AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

LEADING LEARNING DURING CRISES: A SCHOOL
PRINCIPAL REFLECTION

by
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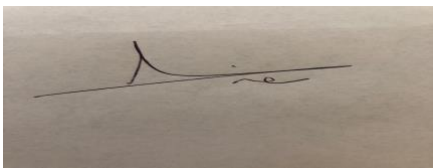Date of project presentation: March 17, 2022

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ABSTRACT
OF THE PROJECT OF

MIRNA ABED EL-HAFIZ RASLAN   for   Master of ARTS
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Title: Leading Learning during Crises: a School Principal Reflection

This study designed as a narrative inquiry describes the journey of a school principal in the context of a small private school in Beirut Lebanon during the period of compounded crisis that started in October 2019 and continued through the global pandemic and the major economic and financial crises both still impacting the education sector in the country till the time of the completion of the project. The study aims to explore the instructional supervision functions that the principal focused on during this period of time: 1) the principal's actions and decisions taken to ensure that learning remains effective in the different school modalities as well as the 2) supervisory approach used to lead learning and 3) the instructional supervision functions that the principal emphasized to overcome the challenges to students' learning brought about by the compounded crisis.

Data was collected from the principal own experience and her documented communications with different stakeholders during this period of time. The findings were discussed in light of the literature review and the selected theoretical models of instructional supervision by Glickman et al. (2018) and Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007). The results indicated that the principal responded to the crisis while keeping the focus on learning, emphasizing the instructional supervision functions of building teachers' capacity, ensuring instructional quality and warranting students engagement using a mixture of directive and informational directive approaches to decision making. The principal had to adopt a new set of characteristics, namely flexibility, adaptability and agility as well as empathy, collaboration and continuous communication. These characteristics coupled with a focus on leading the learning as synthesized from the data helped the principal get through the compounded crisis. Finally, implications for practice and recommendations for further research were shared.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Since October 17, 2019 Lebanon has been facing a number of crises that had a major impact on the economic, financial and social aspects of the life of its citizens. These crises have also had a major impact on the education sector. The economic crisis coupled with political instability, monetary depreciation, all day round electricity blackouts, a nation-wide crippling fuel crisis, a collapsing medical sector, and an exodus of brains and talents represent a summary of the status quo.

My study explores the impact of these compounded crises on leading learning in the context of a Lebanese private school. I intend to investigate the actions and decisions that were triggered by three key crises (the Thawra, the pandemic and the economic collapse) and as experienced by the principal of a private school in Beirut through a theoretical lens of the instructional supervision functions of leading the teaching and learning under crisis.

Background: A Compounded Crisis Brief History

For almost three years now, Lebanon has been struggling to survive, as it was struck by successive catastrophes starting with the economic and financial crisis, followed by a global pandemic, and not ending with one of the largest non-nuclear explosions in the world, the August 4 explosion of the Beirut port. The country is simply collapsing; declares the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development of the World Bank Group (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [IBRD], 2021). Successively, and over three years the Lebanese citizens went from an uprising: the Thawra, to a global pandemic: COVID-19 to a major financial and

economic crisis. These crises had a major impact on the education sector across the country.

An Uprising: The Thawra

A number of challenges faced by the Lebanese economy erupted into an uprising on the evening of October 17, 2019, when thousands of people spontaneously took to the streets demanding radical changes, after the government announced a tax of six dollars a month on all internet voice calls such as WhatsApp calls (Sullivan, 2019). The uprising brought to the surface the huge debt of the public sector, the practically bankrupt banking sector, the absence of any economic growth and the non-existence of an active government. Protesters called for the government to step down. For weeks people chanted on the streets of Beirut transcending sectarian divides, voicing their anger to "condemn the sectarian oligarchy" reflecting aspirations that the new Lebanese generation hoped for as Kassir (2019) wrote in the online magazine Open Democracy describing the scene in Riyad Al-Soloh street in Beirut. The protests lasted for weeks and led to the stepping down of the government of Saad Harriri on the 29th of October, 2019. On the 19th of December of the same year, amidst the protests and an ongoing financial crisis, a new government was formed led by the former education minister Hassan Diab who called on "Lebanese in all squares and all areas to be partners in a workshop of reform" (Azhari, 2019).

COVID-19: A Global Pandemic

Few weeks after the formation of the new government, a global crisis emerged. On January 30, 2020, after 98 cases of infection were reported out of the epicenter of the outbreak in Wuhan, China, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, declared, "the novel coronavirus outbreak,

a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), WHO's highest level of alarm" (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020b). Since then, there has been an exponential increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases around the world and by January 14, 2022, more than 318 million cases had been confirmed around the world with more than five million deaths.

On February 21, 2020, the Lebanese Minister of Health Dr. Hammad Hasan confirmed the first case of COVID-19 infection in Lebanon (Minister Office, 2020). The country went into total lockdown to try to contain the spread of the disease starting March 2, 2020. Since then, Lebanon went into phases of total and partial lockdowns as the number of cases fluctuated.

The August 4 Blast: A Nuclear Explosion

While still struggling with the outbreak of the pandemic trying to implement containment strategies within a collapsing medical sector, and in the midst of major economic, financial and political crises, on the 4th of August, 2020, a massive explosion shook the city of Beirut. The explosion, later found to be caused by a huge amount of Ammonium Nitrate stored in the Beirut port, was one of the largest industrial explosions in the history of the world. It is widely believed that the catastrophe, unfortunately, could have been prevented if proper storage measures were taken in due time. The blast left over 200 dead, more than 6000 injured, and thousands of homeless people. On top of this, and according to the World Bank, the explosion caused an estimated $3.8-4.6 billion in material damage at a time where Lebanon was struggling with the worst financial and economic crisis it has ever been through. After the explosion, Prime Minister Hassan Diab stepped down leaving the country without a government for more than 13 months.

Today, more than a year after the explosion the culprits are still to be found. The country continues its free fall towards a total collapse. A new government formed by Prime Minister Najib Mikati on the 10th of September 2021 becomes the third government to try to slow down the breakdown. Meanwhile schools continue to operate in crisis mode, under conditions that can easily be characterized as "a situation that disrupts the education and training process and makes it inoperable" (Mutch, 2015, p. 27).

The Situation of the Lebanese Education Sector During the Period of Crises

In a press release, on the 21st of June, 2021, the world bank warned that "the compounded crises that have assailed Lebanon over the past several years –Syrian refugee influx, economic and financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Port of Beirut blast– have all put severe strains on an already struggling education system." The report explains how the pandemic and the extended school closures (since March 2020) would most likely have a negative impact on learning. On the 3rd of March, 2021, UNICEF published a press release indicating that 168 million children around the world have been out of classes for almost a year (UNICEF, 2021). The report indicated that around 214 million children globally (1 in 7) have missed more than three-quarters of their in-person learning. The situation of the education sector globally was described as "catastrophic." According to Henrietta Fore UNICEF Executive Director, "with every day that goes by, children unable to access in-person schooling fall further and further behind, with the most marginalized paying the heaviest price," she added that, "we cannot afford to move into year two of limited or even no in-school learning for these children. No effort should be spared to keep schools open, or prioritize them in reopening plans" (UNICEF, 2021).

