



AASSA Newsletter

Association of American Schools in **South America**

May

2020

The Tri-Annual Newsletter of The Association of American Schools in South America

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AASSA's mission is to enhance the quality of education in American/ international member schools.

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From Your Executive Director

Greetings AASSA Friends and Colleagues!

To say that the past few weeks and months have been challenging for us all, both personally and professionally, would be a huge understatement. However, the power of teamwork and collaboration can never be underestimated.

Our motto as AASSA is We Are Better When We Work Together. I believe we have all seen this to be true more than ever over the past few weeks and months as we have worked to address and deal with the impacts of COVID-19. So, please allow me to say "thank you" as the focus of my newsletter welcome.

I would like to start off by thanking the AASSA Board of Trustees. The steadfast support and leadership that the AASSA Board has provided during a very difficult time has been fantastic. I want to thank Thomas Shearer and Dr. Robin Heslip, Office of Overseas Schools, for the amazing assistance they have provided our region. Through their continuous assistance AASSA has been able to provide ongoing and increased support to our member schools. Furthermore, I would like to thank Dr. Sonia Keller, Executive Director for the Association of American Schools of Central America, Colombia-Caribbean and Mexico (Tri-Association), for her collaboration and partnership. In December 2019 the AASSA Board and



Visit our blog to listen to AASSA Radio. If you're interested in participating in AASSA Radio, please contact Dr. Rhoads by email at (drhoads@aassa.com) to let him know your topic.

Be Part Of **AASSA**
RADIO

TRI Board held a joint meeting to open lines of communication, collaboration and understanding. That work is certainly bearing fruit. I also want to thank Dr. Deb Welch, Chief Executive Officer for the Academy for International School Heads (AISH), for her partnership in our joint virtual support groups for Heads of School. In addition, I would like to acknowledge and thank Mark Ulfers, Executive Director for the Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE). Mark, Sonia and I have appreciated the CONVERSATIONS held each Thursday and it is with much respect that we work together to support the work of schools. Lastly, I would like to thank the amazing AASSA team I am blessed to work with each day. While that work has changed to remote work locations, we have continued to operate as a well-oiled team, carrying out all the demands of ensuring that our services to schools have continued at a very high level. So, a huge thank you to our Chief Learning Officer, Adam Slaton, and to our Accounts and Program Service Managers, Arianna Durbeej, Esther Nicolau, Marie

Lopez, and Terri Williams. Thank you AASSA and our entire international community. We Are Better When We Work Together!

Continuous effort and collaboration are key! Whether we call it persistence, perseverance, resiliency, grit or growth mindset, it is our ability to press forward with continuous effort and collaboration that will get us through. Keep on keeping on, and I leave you with one to think on...

Best regards,

Dr. Dereck Rhoads
AASSA Executive Director

References:

Couch, J.D., & Towne, J. (2018). Rewiring education: How technology can unlock every student's potential. Dallas: BenBella Books.

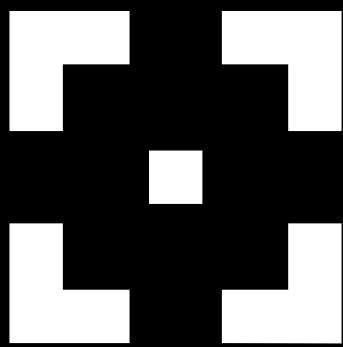
“Rewiring education ultimately means changing the way we teach the things we want today’s students to learn (Couch and Towne, 2018, p. 64).

One to think on...

#remotetelearning

Kudos to all #AASSA Schools as they are innovating, adapting and being flexible with distance teaching & learning.

Keep documenting!
Keep sharing!



A Renewed Focus on Professional Learning

By: Adam Slaton
AASSA Chief Learning Officer



If Students aren't Involved in Our Processes to Reshape Education, We Have Missed the Mark



If students are not seated around our virtual tables for insight into how education can be reshaped, we need to add seats. Everyone around the world is engaged in discussions about reshaping education, and in many cases, it's everyone but students. In instances where we do involve students, it's how we involve them that often falls short. We tirelessly work at teaching students to be change makers, free thinkers, designers, engaged citizens, yet when it comes to involving them in discussions about changing the structure of education -- their structure -- we tend to limit the extent of their participation.

If any one group can best guide educators on how the educational system needs to be rebooted, it's students. They are the ultimate practitioners. In a perfect scenario, it shouldn't be us redefining and reforming education for them, it should be them redefining and reforming education for us.

As educators, we often tend to involve students as part of the process, rather than involving them in the process. Involving students as part of the process typically happens in the form of advisory groups, grade-level delegates, student council representatives, or focus groups that are designed to provide isolated feedback experiences. We facilitate, listen, gather information, and include (hopefully) the feedback during discussions and deliberations. These practices are generally used to fulfill our stakeholder feedback requirements, and although a small group of students might feel like their voices are being heard, in reality we aren't really teaching them anything about the change process except how to gain isolated insight and information.

Being a part in the process means giving students a seat at the table. It means giving students an opportunity to experience first-hand how concepts are thought through collaboratively; how ideas are dissected, discussed, organized, and possibly fail; how we can agree to disagree; how we communicate ideas clearly or clearly; how we build consensus; how we use vulnerability to guide vision; how we use data to inform discussion and decision making. The list can go on and on. Giving

students opportunities to be involved in the process is a real-life lesson that will have far much more value and impact in their lives than merely participating in an isolated feedback exercise.

As a former school administrator, I completely recognize that there are appropriate settings and contexts that might define whether we can have student involvement around the table. However, the more we can shift our thinking about moving students from simply being a part 'of' the process to being fully engaged 'in' the process, the more we will ensure that students are the focal point of educational transformation. This is our chance to partner with students in guiding them on how to take true ownership over their learning. This is our chance to engage students in an authentic experience that will forever shape how they address challenges ahead. This is our chance to truly redefine education through the eyes of our most important stakeholder: our students.



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AASSA and AISH Collaboration



By Deb Welch

In an ongoing crisis, it's more important than ever to reach out and support each other. AISH and AASSA are doing just that! The two organizations are co-sponsoring COVID-19 Virtual Support Groups, enabling heads to get together online in small groups and provide logistical and emotional support for one another.

Both organizations recognize that international schools need strong, adaptive leadership during these times of uncertainty. Over the last year and a half, AISH has been developing Leadership Series online courses on such leadership challenges as home-school communication, governance, school finance, stress and time management, being mission-driven, and developing one's leadership team.

