

STATEMENT FOR SEL AND 21ST CENTURY LEARNING

GESTIÓN EDUCATIVA / DISEÑO Y
DESARROLLO DE PROGRAMAS

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1. OBJECTIVE

One of the most salient additions to our instruction principles was a more notorious emphasis on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and 21st Century Skills; essential skills in our quest for innovation to stay relevant and faithful to our mission. These skills are not only explicitly present in our textbook contents but also, included in the syllabi in the form of recommendations and examples of possible practical applications. Moreover, training sessions were designed and delivered among all of our teachers and supervisors on the practical application of these skills in our classes, on useful resources and on becoming familiar with the new curriculum, in general.

We are also aware such a remarkable renovation requires iterative training for our teachers to fully familiarize with the new curriculum and consolidate understanding of the expected implementation of the methodological changes. Thus, the present document is intended to provide teachers with an initial understanding of essential concepts, guidelines and practical recommendations regarding the role of SEL and 21st Century Skills in our new curriculum.

To start with, it is necessary to present our teachers with the working definitions of SEL and 21st Century Skills in our curricular renovation and some background of the rationale for making them an important component in it.

2. GENERAL GUIDELINES

2.1 Introduction



Mind culture is for life. (manual) skills are for living. They are for shaping material things so that they cater for the

comfort of Man. Studies should be for shaping attitudes, feelings, desires, emotions and impulses of Man, so that they may confer more peace, more joy and more fortitude on Man.

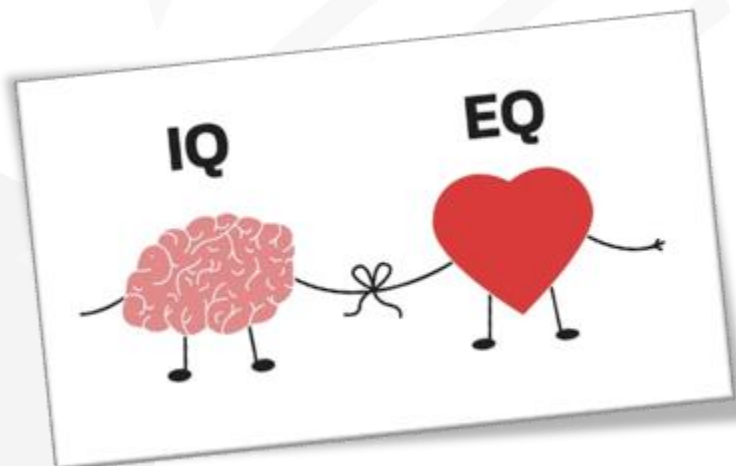
-Sathya Say Baba

Innovation in education is an undeniable necessity. Not because we need to stay fashionable, follow trends and measure up to competition. Innovation is fundamental in education because we have the ethical responsibility to help our learners acquire the knowledge and develop the skills they need to survive in a ferociously competitive and ever changing world. We need to stay current and in constant evolution in order to fulfill our mission: that of contributing to the realization of our students' dreams and to the development of our country.

Based on this understanding of our mission, a curricular innovation of significant proportions took place in 2021 in two of our most important English Language programs: The Intensive Program and the Kids and Teens Program (KTP). It affected the A1, A2 and B2 modules in the former program and the A1 to B1 modules, in the case of the latter. Additionally, it allowed for the creation of three new modules that had proven necessary to tend to the needs of our students: The Intensive Intro and C1 modules and the KTP B2 module. However, the curricular renovation transcended the mere extension of our programs. It presupposed a thorough renovation of the curriculum: replacement of the textbook material, digital resources and platforms, creation of new syllabi, inclusion of new approaches, projects, tasks, procedures, among others

3. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

3.1 SEL in Education



“The survival of the human race depends at least as much as on the cultivation of social-emotional intelligence as it does on the development of technical knowledge and skills” (Darling-Hammond, L., 2015)

