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EduCOVID Series

April 2021 Edition



As schools move towards spring vacations, the academic year slows down after another sturdy start, attempting at relieving pressures and smoothing down tasks until further notice, when they resume and start preparing for end-of-year tests.

Furthermore, the vaccine campaigns, the hesitancy of many parents and teachers, and the ever-coming news about new strains of COVID-19 keep worries at the forefront, but the resilience, the grit, and the willingness to continue the battle until victory, is saving learning and teaching.

Many dates are being changed to suit the disruptions caused by the pandemic. More flexibilities have been given to relieve learners, parents, and teachers.

Some schools have been asking parents for opinion polls, whether they want their children to study in-person, hybrid, or fully-online modes. However, few countries continue to pose school closures, despite the calls for flexibility, going back to schools.

Reminder 1: General Safety Measures/Safeguarding



These were fully explained in Post COVID School (Version 2) from the Edu-COVID Series, published in August 2020.

www.orbitsdevelopment.com

Reminder 2: Focus Synergy



SMART UNDERSTANDING
OF SITUATION
(COUNTRY/REGION LEVEL)



STAKEHOLDERS'
COLLABORATION



FEEDBACK LOOPS



HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE
TEACHERS



FLEXIBILITY

These were fully explained in Post COVID School (Version 1)
from the Edu-COVID Series, published in July 2020.

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Focus Urgency

Accountability

Schools continue to assure quality as they surf into the continuous COVID era. Helping through their accountability measures, these questions are asked:

- Are leaders crafting well-studied plans in case of phased reopenings, including contact tracing?
- Are leaders evaluating the data both horizontally and vertically at this stage for better summer and next year planning?
- Are leaders providing special programs to enrich their learners' experiences?
- Are leaders ensuring that their secondary level learners are getting all the career counseling needed as they head towards their final years in high school?
- Are leaders emphasizing learners' proficiencies and optimizing grouping in classes? Research states that groups with gifted learners tend to perform better as the tasks are invigorated.



Focus Urgency

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Academic Achievements / Losses