Courses are for four weeks, three to five hours of screen time a month and contain relevant, curated resources and content that is personalized for each participant's situation. Courses are asynchronous with cohort group discussion forums and synchronous time is also arranged. Respected international heads of school developed and facilitate the courses who understand the context of an international school. Check out the courses at academyish.org/leadershipseries and know that leadership team discounts are available.

In times like these, when leading a school is more complex and challenging than ever, AASSA and AISH are here to support your growth. This summer is a unique opportunity to "skill up." Most of us will not be traveling so take the time to reflect, share, learn, and emerge refreshed with new insights and practical application.

AASSA and Tri-Association Collaboration



Collaboration Between Sister Associations
By Sonia Keller

In December 2019 the AASSA and Tri-Association Board of Directors came together to strategize and discuss opportunities for potential partnerships and collaboration between the two sister Associations. In retrospect I see that visionary step as the foundation for the dynamic and collaborative effort that has developed between the two organizations in support of the challenges facing our family of schools as a result of the pandemic.

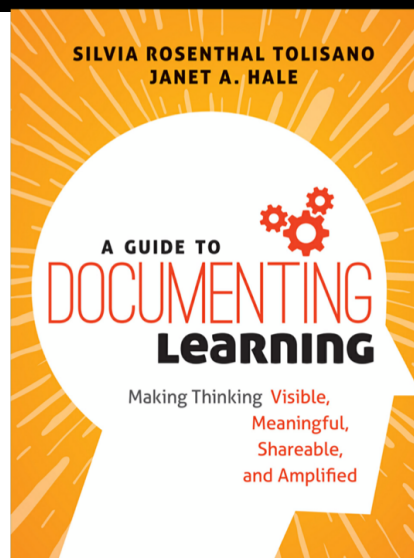
I am deeply grateful to Dereck Rhoads for his friendship and support and to our Regional Education Officer, Robin Heslip, for being the glue and the cheerleader for our team effort and work on behalf of our member schools. I look forward to being part of this new chapter in the history of our two regional associations as we continue to grow stronger together.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION



Heutagogical documentation embraces the metacognition involved in documenting learning. When motivated learners capture evidence and reflect on it, what is discovered informs them of the next steps needed to further their desired learning. It also sheds light on a learner's evolving pathway of understanding, including evidence over time of successes, failures, perseverance, and persistence that is leading him or her to reach a desired learning outcome or goal.

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CONVERSEMOS...



By Adriana Jaramillo

Coach de Español y Sociales

The Columbus School , Medellín, Colombia

Conversar es una estrategia esencial donde convergen 2 de los 4 componentes del lenguaje, hablar y escuchar. Quiero compartir con ustedes algunas reflexiones sobre la importancia de conversar y el uso de preguntas abiertas que generen creatividad, conexiones y lazos de confianza.

Sabemos que para en el siglo XXI, y ya llevamos 20 años de él, lo que más estamos desarrollando en nuestro nuevo paradigma, es el otro. El otro es, porque está en nosotros, el otro existe porque nosotros permitimos estar en él. Hablar y escuchar se da cuando el nosotros realmente está incorporado en la inclusión del ser.

La conversación permite que el otro tenga cabida en mi vida; es conversando que podemos vivenciar las verdaderas características del habla y de la escucha en el intercambio de sentido, de significado, de pensamiento. En las conversaciones están implícitos los valores que nos atraviesan, las creencias que nos mueven y las que nos incapacitan. Cuando conversamos, organizamos las ideas, concretamos nuestro pensamiento, nos preguntamos, dudamos, nos oponemos, dejamos volar la creatividad a través de las palabras. Conversando desarrollamos factores, para que el yo como parte independiente del hombre, no se ancle en sí mismo sino que genere nuevas formas de abordar la realidad.

Con frecuencia he oído a los padres de familia decir sobre sus hijos: “es que no me cuenta nada”, también he oído a los adultos quejarse y decir: “solo mira su teléfono” ¿Realmente no hay nada para decir? Me pregunto también si es la confianza, o si acaso es una actitud de pensar, que el otro no importa. Todo lo anterior podría ser; sin embargo pienso con la esperanza de que usando buenas preguntas, el otro tendrá cabida en una buena conversación que produzca habla y escucha, que posibilite dudas para que el pensamiento crezca y para que el asombro resurja en las vidas de las personas.

Recordemos cuando éramos niños cómo hasta la propia sombra en un patio de juego generaba un sinnúmero de hipótesis que nos llevaron a la reflexión de un por qué, cómo, cuándo, dónde. Muchas de nuestra preguntas esenciales siguen vivas en nuestro pensamiento y ellas continúan generando otras.

Las preguntas abiertas, esenciales, socráticas, son aquellas que podrían tener muchas respuestas, son aquellas que en un momento pareciera que las atrapamos como cuando tenemos agua en nuestras manos, pero así también se desvanecen. Esas preguntas abiertas son las que con el otro generan verdades por momentos. En la medida en que conversamos sobre ellas, crecen y cambian. Estas son las que podemos hacer a los otros para crear el nosotros y establecer buenas conversaciones.

¿Cuáles podrían ser algunas de esas preguntas que generan buenas conversaciones? Aquí comparto algunas, para que intentemos usarlas, para generar la palabra y a través de la palabra crear pensamientos, diálogos y acciones. Cuando impactamos con buenas preguntas, como hizo Sócrates, encontramos deseos de conocer, buscar, encontrar y transformar.

¿Qué te gustaría que pasara en?

¿Me podrías dar un ejemplo de...?

¿Cómo te gustaría que fuera el cambio de...?

¿Qué quisieras cambiar?

¿Cómo serán las cosas dentro de un año si ...?

¿Qué sucedería si...?

Si están conversando sobre un libro o una película:

¿Qué harías diferente a lo que hizo el personaje...?

¿Cómo sería otro final para ...?

¿Qué pasaría si el lugar en el que ocurre la historia no fuera ... sino que fuera...?

¿Para mí la mejor parte fue... , cuál fue para tí?

Para terminar les comparto un texto de Rilke :“Ten paciencia con todo lo que quede por resolver en tu corazón. Procura amar las preguntas mismas, como a cuartos cerrados y como a libros escritos en una lengua extranjera. No has de buscar ahora las respuestas. No pueden ser dadas debido a que no has podido vivirlas. Es cuestión de experimentarlo todo. Ahora has de vivir las preguntas. Quizás gradualmente, casi sin notarlo, encuentres que experimentas las respuestas, algún día lejano.”



