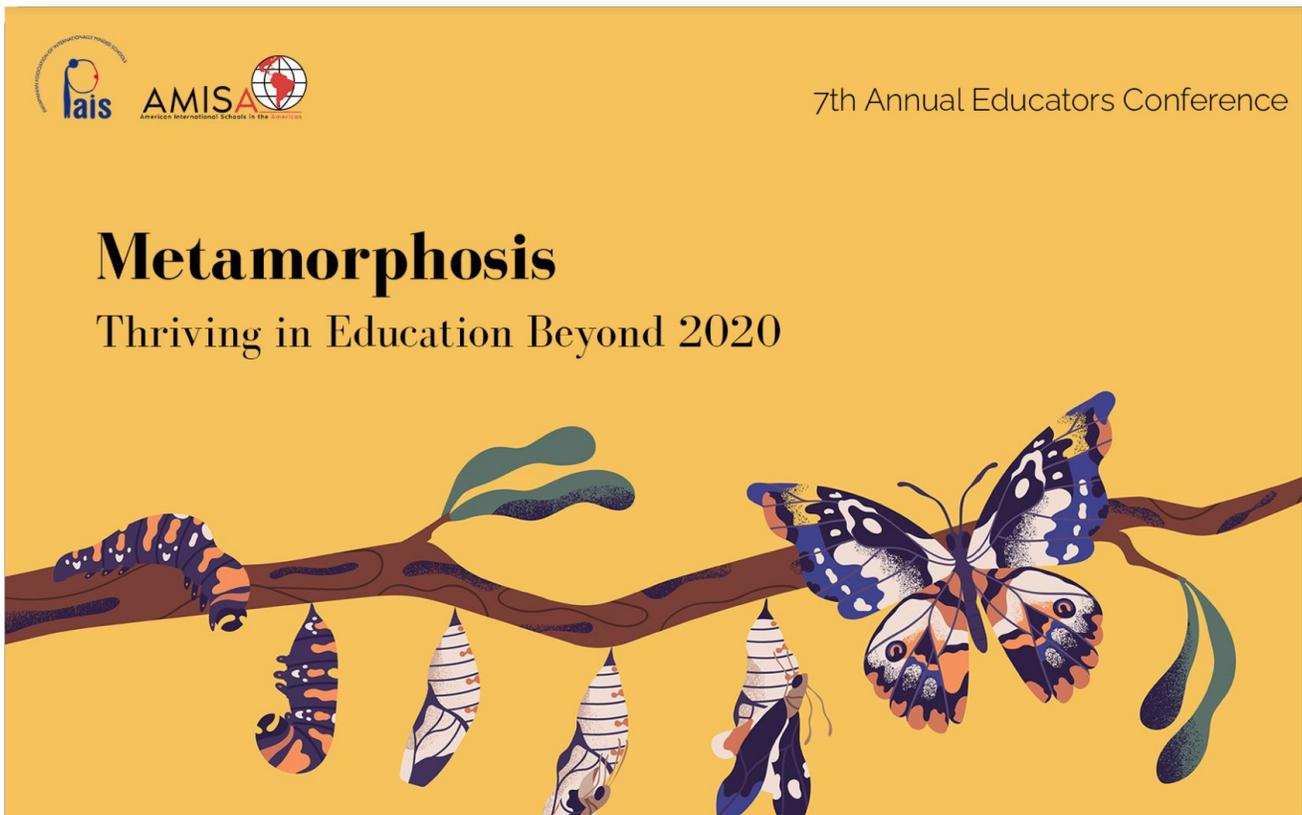
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International Schools in the the Americas (AMISA). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this was the first PAIS educators conference held entirely online. The event was attended by nearly 500 teachers from 25 different schools in Panama and the Americas. Thanks to the support of PAIS and AMISA, the conference offered world renowned keynote speaker, Phil Boyte, who spoke about what we are doing each day to create the school culture we want to be a part of.

In addition to this thought-provoking keynote, the conference held 34 different workshops and 24 job-alike sessions, giving teachers ample opportunity to share experiences and strategies for the future throughout the full-day conference.

One of the quotes that inspired this year's conference theme is by Margaret Wheatley in which she says, "Let's not aspire to go back to normal, let's use the beginners mindset to stay curious, free ourselves from the expectations of what school should be, and explore the possibilities of what could be." As we continue to move through and beyond the challenges presented over the past year, we hope this conference served as an inspiration to adapt, thrive and recognize all the new possibilities that lay ahead.

We thank all of the participants, presenters and our sponsors for this wonderful opportunity, and we look forward to the next PAIS conference in 2022!



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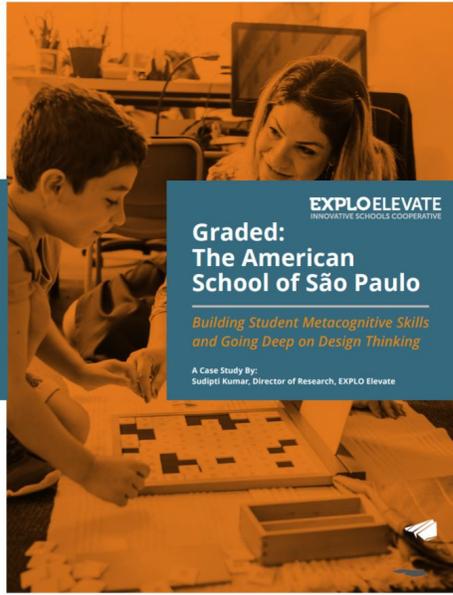


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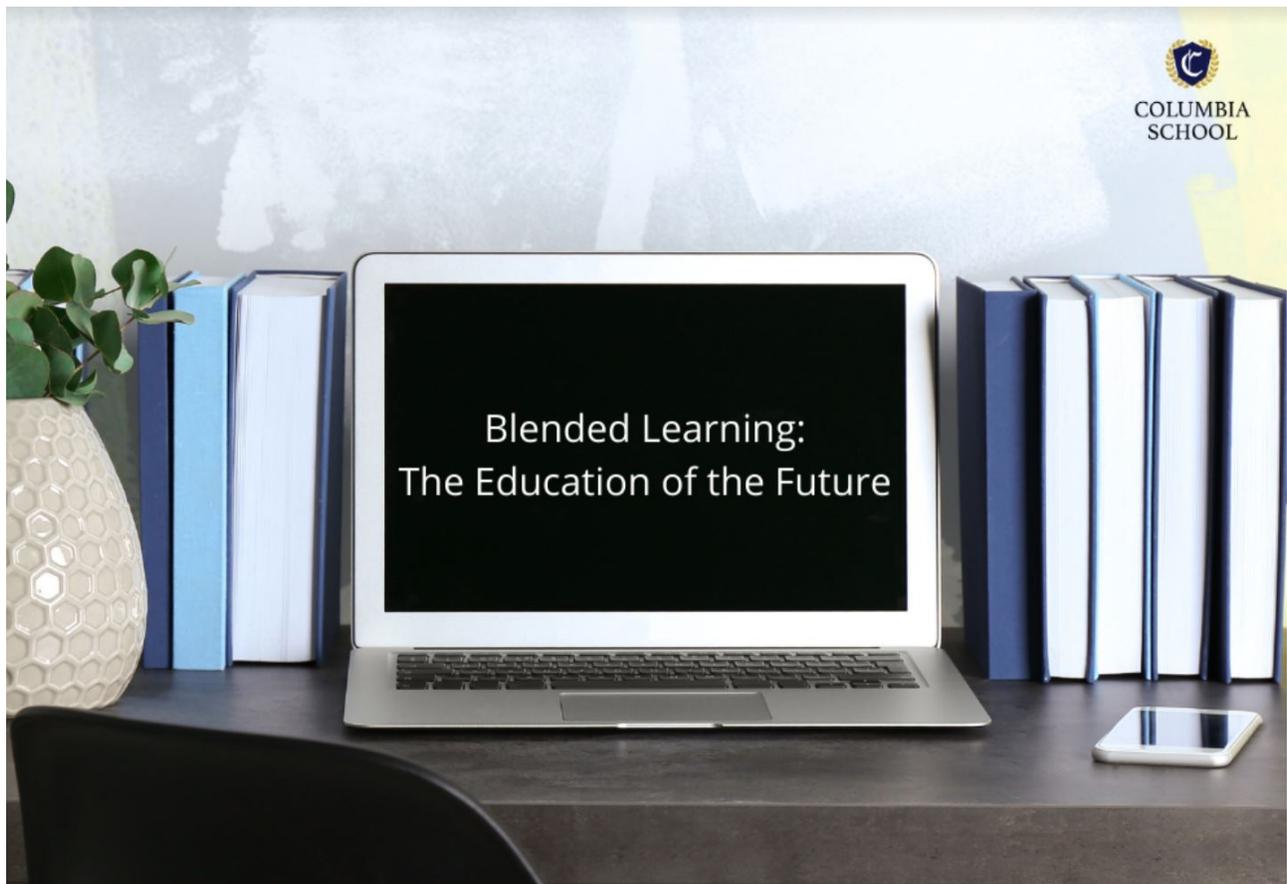
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EmoEmpathy: Where there is Story, there is Power To Teach Empathy in a World on the Margins

by Mehar Suri, AIELOC Contributor

A racial slur was once graffitied upon the walls of my school. Many saw it. Some laughed, some averted their eyes. But no one did anything about it until a teacher at our school came across it. She was shocked, as one can imagine. Everything this person of color had worked for, to obtain a life free of discrimination seemed to crumble at that very moment. While most educators would have set up a condemning assembly to talk about how writing slurs is incredibly wrong, she took a different path. One we will never forget.