On February 28, 2020 Lebanese Schools found themselves suddenly in a state of emergency unable to sustain the teaching and learning process. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) issued a circular to mandate school closing as part of the national plan to control the spread of the virus. On March 17, 2020, MEHE issued a new circular that included an action plan in an attempt to contain the damage caused by the national lockdown on the education process. The proposed plan included the use of the national TV channel to broadcast videos of lessons recorded by teachers, the use of the free Microsoft Teams platform as a means of communication between students and teachers and regular communication done by mail between the different stakeholders (MEHE, 2020). In response to this call, scholars at the Centre for Lebanese Studies criticized the readiness of the Lebanese government to face the crisis. Abu-Moghli and Shuayb (2020) explored education in the time of the pandemic in Jordan, Lebanon and occupied Palestine. They explained that in comparison, the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education was the least prepared and lacked any platform or provision that could help provide quality teaching and learning during the pandemic. Despite the efforts put forth by MEHE, Abu-Moghli and Shuayb (2020) warned that these efforts fell short and many challenges remain for school leaders, teachers, students and parents. Teachers and students struggled with the prolonged hours of power cuts, weak internet and expensive 3G technology (Abu-Moghli & Shuayb, 2020). Moreover, the sudden onset of the pandemic and the lack of preparedness of schools meant that teachers needed to learn on their own about the use of the different platforms and digital tools. The researchers confirmed that some private schools moved the whole curriculum online to virtual platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams to justify the tuition fees

charged to parents (Abu-Moghli & Shuayb, 2020). Yet, students surveyed in the study indicated that the quality of education provided by private schools during the pandemic varied between good and very good.

On the other hand, and on a structural level, a snapshot statistical analysis published by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) indicated that most students in Lebanon attend private schools: 72% of primary and 59% of secondary school students attend private institutions (USAID Middle East Education Research, Training, and Support Project, 2020). Despite all efforts, MEHE has been unable to provide a vision for the governance of these private schools. A document for the national educational strategy published by the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies (2006) indicates that MEHE "has not yet set frameworks or standards for quality assurance for education in schools and universities in both the public and the private sectors" (p. 47). This basically means that private schools are not governed by specific laws and regulations and that they have a large margin of freedom as they interpret and implement the decisions of the Ministry. Nabila Rahhal (2020) explained that during the lockdown period, "given the discrepancies both in the income levels of the Lebanese and in the quality of education in the country's schools, the success of distance learning programs was not uniform." Rahhal (2020) reported in her article the lack of official statistics about the number of private schools that offered online learning to their students. She stressed the fact that International Baccalaureate (IB) schools and French Baccalaureate schools, typically those attended by students coming from medium and high-income families, were among the schools that offered successful virtual classes mostly because their curricula are more conducive to this type of learning.

Around the world, access remained inconsistent and privileged, restricted to those who have the resources and the infrastructure. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published a press release on April 24, 2020, highlighting the challenges that schools are facing trying to ensure the continuity of education. The article explained the global aspect of the crisis, stating "while many countries, including Lebanon, switched to distance teaching and hybrid learning to mitigate the effects of such disruption, challenges related to preparedness, infrastructure and capacity, as well as the digital gaps, have put additional strains on students, parents, teachers, principals and the educational authorities" (UNESCO, 2020). The report highlighted the gap induced by the pandemic and the lockdown and urged for collaboration to mitigate the impact on the children and youth of the country. In Lebanon, the extended school closure over the pandemic led to a major decrease in learning. The situation became worse after the 4th of August, 2020. The Beirut blast damaged approximately 160 schools leaving 85,000 students unable to access education (Partridge-hicks, 2020). A report published by the world bank in 2021 warned that the education sector in Lebanon is likely to lose funding as a result of the current socioeconomic crisis, the COVID-19 health pandemic, and the recent Port of Beirut explosion putting even more stress on the sector in the coming years.

After the blast, MEHE again is unable to help. Tarek Al-Majzoub, Lebanon's education minister, told France 24, "we are trying to help as best we can, but our capacity is very limited."

As the country continued to struggle with COVID-19 and the aftermath of the devastating explosion in the port of Beirut, the economic situation continued to worsen. Hourany (2021) explained that four out of 10 people were out of work in Lebanon,

many businesses have closed and many people aren't able to access their bank accounts. She highlighted the effect of the fuel shortages and the economic crisis on Lebanon's education sector. Meanwhile, the government officials continued to push for "in person teaching", a decision that seemed so unrealistic to many schools. Educators complained that they don't have access to fuel nor to electricity and are thus unable to get to their school to teach in person or to go online and teach virtually. In the private sector, different schools dealt with the crises differently. The school's financial stability determined its ability to deal with the situations arising such as in the school where this study is taking place.

A Brief Background on the Study School and its Principal

In August of 2013, I returned to Lebanon, after having lived in Saudi Arabia for around 15 years. I was full of hope to grow and develop professionally in my own country. As an International Baccalaureate educator and a former diploma programme coordinator, I joined a starting International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum school that offered the three IB programmes and that seemed to be a safe place to enroll my own children and to work myself as a teacher. My leadership experience in Saudi Arabia and the knowledge I had acquired by setting up the first IB diploma programme school in the area where I lived helped me develop the educational leader and instructional supervisor profile that the school was looking for. In less than five years I was appointed school principal and had barely started my principalship at the time where the country went through the "Thawra."

As a school principal during this period in Lebanon I had to deal with the impact of all of these crises on the education sector within my own school context. I experienced the pandemic, the financial and the political crises first hand in the already

economically struggling, explosion ridden country. Alas the pandemic was only one of the crises that affected education and that schools had to deal with over the past three years. This narrative is intended to tell the story of how I dealt as a school principal with the impact of all these predicaments and worked on keeping the learning going through it for all our students.

The Situation at School X

The school of employment is an International Baccalaureate private school with a student population of medium and high-income families. The school has a lot of resources and was able to make available many of the needed resources during the crises to its staff and students. We organized our virtual school model and trained our teachers and students on the use of the digital platform Microsoft Teams in November 2019 as a way to circumvent the impact of the social unrest of the Lebanese revolution of October 17 on class attendance. From the start of the lockdown in March 2, 2020, we were able to continue the teaching and learning by using the virtual model through the Microsoft Teams platform. Our designed virtual school model allowed learning to continue throughout the academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21. The school was able to cover almost all of the curriculum planned for the year 2019-20 despite the 68 days of online classes. Class attendance was very consistent and reached an average of 97% by the end of the school year. Satisfaction surveys sent to parents at the end of the academic year 2019-20 showed an overall rating of the virtual school experience of 3.95 out of 5. At the end of 2020-21 we were able to run exams on campus and our parents' end of year survey showed again an overall rating of 3.95 with the highest satisfaction index given to communication and academic support. While the school had all the resources and the infrastructure needed to transfer the learning to a virtual school

model, the learning journey of all the staff was extremely bumpy and rich with experiences particular to our specific context. My interest to examining this experience as a study is based on my belief that the lessons learned could help guide the work of others under such extenuating circumstances.