Join Instructor Alan November in

Creating a New Vision for Online Teaching and Learning

Course Date | June 3-July 30, 2020

- Meeting times: Wednesday 5:30pm
- Secondary Educators Focus (6-12)
- Limited cohort size
- Graduate Credit Available



COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to empower secondary educators (6 - 12) to craft a new vision of teaching and learning. Participants will engage in learning focused on examining and redefining roles, building capacity, and propeling all students to become the true catalysts of their own learning. By the end of the course, participants will have designed assignments and built lessons for their own classes. Alan November is the instructor and will lead the weekly sessions and be available for office hours.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



CONNECT

Virtual Course

NL November Learning
November Learning

Join Instructor Lainie Rowell in

Creating a New Vision for Online Teaching and Learning

Course Date | June 2-July 30, 2020

- Meeting Times: Tuesdays @ 3:30pm (Pacific Time)
- Elementary Educators Focus (K-6)
- School teams encouraged to register
- Limited cohort size
- Graduate Credit Available



COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to empower elementary educators (K - 6) to craft a new vision of teaching and learning. Participants will engage in learning focused on examining and redefining roles, building capacity, and propelling students to become the true catalysts of their own learning. By the end of the course, participants will have designed assignments and built lessons for their own classes. Note: This course addresses best practices for fully online learning as well as blended learning. Lainie Rowell is the instructor and will lead the synchronous sessions and be available for office hours.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

in an online environment



COURSE OVERVIEW

This purpose of this 8-week, online course is to explore advanced assessment and grading application topics that will increase participants' capacity in continuous assessment and grading improvement in online environments. The course is designed for classroom teachers, teacher leaders, and school leaders who have significant knowledge of grading practices centered on proficiencies, competencies, or standards. In particular, this course focuses on the multiple ways to improve the quality of assessments and ensure their validity in a distance learning environment.

The course comprises eight, 90-minute facilitated Zoom meetings on Thursday evenings from 5:30-7:00 EDT, May 28-July 18. Articles, web resources, and videos will be included via Schoology. The cohort model allows educators from many schools to share experiences, ideas, and grow together, both during the course and after. There is an elementary cohort and a secondary cohort, both limited to 30 participants. 1 course credit from SDSU will be an option at an additional fee. Information on credit will be available once the course begins.

REGISTER FOR THE COURSE:

REGISTER | [ELEMENTARY COHORT](#)

REGISTER | [SECONDARY COHORT](#)



MODULES IN THIS COURSE

1. MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: improving face validity

2. MULTIPLE MEANS OF EXPRESSION: improving construct validity

3. FEEDBACK AND GRADING: ensuring reliability

4. ASSESSMENT INTEGRITY: minimizing external threats to validity



Remote Learning: Let's Not Go Back to Square One.



By Isabel C F Auler, PhD., Middle School Principal at the American School Our Lady of Mercy in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

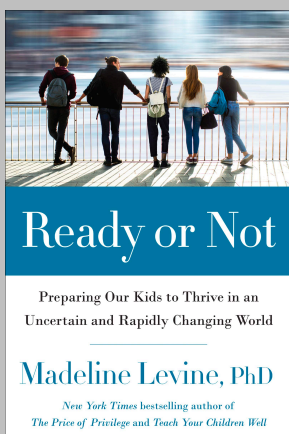
I have read many articles on how to adapt our classes to the virtual world, and I often come across very pertinent statements about the need to be flexible with our students. In fact, if social isolation can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety for an adult, imagine for a child or adolescent, whose hormones often speak louder than reason. It is up to the teacher, therefore, to have the sensitivity to deal with demotivation, possible delays for virtual classes and assignments, without necessarily taking drastic measures at once. Those measures would only further remove the student from the educational environment that we are trying to promote. According to Abraham Maslow, there is a hierarchy for human needs, and if we are unable to meet the most basic needs such as family and health safety, then we are also unable to reach the next stages related to self esteem and self confidence, such as trust, ability to solve problems and creativity.

For this reason, many articles use the expression “we have to Maslow before we Bloom,” which means that, more than ever, we must ensure that our students' socioemotional needs are fully met so that we can later help them develop autonomy, responsibility and critical thinking, as listed in Bloom's taxonomy. That being so, teachers, must accommodate and adapt their classes to a virtual world, without jeopardizing the relationships established in the classroom, thus preventing students from being penalized for difficulties in dealing with the amount of responsibility suddenly given to them during this atypical moment, and for which they were not prepared beforehand.

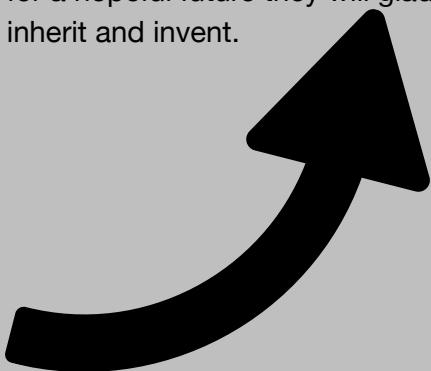
After clarifying the relevance of current articles on the importance of teacher's flexibility during these sensitive times we are living, we can go to the topic that, so far, had only been indicated by the title: being careful so we do not go back to square one during this period of virtual classes.

by
Madeline Levine

Ready or Not-
Preparing our kids to thrive in an uncertain and rapidly changing



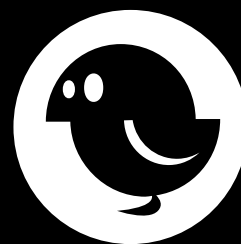
world. In a time of great uncertainty, if we can raise children who know how to optimize that climate and who greet it with anticipation, optimism, and enthusiasm, we will have done our best to prepare them for a hopeful future they will gladly inherit and invent.



Recommendation by Silvia Rosenthal Tolisano

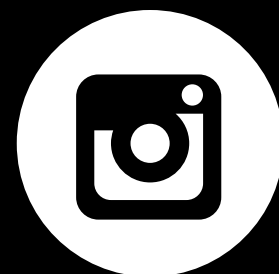
Which square one am I referring to? Allow me to be clearer: I am referring to the methodological aspect of our educational system. After many years remaining as a captive by the theoretical discussions of great thinkers, methodological innovation has finally been introduced to classrooms, and, unfortunately, it now runs the great risk of disappearing from the educational environment due to the pandemic that has spread throughout our world. The skills teachers lack for this new virtual environment makes the return to lectures an imminent risk in our schools. We have obviously received countless emails containing websites and apps with games and examples of activities to use during our videoconferences. However, when the teacher is faced with new content to deliver, they end up returning to the same model as our ancestors, that is, they return to long expository classes and, as a consequence, we come across bored students on the other side of the screen.

