PADA Framework

Teach For All's Global Learning Lab has engaged with some of the most transformational classrooms around the network looking for patterns in the student outcomes teachers and students value. We have found different terms used emerging from the diverse cultures and contexts. We also see that the priorities of a particular classroom depend on the specific needs and values of the community. However, behind this diversity we have found powerful themes in common. These themes are brought together in the PADA framework.

PADA in Sanskrit means a "step" – these outcomes are a step towards making the locally rooted, globally informed vision a reality for students. The arrows illustrate movement towards the vision and the dotted lines indicate the fluidity and interconnectedness between the four themes.

Proficiencies: Student outcomes related to learning knowledge and skills that enable students to access opportunities - for example a meaningful career.

Awareness: Students' understanding of themselves, others, their community, and their place in the world.

Dispositions: Ways of being and operating in the world in order to shape a better future, including earning trust, deepening relationships, and cross-cultural collaboration.

Agency: The ability to take action with a sense of purpose and responsibility, either through personal agency, co-agency, or collective agency.
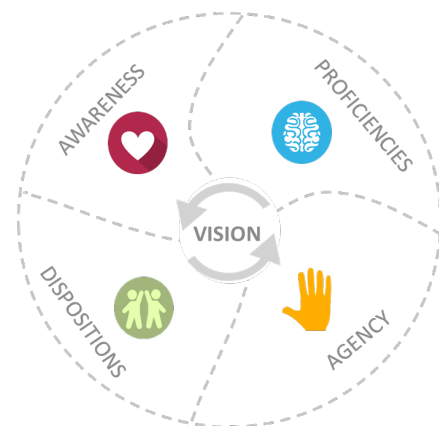
The PADA framework is not intended to be replicated word-for-word across partner organizations. Instead, it is **intended to be used as a critical mirror that provokes partner organizations or teachers to make more intentional, vision-aligned choices in defining and monitoring student growth**.

Among our key learnings is that the conversation about outcomes is most powerful when the **vision for students is at the center**. If we know what we want to be true for students, then we can make informed decisions as to what outcomes will give us confidence that students are on the right path.

This document will not directly discuss the process of arriving at a locally rooted, globally informed vision for students. To learn more about vision, **click here**. This hypothesis assumes the existence of a vision and works from there. It is also important to clarify that we believe the work of developing and evolving a vision is ongoing and not a one-time exercise. Neither is it a linear process. We have seen examples where partners began the conversation with student outcomes and that exercise inspired their vision development.

Theme	Possible Outcomes	Examples
Proficiencies	• Literacy: being proficient in reading and writing • Oral Communication: being proficient in speaking and listening • Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM): having knowledge of science and mathematics, and the ability to make connections between them and put them into practice • Creative Expression: understanding various artistic traditions and developing the skills to express oneself in these mediums • Democracy of Knowledge: understanding that different cultures have different forms of knowledge, and understanding the relationship of different ways of knowing to one another • Critical Thinking: developing the skills to analyze and interpret information	**Example from Teach for the Philippines** Demonstrating culturally appropriate creative expression, **this video** of Jesus Insilada from the Philippines is a great example of valuing the knowledge/skills learned from families and the community as assets that students bring into the classroom. Jesus Insilada is one of the top 10 finalists in the Global Teacher Prize offering by the Varkey Foundation.
Awareness	• Understanding of Self: strengths, values, and purpose (deeper than intention) • Self-Management: self-control, motivation, self-efficacy • Metacognition: learning about and understanding how a person learns, so they can support their own learning process • Contentment & Joy: developing awareness of where our passions lie, and what brings us contentment and joy • Individual & Collective Well-Being: a positive sense of self, spirit, and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs are being met • Cultural Identity & Assets: building a critical perspective on what is commonly believed in a community, particularly those beliefs that reinforce lowexpectations and self-doubt • Relationship with Nature & the Land: understanding the environment through social, cultural, political and scientific lenses. A simultaneous focus on intra-human and human-nature relations, and the assumption that the two are intertwined and mutually determining	**Example from Teach For Nepal** "It is important for our children to be happy. It is important for them to find joy from simple things in life and to understand the limitations of materialistic life. In order for these to happen, they need to understand themselves, experience 'flow' and be self-reflective." **Example from Teach For America** "Students will recognize traits of the dominant culture, their home culture, and other cultures and understand how they negotiate their own identity in multiple spaces"* *Part of Social & Political Consciousness in the Student Outcomes Wheel. Specific statement borrowed from Teaching Tolerance's Anti-Bias Framework.
Dispositions	• Engaging & Collaborating with Others: curiosity, empathy, social intelligence, cross-cultural competence, conflict resolution, cooperation, appreciation (valuing and noticing others and the environment), humility, living in harmony, gratitude • Innovation & Pursuit of Goals: creativity, resilience, goal orientation (individual vs. collective depending on the cultural orientation), growth mindset	**Example from Teach For Bangladesh** The team combined growth mindset and grit and chose to pursue it as a single outcome, as they felt strongly that growth mindset is incredibly important to enable all other outcomes and because currently there is no research-proven way to teach grit. The team acknowledged that the lived experience of their students naturally builds grit, and that students need to be aware of and harness that grit to drive themselves forward.
Agency	• Actions driven by purpose and intent • Taking responsibility for one's actions • Reconciling and living with tensions and dilemmas • Listening deeply to the wisdom of the community and acting wisely based on collective intelligence • Linking individual experiences to collective experiences • Engaging in collective action to bring about social change	**Example from Teach For Thailand** The team really struggled to balance the idea of respect for elders and for the collective with the idea of personal agency. Given that the word 'agency' in itself is not easily translatable across many South Asian languages, the team used examples to communicate the idea of Agency. For instance, in a classroom setting the teacher needs to be the most respected and any form of questioning is seen as disrespectful. Therefore, students who are learning about the area of a triangle but need concrete pictures or models, may initiate their own learning in a way that serves them while not being disrespectful. They might invite or offer to share their style of learning with others or ask the teacher if it's okay to learn a different way (vs. telling a teacher that their current teaching style is not working for them).