At the end of 2020-21 and as the ministry of health started rolling out a national vaccination campaign across the country, the exchange value of the dollar against the Lebanese Lira (local currency) skyrocketed causing a depreciation of salaries that hit all the population, including teachers, very badly. A report by Reuters explained how "salaries starting at 1.5 million Lebanese pounds a month are now worth less than $90 at the street rate in a country where they used to be $1,000." An exodus of brains towards the gulf, Canada and Australia started as a way for people to cater for the needs of their families. All schools started advertising for jobs. The vacancy lists were very long. Rodolphe Abboud, head of the syndicate of private school teachers, declared that every school has lost between ten to 40 teachers so far, with some staying at home because they can no longer afford childcare (El-Dahan & Creidy, 2021). The employment school lost a large number of experienced, IB trained teachers to the gulf. The situation was so bad we were still recruiting in September at the start of the academic year 2021-22. The school tried to attract teachers by offering higher salaries than the market and a small incentive in fresh dollars. Finally, we were able to recruit enough to have the staff needed to run the school's programs for the year. Some were fresh graduates and they all needed training on the IB programmes, but at least we had the human resources needed to start the school year fully in person. Around this period of time, the fuel crisis started and was still ongoing as I was writing this narrative. Teachers were unable to reach school because they did not have fuel for their cars. In

the absence of a decent public transportation system, we tried to support the teachers by offering taxi services and helping out organize carpooling plans. We offered a transportation bonus, but the situation was very uncertain and we were reviewing our plans on a daily basis trying to be creative about solutions that can help the teachers get to school so that learning does not stop. We were living "one day at a time" hoping that tomorrow will be better.

Problem Statement and Rationale

The role of the principal is central to the teaching and learning process. Leithwood, Patten and Jantzi (2010) indicated in a study of how school leadership can influence students' performance that the success of the leadership model in a school is measured by the success of leading and managing the instructional program. They concluded that this success is linked to the ability of the school leader or the principal to set directions, "to support teacher efforts that lead to the success of instructional programs" (p. 675), develop people, redesign the organization and manage the instructional program. Consequently, the principal's job in leading learning is a very complex and multi-layered job under normal circumstances. Within the context of the compounded crises in Lebanon, the question remained: how would this job look like? This study aims to explore this problem of practice.

The scope of research on leadership during times of crises is very limited. Furthermore, literature on educational leadership in Arab societies is itself scarce, as concluded by a systematic literature review of research done by Hallinger and Hammad in 2017. Karami and El-Saheb (2017) review of the literature in the Arab world between 2007 and 2017 confirmed their conclusion and highlighted the gap between theory and practice. An investigation of the international literature showed that most of the

available literature in the field of educational leadership under crisis is geographically restricted to the west and focuses on local predicaments that are either natural or social. Moreover, most of the literature around the topic of crisis leadership was done in the fields of medicine, business and economics. The existing literature explored different natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans or the Canterbury Earthquakes in New Zealand as well as school shootings in different areas of the United States of America (Lalond & Roux-Dufort, 2013; Mutch, 2015; Pepper et al., 2010 as cited in Maldonado, 2010). Pepper et al. (2010, as cited in Maldonado, 2010) pointed out that research within education on crisis is limited and often centered around school violence. The authors also acknowledged that the literature on how to handle crises is likewise limited.

The specific crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic of the academic year 2019-20 was even less represented in literature. International research on education during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic was very limited since the crisis was very recent. Research done on the different websites of local ministries of education and a number of United Nations organizations revealed that no reports or research papers specifically addressing the challenges faced by educational leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic have been published. The available reports on the topic were limited to general issues of access and the mental and emotional impact of COVID-19 on children in the area. One policy brief published by UNESCO Beirut aimed to provide guidance to policy makers and educators on how to transition teaching to a virtual environment (UNESCO, 2020). Moreover, the management of this crisis was explored in terms of classroom teaching techniques more than leadership strategies (Mette, 2020; Pollock, 2020; Wodon, 2020).

This research paper will add to the scarce literature in educational administration in the Arab world. It will also provide insights into leadership in a time of crisis adding to the international literature on this topic given the nature of the crises that it discusses. As a principal leading in a time of crisis, I focused greatly on instruction, a focus that was missing in the literature. This focus is sure worth exploring as the compounded crisis described is quite prolonged which is expected to affect learning significantly. Finally, the fact that this study was done in Lebanon during the period of compounded crises does not make it geographically restricted as the nature of the crises discussed can inform educators managing similar crises in any context.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of the study was ultimately to examine the role of the principal as an instructional supervisor and how the supervisory functions were enacted during a time of crisis. The study focus was on my experience as an educational leader and an instructional supervisor throughout the different crises that hit Lebanon during the period of time between October 2019 and December 2021. It aimed to examine the role of the principal as a leader of learning and how she addressed the different challenges that educators faced as teaching was shifted from a regular classroom to first a virtual environment, then a blended one and finally an in person one again in the context of a private International Baccalaureate school located in Beirut, Lebanon.

Specifically, instructional supervision functions were explored guided by the instructional supervision framework described by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) (Appendix A) while analyzing the supervisory approach based on Glickman et al.'s (2018) supervisory belief inventory (SBI) (Appendix B). The supervisory leadership framework served as a first lens to help organize the events and the activities of the

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principal during the different crises. The data collected was used to examine the scope

and nature of the actions of the principal while focusing on the changes in instructional

strategies or pedagogical approaches in the different school models through the

different crises focusing on the decisions that set the priorities by the principal and her

team. The principal's approach in each of these supervisory activities was examined

through Glickman et al.'s (2018) supervisory belief inventory. The inventory was used

as an instrument or a lens to identify the type of approach (directive control, directive

informational, collaborative or non-directive) the principal used in the supervision

activities delineated under Sergiovanni and Starratt's supervisory framework (2007).

Therefore, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

1- What were the instructional supervision functions that the principal actions and
decisions covered to ensure that learning remains effective while implementing the
different school modalities throughout the period under study in school X?

2- What supervisory approach did the principal use to lead learning under each
function?

3- What were the instructional supervision functions the principal emphasized to
overcome the challenges to student learning brought about by the compounded
crisis at school X?

Significance

This study contributes to both theory and practice. It adds to the scarce

knowledge production in the field of Educational Leadership in times of crisis and

provides contextualized insight into the nature of the challenges that educators faced in

Lebanon in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in the context of the other

crises that hit the country. It also adds to the literature on leadership in education within

the context of the Arab world. In addition, the study should reflect in-depth the nature of the role of the principal in ensuring the effectiveness of the school model by leading the learning in a time of crisis.

The insights shared can be used by practitioners who have to lead during a time of crisis such as during a war, a pandemic or even natural disasters, as guidelines for leading learning under crisis that are grounded in practice.

Results of the proposed study can also guide policy makers in Lebanon and provide them with a contextualized implementation of the different decisions taken during this crisis and their impact on schools, educators and students. It can also inform education departments in universities engaged in designing learning experiences for student teachers or leaders about teaching online, virtually and during a time of crisis.

CHAPTER 2
UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM THROUGH LITERATURE

As I started looking into the available literature on school leadership during a time of crisis, I noticed that the scope of such research in the field of education is limited. As Al-Khalidi, Al-Majali, and Masri (2021) put it "schools' crisis is a relatively recent concept in the science of management" (p. 78). Literature on educational leadership in Arab societies is itself scarce, as concluded by the reviews of research done in 2017 (Hallinger & Hammad, 2017; Karami-Akkary & El-Saheb, 2017). An investigation of the literature available on school leadership in a time of crisis through google scholar and the education databases available revealed the gap. Most of the literature around the topic of crisis leadership found was done in the fields of medicine, business and economics. Such literature in the field of education is mostly produced in the west and tackles local crises of natural or social nature. Very little is said about leading schools in a time of crisis in the Western literature.