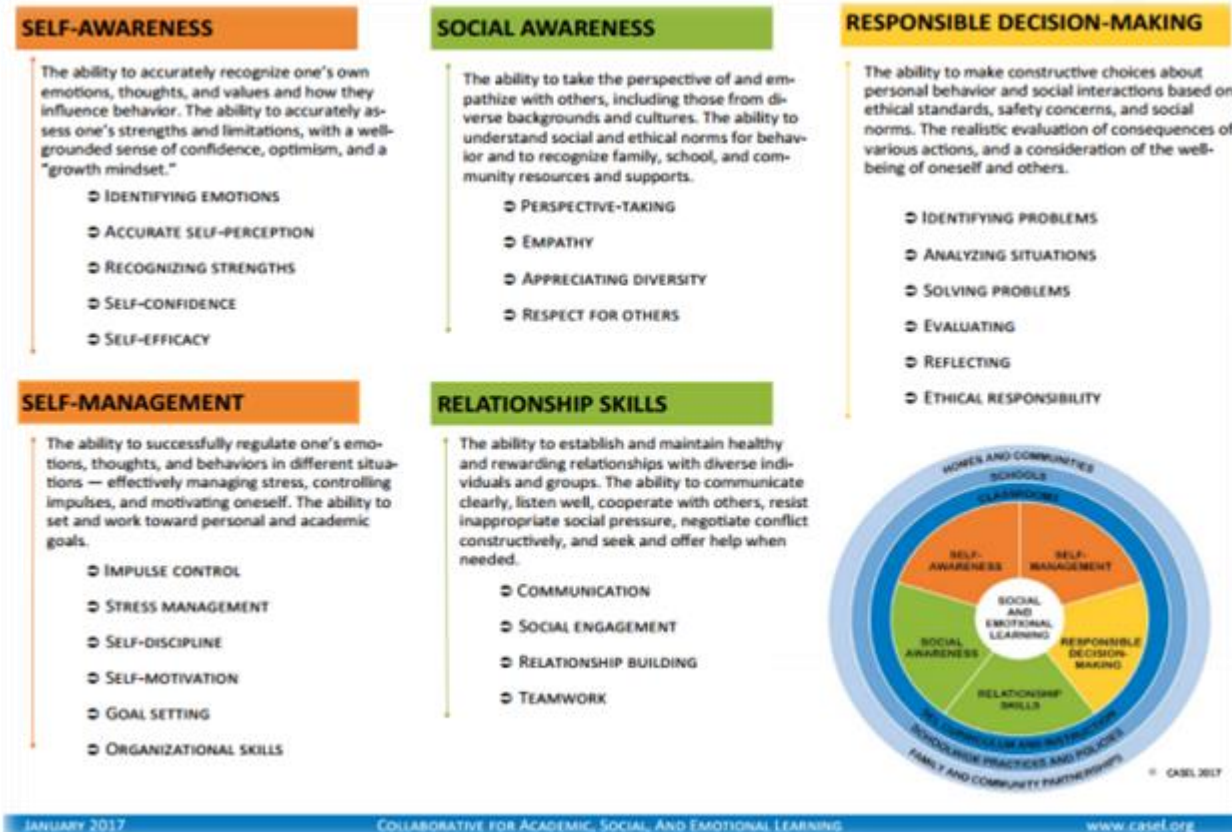
The Integrated Social Emotional approach to learning stems from the notion that intelligence and success are not limited to cognitive skills. In accordance to Gardner's (1983) theory, those who promote SEL also claim that there is more than one kind of intelligence and we all develop some of them better than others, which makes us all different and equally necessary for society. Thus, the social and emotional skills must also be given the attention that is given to other skills and intelligences so that we can all develop our full potential.

According to CASEL, a leading organization advancing the development of academic, social and emotional competence for all students in The USA, SEL can be defined as a personal and intellectual growth process through which people acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

Brain Heart Interactions Concept Best Teamwork Stock Vector (Royalty Free) 408266827 | ShutterstockResearch strongly supports the fact that an education that promotes SEL has a positive impact on a wide range of outcomes, including academic performance, healthy relationships, mental wellness, and more. As an example, we can explore a landmark meta-analysis in 2011 (Durlak, et al., 2011), that looked across 213 studies involving more than 270,000 students and a 2021 systematic review (Clarke et al., 2021), which found that students participating in SEL programs showed improved classroom behavior, social skills, an increased ability to manage stress, anxiety and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others, and school. More specifically, SEL interventions that address the five core competencies (self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills and social awareness) increased students' academic performance by 11 percentile points, compared to students who did not participate. About 27% of the students improved their academic performance at the end of the program and 24% more improved social behaviors and lower levels of distress.

Now, we have always known that social and emotional wellbeing is important due to, precisely, the social and emotional nature of the human being. However, we usually thought of it as something each individual, families, psychologists or psychiatrists were responsible for. But more than ever before, in the post-pandemic world, we are convinced that SEL must be ingrained in our culture, part of our daily pursuits and a fundamental component of education. And it should, by no means, be a privilege, but a constant in all levels of society. "The new survival skills are no longer skills that only the elites in a society must muster; they are essential survival skills for all of us." (Zhao, 2012)

3.2 The CASEL Model



The CASEL Model served as a very useful guide during the curricular renovation. It establishes 5 core competences and numerous sub-skills necessary to reach thorough social-emotional learning as shown above.