She approached every class that afternoon. Every single one. And she did something so simple, yet so phenomenal; she told us a story.

She told us about her life growing up, how racism had impacted almost every aspect of

her growth; school, ballet class, friendships - the very essence of her being. About how hard she worked to attain, without privilege, a life most white people take for granted.

This story was not one read out of a book. It was personal. It was emotional. And as every single one of us in that room heard this story, our hearts and minds connected.

While discrimination did not miraculously disappear, things changed. You could feel it. People began to listen, to think twice.

All through the power of story.

It was a turning point for me, birthing EmoEmpathy, a 3-point, 3-principle concept based on the teaching of sensitive education through personal storytelling and pathos. EmoEmpathy is a practice of education - a lense with which we teach. It is based on three types of "story" omnipresent within all education, and must be focused on as we dissect and reevaluate our curriculums to ensure they foster empathetic learning. They are; the stories we read (compositional), the story of life (historical), and our personal story (emotional, sensitivity).

EmoEmpathetic teaching looks like this.

Step 1: To re-evaluate and expand our literary curriculums; the stories we read. From just teaching the predominantly white literary canon, to including the voices of the marginalized, PoC, LGBTQ+.

Step 2: To Re-evaluate and expand the perspectives with which we teach history; the story of life.

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From teaching the history of slavery from the perspectives of just one party, to the perspectives, histories and experiences of all involved parties.

Step 3: To teach sensitive subjects via both objective and emotional means; our personal story. Teaching concepts such as racial injustice through personal storytelling, to share experiences, and make use of human vulnerability, just like my teacher did. Storytelling - the most powerful form of communication.

Storytelling is an ancient, time-tested tool. Yes, it has always existed. Yet, rarely ever is it used to teach empathy in an educational context. Why?

Scientific studies such as that conducted by Uri Hasson in Neuroscience proves, through Neural Coupling, that our brains react uniquely to stories. Upon hearing a story, our brain reaches a cognitive state known as ignition, also known as engagement. As humans, the cognitive state of neural ignition enables us to better comprehend and break down concepts and proceed to make connections, something that is critical in education. What this means, is that our brains are physically able to better function when we are taught via means of story - that verbal stories heighten our ability to comprehend and learn much more than lists, paragraphs, or any other kind of verbal presentation.

Perhaps it's time to re-evaluate the way we teach, not via an objective lens, but an emotional one.

HOW STORYTELLING AFFECTS THE BRAIN

NEURAL COUPLING

A story activates parts in the brain that allows the listener to turn the story into their own ideas and experiences thanks to a process called neural coupling (Hasson)

MIRRORING

Listeners will not only experience the similar brain activity to each other, but also to the speaker.



DOPAMINE

The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it easier to remember and with greater accuracy. This is linked to the development of empathetic/sympathetic feeling.

CORTEX ACTIVITY

When processing facts, two areas of the brain are activated (Broca's and Wernicke's area). A well-told story can engage many additional areas, including the motor cortex, sensory cortex and frontal cortex.

Stephens, G. J. et al. "Speaker-Listener Neural Coupling Underlies Successful Communication". *Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Sciences*, vol 107, no. 32, 2010, pp. 14425-14430. *Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Sciences*. doi:10.1073/pnas.1008662107.

When we begin to put our educational institutions and real-world society side by side, we realize that schools are indeed microcosmic reflections of real world society. The parallels are astonishing. Our authority figures - governments, prime ministers, presidents, kings and queens, are at school our teachers, headmasters and staff. The "people", who in the real world comprise of the rule followers and general economy-fueling citizens, are at school, our students, within whom the intricacies of social hierarchies and cliques naturally follow. The list of parallels could go on forever. When we begin to observe the correlations between school and the real world, we can understand that the significance of a school extends much farther than just the sole teaching of math, or English, but that schools serve as simulators to prepare us for living and collaborating in a society. Thus, if we want to raise culturally intelligent, empathetic leaders of tomorrow, we need to ensure that the reflection we produce within our schools is one of an ideal world. If that is a world of cultural and racial inclusion, a world free of the margins we face today, then that is the world we must reflect within our schools. For to make change out

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there, we must begin by making change here, within our schools. That begins with what we teach and how we teach it.

Education is the foundation of life as we know it. With story-based EmoEmpathetic teaching, let's create a world where no more little girls, no children, no men, or women feel cheated by their education - like I did.

So don't tell your students what to, or not to do. The eternal prejudices of man cannot be understood objectively like 1,2,3 lists of mathematical equations. Tell them a story. Get your students to share experiences, and for just a minute, be vulnerable. Connect with one another. For our emotions are intrinsic qualities that define the human-kind, thus, don't be afraid to use them. They are powerful.

So what are we waiting for? It's time to tell a story. *"The human species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories."* - Mary Catherine Bateson

"Where there is a story, there is the power to teach" - Mehar Suri

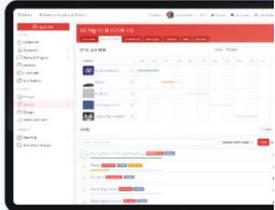
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Stephens, G. J. et al. "Speaker-Listener Neural Coupling Underlies Successful Communication". *Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Sciences*, vol 107, no. 32, 2010, pp. 14425-14430. *Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Sciences*, doi:10.1073/pnas.1008662107. Accessed 9 Apr 2021.

Mehar Suri is a 16 year old ethnic-Indian global citizen studying at the International School of Amsterdam. Working with organizations such as the Anne Frank Huis, Stories that Move and AIELOC (Association of International Educators and Leaders of Color), she is passionate about searching for and developing anti-discrimination tools in education. The founder of Care4buddies, a 45 member animal welfare organization founded in 2016, she is a lover of animals and a big advocate of vegetarianism. She is credited with the development of the principle EmoEmpathy.



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Blended Learning: The Education of the Future

*By Pat Hoge, Chief Academic Officer,
Columbia School*

As schools work to get back on track after a year of remote or hybrid learning, it is clear that blended learning is here to stay. For years, blended learning – the integration of online and face-to-face instruction – has been gaining momentum. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this trend. Not only does blended learning help schools address teacher shortages or delivery challenges, it has also become essential to students' growth and development well beyond their K-12 school years.

Even prior to the pandemic, online learning was experiencing robust growth in higher education and in the business world. Both educators and employers have embraced e-learning technologies to reach students and employees across a wider geographic area and meet demands for time-saving and cost-effective learning methods. With this in mind, we now know it is imperative that students complete their secondary education with the flexibility, independence, organizational and communication skills required to be successful in the world of online learning and remote working.

Blended Learning in Practice

Schools can incorporate online learning into their curriculum in several ways: such as integrating online activities into a course offered face-to-face – for example, having students complete an activity or project

online during class time or at home – or offering courses that are fully online. In the latter model, students can take online courses from anywhere, engage with classmates across the globe and learn at their own pace. Schools can utilize online learning to supplement their existing course offerings, fill in staffing gaps and enroll additional students seeking a remote or hybrid learning option for multiple reasons.

In addition to providing students with increased educational opportunities, combining online classes with traditional, in-person education offers growth opportunities beyond their academic coursework.

- Self-paced and independent learning. Unlike traditional face-to-face classrooms where instruction and classwork occur at the same rate for all students, online learning provides flexibility for students to move at their own pace based on their talents and needs.
- Flexibility and choice in learning. Online schools and courses use multiple forms of instructional resources and teaching tools, such as print, videos, simulations and digital interactives that allow students choices in how they access new information and how they demonstrate their learning.
- Self-discipline and responsibility. An online learning environment teaches accountability and time management, two skills crucial for success in a university classroom and in the workplace.
- Improved virtual communication. As our world becomes more virtually connected, students who engage in online learning develop skills for communicating and

working with others in an online setting.

Implementation

As K-12 educators, we need to prepare students for this changing world. As school leaders, how can we implement blended learning successfully?

First, think about the subject offerings you would like to enhance without needing to hire an additional teacher. Do you have advanced students who would benefit from more challenging classes or subject matter? Are there particular foreign languages your students have expressed interest in, but you lack the teachers with the necessary expertise?

You will also want to think about how online classes will be scheduled. All too often, less time is scheduled for online classes than in-person classes. Remember that when taught properly, online classes will have the same intensity and rigor as in-person classes. Students will need a full class period to give the class and coursework the required amount of attention.

When looking for an online learning provider, look for evidence of quality and effectiveness. Look at the quality of the curriculum, the breadth and depth of course offerings and student outcomes. Ask about their teaching model; ideally, you want a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning that includes some amount of teacher interaction and support for students in the form of direct instruction, office hours or other direct communication with the teacher when needed. You also want to make sure that the model fits the needs of

your students. Is the provider invested in your school and your students' success? Your provider is more than a supplier; they are a partner. You want to feel comfortable and confident in their approach and how you will work together.