The existing literature on crisis management in the education sector tackled specific issues but none discussed school leadership in the time of a pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it had on education in general was seldom represented in literature basically because of its recent outbreak. The literature available on the pandemic crisis was mostly aimed at discussing access and equity issues, mental health during the time of lockdown, and policies aimed at transitioning schools to virtual environments during a pandemic. In this review, I reported on the literature available on crisis management from the perspective of the business world as well as that of the education sector. I will also report on the available literature on the crises in

education before and during COVID-19 and the literature reported in terms of school leadership focusing on the role of the principal.

Literature on Leading through a Crisis

Leading learning specifically during a pandemic is a hot yet very recent topic and so far, the published research is mostly linked to teaching strategies in an online platform since the pandemic imposed lockdown, and issues of equity (Abu-Moghli & Shuayb, 2020; Mette, 2020; Pollock, 2020; Rahhal, 2020; Wodon, 2020). In this section of my paper I will report on the literature that I explored on this topic by looking at leading in a crisis mode from a business perspective, leading schools in a crisis mode before the pandemic and leading schools during the COVID-19 crisis.

Leadership in a Time of Crisis: A Glimpse from the Business World

Literature from the business world depicts crises as bearers of opportunities that could help businesses develop and improve rather than be damaged or destroyed. James and Wooten (2009) defined a business crisis as: "any emotionally charged situation that, once it becomes public, invites negative stakeholder reaction and thereby has the potential to threaten the financial well-being, reputation, or survival of the firm or some portion thereof" (p. 2). George (2009), a professor of management crisis at the Harvard Business School where he teaches leadership explored the topic of leading in crisis from the Chinese dual perspective of danger and opportunity. 危机The Chinese character word for crisis is a combination of two words: danger and opportunity. George (2009) pointed out that "there is nothing quite like a crisis to test your leadership. It will make or break you as a leader" (p.8). He explained in his book "Seven Lessons for Leading in Crisis" that a leader in a time of crisis needs to use his/her wisdom to guide the organization through it all; s/he needs to dig deep inside

herself to find the courage to go forward. James and Wooten, (2009) also saw an opportunity for growth in a time of crisis as they focused on the importance of creating crisis management teams.

Researchers from the business world analyzed the skill set of leaders and their teams working in crisis mode and appreciated that decision making in such circumstances shows a lot of improvisation. The Harvard Business expert, George (2009) focused on the leader leading through a crisis and highlighted the importance of taking responsibility and never "wasting a good crisis." He discussed a number of characteristics that support leaders during such a time including facing the reality, reaching out to others and sharing the burden, digging deep in the root cause and avoiding quick fixes, getting ready for the long bumpy journey and going on offense. He asserted that crisis is the time to focus on winning which in this case is getting through the crisis. In a time of crisis, leaders need to build a team that supports them through the challenges. James and Wooten (2009) explored the skill set of crisis management teams and focused on the importance of flexibility, and adaptability of each team member as the events of the crisis unfold. The authors acknowledged that plenty of improvisation is needed in such dire times. In a business world, that meant changes done to the hierarchy, the resources' allocation and even the infrastructure but also justified the critical approach that team members have towards any decision taken. The example of Team Apollo 13 is used to prove that building a team culture around the norms of optimism and that "failure was not an option" is critical to getting through a crisis. Based on the Apollo example, the authors described a crisis management team as one that operates under the five principles of 1) preoccupation with failure; 2)

reluctance to simplify interpretations; 3) sensitivity to operations; 4) commitment to resilience; and 5) deference to expertise.

The lessons above can be transferred into the education world and be used by leaders of schools in a time of crisis. Having led a school through multiple crises, it took a lot of "courage" like George (2009) put it. During crises, a school principal also has to focus on getting the community through the changes and the different modalities of teaching and has to improvise making changes to the customary organizational arrangements and procedures. This might require a total change of perspective in terms of shifting priorities to keeping the learning going. In order to do this and like James and Wooten (2009) pointed out, developing the team, empowering teachers and leaders, and promoting a culture of commitment to success is major in ensuring not only the survival but also the continuity of the institution or the school. As team Apollo 13 was reported to do, team members in a school setting can also be looking for guidance yet, given the fluidity of the situation, at times, even leaders are unable to give this guidance, which drives them to seek experts in the team.

While leading in a time of crisis might not have been explored well in the field of education, some lessons can be learned from the business world to guide this study in its attempts to inform the work of educational leaders. These lessons imply that principals cannot alone solve all the issues brought about by the avalanche of crises, but they are well positioned to bring some comfort to the team members by ensuring that the goals set forward are realistic and by promoting a positive optimistic school culture fueled by the power of the team. Moreover, deferring specific issues to experts especially when it comes to technology or health and safety in the context of schools must be central to creating a solid "crisis management team."

Leading a School during a Time of Crisis: The Pre-COVID-19 Literature

The review of the literature revealed a number of studies on the role of a school leader in a time of crisis while facing natural and social crises such as the earthquakes in Australia in 2010, the hurricanes in the United States in 2011, the financial crisis in Greece that started in 2008 and the Syrian refugee crisis in Lebanon that started in 2011. The researchers highlighted the role of the leader in planning and implementing crisis management strategies before, during and after the crisis (Bishop, 2015; Mutch, 2015) as well as the type of leadership needed during such challenging times (Bishop, 2015; Menon, 2021; Mutch, 2015). Mahfouz et al. (2020) focused on the types of challenges principals faced during a crisis and on how these leaders were compelled to make the best out of a dire situation.

All literature consulted agree that in a crisis situation all stakeholders tend to focus on their basic survival needs. The phrase "Maslow before Bloom" is always used in the context of schools where the basic human needs of social and physical security are threatened. School leaders find themselves, in such situations, prioritizing the safety of the students over their learning. The research done showed that educational leaders leading schools through different crises have to change their approach to leading by creating highly collaborative teams. They needed to change their focus and prioritize the basic human needs and the needs of the community. They had to change their skill set characteristics and become more communicative, more resilient, more flexible and more human.

Studies also found that the leaders' characteristics, approaches to leading and actions are distinct in crisis times (Bishop, 2015; James &Wooten 2009; Menon 2021;

Mutch 2015). In a crisis situation, research showed that educational supervision took a back role in the life of a school principal (Mafhouz et al, 2020) as the priorities changed.

