



About the Author

Dr. Tony Tohme

Tony Tohme is an experienced figure in the field of education, curriculum development and educational research.

He has a PhD in Chemistry, Teaching and Science Education from the American University of Beirut.

Throughout his career, Tony has worked as an instructor, subject coordinator, committee leader and educational trainer at an impressive scope of school and university institutions.

He is widely published and has fifteen years of experience with Librairie Du Liban Publishers, where he was Co-founder and Director of the Educational Research Centre. His duties involved curriculum development for Arab World Education Ministries, educational research projects, teacher training and professional development, and educational resources development for different subjects. He was also involved in the development of the International Arab Baccalaureate (IAB) project.

He worked as Academic Director at Lebanese Synod Schools. He is now Senior Educational Consultant at the Educational Research Centre (ERC).

How the IAB Program Enhances Social and Emotional Learning

The International Arab Baccalaureate (IAB) Program does not consider academic learning as the only thing required to nourish young minds fully, but also emphasizes learners' social and emotional learning. It helps them develop their personal characters through social and emotional learning.

The early learning years are critical in preparing learners for the rest of their academic career and beyond. No matter how academically gifted some learners might be, if they lack the social and emotional skills needed to make meaningful connections and manage their emotions, they will struggle to realize their full potential.

Between the ages of 11 and 16, learners go through tremendous changes, both physically and mentally. The onset of puberty can trigger confusing emotions and affect relationships with peers, educators, and family members at home. So, learners need to get the social-emotional support they need during this cycle.

Learners who are in the Secondary Cycle may feel overwhelmed with what lies ahead. Learners should have ambitious yet achievable goals in mind to ease their anxiety over their academic/career transition. They need more emotional support provided to them while undertaking stressful examinations.

Brief background

Social and Emotional learning (SEL) is a methodology that helps students of all ages to better comprehend their emotions, feel those emotions fully, and demonstrate empathy for others.

The five core SEL competencies are:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

The following is a list of some of the SEL Skills that are important for students' whole development and well-being:

- Self-Awareness. A learner's realistic understanding of her/his strengths and limitations and consistent desire for improvement
- Self-Management
- Social-Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Goal-Oriented Behavior
- Personal Responsibility
- Decision-Making
- Optimistic Thinking

The following are the three pillars of SEL that are crucial for every students growth, development, and success:

Culture: A culture where social emotional learning can thrive is one that provides a safe and healthy place for learners to learn and grow.

Adult skills: In order to effectively teach social emotional skills, you must first possess those skills yourself. Adults who model emotional intelligence provide the critical foundation for the formation of trusting and positive relationships. When adults are skilled in the core social emotional competencies, they are supportive and engaging, are able to take responsibility for their choices and actions, manage their emotions, deal with conflicts, and are open to feedback.

Curriculum: Teachers teach more with their actions than with their words. Extensive training helps staff develop their own emotional intelligence and social emotional skills, which is an integral part of drafting every academic year's curriculum.

SEL curriculums are designed to teach topics such as communication, teamwork, and self-regulation in just a few minutes a day, and in combination with the academic subjects teachers are already teaching.

"Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them." – James Baldwin

IAB enhances Social and Emotional Learning

If there is anything the past year in education has made painfully obvious, it is the urgency of social-emotional education for our learners. Learners need support and instruction to manage their time in school successfully (whether that is in person or online) and in life. Skills like recognizing and managing emotions, being a good friend, controlling impulses, communicating effectively, and working with others are invaluable parts of what the IAB program has to offer.

IAB Learner Profile (4Ps):

The IAB program encourages students to become “paradigmatic, productive, proactive, and principled”, under the ‘4-P profile’. These personality traits, identified by the Educational Research Center (ERC) researchers as key to success in modern life, are nurtured by the IAB program in order to facilitate students’ successful transition into the 21st century workplace as well as their progression into higher education.



IAB School standards and Development program:

The school environment provided by the IAB program is one that continuously develops the abilities of the participating teachers through systematic workshops and local and regional activities.

The IAB’s workshops tackle different subjects and address different levels of cognition that are not just related to logical thinking, but to emotions as well. This is achieved through integrating academic and lifelong learning skills into the intended learning outcomes, incorporating 21st century skills in their discourse, drawing mind maps and using them as an organizational, educational and evaluative mean, facilitating higher order thinking skills, and highlighting the integration of scientific and social emotional subjects. Thus, IAB is able to provide a social and emotional learning school culture, while paying attention to quality assurance and trailing teachers’ progression.

IAB Curriculum

The IAB curriculum integrates social and emotional learning by focusing on setting a standard and defining certain learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are the statements that tell what content-knowledge and skills students should achieve and demonstrate by the end of a lesson, course, or grade level. Also, through explicitly setting the learning outcomes, it becomes easier to align the teaching, learning, and assessment process of a course.

For students, having clear learning outcomes helps them understand what is expected of them to do and know by the end of each unit of study. Also, having clear and measurable learning outcomes increases students' engagement in the learning process, allows them to draw connections between different courses, and lets them understand the requirements and aims of their assessment. As for teachers, setting clear and explicit learning outcomes is beneficial in several ways. It helps teachers answer the question: "What do I want my students to be able to do when we finish this lesson?" Teachers get the opportunity to clearly convey their expectations to their students. Further, teachers get the chance to reflect on and modify the content of the course to make sure that the emphasis is on students and on the skills that the students need now and in the future, as opposed to just focusing on study material.

IAB Cross-curricular Project

The cross-curricular project established by the IAB enables students to know how to work in a group setting and integrates the value of teamwork. Additionally, having the project work across several disciplines allows every group to share a social responsibility by tackling real life issues, such as suicidal behavior, climate change, renewable energy... etc. This not only focuses on research and study, but also provides an outlet for them to be emotionally conscious of the world around them in general, and their communities in specific. Students are not only graded on the content they provide, but also on their ability to be responsible members of a team.