Even though you won't need to assign staff to teach the course, it is important to have a teacher or administrator designated to oversee the online program. Students are most successful when someone from their school is watching their progress, ensuring students are getting work done, troubleshooting technical glitches and making sure that deep learning is occurring. Student pace and progress should be monitored and evaluated in online courses just as they would for a traditional course. Your provider should be working with you to monitor and support student progress and alert you to any concerns.

Pay attention to the technology and delivery method your provider will use. As schools' experience during the pandemic showed, students work best with a cohesive learning management system. Ideally, all tools, applications and communication should be housed within one platform, accessed by students with a single login. Equally important is students' knowledge and comfort level with the platform. Prior to the start of the course, you should work with your provider to conduct an orientation for students and your facilitators. They should all know how to access technical support and assistance with the course material.

And of course, you will want to make sure

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have the tools they need, both in school and at home: laptops, headphones and a stable Internet connection.

Blended learning at the K-12 level promises to transform education by enhancing educational opportunities and helping students gain the skills they will need for higher education and the jobs of the future. It is not without its challenges, but the benefits to students are well worth the effort. We encourage every school to embrace the shift and explore how an online education provider can help your school provide a 21st century education to the students you serve.

Pat Hoge is the Chief Academic Officer, Columbia School, United States -

pat.hoge@hudsonglobalscholars.com. In addition to her current role as the chief academic officer for Columbia School, Dr. Hoge is also the vice president of education and learning innovation for Port Discovery Children's Museum in Baltimore, MD. Previously, she spent 12 years in leadership roles at Connections Education as chief academic officer and head of curriculum and instruction. She was also the executive director of curriculum and instruction at Catapult Learning and the executive director of education at eSylvan. Dr. Hoge holds a Ph.D. in K-12 educational leadership from Walden University School of Education, and Master of Science and Bachelor of Science degrees in speech-language pathology from Towson University.



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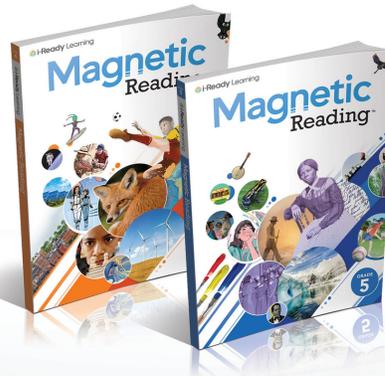
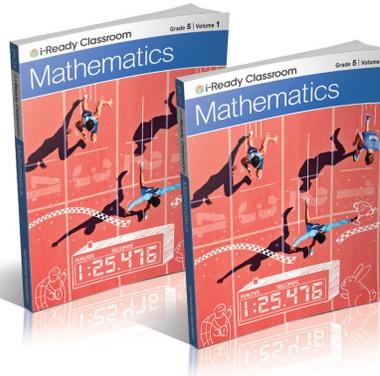
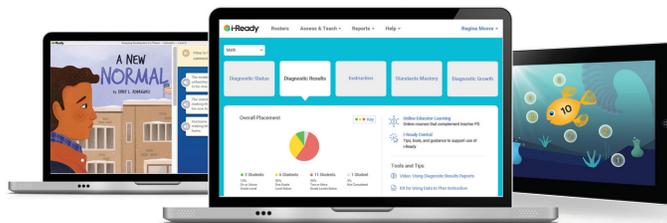
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WIDA Supports Bilingual Language and Academic Development

by Sam Aguirre, WIDA Español Director and Jon Nordmeyer, WIDA International Program Director

La pluma es la lengua de la mente. The pen is the tongue of the mind.

-Miguel de Cervantes

Cervantes' "tongue of the mind" becomes a twice powerful tool when English and Spanish teachers collaborate to help students to develop bilingualism and biliteracy skills. WIDA asked a group of educators at an international school in Guatemala what would make the most difference for their bilingual instruction. Their request was simple: a comprehensive, corresponding system that supports students' language development and academic success across Spanish and English. We were happy to share that WIDA resources can do just that!

WIDA is a nonprofit research center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. WIDA offers three frameworks for [English Language Development](#) (ELD), [Spanish Language Development](#) (SLD), and the forthcoming [Marco de las artes del lenguaje del español](#) (Marco ALE). These three tools are grounded in the WIDA mission, vision, and values, as well as similar foundational theoretical components. At the same time, each of these tools is unique, as each one serves a different purpose.

WIDA recently released the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, 2020 Edition. This powerful toolkit provides a foundation for curriculum, instruction and assessment for multilingual learners in kindergarten through grade 12. The WIDA ELD Standards Framework is centered on equity and fosters the assets, contributions and potential of multilingual learners. Four Big Ideas anchor the 2020 Edition and are interwoven throughout the framework:

- Equity of opportunity and access: This is essential for multilingual learners' preparation for college, career and civic lives.
- Integration of content and language: Academic content is the context for language learning, and language is the means for learning academic content.
- Collaboration among stakeholders: Stakeholders share responsibility for educating multilingual learners.
- Functional approach to language development: This approach helps educators focus on the purposeful use of language.

These Big Ideas support the design of standards-based educational experiences that are student-centered, culturally and linguistically sustaining, and responsive to multilingual learners' strengths and needs.

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework helps connect testing to teaching by providing a linguistic roadmap for the content areas. Teachers can interpret WIDA language proficiency data to understand and build on what their multilingual learners can do. Educators can collaborate to plan equitable, accessible and challenging units and lessons across all content areas.

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By using the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, teachers and students can navigate the intersection of language and content.

The WIDA SLD Standards were developed independently from the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, but serve a similar purpose for Spanish. At their core, the WIDA SLD Standards support the development of language for students to communicate for social and instructional purposes, and for academic content in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. These standards inform the trajectory of students' language gains in Spanish across six levels (e.g, *entrada*, *emergente*, *desarrollo*, *extensión*, *transformación*, and *trascendencia*). Teachers can use the SLD Standards to gain an understanding of students' level of Spanish development. Once they know this, they can teach Spanish language development skills that will move the students to the next level.

In contrast to the WIDA SLD and ELD standards frameworks, WIDA developed the Marco ALE to inform Spanish language arts (SLA), which grows beyond WIDA's other work on language development. The Marco ALE is made up of the main components for the instruction of SLA and was drawn from an analysis of SLA and related documents from across Spanish-speaking contexts in the Americas. Furthermore, the authors wrote the framework in a way that can inform multiple applications. This fall, the WIDA Español team will be publishing two documents on the Marco ALE, its application for standards design, enhancement, and alignment, and its application for teaching and learning. Educators will notice that the

document that explores the Marco ALE para la enseñanza includes a variety of lesson ideas and tools that can be built into existing SLA curriculum.

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework, SLD Standards, and Marco ALE were all designed by researchers at WIDA in collaboration with educators across the global WIDA network, resulting in a strong correspondence across the three frameworks. Each of these tools builds on the [WIDA Can Do Philosophy](#) or [La filosofía de valorización](#). Deeply rooted in a belief that all educators should build on the assets of multilingual learners, WIDA tools focus on what students can do, rather than what they can't do. All three resources draw from a similar research basis and set of beliefs about language development. The [WIDA Guiding Principles of Language Development](#) and the [Principios orientadores de WIDA para el desarrollo del lenguaje](#) outline ten foundational ideas for teaching multilingual learners.

Educators working with WIDA English and Spanish language development standards will realize that even though each set of standards is designed for a unique language (English and Spanish, respectively), the tools are designed in a similar manner. Therefore, educators can learn how to use a single system and then be able to readily apply it to both sets of Standards with their bilingual English-Spanish learners.

Additionally, as students reach the higher levels of the SLD Standards (*la trascendencia*), they begin to engage with SLA, which is supported by the Marco ALE. Therefore, the SLD Standards and the Marco



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ALE inform the spectrum of Spanish literacy from language development to language arts.

By way of the SLD Standards, there are opportunities for connecting the Marco ALE with the ELD Standards Framework. One such manner is that all three tools maintain a sociocultural approach to learning language and academic skills.

Educators in a variety of bilingual contexts across Latin America will appreciate the coherence and correspondence within the three resources. Utilizing both WIDA SLD and ELD standards frameworks provides an opportunity for a more holistic picture of language development across both languages. Furthermore, the implementation of the SLD Standards alongside the elements of the Marco ALE can lead to appropriate supports that can inform the trajectory of student growth from Spanish language

development to Spanish language arts.

If you are an educator who wants to learn more about how WIDA can help you build on what your multilingual learners can do, we invite you to explore our resources. To learn more, please contact international@wida.us.

Samuel Aguirre is the [WIDA Español](#) director. Jon Nordmeyer is the [WIDA International Program](#) director.

What We've Learned about Unfinished Learning at Midyear

By Julia Febiger

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic more than a year ago, educators have expressed concerns that inequities in remote learning and the digital divide, coupled with emotional and financial struggles caused by the pandemic, would result in unprecedented “learning loss”—or, as Curriculum Associates prefers to say for reasons of accuracy and equity, unfinished learning. Unfortunately, our midyear research indicates that educators’ instincts were right.