The role of a school leader during a time of crisis was found to be geared towards improving the situation to ensure safety and stability. The characteristics of a successful school leader operating in such a situation show a leader that is focused and prioritizes the basic needs of the community, s/he is a communicator and an inspirational motivator who is physically visible to the community and widely accessible, s/he is supportive of the staff, has a sense community and enables empowerment (Bishop, 2015; Menon, 2021; Mutch 2015). Mutch (2015) explained how students look to those in "loco parentis" their principals and teachers during a major crisis to keep them safe. Bishop (2015) highlighted the role of a leader vis a vis the community "who relies on educational leaders to provide direction and take control" (p. 224). Furthermore, Mutch (2015) portrayed the actions of a school leader in crisis mode who decides to focus on four major areas: people, communication, operational issues and business continuation, stating: "leadership has its place; culture comes to the fore; you need to be prepared to adapt; and people's well-being comes first" (p. 188). Mutch (2015) also highlighted the importance of communication mentioning that "there is something reassuring about hearing the voice of a person in a position of authority, even if the information provided is scant" (p. 188). Others pointed out that during a crisis, a true leader should remain visible, accessible and engaged with members of their team (Bishop, 2015; Menon, 2021; Mutch 2015). Communication is found essential by any means through emails and texts as the principals interviewed by Mutch (2015) explained, and even when communication lines are broken as suggested by Bishop

(2105). In addition to being communicative, a principal in a crisis context is advised to adopt a collaborative approach. Menon (2020) explained that teachers want to see a collaborative approach to the management of problems. He argued that for teachers, a good leader during crisis is supportive and empowering; someone who can use a collaborative method for decision making. Moreover, resilience emerged as a key characteristic for leading under crisis. Like James and Wooten (2009) from the Business world, Bishop (2015) mentioned the importance of resilience to help leaders spring back, rebound and successfully adapt to the new status quo.

Additionally, in a crisis context, research showed that the response to crisis management is effective only when the leader has been able to gain the trust, and the respect of the community and was able to build relationships with staff and faculty and thus a strong team and a feel of community (Menon, 2021; Mutch, 2015). Successful leadership in a time of crisis is driven by a school culture that promotes a community feel in normal times. Teachers want to be able to reach out to the leader when necessary (Menon, 2020). This type of leadership is prepared for ahead of time as school leaders work on developing a culture of empowerment before a crisis hits (Mutch, 2015). Leaders have the difficult job of creating a sense of community that resists the overwhelming uncertainty that comes with crises. Those leaders make sure to build strong relationships, develop a sense of community that engenders loyalty and fosters collaboration explained Mutch (2015).

Finally, research showed that during a time of crisis, teachers want a leader who transcends human nature and the natural panic reactions to crisis. Mutch (2015) pointed out that "although leaders are subject to the same physiological responses as other people when confronted with a sudden crisis, they are expected to take control and act

rationally and calmly while displaying creative thinking, social judgement and complex problem-solving skills" (p. 187). To lead effectively under crisis a leader needs to act calmly and decisively, remain focused and not get overwhelmed by the situation. In fact, Menon (2020) concluded his article by pointing out that "crisis situations bring out the best in leaders who in this case did not appear to be overwhelmed by the mounting problems they faced at the school unit" (p. 8). But where does instructional leadership fit in such a context? Most of the research consulted did not mention instructional leadership functions in a time of crisis. Only, Mahfouz et al. (2020) highlighted the role of the principal as an instructional supervisor in a time of crisis however, the crisis discussed in their study did not really threaten the safety of the stakeholders.

The literature consulted converged on the characteristics of a human leader who is focused, inspirational, and a team player, someone who has a specific approach to leading in dire times, who is adaptive to change, who can adjust and focus on the priorities imposed by the status quo, someone who adopts a different set of actions in such situations. The perfect leader in a time of crisis is a different leader when tackling the challenges imposed by the crisis. The successful leader leading in a time of crisis is a changed human!

The Pandemic: Schools during the COVID-19 Crisis

In March of 2020 and following the outbreak of COVID-19 and WHO's classification of the disease as a pandemic, governments suddenly found themselves compelled to close schools as a preventative measure. Stories have it that teachers and school leaders struggled to keep the learning going. However, less than two years after the outbreak and the lockdown, research is still scarce in the area of school leadership during a pandemic. Kwatubana et al. (2021) pointed out that "evidence on school

leadership practices in a pandemic is non-existent; this is unprecedented territory with few education signposts, points of reference or recent experience to draw upon" (p. 107). Nitel Ben-Aretima et al. (2021) also explained in their article about education challenges in Turkey during the pandemic that the literature review they did revealed that no research specifically focusing on school administration during the COVID-19 pandemic was done.

The research done on education during the pandemic tackled the challenges of the emergency remote teaching and focused on the issues emerging from the use of technology in classes and the digital gap that added to the concerns of accessibility and equality. The research that tackled the role of the principal during the pandemic reported the same set of personal and social skills mentioned by the literature in other crises. The principal during the pandemic is courageous, flexible, focused, creative and communicative. S/he is able to adapt to the new virtual teaching environment imposed by the pandemic.

The research explored in this area, in terms of leadership, shows that leading in the time of a pandemic requires the same set of skills as leading under any other crisis despite the unique circumstances. Nitel Bin Aretima (2021) study highlighted the fact that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of the principal became one of leading a school remotely, noting that this increased the intensity of the challenge on school leaders as principals had to manage their schools in ways never imagined before. Principals had to "lead parents, teachers, and students from their laptops" (p. 1009). Moreover, the research explored concluded that similar to any other crisis, the successful principal leading during a pandemic, proved to be a distributive leader who collaborates with teachers, is compassionate and empathetic and has good

communication skills (Brion,2020; Marshall et al.,2021; Kwatubana et al. ,2021; Nitel Bin Aristirma, 2021).

Like in the context of other crises, the principals leading through the pandemic in the new virtual environment had to make tough decisions in addition to remaining flexible. They had to forgo of their old ways and adopt new ways that were more appropriate to the novelty of the crisis. Brion (2021) listed the skills a principal needed to get through a pandemic including excellent communication skills, being able to make quick decisions, thinking creatively, showing empathy and being flexible, intuitive, optimistic and tenacious. (p. 34). These skills and characteristics match the set of skills that successful school principals had to develop through any other crisis albeit the fact that the teaching/leading medium changed completely. Marshall et al. (2020) emphasized that a pandemic, like COVID-19, plunged educational leaders into an "unprecedented calamity." The researchers, similar to George (2009), wrote that "the hallmark of a great leader is courageous leadership during a crisis" (p. 30). In the midst of the uncertainty and the unpredictability of the situation, leaders needed to bravely focus the vision to be able to provide clear direction to their teachers (Marshall et al., 2020). They needed to be visible and available for their community. Similar to other crises, everyone was looking for a sense of normalcy. Teachers were looking up to their leaders, hoping they would minimize the impact of the crisis (Kwatubana, 2021).

However, the research done on education during the pandemic was mostly technical and linked to emergency responses of governments and schools. The schools' readiness to use technology in emergency mode surfaced in the literature consulted and proved to be common across geographic locations (Mahmoud & Shuayb, 2021; Mitesou et al. 2021; Toquero et al, 2021; Truzoli, 2021; Willemark, 2021; Wong, 2021). In the

Philippines, Toquero et al. (2021) proved that issues of access and use of technology impacted students' engagement and constituted a major threat to education. In Italy, Truzoli, et al. (2021) explained that technological issues, lack of devices and signal interruptions impacted the implementation emergency plans for remote teaching and learning. Even in the context of higher education, these issues caused a great risk as "academic leaders experienced the dizzying rapid transition to building an online/remote curriculum" (p. 93). In China, Wang (2021) pointed out that schools, teachers and students in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities were "afflicted by a lack of planning in the rapid move to online learning" (p. 1496). In Lebanon, where resources are limited, and curricula are rigidly time dependent (Bizri et al., 2021), one report published by the Center for Lebanese Studies explained the effect of the pandemic on education and the huge gap created by the lack of access to resources by nationals and refugees. Mahmoud and Shuayb (2021) explained that on top of the inability to buy devices and the weak internet, students and teachers struggled with continuous power cuts.