So, what can we do to prevent this setback from occurring in our e-learning period? The role of Principals and Coaches becomes essential in this moment of transition. Supervising classes and assisting in their preparation is of the utmost importance to help the group of teachers at your school to return to the path of active methodologies. Just as we mentioned Maslow to talk about children, we must once again use him when referring to our educators. When we are insecure and do not have the necessary support in the face of new situations, we logically return to the model with which we have the most control. There is nothing more natural than teachers who were beginners in the process of active methodology returning to the model of expository classes due to the uncertainties they are experiencing at this moment. It is up to their Pedagogical Leaders to assist them in this delicate period and to model, if necessary, the first activities in order to support their team and show that even at a distance, their supervision and guidance remain present. We will not always be able to present amazing and creative projects to stimulate the learning of our students. As we must follow an annual curriculum, some classes will be just classes, but that does not mean that they should not be guided by an innovative methodology, which will help students' learning process by giving them more autonomy and challenging their capacities thus stimulating their skills. Based on a learning model that is very popular today, basic rules can be established so as to guide the preparation of virtual classes. Using John Hattie's Visible Learning approach (HATTIE, John. Visible Learning for Teachers. New York: Routledge, 2012.) , we can establish tips on how to create an online class, like the example below:



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Lesson Plan Structure	Observation
Hook	It can be a warm up, it can be a question that stimulates the student's curiosity
Objective and learning activity	Clear and objective explanation of what you expect them to learn and how.
Success Criteria	<p>Having at least 2 criteria will mean having at least 2 levels of activities (learning differentiation): a basic one and a more complex one. It is expected that everyone reaches the 1st level. Make it clear that you believe that everyone is capable of reaching both levels, but that it is normal to struggle at this point. It will be a challenge. This will stimulate students, and, at the same time, reassure them if they don't get it right so easily at first.</p> <p>When correcting, be sure to ask the simple ones to struggling or special needs students.</p>
Modeling the learning:	You may ask them to answer the first question collectively so they understand what they have to do; it can be a video with an explanation of the content; it can be a short quotation from a text, and etc.
Application by the student	In a normal class, you usually apply and at the end you assess. In an online class, divide the task into small parts. Give an activity, ask specific students instead of letting them decide who wants to participate and who does not. Write down who got the answer right and who got it wrong. Make sure you are assessing everyone. That's your responsibility as an educator. Anyone who didn't answer today, should participate in the next class.
Acces and Conclude	Return to the objective and success criteria, and ask them to write down what they have learned, who reached the expectations and who exceeded them . Write down students who have not reached them, and ask them to wait while the rest hang up. Schedule individual conferences to help them.

The criteria cannot consist of an inflexible format for your teacher's classes. As school leaders, we must learn to extract the best that each individual has, instead of forcing them to conform into a static model. Guidelines should be seen as a prototype to remind them of the important points that should be present in their lesson plans.

By creating expectations about what we hope to observe as pedagogical supervisors, even during this exceptional moment of uncertainty, we help our teachers maintain the innovative path that education had finally traced before this social isolation period.

If pedagogical leaders remain present to assist teachers during this transition to e-learning, we will prevent our educational system from returning to square one, which would mean allowing methodological innovation to, once again, live as a captive of educational theorists.

"THE UNIVERSE IS MADE OF STORIES, NOT ATOMS."

Muriel Rukeyser

VOLATILE. UNCERTAIN. COMPLEX. THIS IS THE NATURE OF OUR MODERN SOCIETY. THINGS CHANGE. EDUCATION, HOWEVER, WILL FOREVER REMAIN THE KEY TO PROSPERITY AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE. IMAGINE HAVING AN AUDIOVISUAL PARTNER SPECIALIZED IN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS. IMAGINE A PARTNER CAPABLE OF DISTILLING THE ESSENCE OF YOUR INSTITUTION TO CRAFT BEAUTIFUL STORIES AND COMPELLING MESSAGING. THAT'S US. WE ARE FILMISTAS. AASSA GOLD MEMBERS WHO HAVE WORKED FOR MORE THAN TEN YEARS ALONGSIDE THE BEST SCHOOLS IN BRAZIL AND LATIN AMERICA. LET US CHANGE THE WAY YOUR SCHOOL SPEAKS TO THE WORLD. **LET US BE THE ONES TO TELL YOUR STORY.**



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Please Sir, I Want Some More...



By Dr. Samiramis Sarkardei. *She is currently a teacher of IB Biology at PASB international school in Salvador, Brazil. She has a PhD in Food Safety from the University of Surrey, UK. She has been working in the field of science since 2000 and has been a teacher in Biology and Chemistry since 2015. s.sarkardei@pasb.com.br (FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sarah.spamkins>)*

That familiar phrase from one of my favorite stories plays in my head over and over again since virtual learning began at my school. With the exception that in my head the sir is replaced with me, and the student is not referring to a plate full of hot food, but rather a virtual folder full of activities.

All school year this year, I have been struggling with encouraging my students to pursue student-led learning. I have been trying to provide them with opportunities that will encourage their independence, flourish them as inquirers, and boost their thirst for wanting to learn more, by simply asking more questions. Most of the time I was faced with resistance from my students either in grade 10 or grade 11 and the usual “you are the teacher and you should be teaching in front of the whiteboard” kept being thrown at me like sharp daggers. Sometimes I didn’t know what to do with them but to give into “spoon-feeding” them, which made me cringe just at the thought of it. I kept asking myself how do I teach these teenagers time-management, self-control, responsibility, accountability, and work ethic. How do I teach them to be independent? How do I teach them skills that will allow them to write an email, open a bank account, ask for directions on their first day at their university or college or job, communicate and network to land their favorite occupation. It wasn’t really until my recent zoom meeting with my grade 11 students when they asked me if I thought they will have enough time to learn the content they need to learn for IB HL Biology, that I realized, this unusual time we are going through is not about teaching content, but it is about teaching SKILLS.

Those very same skills that could help a student take CARE of themselves.

I was an OK student at school with average grades, nothing above ordinary, but I made it to University, worked in the field of science for 15 years which entailed working in academia, industry, hospital, NGOs and the UN before I decided to become a high school teacher in sciences. And all this time, what rescued me wasn’t how much content I knew, but it was the skills I picked up along the way, often the hard way. So you see teaching for me is not just about teaching the content of my subject. I often wish I had teachers who taught me skills as well as content and perhaps that would have made me feel more confident when I had to renew my visa, ask for help or “professionally stalk” that one project manager who was leading a group at my dream job!

But reflecting months later during the coronavirus closures on how my semester began at my school, I have some surprising stories which make those challenges I spoke of above, seem like a distant memory. My hyperactive kids, shy kids, and creative kids, are doing incredibly well managing their distractions and focusing on work. I appreciate that there are fewer distractions around the students when studying at home rather than being at school, but that is not a guarantee for every student, right? Those very same students who often struggled with independent thinking and learning and self-discipline are thriving during virtual learning caused by the Covid19 pandemic of 2020. Believe it or not, these kids are learning skills that we have been trying to teach them for a very long time.