In Curriculum Associates’ newly released report “[What We’ve Learned about Unfinished Learning](#),” our Research team members share their analysis of winter 2020–2021 results from [i-Ready Diagnostic](#), our standards-based, adaptive assessment.

In short, the results from 1.1 million students who took the Diagnostic for Reading and 1.2

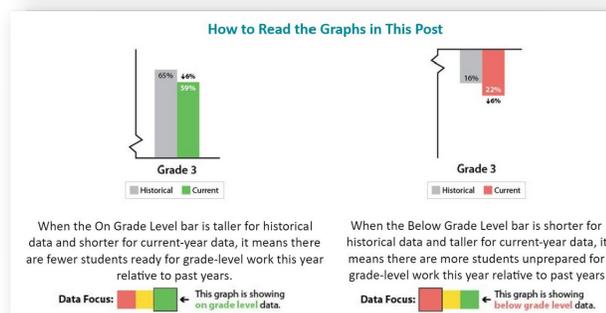
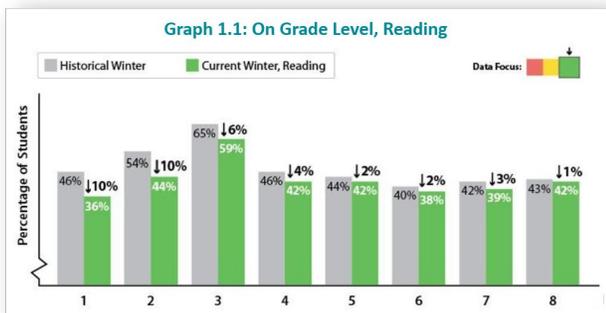
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million students who took the Diagnostic for Mathematics show that there is more unfinished learning to address this year than in a typical school year. Fewer students are prepared for grade-level work than at this point in prior years, and more students are Two or More Grade Levels Below their actual grade than in prior years.

Here are our other key findings:

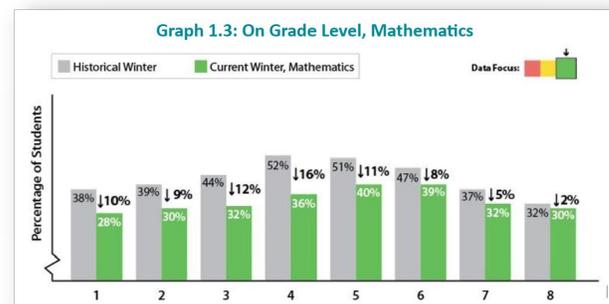
1. Unfinished learning in Reading is greater this winter compared to historical averages, especially for students in early elementary grades.

The percentage of students placing On Grade Level by midyear in Reading is down by 10 percentage points in Grades 1–2 and by six percentage points in Grade 3 from the historical average. The differences between this year’s and prior years’ results in Grades 4–8 are not as dramatically lower and range from one to four percentage points below the historical average.



2. Unfinished learning in Mathematics is greater this winter compared to historical averages.

The percentage of students placing On Grade Level in Mathematics by midyear is down by eight to 16 percentage points in Grades 1–6, five percentage points in Grade 7, and two percentage points in Grade 8. We see the biggest performance difference in Grade 4, in which students’ scores are lower by 16 percentage points relative to prior years.

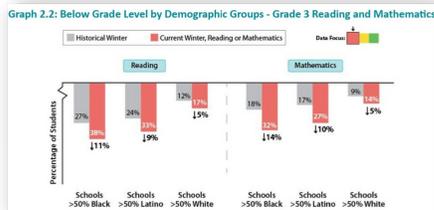


[See the data and graphs for students who were underprepared for grade-level content in Reading and Mathematics.](#)

3. Unfinished learning in both Reading and Mathematics is greater for students in schools serving majority Black and Latino students than in schools that serve a majority White student body.

When we look at students who are unprepared for grade-level work (i.e., those placing Two or More Grade Levels Below where they should be), we see more unfinished learning for students in schools that serve a majority Black and Latino student body compared to students in schools that serve a majority White student body.

For example, the percentage point increase of Grade 3 students with unfinished learning in Mathematics in schools serving a majority Latino or Black student body is double and nearly triple that, respectively, of schools serving a majority White student body, relative to prior years. We see a similar trend in Reading.



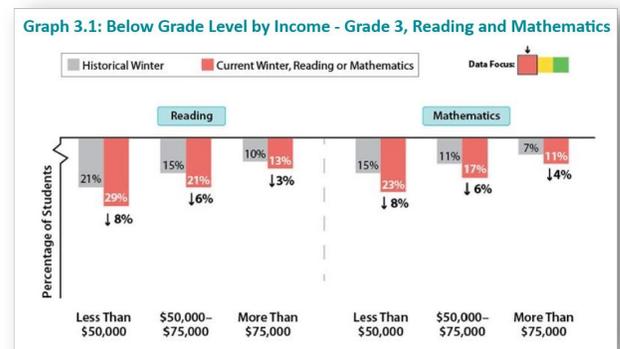
[See the data and graphs for students who were ready for grade-level content in Reading and Mathematics by demographic group in the full report.](#)

4. Unfinished learning is greater for students in schools located in lower-income zip codes than for students in higher-income zip codes.

Across grade levels and subjects, the percentage of students who are ready for grade-level work has decreased this winter relative to the historical average for students, regardless of income bracket. The declines are larger for Mathematics than Reading, though within subjects the declines are relatively stable across all three income groups (i.e., median household annual income is below \$50,000, between \$50,000 and \$70,000, or greater than \$75,000). For each of the three income groups, and in Reading, the percentage point difference ranges from four to seven. When we look at

students who are underprepared for grade-level work (i.e., those placing Two or More Grade Levels Below where they should be), we see that students in schools located in lower-income zip codes have more unfinished learning than students in schools located in higher-income zip codes. The percentage point drops relative to the historical average are steeper in both Reading and Mathematics for students in lower-income schools than for students in higher-income schools. For example, in Reading, the percentage point increase of Grade 3 students in lower-income schools (i.e., less than \$50,000) with unfinished learning is almost triple that of higher-income schools (i.e., more than \$75,000), relative to prior years. We see a similar trend in Mathematics.

The percentage of students placing On Grade Level in Mathematics by midyear is down by eight to 16 percentage points in Grades 1–6, five percentage points in Grade 7, and two percentage points in Grade 8. We see the biggest performance difference in Grade 4, in which students’ scores are lower by 16 percentage points relative to prior years.



5. It's too early to tell if students are catching up after starting behind in fall 2020.

In some subjects and grade levels, the difference between the current school year and the historical average increased from fall to winter, and in some subjects and grade levels, the difference decreased. When looking at the percentage of students who are ready for grade-level work, a decrease in the differences indicates that students are catching up from where they started behind in the fall. An increase in the differences indicates that students are not catching up from where they started behind in the fall. Given the variability we saw across subjects and grade levels, we do not want to draw a firm conclusion at midyear. We will certainly be following the data into spring and will report on what we find at the end of the 2020–2021 school year.

Final Thoughts

It is important to note that this analysis and the findings we reported are based on a population of students who tested in school. When we looked at the remote-testing data, we found more variability in terms of both scores and test administration data, such as test duration, number of testing sessions, and number of devices used. For this reason, we focused most of our findings on the in-school testing population as it is the fairest basis of comparison to a typical school year. Unfortunately, this means that the reality of unfinished learning could be more concerning than we're able to report at the moment, because our early winter analysis does not account for students who took Diagnostics remotely. We know from our fall

and winter Diagnostic research that schools in which students took the Diagnostic remotely were more likely to serve majority Black and Latino student populations and be located in urban areas, and schools in which students tested in school were more likely to serve a majority of White students and are more likely to be in towns and rural areas. The percentage of students placing On Grade Level in Mathematics by midyear is down by eight to 16 percentage points in Grades 1–6, five percentage points in Grade 7, and two percentage points in Grade 8. We see the biggest performance difference in Grade 4, in which students' scores are lower by 16 percentage points relative to prior years.

Notes on Our Research Process

Our Research team arrived at these conclusions by comparing Grades 1–8 winter 2020–2021 Reading and Mathematics i-Ready Diagnostic placement levels to average performances of the three previous winter i-Ready Diagnostics (referred to as the “historical average”).

In order to have a fair basis of comparison for this analysis, we only included students who tested in school during winter 2020–2021, between November 16, 2020 and March 2, 2021. The final analytic sample consisted of 1,159,733 students in Grades 1–8 in the Diagnostic for Reading analysis and 1,291,018 students in Grades 1–8 in the Diagnostic for Mathematics analysis.

About the Author

Julia Febiger is the Director of Research and Assessment Markets at Curriculum Associates. She has more than a decade of education publishing experience, and before moving to Curriculum Associates, she held high-level research roles at several prominent education companies. Julia earned a B.A. in Psychology from Bowdoin College and an M.Ed. in Human Development and Psychology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her rich experience and deep assessment knowledge fuel her dedication to transforming research and theory into proven classroom practices that drive student achievement.

*This article was originally published on the Curriculum Associates blog at <https://www.curriculumassociates.com/blog/winter-assessment-report-on-unfinished-learning>.