However, this was, as mentioned before, a guide. Additional competencies were also made part to the syllabi based on the textbooks' suggestions and other models, for instance. A complete glossary of general competencies or skills and sub-skills will be annexed by the end of the present document for teachers' reference.

3.3 21st Century Skills in Education

Research demonstrates that there is no unique definition of '21st Century Skills' accepted internationally (Joynes, et al., 2019), due to the fact that there is also lack of clarity regarding which specific skills they are. Research also shows that the difference between 21st Century Skills and other related skills (e.g. soft skills) is undetermined. Experts usually use the term '21st Century Skills' when referring to new, multiple skills or subcategories of skills citizens need to be trained on in order to succeed in future jobs, careers and their own personal lives; participate appropriately in an increasingly diverse society; use new technologies; and cope with rapidly changing workplaces (Voogt & Roblin, 2010).



Our new curriculum mostly suggests skills and sub-skills from The Framework for 21st Century Learning, designed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21). In general terms, this framework claims that academic subject knowledge should, undeniably, be the basis of the education we need. However, educators also need to guide learners to develop these additional, Global Skills that will help determine their success and life balance:

- **Learning Skills:** Also known as the "four Cs" of 21st-century learning, these include critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.
- **Life Skills:** Flexibility, initiative, social skills, productivity, leadership
- **Literacy Skills:** Information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy

3.4 Principles for applying SEL and 21st century skills in our English classrooms

The term we will use hereafter in order to refer to both SEL skills and 21st Century Skills will be global skills. Next, we would like to present some general principles and guidelines for the implementation of these skills in our classes:

1. Our curriculum suggests an integrated approach to these skills. This approach aims at the development of both communicative competence and global skills simultaneously and progressively as students advance in their learning process. Therefore, what is expected from teachers is not to address a global skills activity as a separate section of the class but rather, to find opportunities to train students in these skills as they approach the content of the lessons.
2. The academic content is mediated by the social-emotional or 21st Century skill being taught, which maximizes the development of their communicative abilities such as meaning negotiation, active listening, fluency, lexical variety, complexity, accuracy, speech, speech repair, checking for understanding, asking for clarification, among others.

3. Make it relevant. The relevance of learning Global Skills is much clearer to students and much more motivating if they understand how a given topic fits into the class context.
4. These Global Skills do not need to be taught every class. However, when they are addressed, they need to be explicitly introduced, taught and then, reflected upon. This so that students are aware that they are learning a new skill and they understand their usefulness in their learning experience and day-to-day life. Additionally, we strongly suggest recycling these skills whenever the topic allows.
5. In most cases, our syllabi offer plenty of suggested Global Skills per unit. However, it is the individual teacher's decision which, when and how to teach them. To provide our teachers with better guidance in the beginning stages of curricular implementation, we strongly recommend formally addressing at least 1 Social-Emotional skill and one 21st Century Skill per unit.
6. When teaching Global Skills, it is important to bear in mind procedures and principles that are familiar to most of our teachers:
 - **Smooth transitions:** from the previous activity to the next one within which the Global Skill will be included. It should not appear to students as something additional to the class plan and lacking of coherence with the class objectives.
 - **Engaging practices:** The activity should be intellectually and emotionally challenging, motivating and meaningful.
 - **Constructive closure and assessment:** Time for students to reflect under the teachers' guidance, make connections and think about the next steps in the application of the new skills in their personal and professional growth.
7. The integration of the Global Skill selected for a given lesson does not need to be part of the class objectives, unless it is closely related to the communicative goal of the class.
8. As aforementioned, there should be an intentional space for reflection after addressing the Global Skill. Teachers can intentionally create opportunities for students to discuss what they have learned in order to make meaningful connections to their present and future lives, self or peer-assess their learning and understanding. However, due to the newness of this component of our curriculum, we do not consider pertinent to make it a decisive factor to determine whether the student passes or fails the level.
9. Encourage transfer of learning. Students need to develop the ability to apply skills, concepts, knowledge, attitudes and/or strategies they develop in one context, situation or application to another. This will also facilitate recycling and reviewing previously learned skills.
10. Promote a class atmosphere that facilitates students' expression of their emotions, concerns, insecurities, strengths and weaknesses, best practices as advice for others, etc. Avoid judgement, criticism, comparisons and discrimination.
11. Most importantly, we expect our teachers to learn, understand and reflect upon these skills, apply them to their own personal, intellectual and professional development. As a community of practice, we are committed to providing further training opportunities, spaces to discuss, share and learn about these concepts. We expect teacher's feedback and ideas to improve their effective implementation.