Studies also pointed at the exceptional demands the pandemic put on the psychological wellbeing of teachers and students. For teachers, the sudden change in the routines exposed them to a great deal of uncertainty and high levels of stress. In the context of South Africa, Kwatubana et al. (2021) highlighted the uncertainty of the situation as the decision to open and close schools depended on the rate of spread of COVID-19 cases. The authors pointed out that the "frustrations stem from a lack of consultation with the education community and last-minute decision making" (p. 109). Kwatubana et al. (2021) also mentioned the high level of stress and anxiety due to all the last-minute demands that they needed to fulfill from home which created conflicts in

their own personal lives. The authors also pointed out that the "sudden shift from face-to-face teaching to remote learning affected teacher wellbeing as it demanded great efforts in teaching habits and routines" (p. 108). Truzoli et al. (2021) explained that the crisis-response in the form of digital migration is primarily an emergency response that cannot be equated with a real digital transformation of schools. Willermark et al. (2021) portrayed the pandemic as creating a state of uncertainty with its suddenness. The situation as they described involved a quick change that required immediate action rather than reflective and well-prepared approaches.

In conclusion, the available literature on education during the COVID-19 pandemic portrayed leading through such a crisis as requiring the same set of skills as leading through any other crisis despite their calls to acknowledge that the impact is global and the response actions should start at governmental level (Center for Lebanese Studies, 2021). However, leading learning through a crisis requires a specific skillset, a different leadership approach and appropriate actions from school leaders in any crisis irrespective of the modality of teaching and whether leading is happening in physical schools or in virtual environments. This is clear from the literature available on the challenges faced during this crisis, especially when the goal is to achieve equity and fairness.

Conceptual Framework

The role of a school principal has evolved over the years as the purpose of supervision itself evolved from monitoring to improving instruction and creating learning communities. Hallinger and Murphy (2013) reflected on 40 years of research around the role of the principal in leading the learning to conclude that leading learning is central to the principal role while warning that occupants of this position are not

superhuman. They affirm in their research that "sustainable school improvement is seldom found without active, skillful instructional leadership from principals and teachers" (p. 1). The new image of an effective school principal comprises one of an instructional supervisor who is available to support the teachers in a collaborative environment. Pawlas and Oliva define (2008) supervision as "a means of offering to teachers in a collegial collaborative and professional setting, specialized help in improving instruction and thereby student achievement" (p. 11). The principal is no longer considered a leader tackling the administrative aspects of running a school nor the superhero supervisor with the powers to handle basic administration issues and improve teaching and learning while empowering the teachers and supporting them by creating a community of practice.

Leading in a crisis situation puts another layer of complexity to the role of the principal that is tackled in this paper through putting emphasis on the instructional supervision functions of this role. The research consulted showed that during crises the focus of the principals tend to shift away from leading the learning. Principals focused on the survival of the institution and on keeping their schools going, but the supervision functions were pushed to the background which I argue, affected learning and created gaps in the students' knowledge. In this paper, I will examine my experience of leading a school through a crisis while keeping the emphasis on leading the learning. To examine how this looks like in the context of a school in crisis mode, two theoretical frameworks guided my research study: Sergiovanni and Starratt's instructional supervision framework (2007) and Glickman et al.'s framework of the supervisory belief inventory (2018).

Sergiovanni and Starrat Instructional Supervision Framework

The Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007) framework breaks instructional supervision into three functions called "pathways" that supervisors should "travel" to improve the achievement of their schools. These pathways are: promoting instructional capacity, providing instructional quality and ensuring student engagement.

Promoting instructional capacity refers to the school's organizational characteristics that are geared towards supporting teaching and learning functions, namely: providing teachers with a solid curriculum, and appropriate teaching material, ensuring access to technology, organizing the proper adequate teaching space, and promoting a strong professional community that shares a common purpose, and collaborates in a reflective inquiry approach. Providing instructional quality requires that instructional supervisors ensure an in-depth knowledge of the content to be covered in each discipline as well as the mastery of all the skills to be taught at the different levels of Bloom's taxonomy. All of this in addition to providing teachers with an environment that promotes high expectations and commitment to sound pedagogical approaches and a collaborative school climate. Ensuring student commitment refers to ensuring students' engagement in the teaching and learning process.

According to Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007), these three pathways also referred to as dimensions will help the instructional supervisor specify the dimensions that will make the teaching effective and capable of promoting students' engagement in the teaching and learning process.

Glickman et al.'s Supervisory Belief Inventory

The supervisory approach used to tackle each of the dimensions or pathways of the instructional supervision framework, will be analyzed in this study using the framework of the supervisory belief inventory of Glickman et al. (2018): directive,

informational directive, collaborative or non-directive. A directive approach, where the authority of the principal is enforced merely because of hierarchy, is recommended when teachers lack the knowledge or the awareness needed to attempt a task. An informational directive approach is used when the supervisor needs to be the major source of information and ends up suggesting the plan of action while providing restricted choices to the teachers to select from. A collaborative approach is mostly used when teachers have some expertise in the topic and when they are involved with the principal in the decision-making process, especially in a situation where everyone is trying to find a viable solution to the problem. The non-directive approach is used when the teachers have all the expertise needed and they take the responsibility to solve the problem (Glickman et al., 2018).

The narrative written for the purpose of this research paper aims at presenting the information under the Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) instructional supervision framework, tackling the dimensions of building instructional capacity, ensuring instructional quality and warranting student engagement while analyzing the availability and efficiency of social and structural supports at the disposal of the principal, during the period of time from October 17, 2019 till December 21, 2021. The focus of the study will be on the role assumed by the principal as a leader of learning who has the responsibility of providing effective supervision to teachers and providing them with the conditions needed to engage in the supervisory functions themselves. In this context of a learning community and based on this framework (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007), the principal should be engaging herself in a number of roles including that of "a colleague, teacher developer, keeper of the vision and designer of learning opportunities" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007, p. 7). The data collected by the researcher

on the actions taken by the principal under study will be organized under the three pathways of instructional capacity, instructional quality and student engagement (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Those pathways will be used to frame the original understanding of the researcher on strategies adapted to the different modalities of teaching during this period of time and will highlight the changes that had to be done in terms of teaching and curricular material, as well as students' participation and commitment in virtual and blended classes. The support provided by the community including the parents will be analyzed as an example of social support while structural support will focus on the type of communication used by the principal to ensure the creation of a successful work environment where educators share the responsibility of keeping the learning going during these exceptionally difficult and uncertain times.

Additionally, the decisions taken during this period of time to lead the learning will then be analyzed through the lens of Glickman et al.'s supervisory belief inventory (SBI) (2018) in order to identify the approach used by the principal in applying these supervisory functions during the three crises and in different modalities.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The research method proposed in this study is narrative inquiry using qualitative methods. It focuses on telling my story as a school principal leading the learning during the period of crisis between October 2019 and December 2021 in the context of a private IB school in Beirut, Lebanon. The data used is collected from the documented communication done with the community, through this period, in the form of briefs, letters or emails along with my own interpretation and reflection.