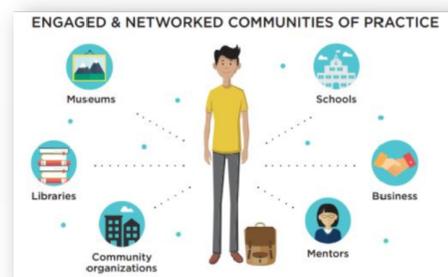


Launch! Paraguay Space Agency and the American School of Asuncion: The New Space Age is Within Our Reach with Arduino

by Tyler Shelden, Curriculum & STEAM Coordinator, American School of Asuncion

Believe it or not, Paraguay now has a satellite in space! The South American nation called “an island surrounded by land” by the illustrious writer Augusto Roa Bastos surprisingly has both a Asuncion (ASA) met with the engineering director, Dr. Jorge Kurita, of the Paraguayan Space Agency to discuss the successful recent launch and deployment of the Guarani Sat-1 satellite. Dr. Kurita inspired and encouraged students in all grades to simulate, build, and code their own satellite equipment using Arduino microcontrollers. Relationships are more important now than ever. Students and teachers need connections to each other and their learning units to develop identity and a sense of place in their community. Successful STEM education programs frequently leverage community connections

through strategies such as guest speakers, community surveys, field trips, internships, and innovative solutions to community problems led by student inquiry. (Bybee, 2010) The Obama administration’s STEM 2026 report highlighted a vision for STEM learning in schools that prioritized engaged and networked communities of practice. Specifically mentioned is the need to have community mentors for students to learn from: *These mentors encourage students to learn about the world around them; to identify challenges at the local, national, and global levels; and to use what they learn and observe to develop innovative solutions to these challenges. These formal and informal educators harness perhaps one of our greatest assets in transforming STEM education—children’s curiosity. As noted by one contributor to the project: “Children are born curious and come equipped with a desire to learn that rivals even the most determined scientist.”* (Tanenbaum, 2016)



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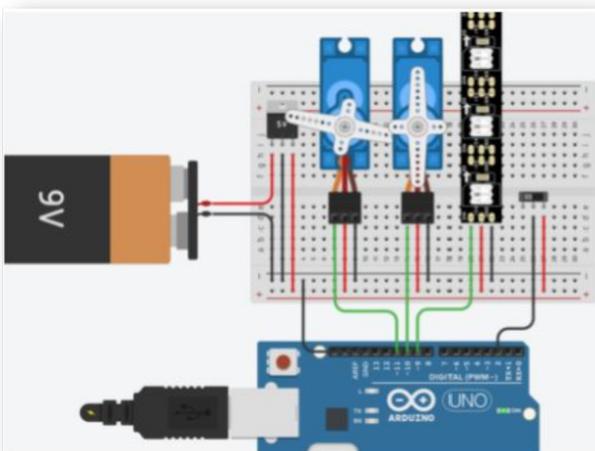
During the final week of March, Dr. Jorge Kurita visited students in all three divisions who study space science as part of their grade level curriculum Next Generation Science Standards. Dr. Kurita discussed the recent launch (video link) and deployment (video link) of the Guarani Sat-1. Dr. Kurita inspired ASA students with his discussion topic that “Space is Within Our Reach” through the practical examples of his team and their recent successes. He also spoke to the difference between “New Space vs. Old Space” and how private companies and individuals are entering the field of space science and discovery through innovations in robotics, such as Arduino microcontrollers or prototyping their cube satellite designs (see images below).

Students in the ASA high school STEAM elective Engineering + Robotics are now starting their Arduino programming unit and are challenged to engineer robots that can use sensors, such as photoresistors, ultrasonic distance sensors, and PIR sensors, to gain data from and interact with a novel environment. A huge thanks from the ASA STEAM program to the inspiration of Dr. Kurita and the Paraguayan Space Agency for their future collaborative connections that inspire our budding space scientists to reach for the stars.

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Tanenbaum, C. (2016). *STEM 2026: A vision for innovation in STEM education. US Department of Education, Washington, DC.*



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Science Simulations: Do More Than Just Teach Science

by Suzanne Saraya, ExploreLearning
International Sales Manager

Jessica York has been a science teacher in Great Neck, New York (U.S.), for 20 years and department chairperson for five. She's taught all levels of biology, as well as Regents and Honors chemistry, anatomy and physiology, and AP environmental science. She has a BS in Biology and an MS in Education and did genetic research for four years while attaining her bachelor's degree.

Currently, York teaches 10th grade Honors chemistry. She's also worked with English as a New Language (ENL) and Inclusion populations for many years. Approximately 17% of the student population at Great Neck North High School are considered economically disadvantaged.

York says, "When the pandemic closed schools for us in March 2020, our biggest science challenge was providing real laboratory experiences. This lack of hands-on experience is hard for both my students and for me. The excitement of discovery is one of the most rewarding parts of teaching science."

York's school turned to online science simulations, specifically ExploreLearning Gizmos, to provide interactive laboratory experiences for their students.

"I believe they do a great job of outlining the really hard-to-understand concepts—for

example, intermolecular forces and bonding," York says.

Bringing Difficult Concepts to Life with Simulations

"Students really struggle to understand the interaction of electrons in ionic and covalent substances as well as how the polarity of molecules and electronegativity impact how molecules interact. With simulations, students can manipulate electron movement and then check to see what happens, making this otherwise abstract idea real for them. They are better able to see and predict what will happen in novel situations," says York. "The ability to build and then evaluate molecules with different atoms and then watch those molecules interact in an electric field really helped to illustrate the ideas of polar and nonpolar molecules. This, in turn, leads to solid understanding of how molecules can interact with each other. I use most of the Gizmos as interactive lessons, where the students and I work together to answer the questions in the PDF. I also provide the notes that I would normally have given them while we are learning using the Gizmos," she continues.

"Gizmos is great for inquiry-based learning, which is an important part of our science curriculum," says York. "I use Gizmos in lieu of notes to introduce topics. I appreciate the pre-activity connections that students can make in the prior-knowledge sections and the analogies have been great for anchoring the ideas to come. I also like how we can use Gizmos to have students predict and then test ideas about topics.

We are able to use Gizmos to ask questions

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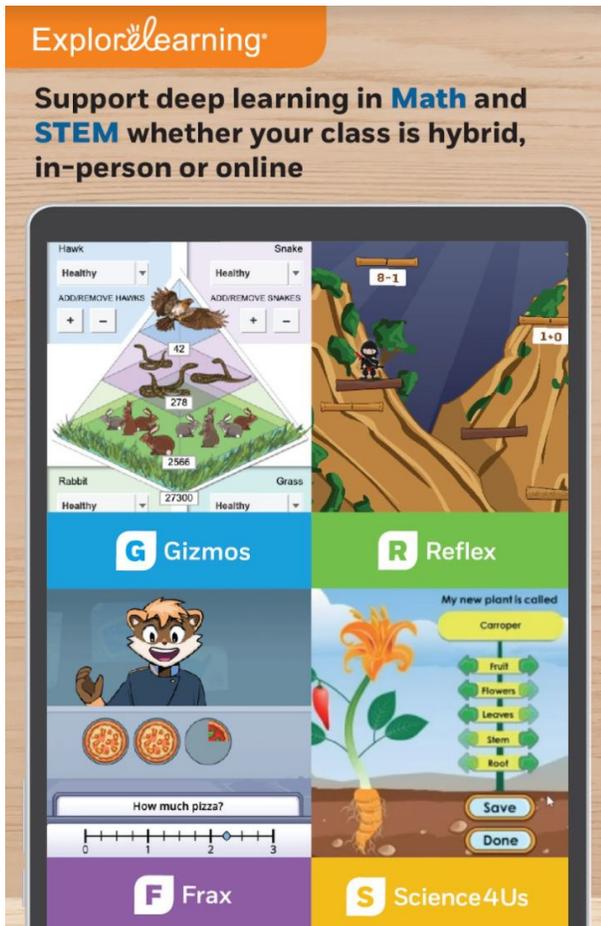
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To test and run simulations, students have the opportunity to think, write, and communicate about science.

- **Get Students Thinking With Simulations.** Simulations get students to think about the world around them. Students can experiment and explore abstract concepts in an interactive and virtual environment.
- **Use Simulations to Practice Writing.** When conducting simulations, students record observations and findings. This allows them to practice key writing skills like researching and summarizing.
- **Build Communication Skills Through Simulations.** Through simulations, students can practice oral and written communication skills. Students can work collaboratively and discuss their predictions with their peers. They can also share simulation results in whole group discussions, either remotely or in-person.

and define problems, plan and carry out investigations, analyze and interpret data, engage in argument from evidence, and obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.”

Helping Students Think and Communicate about Science with Simulations

There wouldn't be science without the ability to communicate information. Science simulations are the perfect tool to help students strengthen both science and language arts skills in an interactive way.

Simulations allow students to solve real-world problems in a virtual learning environment.

Online science simulations like Gizmos can keep the excitement of discovery in science alive even during remote learning, while both Gizmos and Science4Us offer the opportunity to integrate language arts skills into your science curriculum. For more information, contact Suzanne Saraya at ExploreLearning at suzanne.saraya@explorelarning.com or 434-293-7043, ext. 305.