3.5 How Global Skills are presented in the Syllabi

In most of the modules, SEL and 21st Century Skills are presented in specific columns of the syllabus.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS	SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS
<p>Creativity: making new sentences with the new language and comparing them to their partners'. Exercise B from grammar section on page 79. As well, on writing exercise from page 83.</p> <p>Numeracy: use numbers to describe. Use this with countable and uncountable nouns on exercise B from grammar section on page 79. Recycle this skill in the recipe from B, in vocabulary exercise on page 82.</p> <p>Social and cultural Awareness: reflect on how the lifestyles of people can vary from culture to culture, and from region to region. Vocabulary ad listening section from page 80, how is your diet.</p>	<p>ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION: Setting high standards for oneself and working hard to meet them. Enjoys reaching a high level of mastery in some activity. Opposite: uninterested in career development.</p> <p>COOPERATION: Living in harmony with others and valuing interconnectedness among all people. Find it easy to get along with people, respects decisions made by a group. Opposite: Has a sharp tongue, is not prone to compromises.</p> <p>CREATIVITY: Generating novel ways to do or think about things through exploring, learning from failure, insight and vision. Has original insights, is good at the arts. Opposite: seldom daydreams, dresses conventionally.</p> <p>ASSERTIVENESS: Able to confidently voice opinions, needs, and feelings, and exert social</p>

SOCIOEMOTIONAL SKILL
<p>SOCIAL AWARENESS: Once their pechakucha presentations have been shared, students may write a short reflection about the way this task may have helped them understand some of the problems our society has. This way, they'll raise awareness of the fact that being part of the solution starts with being informed about current social problems. They can raise awareness of the fact that once they are informed, they can have a say in necessary social changes and thus, become leaders.</p>

Complementary Skills and Tools
<p>21st Century skill: Collaborative Problem Solving: ask ss to discuss the questions on page 51 act D in pairs and then share their plan to escape.</p> <p>Social-emotional skill: Responsible decision-making: Ask students to discuss the questions on activity D page 53. Encourage them to focus on the cultural component of the urban games and ask them to make final decisions about which games should be played and which ones should not, their decisions must be supported by strong ideas with ethical and constructive choices. They can also look for other games if necessary.</p>

In some cases, more than one skill is suggested per unit and also, in some cases, specific suggestions for the practical application of the skill in a particular lesson is also recommended. However, teachers must remember the syllabus is a useful guide, but in the end, we expect them to be the ones who make the best decisions based on their experience, the particular needs, preferences and learning styles of the students. Definitely, as aforementioned, we strongly recommend formally addressing at least 1 Social-Emotional skill and one 21st Century Skill per unit, but apart from this standard, they can innovate and go beyond.

3.6 Glossary of SEL and 21st Century Skills and Sub-skills

COMPLEMENTARY SKILL	DEFINITION
ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION	Setting high standards for oneself and working hard to meet them. Enjoying reaching a high level of mastery in some activity. Opposite: uninterested in career development.

ASSERTIVENESS	Voicing opinions, needs, and feelings, and exerting social influence. Taking charge in a class or team. Opposite: waiting for others to lead the way, keeping quiet when disagreeing with others.
CIVIC LITERACY	The knowledge and skills to participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed, understanding governmental processes, and knowing how to exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
COLLABORATION	Working interdependently, learning from and contributing to the learning of others for a shared purpose for a wide range of environments.
COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING	The process of collaborative decision making is aimed at combining the input from all stakeholders and therefore at making the best choice from the standpoint of the objectivity.
COLLABORATIVE COMMUNICATION	Collaborative communication is the method of communication that attaches importance to the opinions of every student. It is a flexible communication that respects the contribution of the entire class, thereby making them feel valued because they believe that they are always listened to when they express their opinions.
COMMUNICATION	Appropriately interacting with others to convey meaning and gain understanding for multiple purposes, settings and audiences including the digital environment.
COMPUTER LITERACY	It is the understanding of computer characteristics capabilities and applications, as well as an ability to implement this knowledge in a skillful, productive use of ICT application.
CONVERSATIONAL APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION	Having a repertoire of ready-made phrases to improve one's communicative competence in interactions.
COOPERATION	Living in harmony with others and valuing interconnectedness among all people. Finds it easy to get along with people, respects decisions made by a group. Opposite: Has a sharp tongue, is not prone to compromises.
CREATIVITY	Generating novel ways to do or think about things through exploring, learning from failure, insight and vision. Has original insights, is good at the arts. Opposite: seldom daydreams, dresses conventionally.
CRITICAL THINKING	The ability to evaluate information and interpret it through independent and unconstrained analysis. Good at solving problems, at ease in new and unknown situations. Opposite: dependent on others' guidance.
CURIOSITY	The ability and habit to apply a sense of wonder and a desire to learn more. Curious people try new things, ask questions, search for answers, relish new information, and make connections, all while actively experiencing and making sense of the world.
EMPATHY SKILLS	Binge an open-minded person in order to understand personal and difficult life events, listen, care and give advice or support to people.
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS	
FLEXIBILITY	The capacity to adjust to short-term change quickly and calmly, so that you can deal with unexpected problems or tasks effectively.
GLOBAL AWARENESS/MULTICULTURAL LITERACY/CULTURAL AWARENESS OR COMPETENCE	It's the understanding of your own culture, other's culture, and the role of culture in education." Getting to know different cultures, identify and understand respect differences.