Proficiencies

Student outcomes related to learning knowledge and skills that enable students to access opportunities.

Much of what is labeled "academics" is covered by Proficiencies. Literacy, numeracy, and specific subject knowledge fall under this theme. For example, depending on our vision for student success, we might want our students to be proficient in math, languages, science, cooking, or the arts.

However, Proficiencies goes further than this. It also includes certain skills that can only be developed once we have the foundation of knowledge in place. For example, critical thinking and problem solving require a domain of knowledge in which we are applying them. If I am asked to "think critically" about a text in literature, I must first have knowledge of the domain of literature.

At its heart, the theme of Proficiencies aims to capture the knowledge and skills a particular community thinks are important for students to master in order to be able to navigate the world. While the focus in Proficiencies is on rigorous content, this also enables mindsets and values to develop. Content is the vehicle that allows young people to explore their values. It is not possible to teach mindsets or values in a vacuum. Our knowledge of the world provides a foundation from which we can explore our values.

Photograph from Teach For Bangladesh

Within Proficiencies, it is important to ask "what counts as knowledge" and "who is deciding" what to include. Different communities value different ways of knowing the world and different types of opportunities. These differences will affect the areas in which we want our students to be proficient.

We are seeing a particular focus on critical consciousness in classrooms and communities that are moving towards equity. We often see examples where a dominant culture has control of decisions about what counts as "legitimate" or "important" areas of knowledge. This tends to ignore the perspectives and traditions of local communities. By approaching with a critical consciousness lens, we can examine the assumptions that might be at play. If unexamined, these assumptions might limit the opportunities students believe are open to them. As knowledge and skills connect with how students understand and will find their way in the world, it is important that we take the time to question these assumptions.

Awareness

Students' understanding of themselves, others, their community, and their place in the world.

In exploring Awareness, we need to ask: awareness of what? We can start by looking at self-awareness, which covers a range of important learning outcomes. This includes a learner being able to identify their strengths, values, and purpose. Self-awareness also enables students to manage their learning more effectively. This metacognitive awareness acts as a powerful catalyst in education, as students become more able to see what they are learning, and where there are gaps. This also has an ability to transform the relationship between teacher and student, as students are less dependent on teachers to tell them, and instead, are able to guide their own attention more effectively.

This theme extends to awareness of the community. We all grow up in a particular context, with its own history, culture, and traditions. Building awareness of these factors enables us to unpack the various identities that we all carry, which have their roots in different cultural and historical factors. Bringing this to light allows students to have their full self recognized in the classroom. This connects students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles in ways that legitimize what students already know. This accommodates and values the dynamic mix of race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to every student's cultural identity.

Some of the most powerful classrooms we are seeing are not afraid to explore these elements of community by looking at how they exist in a complex web of power relationships. This includes looking at histories of oppression and the ways those histories live on in the experience of the community today. Most education systems actively discourage students from bringing elements of their community identity into the learning space. Students come to the classroom implicitly aware of these types of factor, as they live them in their daily lives. By bringing them to light in the classroom, teachers can help students see them more clearly. This creates the potential for a deeper, more transformational learning experience for students.

Ecological awareness is also vital. This is an area where student leadership is striking. Through building an understanding of the impact of our actions on the natural world, students often take a leading role in advocating for change - whether this is preserving local water sources, recycling, or reducing carbon consumption. This goes beyond surface measures, to re-examining how we see our relationship to the natural world.