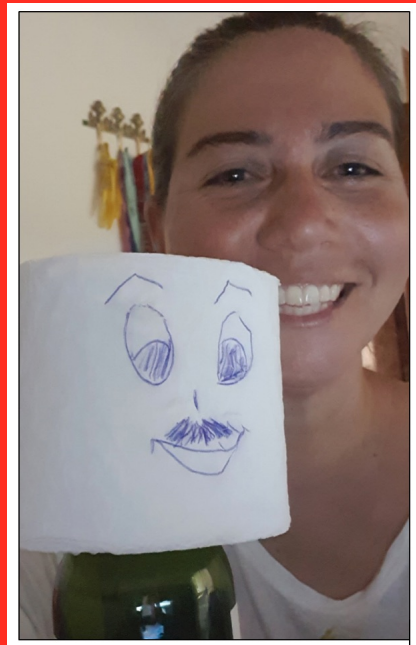
My students are able to communicate with me in a constructive way, either by writing a professional email or by scheduling a meeting using a calendar - which is an example of a skill I was so desperately trying to teach them at the beginning of the year. They are demonstrating how self-pacing has been beneficial and advantageous to them in their learning. It is allowing them to get a taste of self-independence and to take ownership more because they are not under the micromanagement of the school day and are not bound to a physical space. Virtual learning is creating a world of trust for the students and teachers. My very same grade 11 student who told me once at the beginning of this

semester that she doesn't trust me, is now reaching out to me to ask for advice and she is managing her time and her learning. What these students are learning now as a result of virtual learning will benefit them immensely in their future education, jobs, relationships, and lives.

I am excited for the time when this pandemic is resolved - my scientific side doesn't believe that it will be completely over, but that it will become a part of our new lives. I am excited that a new norm will begin, and I don't only mean in regards to our social interactions, taking care of each other and the environment, but I mean in regards to a new "generation" of students that will arise as PROBLEM SOLVERS!, something that our world is in desperate need of! Upon their return to the classroom, these students would be the new thinkers, initiators, inquirers, explorers, and educators, for they have gone through something unique and their experiences are worth sharing and learning from.

In the past, it always bothered me why my students would ask only of me to change the deadline of an assignment and they would never ask the same question from other teachers. I used to make all kinds of assumptions - such as they undermine me, or that they don't take me seriously. I didn't even consider asking the students, I guess because I didn't feel safe. So last week, I finally asked why. And the response was that I am one teacher that students don't feel intimidated by. Imagine how much uncertainties I could have saved myself if I had only asked that question sooner! So it is not only the students who are learning skills, but it is also us, the teachers. We are becoming better communicators because of these unusual circumstances and we are feeling safer and asking more questions. How many times did we ask for more time? More time to give constructive feedback on assignments and to have one on one consultation with our students. The world of virtual learning has provided me with exactly that, more time to talk to my students.

I want to end this with the same phrase I used to start this note and that is: Please sir, I want some more....and that more for me during this experience has been more help, more tasks, more skills, more responsibilities, more advice, more suggestions, etc. I am thrilled that my students are beginning to ask for more. Perhaps virtual learning has also shown students that despite their beliefs that teachers are mind readers or that they have a crystal bowl under their desks, that teachers actually need to know from the student when they need something. This notion of asking for more, of course, comes from a place of trust that has been built between the student and the teacher and it is wonderful to see that these students can feel secure to ask for more.



This picture was taken during a zoom meeting with grade 11 IB Biology students discussing cystic fibrosis. My partner (Mr. TP) and I were pregnant and we were consulting our genetic counselors (Students) about what would be the probability of us having a child with cystic fibrosis since we each had one parent with cystic fibrosis. The world of virtual learning has provided me with the greatest gift and that is the opportunity to have one on one consultation with my students.

AASSA Regional Institutes

Child Protection Level 1

Provided by Columbus School Staff

How do the systems and structures at your school safeguard your students? This question was one that a group of 55 educators from our region tackled over a 2 day training hosted by **The Columbus School in Medellín, Colombia**, funded by AASSA and offered by the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, ICMEC.

Recognizing abuse

In this training we started with the basics of defining abuse (see image below). By utilizing this common definition it allowed school level teams to make decisions and guide discussions founded in the same understanding. They then dove into the different types of abuse to determine the systems and structures present in their school to identify the different types of abuse and how the Child Protection Response Team would be made aware of a child who has been harmed. Finally, we learned about the different signs and indicators that might be present and may indicate that a child has been harmed.

Discussing Abuse

An integral part of this training was learning how to address students who have been harmed with dignity. How to support them, listen to them and respond to their needs in as empathetic as possible. Has your team considered the language that is used to discuss children who have been harmed? Are you ready to embrace terms for students like: victim, survivor, child who was harmed, child who has harmed, harmful/problematic behavior?

Reporting and Responding

“If I walk up to a staff member on your campus and ask, How do you report harm or abuse to a child?, would they know how to do that?” Katia Dantas, one of the facilitators posed this question to the group. Reporting procedures should be clear and staff should be regularly trained on how to access them. Throughout the training Dr. Virginia Jordan Greenbaum and Ms. Katia Dantas referenced the Ed Portal as a resource for schools to develop, review and refine their reporting procedures. In one of the resources, Managing Allegations of Child Abuse by Educators and other Adults, teams accessed and used the flowchart below to reflect on where they are in their current practices and what steps they may need to take to continue to improve their systems and structures. As part of this step we also mapped our campus to identify areas where students may go to be seen, unseen and may be at risk.

Overall, this training is highly recommended for school teams to attend together to reflect on and refine their practices. Each school attending walked away with a deeper understanding of how to safeguard children and the next steps to take within their school community. ICMEC is a professional organization and their training was focused on supporting students by supporting adults.



AASSA Regional Institutes

Educadores foráneos hablan de inclusión en Guayaquil



Submitted by: Paola Tinoco, Interamerican Academy of Guayaquil

La Interamerican Academy, situada en el kilómetro 10,5 de la vía a la costa, fue sede de un ciclo de conferencias sobre la inclusión, con la participación de educadores extranjeros.

La viceministra de Educación, Susana Araujo, estuvo entre los conferencistas y destacó programas que permiten que profesores lleguen a hospitales y a centros de aislamiento de menores de edad. Dijo que el Ministerio de Educación mantiene un convenio con el Instituto Ecuatoriano de Seguridad Social para que niños hospitalizados puedan recibir clases.