Collecting **Feedback**
and using it to design and
redesign



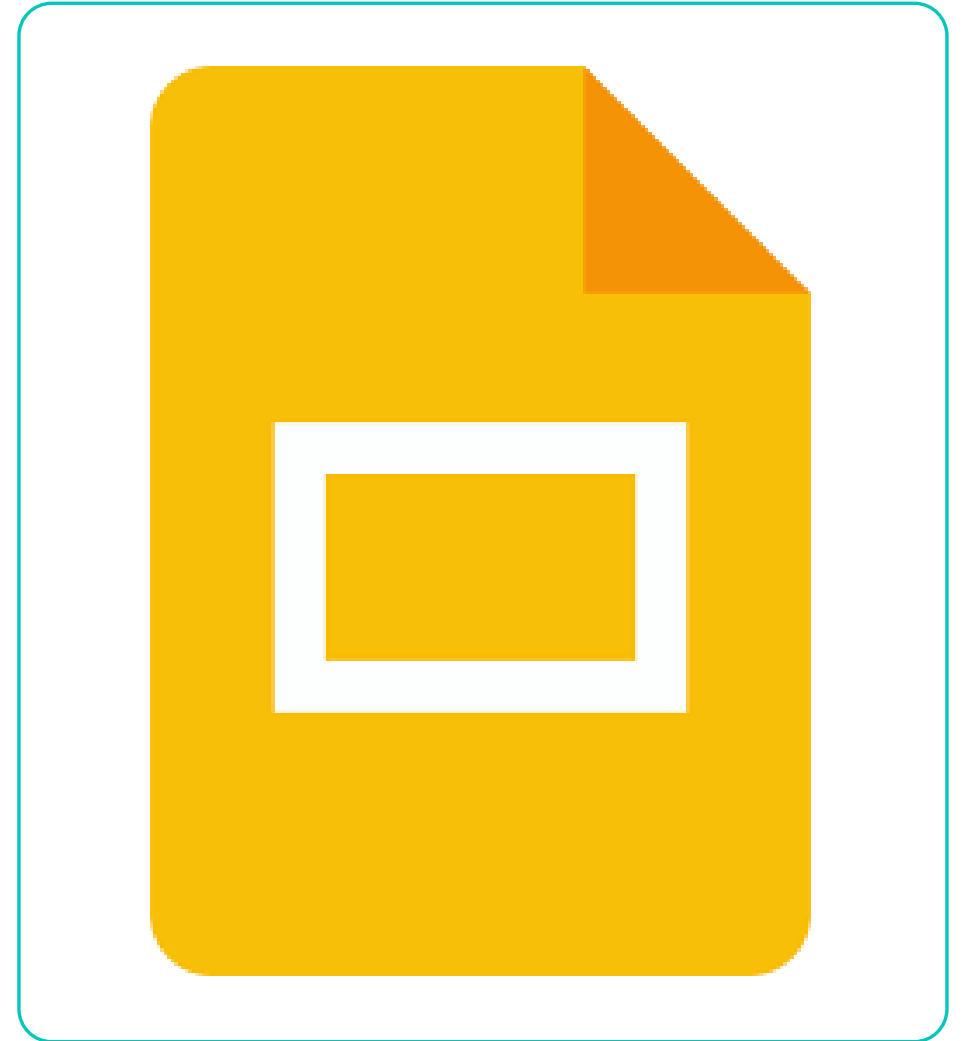
Integrating **SEL**

Social-emotional learning
components to all subjects

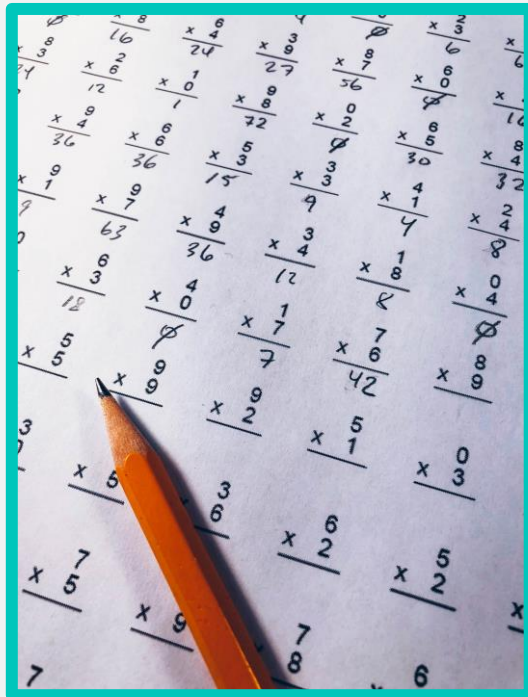
With more schools going in-person, even if partially, more facilitation is needed in terms of accomplishment and engagement, for both teachers and learners.

One of the ways that assist in coordinating in-person learners and virtual ones are google slides that are used as digital desks, in which all learners and teacher can keep classwork within the same range of eye-view.

This way every learner can see what the others are doing and even do peer-to-peer reviews.



Mathematics



A key in showing math proficiency is having proficient problem-solving skills. Unfortunately, much of the problem-solving done in classes in various educational systems relies on almost the same procedures of solving the questions.

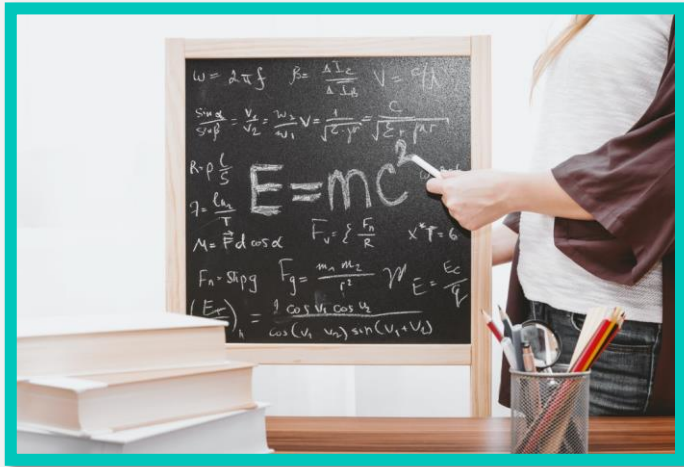
Mathematics requires not only the knowledge of the procedures but also the smart use of the procedures. Therefore, problems to be solved should offer opportunities to reflect upon the procedures and select the most effective one for solving the problem.