We are particularly struck by how certain patterns of Awareness seem to lead to particular values. For example, we see classrooms that prioritize buildling empathy and students' understanding of others tend to lead to compassion and care for others. Similarly, by building awareness of nature, students tend to take on the importance of environmental stewardship. And, by building awareness and relationships across borders, we see students building a global awareness and commitment to leading change that makes the world a better place for all of us.

Dispositions

Ways of being and operating in the world in order to shape a better future, including earning trust, deepening relationships, and cross-cultural collaboration.

Dispositions are ways we tend to respond and act. Dispositions are not fixed; instead, they are malleable and coachable. We have focused on two main categories of Dispositions, which seem important as student outcomes. First, those Dispositions that relate to engaging and collaborating with others. This includes:

- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Social Intelligence
- Cross-Cultural Competence
- Conflict Resolution
- Humility
- Living in Harmony
- Gratitude

The second category relates to innovation, achieving results, and pursuit of goals. This includes:

- Creativity
- Resilience
- Goal Orientation
- Growth Mindset

What goes under each of these buckets is not exhaustive but an attempt to catalog what we believe are important for our students. These will change based on where a particular student is growing up. Also, the specific definitions of each Disposition will vary by age and other factors, such as context.

When we talk about "dispositions that will set up students to succeed", there are some difficult decisions we need to make. For example, are we equipping learners to succeed in the world as it is, or equipping them to change the world? Are we suggesting that students from the communities we serve change their attitudes, the way they behave, and their ways of communication to see success within the current system?

We explore some of these below in looking at the relationship between Awareness and Dispositions.

Agency
The ability to take action with a sense of purpose and responsibility, either through personal agency, co-agency, or collective agency.

Agency can be understood as the capability to act intentionally, to initiate and control one's behavior and interactions with others. It reflects the capacity to anticipate a future goal, to reflect, to think critically, and to question the status quo. That being said, what agency looks like in a particular culture varies significantly. For this reason, it is not an inherent quality in an individual. It is a relational process that emerges through interactions between an individual and their social context. It is influenced by the social and cultural contexts that inform and shape who we are. Our focus is on three types of Agency:

Personal Agency relates to our individual ability to identify our goals, to have the motivation to pursue them, and to effectively achieve them. Personal Agency requires a sense of purpose, and our ability to take responsibility for our actions.

Co-Agency reflects our ability to work with others in pursuit of a common goal. Co-agency brings together individuals with different skills, resources, and competencies facilitating the development of mutual trust and respect, the recognition and reconciliation of different perspectives, and ability to work in a team.
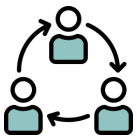
Collective Agency occurs when people act together, reflecting interactions with a wider community, a movement, or a society. This can stretch to the global level or be seen at the classroom level - when the class is understood as a learning community. Collective Agency implies a common purpose and goal and the shared belief that a desired outcome can be achieved through collective action.

When exploring Agency, we need to be careful that we do not reduce it to a stereotypical Western model, which tends to emphasize autonomy, self-expression, and individual will. Instead, we see Agency as always embedded in a social and cultural context. The goals and actions that people choose and how they experience and evaluate their decisions will vary depending on the prevalent structures, ideas, and practices in their cultural contexts.

In some places where there is a stronger sense of individualism and individual rights there may be more of a stress on individual choice in determining what is right. In others where there is a greater stress on deference to collective interests and tradition, including within families and organizations, there will be a greater sense of obligation to a wider community.

One challenge in cultivating Agency in all students is ensuring that implicit biases do not lower our expectations. As Dr. Zaretta Hammond argues: "Agency and self-directed learning are the key mechanisms that can pull students up out of poverty. So, we have to help educators see every student as capable and then teach students the tools and processes to become the leader of their own learning. One important tool is the idea of counter-narratives. There are dominant narratives that create a negative perception of poor students or students of color. We must create counter narratives - narratives that push back on or 'counter' the dominant belief about these students. When students hear educators articulating these counter-narratives it helps promote a healthy psyche in the students and positions him for agency."

Relationships Between the Themes

One of our biggest learnings from the two years of test driving the PADA framework has been to recognize how important it is to see the themes all interconnect. They cannot be taught or understood in isolation.

Awareness - Agency

Awareness and Agency are interconnected in many ways. At the most foundational level, our Agency is always expressed in a particular context or environment. As a result, unless a learner has awareness of the world in which they are acting, and an awareness of the implications of those actions, it is not possible for the agency to be effective. In other words, Agency is never just a matter of a learner doing whatever suits them in isolation. Instead, learners must develop an Awareness that there are consequences for the decisions they make. An Awareness of these consequences is a key part of effective agency. Agency is also enabled by an awareness of the responsi-

Photograph from Teach For Austria

bility of one's own actions on the environment and on others. Every decision a learner makes will impact the thinking, behavior, or decisions of others - and vice versa.