ICT LITERACY	Using digital technology, communications tools, and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to function in a knowledge society.
INDEPENDENCE	The ability to evaluate information and interpret it through independent and unconstrained analysis. Good at solving problems, at ease in new and unknown situations. Opposite: dependent on others' guidance.
INFORMATION LITERACY	The ability to find, evaluate, organize, use, and communicate information in all its various formats, most notably in situations requiring decision making, problem solving, or the acquisition of knowledge.
INITIATIVE	The ability to assess a situation and take action without direction from someone else.
LEADERSHIP	The strengths and abilities individuals demonstrate that help the oversee processes, guide initiatives and steer their employees toward the achievement of goals. Valuable leadership skills include the ability to delegate, inspire and communicate effectively.
MEDIA LITERACY	Practices that allow people to access, critically evaluate, and create or manipulate media.
NUMERACY	The knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that students need in order to use mathematics in a wide range of situations. It involves recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully.
PEER-ASSESSMENT	The ability to critique and provide feedback to each other in a constructive and respectful way.
PROBLEM SOLVING	The ability to define a problem; determine the cause of the problem; identify, prioritize, and select alternatives for a solution; and implement a solution.
PRODUCTIVITY	The ability to create a product using these skills: setting and meeting goals, prioritizing needs, managing time, working ethically, collaborating and cooperating with colleagues and clients.
RECOGNIZING EMOTIONS	Analyzing and understanding why people may feel in certain way when facing some situations.
RECOGNIZING STRENGTHS	Recognizing the personal qualities, abilities, knowledge and skills you already have. Strengths are things that, at the very least, you are competent at – you have sufficient skill, knowledge and experience in. But more likely, your strengths are the things you're good at and that you do well.
RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING	Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior.
RESOURCEFUL LEARNING	The ability to find and use available resources to achieve one's learning goals.
SCIENTIFIC LITERACY	Scientific literacy means that a person can ask, find, or determine answers to questions derived from curiosity about everyday experiences. It means that a person has the ability to describe, explain, and predict natural phenomena.
SELF-ASSESSMENT	The ability to examine yourself to find out how much progress you have made. It is a skill that helps individuals monitor their own work or abilities, find out what their weaknesses and strengths are, and self-diagnose relevant solutions.
SELF-DIRECTION SKILLS	Making the right choices in life and making a life out of your hobbies can be very beneficial for your wellbeing.

SELF-EFFICACY	The strength of individuals' beliefs in their ability to execute tasks and achieve goals. Remains calm when facing unexpected events. Opposite: avoids challenging situations.
SELF-MANAGEMENT	Understanding and reflecting upon one's emotions and the impact one has on performance to achieve goals.
SOCIAL AWARENESS	Understanding people have different routines, likes and preferences. Becoming an open-minded person in regards to diversity.
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	Student social responsibility mainly focuses on taking responsibility for one's own actions. It is a promise everyone should make for the society while working for the social, cultural and, ecological causes.
SOCIAL SKILLS	The skills we use to communicate and interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and our personal appearance.
SOCIABILITY	Being able to connect with other people and maintain social connections.
TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY	The mere usage of the software, online dictionaries, computers and other online resources results in a whole new process for the student.
USING FEEDBACK CONSTRUCTIVELY	A form of criticism that focuses on building the recipient's abilities. This type of feedback involves discussing the negative and positive aspects of a person's work and suggesting improvements.

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