Craig Barton, a British Math teacher and author, explains that in his books "How I Wish I'd Taught Maths":

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/product/1911382497/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=mrbartonmaths21&camp=1634&creative=6738&linkCode=as2&creativeASIN=1911382497&linkId=6088da3d9b628ee847be7a191b4faaec

and writes about SSDD problem-solving. **SSDD or same-surface different-deep** mathematics that uses problems in mathematics for the target of mainly knowing what procedure to use, instead of just using the procedure to find the answer. This is integral in problem-solving, which is needed in learning.

Science



Thinking like a scientist is the essence of science teaching and learning, without which science would be only rote learning and low-order thinking skills.

Creating a **science community** in the school revives school spirit. Researching practical problems can be a regular assignment, through which learners research topics that require problem-solving. Problem-solving will introduce new solutions and alternatives.

Grade levels and/or group interest level can work as science committees, study data, store data, and even conduct science conversations and investigations with other school communities.

This also spurs interest, curiosity, and innovation, three of the 21st century skills.

Physical Education

A strong element that makes physical education highly-effective is the understanding that this subject is “education in movement”, which means that it hones “**embodied potential**”. This is instrumental in establishing a robust PE curriculum and sessions. It is never only a set of pre-established guidelines. There should be guidelines, but they are to be strengthened and empowered by exploration of movement and potential.

These experiences provide learners with a challenging disposition and the enrichment of all those movements and patterns within the range of a learner and extending beyond that.

This means learners have the privilege of choice and the power of depth in the way they do PE exercises, practices, and play patterns – embodying their potential as human beings, blessed with movement, high level of flexibility, and design. This by itself leads to more self-confidence and even cognitive attainment.



Art



Knowing about art is an integral part of art teaching and learning, such as learning about history, cultures, eras, classic painters, heritage, and son on.

World Museums can be a great project to work on, regardless of age group (can be adapted to age), in which learners are asked to work in groups, researching world most renowned museums. The project can incorporate general facts, such as geography of museum, category, founders, curators, and so on, and specifics, such as the museum's best selection of paintings, painters, sculptures, etc.. The project can extend to case studies at higher grade levels.

This is so important as it recreates the value of art and its historical significance and creates opportunities for learners to be innovative in the way they select their styles, presentations, and features. They may even work on designing their own school museum, physically or virtually.

A stack of smooth, light-colored stones, possibly river stones, stacked on a dark, textured surface. The stones are arranged in a slightly tapered stack, with the top stone being the smallest and the bottom stone being the largest. The background is a dark, gradient color.

Focus Urgency

III

Alignment


Alignment to Statement

Challenges continue although a calibration of understanding and adjusting has been long underway. From statistical viewpoints, numbers are still projecting fear and doubt regarding safety, especially for in-person, whether full or partially. Few questions arise:

- Is the school ensuring the safety and mental health of teachers, especially those returning in-person?
- Is the school ensuring the safety of learners, especially regarding the debates of 3- or 6-foot apart debate of in-person learning?
- Is the school organizing events to revive school spirit, such as virtual camps, summits, etc..?
- Is the school fostering partnerships, both locally and globally?
- Is the school connecting academic, social and emotional factors ? A very good model connects cognition, emotion, and behavior as a three-type engagement needed to assure performance and social-emotional stability and flourish.



Source: ASCD



Focus Urgency

IV

Inclusion

Some examples of inclusion that can be introduced:

- “Air Greetings” are a very loving gesture from both teachers and learners in in-person classes. That’s when teachers and learners design a way to greet each other at the entrance of the classrooms – Standing opposite to each other, clapping hands and thighs, hands, hugs without touching. This way, every child feels that there is a physical (mirror) and heart connection between him/her and the teacher.
- “One-minute” videos are a very helpful tool to wrap up a lesson or pinpoint key statements, helping learners who are reluctant to ask questions or those who find it difficult to re-organize their ideas after lessons. Some teachers choose social media to post those videos. Others prefer to post them in their own platforms. Both ways, all learners can find ongoing support through such videos.