Comentó que en los centros de aislamiento un dicho es “el que no quiere estudiar, se queda en su habitación”, lo que lleva a los jóvenes a preferir nutrirse de conocimientos.

El evento Inclusion School of 2020 Conference empezó este jueves en el plantel de la vía a la costa. Continúa el viernes en el Centro Ecuatoriano Norteamericano, situado en Córdova y Luis Urdaneta, centro de Guayaquil. Allí, el sábado se cerrará el ciclo de conferencias. Los educadores Christopher Stone, Jim Delisle y Jonna Bobzien constan entre los ponentes del evento.

La Interamerican Academy, dirigida por Don Francis, “trabaja con familias y comunidades culturalmente diversas”, destaca en su portal web.

Mantiene un programa de intercambio estudiantil con alumnos en Estados Unidos, Canadá, Alemania, Corea del Sur, entre otras naciones. (I)

Adaptive Schools Seminar

The International School of Havana hosts the Adaptive Schools Seminar

Submitted by: Michael Lees, ISH Director

27 members of the ISHavana learning community along with three visiting teachers from the American School of Guatemala took part in the Adaptive School Seminar at the International School of Havana, Cuba from March 4th to March 7th.

The aim of the seminar, run by Thinking Collaborative's Doreen Miori-Merola, was to ‘develop our collective identity and capacity as collaborators, inquirers and leaders in complex systems’. In practical terms, this involves growing the capacity in schools and organisations to structure successful meetings and increase the efficacy of the various groups, teams and task forces in a complex structure like a school.

Teaching staff and board members spent their time exploring and developing their skills in areas such as meditative questioning, norms of collaboration, paraphrasing and the differences between dialogue and discussion. As a result, everyone left the seminar with a robust toolkit and set of foundation principles for adapting the way we collaborate in our organisations, resulting in more effective decisions and actions.

Attendees were unanimously delighted with Doreen at the helm, whose mixture of experience, humour and profound understanding of collaborative work in educational settings made for a fascinating four days. Those members of the group who had participated in Thinking Collaborative's Cognitive Coaching seminar in 2019 with Doreen found that they were able to extend and connect their learning across both areas.

The International School of Havana is looking forward to welcoming more of our international colleagues in the near future for some more outstanding professional development.



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Global Citizens Award Finalist



The Global Citizens Award is sponsored by AASSA and AASSA Partner Member TIECare in honor to recognize the amazing projects and service-minded students from our region. Congratulations to this year's finalists! We Are so honored of the positive impact you are making in your communities!

Friends through Sign Language

American School of El Salvador, San Salvador, El Salvador

Students(s): Jose Guillermo Avelar Caballero, Juan Fernando Hurtado Garcia, Federico Bolanos Pacas, Javier Andres Menendez Gasteazoro, Francisco Javier Escalante Santos

Friends Through Sign Language, or F.T.S.L, is an independent project focused on creating an avid educational environment for deaf children throughout El Salvador. This task is successfully met by imparting academic support in different areas, providing the necessary material for deaf education and also establishing a sense of friendship between each volunteer and the child. In October 2018, Guillermo Avelar discovered an academic support program, Proyecto Fátima, which taught deaf kids in economical need. These kids were previously educated at a christian private school for the deaf, but budget mismanagement led to its close. This concerned many of the parents, as they wanted an appropriate education for their kids, something not really met by the public school system. Thus, Fatima Alas, one of the school's old teachers, created Proyecto Fatima to continue giving these kids an appropriate education in a healthy environment. Following this discovery, Guillermo was deeply moved by the childrens' educational conditions, as there were many who still could not read fluently at 10, 11 or 12 years old. This led to him creating a support project that would try to increase the educational opportunities of these kids, called Friends Through Sign Language. With the help of his peers, Federico Bolaños and Juan Fernando Hurtado, they have created a successfully run program that not only teaches these children language, mathematics and character building classes throughout the week, but also focus on aiding the children to obtain the successful learning environment



through other medians; the donation of 20,000 worth of hearing aids with the help of Starkey Foundation, educational field trips every month, and more.



Link to Video:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VQ-6wdkGF9a0UXKcvqDuQXdlVOK2MWk9/>

Global Citizens Award Finalist



Biblioteca Atutu

American School of Guatemala, Guatemala City, Guatemala

Student: Kira Jacobs

Overview written by Kira Jacobs

Thinking about Guatemala's reality is what made "Biblioteca a Tuto" come to life. I knew I was going to be visiting a school with limited resources with some of my classmates from the American School of Guatemala, and my goal was to create a sustainable project to benefit the school, its students, and the community. But I wanted to do something that would last, something that would help and be with these kids for the rest of their lives. When I started thinking



about what I wanted to do as a project, only one thing made sense for me. I would share my passion for reading! My father said to me ever since I was little, "If you give a man a fish, he eats for a day. If you teach a man to fish, he eats for a lifetime." Similarly, it is better to teach people to read and foster a love of reading than to simply give books. I have always believed in helping someone to be independent, and I kept this in mind while designing my project.



I knew the school in Lagunas Cuaches didn't have a library, and having limited resources and a small budget, the school couldn't provide reading material for the

students. This meant that their reading skills couldn't improve, and I wanted to do something about it. This is how I started thinking about my project.

In the indigenous culture, it has always impressed me how women work just as hard as men, and while working, the mothers tend to tie their children to their backs, kind of like a piggyback ride. In Guatemala, we call this "a tuto", and this is how I came up with my project name "Biblioteca a Tuto", which means library on the back. Instead of having a box full of books, I decided I would provide them with backpacks that they could take home with books. After a week of reading with their families, they would bring both the books and the backpack back to the school. Then, another student would have the opportunity to do the same thing with their family for a week.

Having done this project not only had an impact on the school, the kids, and the community, but it had an impact on me. I learned so many things about myself. I learned that sharing my passions and helping other people makes me happy. I also saw the impact I made on the kids, teachers, and principals in the school. They aren't used to having so many resources, but when they saw what a book can do to change their lives, a new path was opened in their minds, a new future.



Link to video:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/16X3mFlwH7XJjvsu_uRfhk1LnwPDfBSHE/view

"Fighting the digital media revolution—either personally or in our schools—is a quixotic endeavor. Students must learn to read for bias, shift between written and visually communicated information, and maintain focus amid a myriad of opportunities to depart from the primary text via hyperlinks to supplemental information."