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Supporting Multilingual Learners in a Hybrid Learning Model

by Sarah Said, Director of Language and Equity Programs at the Elgin Math and Science Academy in Elgin, IL.

We are all moving towards the final lap of the 2020-2021 school year. It's been a storm, but a rainbow of new ideas will shine as we move forward in our schools. For some of us, like myself, we have navigated a good chunk of our school year in a hybrid learning model, some of us are moving into a hybrid model of instruction for the first time and some of us are still waiting for news of what the rest of our school year will look like. We need to be prepared for what is ahead. This virus and its effects didn't magically disappear as the calendar changed to January 1st. We are still riding this wave and learning. Below I will share what I've learned about supporting multilingual learners in our hybrid learning model.

We need to do what we can to ensure our students are learning, but at the same time we have to remember that we need to give our students and ourselves grace as we

adjust into a hybrid model. With this, we need to check our communication to ensure that our students and families are understanding of the model, the daily changing schedules and learning expectations. And, systems need to be created as our students are moving between home and school for parts of their week. Most importantly, we need to find ways to create equity for students at home as they are navigating instruction through zoom and you are delivering instruction to their peers in the classroom.

The Importance of Communication

As we have been in remote learning models, communication has been vital with families to assure students are online and support families in navigating instruction. Learn more about methods to engage families in remote learning here. Here is what I think is different in a hybrid model, the day to day communication is critical particularly in native language in order to assure that students understand what days they attend school and what days and times they are online remote learning.

Sounds simple, right? But for families juggling jobs, multiple children in multiple schools, and multigenerational homes where families may take care of elderly parents there is a lot that a person has to remember in these times. We don't want to assume that people remember when their child needs to be online in the first few days. Send mass communication in native language as often as you can. In my program, we created infographics explaining the model, sent video messages via Seesaw for Schools Announcements, and sent mass text messages making parents aware of the cohort dates and

times. We also felt it was important to continue to engage families in the school community. On in person days, we have made sure to be masked and outside greeting parents and students as we checked temperatures daily. Being outdoors was important to us to keep that connection with families and help them have a sense of safety and security. We continued to work hard to stay connected with families online. We did this through weekly community crew meetings school wide done virtually by our school. Also, we have weekly storytimes where staff and community members read to students and their families, then just have conversation about topics in the story.

Supporting Students Between Home and School

This toggling between home and school is difficult for us adults--imagine what it feels like for children. Especially when that child is new to the country or is still gaining English language proficiency it can really be a confusing time for them to continue to keep changing schedules and models.

Have a System For Paper Management Between Home and School

Yes, many of our schools have become one-to-one because of this pandemic, but using paper and pencil is vital for developing fine motor skills in younger students and also cognition in older students. Also, it is probably good for students' vision and piece of mind to have them off of a screen. Paper and pencil activity should still happen in some form. In my experience, managing that paper and pencil was difficult for students with organization issues pre-pandemic--this has been even harder.

What worked for us? One grade level had students utilize a five pocket accordion folder that was organized by subject. This was brought back and forth between school and home with the chromebooks that students were using. For most students it was successful--some still struggled. Teachers also kept handouts in Google Classroom that students can pull up and write down on lined paper when handouts were not with them. For students at home, to ensure accountability on paper and pencil tasks, teachers had students take a picture of completed notes and handouts. Teachers provided those students with feedback virtually as well.

Take Advantage of In-Person Times for Clarification

When our most vulnerable learners were in our building, we took advantage of the time for native language explanations and front loading. We also made sure that this was time for clarification of content or instructions that students were confused on for large scale concepts and activities. Taking the time in person for small group learning tasks (which can be organized in a hybrid setting while at home students work asynchronously) and reteaching content in person can be helpful for supporting students on days when they are at home.

Be Creative With Engagement When Students Are in the Building

You still need to engage students as you are teaching them both online and in person at the same time. Some schools have the ability to have separate teachers for remote and in person--where some schools have a teacher who is teaching both groups of students-

one on zoom and one in person at the same time. My school is using a model where one classroom teacher is teaching both groups of students at the same time. Teachers at times are supported by teaching assistants and have Multilingual Specialist and Special Education specialists co teaching with them at various times. Creativity is critical when trying to create systems of engagement in your classroom to support language instruction.

Being in an EL education school, we have been fortunate enough to be provided with guidance from the organization. One tool that we have utilized to support engaging all students is the guide to classroom protocols created by practitioners at EL education and in schools who are supported by them. These protocols are ways to help teachers start discussions with students online and in person.

Teachers have also gotten creative with the way they use breakout rooms with online and in person learners. To help teachers manage learners but create community, teachers have created breakout rooms where in person students are grouped with remote students in activities and discussions. Teachers can then manage the students by walking around the room and looking over the shoulders of in person students. Students who need to have discussion to develop their language can do so in a small group and can receive support from the teacher when needed.

Creating Equity for Students Learning At Home

The biggest fear we have as teachers is that

we are not being equitable in our support for kids in person and kids at home. I noticed that our Multilingual learners at times struggled with following hybrid instruction from the classroom as they are at home. I rethought our department's schedule after noticing this and created short Zoom sessions where our specialists have gotten online to preview and review content. These are shorter 20 minute Zoom sessions where learning targets and key vocabulary is front loaded for ELA and content based literacy instruction. The previews have not only been effective for students' language knowledge, but we prepare them to assure they have the physical and online resources needed for the classroom teachers' instruction. Then we hop into the classroom Zooms at times where teachers are in breakout rooms with students and do small group instruction with both in person and remote students. Later in the day, we support remote students through 20 minute reviews of the content they have learned. Also, many of our classroom teachers have office hours where they answer student questions to clarify confusion.

For key concepts that are overarching for the content students are learning, we create video reviews via Seesaw where video instruction is used to support translanguaging and vocabulary enrichment. We also have pre recorded our breakdown of learning targets to be used by the whole class. Teachers have students watch these videos and write their understandings of them in person as they are waiting for the online students to join the class zoom. Students at home complete these reflections pre or post-lesson. You need to be okay with the mess that you feel like you are

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in when you begin hybrid learning. It is stressful, and it does take a lot of work to get off the ground. Have faith in yourself and the students you serve. You will get through this wave. Patience is important and at times your patience will be tested. But don't give up and be open to new ideas that people bring to you. You will feel uncomfortable these next few months- but you will learn unforgettable lessons.

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Becoming a Certified Teacher: A Marker of Quality in International Schools

by Kevin J. Ruth, Ph.D., President, Moreland University

The greatest impact on student learning, as we know and as research attests, is an effective teacher. To improve educational outcomes for students requires teachers who are able to diagnose what is happening with each learner in a classroom, and to apply proven methodologies for supporting and strengthening that learner. Those teachers who have gone through a teacher preparation program, if their home country offers one, have been trained to do just that. Understandably, international schools do their best to recruit these credentialed teachers because they know that such teachers are critical to the success of the school. Yet, whether due to increasing teacher shortages or other reasons, teacher recruitment still allows for non-credentialed teachers to be hired and placed as a ‘teacher of record’ in the classroom, often because those teachers have English as their first or second language (naturally, there are exceptions).

A non-credentialed teacher does have options—even while teaching full-time—to earn a recognized teaching credential (also referred to as: license, certificate, qualification) by engaging in a teacher preparation certification program that leads to the credential.

What are teacher preparation certification programs?

These programs serve students (such as the non-credentialed teacher) with specialized coursework in educational pedagogy as well as a clinical experience where the student must apply their knowledge in a supervised classroom setting (sometimes called ‘student teaching’). A teacher preparation certification program is approved by a government entity (e.g., in the United States, each state must approve educator preparation providers, or EPPs, as teacher preparation programs), and the best submit to quality control from a body that accredits teacher preparation programs and/or institutions of higher learning. Coursework in these programs typically covers areas such as: learner development, learning differences, learning environments, content knowledge, application of content, assessment, planning for instruction, instructional strategies, and collaboration.

What are the pathways to teacher preparation programs for those who are already teaching? Assuming that the teacher holds a bachelor degree in a recognized field from a recognized college or university, the teacher would need to identify a non-degree teacher preparation certification program, which can take several forms:

- 1.College/university campus-based teacher preparation program.
- 2.College/university internet-based (digital provision) teacher preparation program
- 3.Alternative certification programs, which may or may not be run or sponsored by a university, a school district (local educational authority), or other organization; may or may not be online

Schools would do well to allow teachers who desire to earn a teaching credential to use professional development funds to do so;

some schools even use a teacher preparation program as a recruitment and retention tool (we can hire you and pay for you go through the program, and in turn you will agree to stay a minimum of X years, contingent on positive evaluations).

Questions to Ask

When considering teacher preparation program providers, teachers and schools should perform due diligence in terms of understanding what is required, what the 'fine print' says, and so forth. Among others, these questions are critical:

- Legitimacy. Is the program accredited by a recognized accrediting body?
- Convenience. How convenient is the program? Can you take it anytime, anywhere? Can you start the program in one country, and then move to a different country before completing the program?
- Affordability. How does one pay for the program? All up-front? Monthly installments? Is there an interest charge for monthly installments? Do you need to borrow money?
- Recognition. Will the teaching credential be recognized by the authorities or regulators in your current market? Is it a credential that you could use upon returning to your home country? Will it be recognized in other markets, should you choose to move?
- Instruction: Self-study or Classes With Others? Many low-cost teacher preparation programs are also no- or low-interaction in nature. If you want a self-study and self-paced program, those are available. If you prefer growing your network, working with other teachers in international schools around the world,

and learning collaboratively, there is an option for you, as well.