Focus Urgency



Home Cooperation

Parents' involvement is central in the overall process of learning, especially during these times.

- Inviting parents to volunteer in activities and probably even plan activities and events, can be a very good idea when also assisted and guided by the school.
- Engaging children in reading some books that relate to mental health is very helpful in supporting school's plans for well-being. Books by Raina Telgemeier, (her #1 *New York Times* bestselling, Eisner Award-winning graphic memoir based on her childhood, and more books by her), Dan Santat's poignant tale follows Humpty Dumpty (about facing fears), award-winning author-illustrator Jerry Craft's *New Kid* (about overcoming complex challenges), and many more are very good examples.

Social Emotional well-being, just like academic well-being, cannot be fully achieved during these hard times. However, every small step can count for better experiences.

Social-Emotional Support

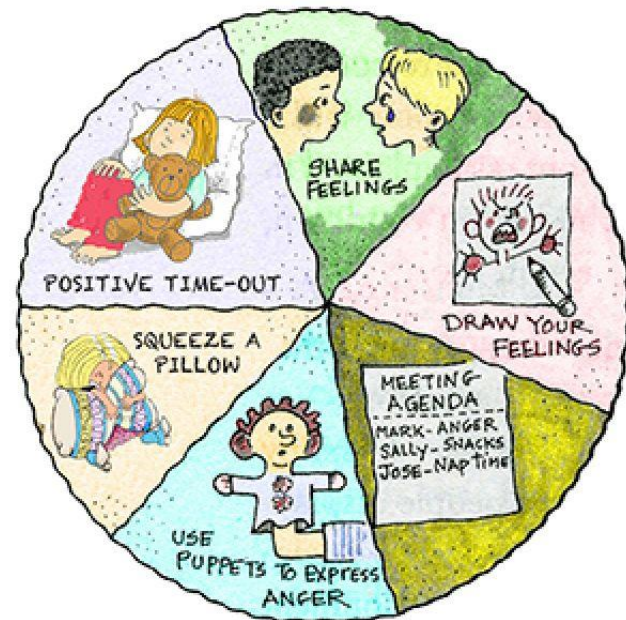
Learner and Teacher

Learners

During these times when social distancing is still controlling our daily lives, children and even adolescents might feel angry, without being able to handle their anger. *Positive Discipline* suggests using “Anger Wheel of Choice” to help explore alternatives to express their anger.

Anger
is just a feeling.

Help children find
alternative ways
to express their anger.



- 1) Teach your children that feelings are always okay, but what they do is not always okay.
- 2) During a time when your child is feeling calm, show him or her the Anger Wheel of Choice and go over the respectful alternatives for expressing anger.
- 3) When your child is angry, validate his or her feelings and then ask if he or she would like to choose something from the Wheel of Choice.

Teachers

It is so important that teachers observe their surroundings, tracking the influence of other people upon their actions, reactions, and general attitudes.

Now that there is a wide array of factors intervening with the daily work of teachers, they are more likely to feel down, discouraged, and even fearful. Observing this negative mind talk can be the first step towards understanding hidden causes of those feelings, and when the influence of others is clearly noticed, some steps can be taken to reduce that influence.

- Taking time to do breathing exercises for relaxation and calmness of over-thinking
- Doing activities that are of great interest (hobby or loved routine)
- Reducing as much negative outside talk as possible (Changing subject or excusing oneself from a conversation)
- Reading books of interest and others, such as poetry and happy diaries
- Spending quality time with family and importantly, peers from the field, who display enthusiasm, hope, and conscious optimism
- Drinking lots of water and eating healthy food (less caffeine and less sugar)
- Having enough sleep and calming sleep protocol
- Infusing surroundings with nice aromas and fragrance, such as flowers, plants, fruits, and even food aromas
- Decorating surroundings with lovely pictures and paintings, especially of the natural world and warm people gatherings
- Most importantly, reducing worrying as much as possible because worrying means emphasizing other people's negative influence



April.
Bloom Time !

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