MICHELLE LUTHALA &
JAQUELYN WHITING



BOOK
RECOMMENDATION



Global Citizens Award Finalist



Ayudando Abrigando

Colegio FDR, Lima, Peru

Student(s): Ainocha Siucho, Miguel Uccelli, Francesco Mufarech, Marcelo Makhoul

Ayudando Abrigando is a non-profit civil association that turns plastic bottles and raw plastic into a material for blankets that get delivered to communities around Peru who suffer from low temperatures or have been victims of natural disasters. It was founded by four 13-year old teenagers that wanted to have an impact in their community. After three years of operations, they noticed that there was a problem with the regulations in Peru regarding environmental and recycling policies. Due to this, the program Ayudando Abrigando has started dialoguing and conversations with the Ministry of Environment to create effective environmental and recycling laws.

**we're
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Link to Video:

<https://youtu.be/4uvycruNSsM>



¡Gracias Ayudando Abrigando!

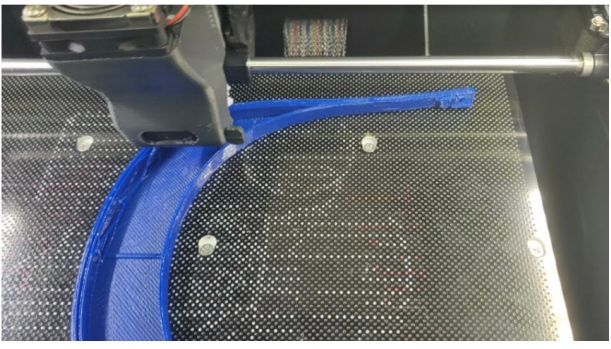


3D Printing to Prepare for the Peak Making Face Shields for Hospital Workers



*Tyler Sheldon, Curriculum & STEAM Coordinator,
American School of Asuncion*

The American School of Asuncion's (ASA) 3D printer has never been this busy. For the past three weeks the Afinia H800+ 3D printer has been producing forehead visors as part of a school community effort to provide Paraguayan hospital workers with protective face shields. Like all of us transitioning to a new schedule, the printer has had its ups and downs with personal maintenance, but continues to find opportunities to improve during these challenging times.



Maker and integrated STEM units in the elementary and middle school at ASA have integrated the 3D printer through programs such as TinkerCad and WhiteBox Learning. Students in 2nd grade studied towers as part of their exploration of solids and culminated their investigation through physical and digital structures, some of which were 3D printed for a class set. Seventh graders studied the role of wind power as an alternative energy and designed turbine blades using an auto-CAD program, subsequently printing and testing their designs.

To prepare for the peak of Covid 19 in Paraguay, the ASA parent community and school leadership collaborated to assist in the production of face shields for

hospital workers. The director of ASA, Christopher Russo, fired up the school's 3D printer and production began. After several rounds of filament experimentation, minor system maintenance, periodic realignment, and model tweaking, production was ramped up to several dozen masks each week with a total goal of over 300 by the time of the infection peak.



The school is grateful for parental support, medical guidance, and the warm-hearted collaboration of Asuncion's Maker community. During this period of uncertainty, when the recommended action for safety is inaction and staying at home, it's good to leverage school resources to help the community, one 3D printed hospital face shield at a time.





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The Impact of Coronavirus on International Schools – China's Schools Prepare to Reopen



by Anne Keeling | Communications Director | ISC Research

As schools in China begin to carefully and, in a phased approach, re-open their doors to students, there are several key concerns and challenges they are now facing.

ISC Research field researchers based in China have been gathering intelligence from the international and private bilingual schools in the country to understand how reopening after coronavirus will be impacting them. These insights may help international schools around the world prepare for their own reopening plans.

Most international and private bilingual schools in China have prepared their re-opening plans. These are including the introduction of systems limiting campus access such as temperature checks and green QR health codes, heightened cleaning and sanitising regimes, systems to manage pupil gatherings such as staggered dining and online assemblies broadcast to classrooms, protocols for managing suspected virus cases during the school day, and changes to school transport plans.

Public exams have been cancelled, but some schools are particularly concerned for their current year 10 and year 12 students (grades 9 and 11 i.e. the first year of International GCSE and the first year of International A levels or IB Diploma programme). In China, parents of younger primary age children can be just as concerned about lost learning in the earlier years, as parents with older students facing exams.

Despite the significant efforts of teachers, students and their parents, online learning, regardless of how well it is planned and executed, cannot replicate the classroom experience. Many experiences and opportunities will have been missed. Some parents are asking schools how they intend to address gaps in learning when their child's school eventually re-opens. Parents are asking about the possibility of schools extending their school day or delivering weekend lessons. Some parents are asking their schools to extend the school year or offer free summer schools to the students for catch-up. Schools are learning to challenge fake news about what their competitors are offering; some parents are making claims about what other schools are doing; but when checked, the claims often prove inaccurate. Some parents are seeking a rebate on this year's tuition fees, or a freeze or reduction in next year's fees. Some schools are considering one-off bursaries for families who are experiencing temporary financial difficulty.

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Concerns for the wellbeing of students, staff, and the wider school community will continue for an extended period. There may be a need for schools to support those who have felt particularly isolated and lonely, those who may have financial worries, those who will have medical concerns and a new fear of becoming ill, those who are mourning the death of a loved one whose funeral they are unable to attend, and those who have missed a significant family event such as a postponed wedding, a deferred graduation ceremony, or other major event. For an extended period, there will still be limited opportunities to mix and socialise and this too will have an impact on people's wellbeing. Children will continue to be isolated as restrictions remain. So much of the non-academic enriching curriculum, such as school



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productions and sports competitions which are at the centre of developing 'the whole child', may be missing for a time as some restrictions remain in place. Some parents are asking for a narrower focus on the academic curriculum when schools reopen.

There is likely to be a large and, possibly, permanent impact on the economy, and schools are likening the coronavirus to the financial crash of 2008. That crisis saw a significant reduction in demand for student places for some schools in the year following the crash. Some school leaders are questioning how many families will still be able to afford premium international and private school fees. However, as a result of the coronavirus, some Chinese families may be more cautious about sending their child to an overseas boarding school, preferring to keep their child with them in China, sending them to their local international or private school instead.

There is no doubt that most schools will be giving serious consideration to their education continuity plans for the future. Many schools are already exploring the online platforms that work best for them, and developing systems, structures and practices to ensure that all members of their school community are well placed should there be any form of disruption to learning in the future.

There may well be a fall in the supply of international teachers worldwide. Teachers may be less willing to live so far from their home country and family, having experienced an extended period in which borders have been closed. Schools are beginning to consider alternative options at this time. However, as the coronavirus is now a global pandemic, there is a view that China may be well positioned to realise a faster recovery than many other regions in the world. Expatriate teachers may take reassurance from how well China has been able to contain the spread of the virus.