Design of the Study

This research paper is based on an interpretivist perspective. The social reality is constructed based on my experiences as a school principal who is assuming a reflexive approach to analyze the data collected. In studies based on the interpretivist perspective, the researcher often collects data by observing the participants in their natural environment and recording notes in a journal for analysis at a later stage (Gall et al., 2014). A main source of data will be for this paper from my documented communications, and journal reflections. The data collected through the period of crisis from the communication written by the principal includes principal letters to parents, a virtual journal in the form of daily morning briefs and debriefs written on the platform used by the school during the virtual learning period of time, weekly principal notes to staff, minutes of meetings, one-on-one reflections with the teachers and the end-of-year principal reports to the board.

The study used qualitative methods informed by a narrative inquiry design where the autobiography of the researcher and her own feelings and thoughts are central as a data source and as part of the analysis. As explained by Clandinin (2007) in the

handbook of narrative inquiry, this methodology "embraces the narrative as both the method and phenomena of study" (p. 5).

This study is done in the context of a private IB school in Lebanon during the period of crisis as "the systematic study and interpretation of stories of life experiences" (Gall et al., 2014, p. 304). It is based on the narrative of events within a specific timeline and goes beyond the story to interpret the happenings. Saven-Baden and Niekerk (2007) argue that narrative inquiry is seen in a variety of ways and tends to transcend a number of different approaches and traditions such as biography, autobiography, life story and, more recently, life course research. My narrative in this research study is a reconstruction of the events as I tried to answer the central question: what happened to me as a leader during the crisis and how did I manage to get through it. It goes beyond telling the story or the autobiography and beyond an autoethnography given the very rich context, to using the data collected in its natural setting (school X during the crisis), reconstructing the story under each crisis with the purpose of interpreting the phenomenon of leading learning that was part of the actions of the school principal that formed the depicted narrative of leading through crisis. This study begins in the experiences lived as illustrated in the communications of the principal and reconstructs these experiences in the context of the theoretical framework of instructional supervision. For the purpose of this study, the narrative inquiry will focus on telling the story of what happened during the period of crisis that hit Lebanon starting October 2019 and all the life changing events that followed while reflexing on my actions trying to interpret them in the context of school X and my own experience as a principal. Gall et al. (2014) explained that this engagement in narratives is encouraged to be undertaken by researchers particularly when they experience "a disruption, that is,

an unexpected difficult, or disturbing occurrence in life" (p. 306). Consequently, the focus of this study will be on the story and what it reveals about the world it took place in and the person who wrote it. The interpretation of the narrative would help explain the events and the conditions that created it (Gall et al., 2014).

In sum, this self-narrative inquiry used here is a type of qualitative research, positioned within an interpretivist stance with reflexivity, and representation being primary features of this approach (Baden & Niekerk, 2007). This narrative is completely written from the perspective of the school principal who, while totally immersed in the narration of the story, interprets the different experiences that the crisis situation helped create. As a qualitative researcher my aim was to analyze and understand the events linked to the leadership functions in a time of crisis and to analyze the actions and the decisions taken in this context within the set theoretical framework.

Sources of Data

The sampling procedure used here follows a stratified purposeful sampling of events/ stories to ensure the comprehensiveness of the actions considered within the specified timeline. As Patton (2002) explains, "the purpose of a stratified purposeful sample is to capture major variations rather than to identify a common core, although the latter may also emerge in the analysis (p. 204). Accordingly, for this narrative the strata considered were periods of time in line with the onset of the crises and the events that unfolded as a result of each. I focused on the communication used during the period under study relaying experiences written in a chronological order with interpretation and reflection on each extract shared. The documents examined include weekly letters written to parents, weekly principal notes shared with the teachers and staff, daily briefs

shared as posts on the school's digital platform, as well as minutes of meetings, emails and reports compiled for the school board. Table 1 lists the types of documents used in this study as well as their frequency and their recipients. The selection happened at two levels, first at a chronological level depending on the crisis so different documents were selected for each crisis that reflected the major actions and decisions taken during this specific period of time. Then, at a second level, within the documents linked to one crisis, the communication about experiences that included instructional supervision activities and decisions taken in this area were selected and organized under the three supervisory dimensions of Sergiovanni and Starratt's (2007) instructional supervision framework namely instructional capacity, instructional quality and student engagement. Decisions and activities linked to social and structural support that are important leadership dimensions that support the development and the effectiveness of the instructional supervision pathways constitute two other dimensions that guided the data collected and the choice of documents examined for this study. These experiences were then analyzed through Glickman et al's supervisory belief inventory (2018) and categorized as directive, informational directive, collaborative or non-directive.

Table 1

Communication used during the period under study

Type of communication	Form	Frequency	Recipients
Principal Notes	Email to teachers and staff	Once a week	Teachers and staff
Principal Letters to parents	Email to parents	Once a week	Parents community
Morning briefs	Post on Teams	Mornings every school day from March 2, 2020 till October 4, 2021	Teachers and staff

Afternoon debriefs	Post on Teams	End of school day every day from March 2, 2020 till October 4, 2021	Teachers and staff
Daily briefs	Post on Teams	Once daily starting October 4, 2021	Teachers and staff
Student briefs	Post on Teams	Depending on Needs	Students and teachers
Reports to board	Report sent by email	Twice a year: end of every semester	Head of School, directors and chair of the governing board

Data Analysis

The narratives collected and constructed from my experiences were then analyzed and discussed considering the understanding that I developed from reviewing the literature and from the in-depth reflections. Data analysis included an iterative identification of segments of the communication samples that contains ideas or experiences that are relevant to the research questions. After constructing the narrative of each crisis around the actions of leading in crisis, segments including samples of instructional leadership activities and the decisions linked to them were then coded under Sergiovanni and Starrat's (2007) instructional supervision dimensions. Each decision taken in each segment or sample was interpreted again using the lens of Glickman et al.'s (2018) supervisory belief inventory. From these segments I was able to analyze the different actions of the principal in each crisis situation and to evaluate whether there was more emphasis on one of the different dimensions or not in any of the mentioned crises. I was also able to describe the leadership approach to decision making and to link it to the context of the crisis.

Ultimately the goal of this project was to call for action, and as Smith (2007) indicates "people understand themselves as selves through the stories they tell and the

stories they feel part of" (p. 391). Telling the story is intended to help move us to action hoping to find empathy, understanding, motivation and transformation in the reader. Telling the story helped me understand the actions and the decisions taken during the period of crisis. This study helped me make sense of a very complex situation.

Quality Criteria and Limitations

Narrative inquiry is grounded in the story told. It is an organized interpretation of re-counted events (Gall et al., 2014). This implies that the researcher's inner feelings and thoughts are shared with the outside world, which requires honesty and transparency. Data collection might be deemed easy as the researcher is mainly required to dig deep into previous experiences. The voice of the researcher is heard throughout this study.

The data used was a limited selection from the wide number of communications that I collected over the period of the study. The scope of this project imposed a choice of a select number of communications considered most representative in the case of each crisis. This might be a limitation in the sense that I might have missed to convey some of the complexity of the story. Moreover, the selection was purposefully stopped at the specific date of December 21, 2021 while still leading through the economic collapse. This was also imposed by the scope of the study that could not be extended further.