- Residency/Travel/Visas. Is there any residency requirement? How does that requirement impact time to completion? Does one need a visa in order to meet the residency requirement?
- Exams and Locations. Will you be expected to sit for any exams, whether pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, or other? Will you need to travel to your home country or another country to sit for the exams, or can you take them online?
- Candidate Support & Success. How will the provider help you during and after the program, whenever you have questions? When you have a question or a request, will they charge you for it?

A recognized teaching credential is a marker of quality, especially in the international school sector, which is continuing to grow at a remarkable pace. If you don't have a teaching credential, or if you're an administrator at a school that would like its teachers to become credentialed in order to show your commitment to instructional quality, teacher preparation programs are ready for you!

Kevin is president of Moreland University (moreland.edu), a fully accredited and fully online university headquartered in Washington, D.C. Its TEACH-NOW Teacher Preparation Certificate Program has served 6,000+ enrollees of myriad nationalities in 157 countries, with two-thirds of candidates in international schools. You can reach Kevin at kevinr@moreland.edu, follow him on Twitter @kevinjruth, or connect with him on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/kevinjruthphd. You can also reach our Latin America specialist located in Bogotá at latam@moreland.edu.

Pandemic Lessons for International Schools: Adaptive Leadership Needed

by Rebecca Stroud Stasel is a PhD candidate at Queen's University

The demand for international teachers has been on the rise and shows no signs of slowing down. One researcher posited that the exponential and largely unregulated growth of international schools could lead to a global educational precariat (Bunnell, 2016). When the threat of a pandemic emerged in the early months of 2020, a possible educational precariat became palpable. At that time, I was undertaking a study on educator acculturation and its effects upon educator thriving and teacher retention. My work is informed by the work of Berry (2005, 2006, 2011) which has expanded culture shock theory (Oberg, 1960). Educational workers are underrepresented in acculturation literature, despite the argument that all international teachers experience culture shock (Roskell, 2013) and that educators carry the duty of care for students, and so their ability to thrive is of high importance. When educators move away from their home culture to teach abroad, they become sojourners, or “between-society culture travellers” (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2005, p. 6). Many international school recruiters ascribe to notions of fit (Ward et al., 2004) seeking to hire teachers who have “intercultural competence and sensitivity, flexibility, adaptability, and self-awareness,” (Budrow & Tarc, 2018, p. 867). The term educator is used to include teachers, school

counsellors, and school leaders. In a previous article, I proposed that:

The learning space of the sojourner is an interstitial one; it draws from facets of one's personal identity and culture as well as from the host culture, including the organizational culture, which may differ radically from organisational structures in one's home country, but it is in the interstitial spaces that hybrid identities and learning can form which can create novel and adaptive ways of thinking and being (Stroud Stasel, 2020, p. 97).

It follows that even without a pandemic, adaptive leadership (DeRue, 2011) is a high priority for international schools, and strong self-leadership capacity is necessary for sojourning educators. Self-leadership involves opportunity-thinking and drawing upon skills and strategies from within to motivate and lead oneself in the absence of leadership supports (Houghton et al., 2003). What has highlighted this proposition is the pandemic, which has launched numerous organizational curve balls at international schools. This article shares findings from this study regarding the effects of the pandemic upon sojourning educators.

Methodology

Data collection for this qualitative study began in November 2019, with in situ interviews and school visits. The second research trip was cancelled due to the pandemic, and from this point onward, all data was collected virtually. Data came from two sets of interviews with participants, researcher field notes, and participant and researcher reflex journals, photovoice and artifacts.

The first interviews used semi-structured questions. The second interviews used unique protocols for each participant that were developed after coding the first interviews. In total, 17 educators joined the study from five regions: Macau, mainland China, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Participants' roles included those of teacher, school counsellor, division lead, school leader, and educational consultant. All participants were sojourners. All teachers had received their initial teacher training in Canada; three of the leaders were trained in the UK or the USA.

Findings

Pandemic effects and leadership strategies were numerous. The following findings are shared: rapid leadership responses; mobility barriers; role and school precarity; heightened acculturative stress.

Rapid Leadership Responses

International school leaders are cognizant of the power of client (parent) choice. In efforts to sustain client satisfaction, schools initiated a rapid transition to online instruction to minimize interruption to learning. Educators facilitated the rapid turnover timeframe. Many participants were required to work overtime to develop virtual frameworks. Some teachers were given 24 hours to upload two weeks of instructional material to a virtual format. Most teachers managed this time crunch, exhibiting stress but accepting the rationales that schools provided as necessary and beyond everyone's control. Most educators made this rapid transition successfully. This may have been aided by most schools already well-developed for virtual technologies. Two schools housed all "course binders" online in

a repository accessible to all educators within the school. Participants also exhibited numerous personal and professional self-leadership strategies that maintained their sense of resolve. One school hub developed short-term certificate programs that could be completed within one or two modules, to provide higher education students who could not return to other countries. This workaround solution served to buffer financial precarity as well as to provide a community solution to educational barriers emerging in the pandemic.

Mobility Barriers

The high levels of mobility required for international schools were made evident during the early months of shutdown. In the five regions in this study, shutdown measures were strict. Some schools announced their initial shutdown during the Chinese New Year holiday. Reports emerged of students and teachers not being able to regain access to the host country where the international school was located. One teacher was backpacking in another country and could not return. She sent in her lessons and supported students' remote learning via smartphone for a month. Some educators had friends visiting their host country when the shutdowns began, and so they assisted their stranded sojourning friends awaiting return to their host countries.

Role and School Precarity

Most schools appeared stable enough to project enduring economic distress to the organization that the pandemic imposed. One teacher stopped being paid and was told that since the shutdown had reduced services, the school could not afford to pay its teachers.

One school leader noted that only a fraction of the newly hired teachers was admitted to the country, but a mutual delayed employment date was successfully negotiated. This might have left the school in the lurch for sufficient teachers except that enrolments had also suddenly dropped due to some students not being able to return to the country, and other parents choosing to keep their children home and save funds during the pandemic. Other reports of isolated precarity emerged. For instance, one school leader found himself negotiating new contracts with food caterers who could not keep their businesses afloat with new social distancing measures, leaving cafeterias at partial capacity. Reports emerged from educators indicating that educators were now required to fulfil roles outside of their job descriptions, often without additional recompense, in order to help schools adapt to the chaotic and unpredictable environment.

Heightened Acculturative Stress

Early in the shutdown, participants appeared to be adapting well to the crisis, exhibiting a growth mindset (Dweck, 2008) to the shifts in organizational directions. Over time though, despite the general ethos of goodwill initially expressed by teachers and leaders alike led to reports that the crisis itself and the rapid transition exacerbated acculturative stress (Berry, 2006). Some educators were anxious about host country laws and protocols for the pandemic, including how to attend to medical needs. One teacher was hospitalized with double pneumonia and found the hospital experience in a foreign country to

be both reassuring because of a high standard of care but also terrifying because of language and cultural barriers. Newly hired teachers didn't have the time to create social networks after arrival, navigating the pandemic in utter isolation. One educator in this study became a 'Midnight runner' a term referring to expatriates breaking contracts without notice and secretly leaving host country. Some participants found themselves unable to support their elderly relatives back home. Some regions saw the implementation of new arrival and departure laws, resulting in 'what if' anxieties. Some participants found that they could not even take wellness jogs around their apartment complex or leave unless to get groceries or medical assistance.

Conclusions

To say that the pandemic has been organizationally difficult would be an understatement. Evidence of organizational stresses—including acculturative stress—will likely emerge long after the pandemic ends, adding to new understandings of leadership through times of crisis. Participants in this study presented as brave, open-minded, and willing to adapt. Adaptive leadership theories call for both futurist and opportunity thinking on the part of leaders (Kim, 2020). Many participants manifested opportunity thinking (Houghton et al., 2003), a key motivational feature of self-leadership, and aligned with notions of fit (Budrow & Tarc, 2018). What has become clear from this particular study is the need for international schools to further develop contingency educational plans that look at policy alternatives in order to lead through times of crisis. While it appears that many teachers and leaders stepped up bravely

during this time, the stresses experienced are also instructive in terms of what teachers and leaders need for navigation through crisis with high self-efficacy and cultural safety. One organizational trait that is critical in times of crisis is the presence of empathy in the workplace (Center for Asia Leadership; CAL, 2020). If leading with empathy is not a part of the organizational culture, it could take a long time to develop in order to gain the trust of the employees of the organization, so international schools could work on developing their organizational culture proactively.

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KEY PERCEPTIONS

Candidates were asked to identify which aspects of their identity, if any, positively and negatively affected both their experience as an international school educator and their search for leadership positions. The results of this study strongly suggest that we in the international school sector have considerable work to do to create a culture that embraces and supports international school leaders of all races, nationalities and genders.