Some international schools have been perceived as being relatively successful in delivering well-structured online learning during the shutdown. They may be increasingly seen by parents as a dependable education solution, even through the huge challenges of a global crisis. But for now, it is too early to tell how the implications of the coronavirus will impact the demand for enrolment of students next academic year. ISC Research will be closely and constantly tracking this impact and the future prospects for international and private schools around the world. More information is available at www.iscresearch.com where you can find blogs sharing coronavirus implications, details of school closures as a result of coronavirus updated weekly, and reports and support available for international schools.

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What Characterizes a Good School?

By Isabel C F Auler, PhD., Middle School Principal at the American School Our Lady of Mercy in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The false incompatibility between academic excellence and equity.

One of the parent's most difficult decisions lies in choosing the school where their child will study. Many wonder what they should prioritize when deciding which institution they will choose since it will contribute to their child's character, and to assist in the professional future of the most important person in their lives. In fact, the responsibility is immense, and the answer to that question is not as easy as you might think.

Depending on the particular vision of each family, the school will represent something different. For some, it will represent the maintenance of conservative values; for others, it is the depth of academic education. And there are still those who value a more alternative vision, which favours the diversity of ideas and the development of artistic expressiveness of students.

Despite the multiplicity of perspectives and desires, the concern with students' professional future still remains central to the choice of the educational institution. This ends up in feeding a fierce competition between schools aiming to prepare students to pass to renowned universities and, therefore, to put their names in advertisements to attract new parents.

This marketing logic helped in the stagnation of educational institutions since the concern with

results relegated the educational process to the background. It is even funny to think that the desire of parents in search of quality education ended up becoming one of the main impediments to the methodological renewal of schools. No institution dares to innovate, as it is well aware that for the maintenance of its clientele, the premise remains, primarily, the same: that your child passes into a good university.

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Therefore, under the banner of academic excellence, schools fill classrooms with 30 to 40 students and hire teachers to regurgitate content. At the same time, rows and rows of attentive eyes and ears try to copy everything they hear onto paper. In an attempt to promote some kind of deeper connection, at most, the teacher will be able to establish a debate during his class. And that goes beyond the usual stimulus of basic memory and applicability.

At this point, you must be questioning my argument, since you studied at an institution similar to the one described and, you are currently well employed. It is clear that knowledge acquisition will occur in a traditional educational institution. We cannot deny that the competitiveness inherent in this educational environment will also promote external stimuli, which will make the student develop responsibility and autonomy. After all, the premise is simple: if you don't study, you will fail. However, we must look more closely at the reality of these institutions and ask ourselves if this is what we expect from an excellent school.

To discuss in detail, I will list three important points to analyze the qualities of an educational institution in the middle of the 21st century: socio-emotional education, equity and academic excellence.

Socio-emotional education:

After two years of intense research in the educational field, The Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development published a document revealing the intrinsic relationship between the dimensions of cognitive and socio-emotional learning. In an increasingly competitive and collaborative labor market, cognitive flexibility, the ability to negotiate and solve problems are integral parts of all of our lives. The traditional school environment, being more concerned with quantitative results instead of building a qualitative educational process, does not intentionally promote such skills. Students with natural skills end up surpassing others, who are pressured to develop those qualities quickly, without the help of an educator. Many

fail and end up discarded by the system for not fitting.

In addition, even naturally disciplined and internally motivated students can leave a traditional educational institution without learning to collaborate and negotiate during conflict situations. Many institutions dismiss academically excellent professionals for the lack of these skills, seen as central to progress in the corporate world.

“Evidence confirms that supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development benefits all children and relates positively to the traditional measures we care about: attendance, grades, test scores, graduation rates, college and career success, engaged citizenship, and overall well-being.”

The Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development

The traditional school is essentially content-based. However, the current world requires the development of skills and competences that will make young people deal with a new and unexpected reality. More than pure scholastic content, we need to focus on developing these capabilities.

Equity:

Many schools advertise as supporters and promoters of socioemotional skills. Nevertheless, parents must understand that the development of a pedagogical plan, capable of developing students' cognitive and socioemotional potential, necessarily involves promoting equity.

“Although these skills are important for all students, equity means acknowledging that not all students are the same. Providing equitable opportunities for developing young people's social, emotional, and academic growth requires calibrating to each student's and school's individual strengths and needs —

ensuring that those with greater needs have access to greater resources.” The Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development

Each student will have their own time to develop their skills. Therefore, big schools with more than 25 students in a classroom, run by teachers in need of continuous professional development, will not be able to put this into practice.

Recognizing the individuality of each student and family means creating different expectations and methodologies to meet different needs. This attentive look at each student is essential if we really want to develop the potential of each one. Academically excellent students may need more help in their collaborative skills. In comparison, other groups may need more help in developing their interpretive skills, for example. Seeing this difference and adapting to them requires a change of paradigms in the elaboration of teaching materials, as well as in the classroom methodology itself.

Academic Excellence:

The biggest challenge today is to deconstruct a false paradigm that permeates the discourse of educators and parents. When we refer to equity and inclusion, we are automatically led to think about reducing academic expectations.

In fact, many institutions that are new to the inclusive process may run the risk of adapting to the inclusion discourse simplistically, by only reducing expectations regarding their students' success criteria. However, this should in no way characterize the 21st century school.

Adapting to the needs of students must mean the full development of everyone's abilities, including those with high skills. The process is complex and must be carried out with the help of the entire community, through research, constant data analysis and continued staff development. However, we cannot think about the school of the future without having academic

excellence as one of the main pillars of a good school.

In a traditional institution, this often boils down to the exclusion of 15 to 20% of students annually, in order to reach a select group that fits the traditional style of content based teaching. However, if we create multiple criteria and expectations, which encompass students with diverse cognitive and socio-emotional abilities, the number of repetition and exclusion will gradually decrease.

It is difficult for some to understand the difference between equality and equity. If we expected the same from all students, we would apparently be promoting equal conditions. However, if we look carefully at the development process of each individual, we soon realize that it is fairer to evaluate students multiply

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and diversely, as they have numerous and diverse characteristics and abilities. We know that developing specialized work for each individual every day is a chimera. Notwithstanding, the attempt to reach this aim will help in the constant improvement of educational institutions, and we must value this permanent journey.

We thus return to the question that guided this article: what characterizes a good school? I know that each family, with its diverse values and expectations, will present varied answers. However, even though I respect the right of opinion of each one, I reiterate the importance of these three pillars in an educational institution. Moreover, I restate that the development of socio-emotional values, together with the promotion of equity, end up stimulating academic excellence instead of annihilating it.