This relationship between Agency and Awareness becomes particularly clear when a learner is in a context which has external forces that obstruct their growth, for example systemic racism or oppression. If a learner acts in ignorance of these forces, their intentions are unlikely to be effective, and they may end up blaming themselves for their lack of efficacy. On the other hand, these forces can also lead to a sense of despair, or a sense that it is pointless to exercise Agency. What is needed is both an awareness of the oppressive external forces that are pervasive across the system, as well as a sense of self-efficacy (a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation) to navigate those forces and overcome their gravitational pull.

Dr. Aaliyah El-Amin, lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, identifies a three-pronged approach to building this awareness in terms of critical consciousness in schools:

- **Teach the language of inequality**. The first step is to recognize inequality and injustice. By identifying forms of oppression with labels and language, it becomes more visible and students are able to challenge the constructs that created the inequality.
- **Create space to discuss and reflect in order to create a sense of efficacy**. Helping students generate a belief that they can do something to stand up to oppression.
- **Educate students on how to take action**. It is critical to help students to understand possible implications to different types of resistance and to think about resistance in strategic ways.

Proficiencies - Awareness

One of the strongest themes in our learning has related to critical consciousness. In particular, the assumption that there is an accepted body of content, knowledge, and skills that is collectively agreed upon was repeatedly challenged. This led us to recognize the importance of who decides the student outcomes that matter, and whose knowledge, values, and culture are represented in these decisions. As we look at education systems that have inequitable outcomes, it becomes clear that one of the forms through which oppression occurs is the powerful deciding what counts as legitimate or important to be taught in schools. In most contexts we have seen, content is coded as Western and negates that there might be any kind of other knowledge.

Photograph from Teach First New Zealand

What would happen if we were to define areas of knowledge and skills depending on what the community valued? What would it look like in the classroom and how would we track progress? When we say educate to build citizenship, what does that mean for communities who have been colonized and do not identify with the existing parameters of citizenship?

It was this piece of critical friendship that led to the inclusion of democracy of knowledge under Proficiencies. This is a powerful example of the intersection of Awareness and Proficiencies.

For example, Anne Milne at Teach First New Zealand said: "At Kia Aroha College we talk about the pedagogy of whanau. Whanau is the Maori word for an extended family and kinship, so it's very much about bringing cultural values into the curriculum and into the classroom. It's very much about local resistance to the status quo and a determination to change that."

Dispositions - Awareness

Many times in conversations over Dispositions or "non-cognitive" skills, there is an assumption that students from marginalized communities are disadvantaged as individuals, because their contexts do not allow for similar socialization as their middle or upper class counterparts. The teaching of some of the socio-emotional skills pushes a socialization process that seeks to homogenize students into a single, mainstream culture if they want to "succeed". These skills send cultural messages on how a student exhibits "good behavior". They are built upon certain dominant beliefs and values that could prove to be culturally irrelevant and deficit-based when it comes to the students and communities we serve.

When we think of Dispositions in relation to Awareness, we explore what it would mean for our students to maintain and assert their cultural values while being able to navigate the complexities of the world as it is constructed today. As we work with our partner organizations looking at Dispositions through the lens of Awareness, we open up the space to recognize the skills our communities already have, and it becomes possible to both recognize and value these ways of being. Instead of seeing communities as being culturally deprived, we find ways for learners to bring their whole selves into school, redefining skills and mindsets in a way that is culturally sustainable.

Agency - Proficiencies

Research on motivation and engagement has shown that creating opportunities for students to shape their learning experience (i.e., Agency) is an essential ingredient for improving academic achievement. Creating ways for students to express themselves and have voice is central to building Proficiencies. To accomplish this, schools will need to invest more in developing critical thinking and the habits of learning so students can help themselves. It may start with curricular choice and expand to co-designing learning experiences, as students become more adept at managing projects.

One important element connecting Agency and Proficiencies is transparency. It is by having absolute transparency about what students are expected to know and do, the criteria by which their Proficiency will be assessed, and a strong understanding of what Proficiency looks like, that students can begin to have the information they need to take ownership of their learning. This, alongside being explicit about the habits of learning (those behaviors that contribute to learning), enables a culture where there is a shared vision for learning.

While critical thinking and Agency are seen as additional skills over and above the content, through lines of inquiry and reflection, we can teach students to "go meta" by asking them to think about their thinking in the moment, or directly after they complete a task. This builds on a student's ability to identify how they went about their work and provide logical and thoughtful explanations for how they arrived at an answer. This process allows students to think more deeply about the content and themselves as a learner rather than relying on evaluative scores from sporadic assessments.

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