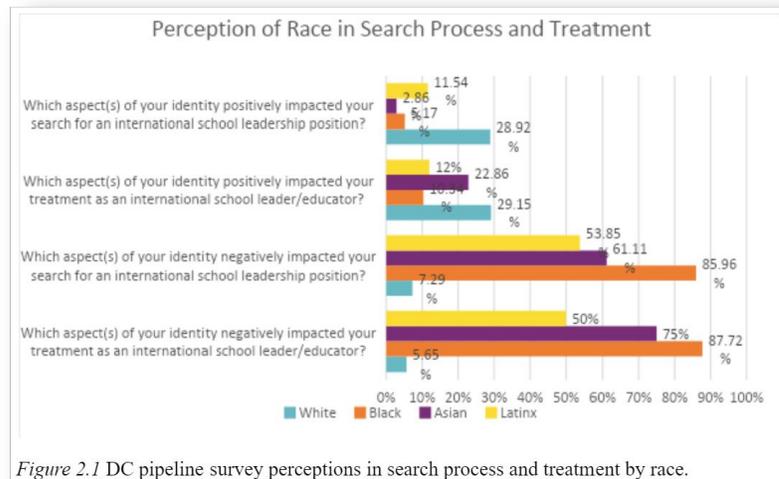


Figure 2.1 DC pipeline survey perceptions in search process and treatment by race.

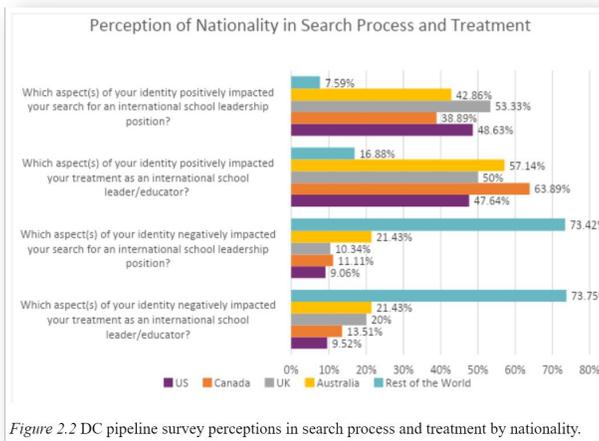


Figure 2.2 DC pipeline survey perceptions in search process and treatment by nationality.

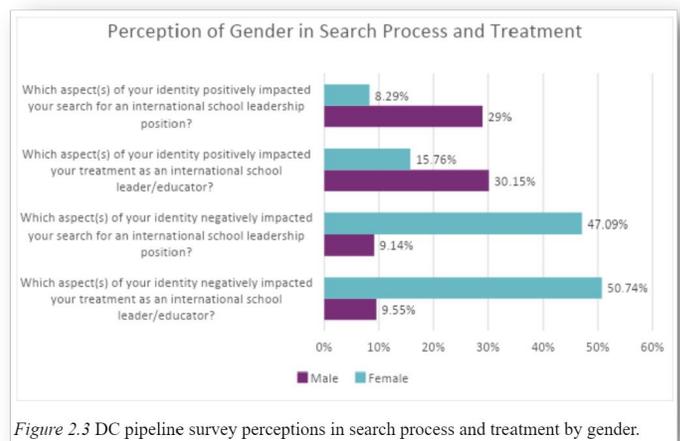


Figure 2.3 DC pipeline survey perceptions in search process and treatment by gender.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings of this report, we have identified 10 categories of recommendations for how to make the recruitment of education leaders at international schools more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just and to ensure that all leaders once they are hired thrive and succeed.

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Given the scale and scope of the issues documented in this report, everyone involved with international schools has a role to play in cultivating and sustaining inclusive leadership at international schools, including recruitment agencies, other international school organizations (such as regional associations, accreditation agencies, and global education institutions), international schools themselves, and educators at international schools, particularly those in positions of authority and influence.

The organizations and people who have systematically benefitted from the past structural inequities in the recruitment system must become strong advocates and champions of the changes described below. Otherwise, those who experience bias will continue to be forced to share the additional burden of holding those in positions of power to account, further exacerbating their oppression and marginalization.

VISION – Our vision is of an interconnected international school sector in which educators of all races, nationalities, genders and other identities have equitable access to leadership roles in international schools.

COMMITMENT – The first step toward reaching that vision is for recruitment agencies, other educational organizations, international schools, and current international educators in positions of power and influence to commit to fostering and supporting inclusive leadership. Those commitments should reflect a shared understanding of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) principles. They should be aligned and enshrined with their core

mission and guiding statements so they do not wane over time, and they should include strategic priorities and goals to measure progress.

REFLECTION – In order to know how most effectively to intervene, it is essential to understand the status of leadership at your current locus of control, whether that be at the sector level, the regional level, the school level, the senior staff level, etc. This report documents some broad sector-wide trends. Much more can be done to fully understand the challenges that Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), People of the Global Majority (PGM), female and other international school leaders face both during the recruitment process and as school leaders. The more such feedback can be institutionalized and prioritized the less likely the onus will fall on those groups marginalized by our current systems, including those groups outside the scope of this study who also face systemic oppression.

POLICIES – Collectively, international recruitment agencies should work with educators and recruiters expert in anti-biased recruitment to identify those policies that promote equity in recruitment. They should then use their own reach and power, and the reach and power of other international school organizations, to promulgate those policies across the sector.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Changing habits is not easy, particularly unconscious ones, so enduring change will require training. We recommend working with educators and recruiters steeped in DEIJ

issues to develop a recruitment curriculum that helps recruiters recognize and reduce bias and validate candidates' multiple identities and perspectives during the hiring process. Such a curriculum could be adapted for everyone involved in international school recruitment, including recruiters, school leaders, board members, and search committees, so that the sector adopts more equitable and humanizing hiring practices.

PRACTICES – Recruiting agencies should interrogate all of their practices to determine how they are consciously or unconsciously excluding people from leadership positions.

Fruitful areas for focus include:

- increasing the accessibility of job fairs and the visibility of job searches,
- decentering qualifiers from recruitment platforms that marginalize educators but have nothing to do with their ability to lead,
- emphasizing required competencies in leadership searches, including demonstrated experience with DEIJ issues,
- revisiting recruitment practices that rely on nepotism, fraternity and other exclusive networks that systematically favor educators from White, Western and male backgrounds over educators from other backgrounds, and
- highlighting schools' DEIJ commitments and practices.

PEOPLE – One of the important ways to address traditional blind spots, broaden recruiter perspectives, and ensure that equitable recruitment becomes and remains a commitment is to ensure that recruiters, at both the agency and school level, better

reflect the diversity of students who attend international schools. At the same time, organizations that offer mentorship, sponsorship and leadership development programs should be sure that aspiring leaders of all backgrounds are well represented in their programs.

PARTNERSHIPS – An effective way to increase the pipeline and retention of diverse leaders is to partner with organizations both within and beyond the international school sector that have strong reputations for nurturing BIPOC and PGM educators, including affinity groups, regional BIPOC support networks, leadership development programs, Black fraternities and sororities, alumni organizations, and schools of education around the world.

ACCOUNTABILITY – None of these efforts will endure and lead to transformative change unless strong accountability measures are developed and implemented that monitor both progress and setbacks and elicit feedback from aspiring leaders. At the recruiting agency and school levels, such accountability would include systematically tracking their leadership pipelines, surveying candidates who have applied for positions through their services or at their schools, and monitoring promotion, retention and length of tenure data. Other organizations, such as accreditation agencies and regional associations should consider how they might use their broad platforms to develop baselines and/or standards for their constituents to assess their policies and practices. While international educators have begun to recognize that racism and misogyny like predatory behaviors harm children, unlike for

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child protection, there is no centralized organization for reporting such behaviors and seeking legal, mental health and other support.

ADVOCACY – In some countries, visa requirements may be an obstacle to equitable hiring. While we recognize that not all restrictions may be removed, we encourage schools and regional associations to work through the appropriate host country diplomatic and ministerial channels to see which restrictions could be eased to help international schools recruit educators who better reflect the diversity of their student communities.

COMMUNICATION – Learning and progress foster further learning and progress. To those ends, organizations should publicly share both their successes and their setbacks in their efforts to create a more equitable leadership pipeline so we can learn from each other.

The Diversity Collaborative (DC) is a voluntary group of international educators committed to creating and sustaining a more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and just international school community through our focus on leadership. Learn more the Diversity Collaborative and join the work at ISS.edu/Diversity-Collaborative.

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The changes described in this report will take time and resources – but that just adds to the urgency for all of us engaged with international schools to start to dismantle the systems that have prevented some outstanding educators from becoming international school leaders. We must build a more equitable and inclusive international school sector so that educators of all backgrounds thrive.



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THANK YOU!

TieCare International wants to say thank you to all the teachers and school faculty working so hard to ensure that learning continues during these uncertain times.



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RICK WORMELI

Our YEAR-LONG EXPERIENCES:

- Engage school teams in ongoing cohort-style learning from September - June
- Provide level-up learning opportunities over the course of a year
- Create tangible products based on learning outcomes
- Immerse learners in one of AMISA's Professional Learning Strands
- Cover a school team (up to 5 people) for the entire year
- Run only if the minimum cohort team participation is met

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