With the above in mind I have taken the following measures to ensure the credibility of the findings of this narrative inquiry guided by Gall et al. (2014):

1) providing sufficient details about the stories narrated

2) providing credible interpretation of these stories

3) including an emic perspective to each story throughout the report

The quality and the rigor of the findings are evaluated based on their usefulness and how relevant they are to problems of practice, the duration to ensure that the data was collected over a long enough period of time, the contextual completeness, and the chain of evidences provided throughout the narrative and the impact of the researcher reflections aimed at removing any unintended bias (Gall et al., 2014). The data analyzed for the purpose of this study was collected in context over two years and two months from October 17, 2019 to December 21,2021. The context and the events of every story were included in the study as well as my own interpretation of these events and my reflections on the happenings and the decisions taken.

CHAPTER 4
THE RESULTS

The chain of events that happened from October 19, 2021 and continue till the time I am writing this narrative has impacted the teaching and learning process in the education sector in general and my school in particular. Through this period of time I have focused on leading the learning through thick and thin hoping that as a school we continue to fulfill our mission of providing quality education using an IB curriculum. In this chapter, I tell the story of each of the crises, the Thawra, the pandemic and the economic crisis, then analyze the data collected from my communications during this period of time through the lens of the theoretical framework of Sergiovanni and Starrat's (2007) supervision dimensions and Glickman et al.'s (2018) supervisory belief inventory in order to make meaning of my actions during this challenging period and to inform further studies done on the topic of leading in crisis.

The Compounded Crisis Narrative

> We are in the midst of a pandemic. The entire world has been impacted and the field of education has been turned on its head. For some, this has been a time of deep introspection and profound discovery and innovation; for others it has led to feelings of intense isolation, anxiety, and depression. For many, it has been a confusing combination of both. We all have experienced some form of trauma and we all have stories to tell (Colket, 2020).

This is how I felt, around the end of the academic year 19-20 after we had gone through four months of virtual teaching confined to the walls of our homes because of a microscopic airborne protein that hit the world and resulted in a worldwide pandemic. I was exhausted, anxious, depressed but I wanted to tell my story to the world. Back then, as a school principal I had already led the school through a period of political unrest after the October 17 uprising. I did not know that this was only one other crisis I would

have to deal with as a school principal. I never anticipated an explosion of nuclear grade, long waiting lines on gas stations, a major depreciation of the Lebanese Lira (local currency) and, the heart-breaking infuriating exodus of teachers that is still ongoing. Through all of these crises I had one goal as the principal of a private school in Beirut: no matter what happened, to keep the learning going, to make sure teaching is happening every day through whatever modality is available, to make sure that, as a school, we survive and thrive.

The Thawra

The first crisis started on October 17, 2019 when a period of political unrest started in Lebanon. For few weeks, schools were closed based on the ministry of education's decision. I joined staff, students and parents on the streets of Beirut invigorated by this sudden surge of "patriotism" feeling happy to see how everyone came together for the good of the country. I was ecstatic! By the end of October though we, as a school, started to worry as learning was stopped for more than two weeks and parents started complaining. There was no war on the streets. The situation was relatively safe. So why were we not in school? After deliberations with the parents committee, the board and the school leadership we decided to roll out a plan according to which we could either go back fully to school, have only the students who were supposed to sit for official exams on campus (Grade 9 Brevet and grade 12), or revert to a virtual school model if none of the above was possible. I worked with the team on setting up a virtual school on a Microsoft platform called Teams. We were in and out of school regularly for a period of time but things settled down significantly in January and February of 2020 when we were back to a full face to face school model and we felt

good about this normalcy even though the Thawra vibes were still up in the air, and the ghost of a collapsing economy was looming in the background.

The Pandemic: COVID-19

Early March 2020 a state of emergency was declared across the country as we had confirmation of the first cases of COVID-19, the new virus that hit the Earth and spread at warp speed warranting a global state of "pandemic". For a year and a half, we had to switch completely to a virtual school model: we had the luxury of being ahead of everyone else as our virtual school was already set on Teams during the Thawra. First day of lockdown, we were online: students, teachers, and staff. For the coming year and a half through ups and downs, power cuts, internet issues, and an unforeseen explosion of nuclear grade, we kept the learning going albeit online. I had to review a number of policies and procedures, work with the team on new assessment strategies, train new staff on the technology, improve classroom management approaches, and ensure students' engagement in virtual classes. Throughout this period of time, and while I tried to keep the learning going, I worked very hard to develop a professional community that works collaboratively and reflectively to continue the teaching while ensuring a level of high expectations that fit the virtual modality. It was a tough, challenging period of time but also a period of development and growth for everyone at the school, the staff and myself as a school principal and instructional leader. I was exhausted at the end of the year and dreading the next one as the financial crisis was starting to hit us hard.

The Economic Collapse

From October 17, 2019 and up till this moment I wrote this narrative, the national currency, the Lebanese Lira (L.L.) continued its depreciation against the US

dollar. The exchange rate went down from 1500 L.L to 23,000 L.L. per Us dollar.

Subsidies were gradually lifted from different sectors: fuel, medicines, and even food.

The basic living expenses increased dramatically while the salaries remained the same.

Teachers were unable to make ends meet: they could not provide for their families

anymore. At the same time, a scorching fuel crisis, linked to the lift of subsidies hit the

country: we had to queue for hours at the stations to fill our tanks. The prices for taxi

rides went up the roof. Teachers were trying to figure out how to get to school. We lost

a large number of teachers who decided to take jobs that paid better outside the country.

Throughout the summer of 2021, we had to actively look and hire teachers. We were

still interviewing as the induction for new teachers started in August of 2021. For few

months, I had to work together with the remaining teachers on training the new staff and

on developing and promoting returning ones to fill the vacancies in leadership positions.

Flexibility and empathy were key during this period of time: we had to "understand"

what the teachers were going through and to support them financially so that they can

keep the learning going. With the MEHE directive to return to in person teaching, I had

to ensure as a school principal that we were ready to start a new year. The state of the

internet and the electric power coverage was so bad there was no way we could go back

to a virtual model. At the same time teachers did not have the financial means to get to

campus. The school was very generous and increased the transportation allowance

gradually. I worked meanwhile on building capacity again. I continued with my

attempts to improve the professional community and to ensure more collaboration while

still pushing to ensure a climate of teaching with high expectations. We were back to

our old normal in few months with an improved model, new staff and emerging leaders.

At the end of December as the winter break started, I left school wondering how and when we will be back and how we will survive this last crisis.

Through the different crises that hit Lebanon from October 17, 2019 till now, I tried to ensure that learning is happening in classes. The data that I collected over the last two years on the job, whether from my letters to parents, my briefs to staff, or my principal letters to teachers were concrete documentation of the different actions that I took in response to these crises. In the narrative that follows, I will be telling the story of my leadership experience while trying to answer the research questions below:

1- What were the instructional supervision functions that the principal actions and decisions covered to ensure that learning remains effective while implementing the different school modalities throughout the period under study in school X?

2- What supervisory approach did the principal use to lead learning under each function?

3- What were the instructional supervision functions the principal emphasized to overcome the challenges to student learning brought about by the compounded crisis at school X?

The Instructional Supervision Functions Implemented by the Principal

My role as a leader of learning in a crisis situation started during Thawra and continued throughout. The documentation of my work during this period of time helped me organize the events and the actions around the instructional supervisory functions as framed by Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007). As a start, I had to focus on building the capacity of the teachers by providing them with the proper resources and background to start teaching online. I had to help teachers use the technology, manage classes, implement an IB programme in any modality and guide them through assessments and

reporting. Through it all I had to develop a professional community to ease our journey through the different crises. I took actions to ensure instructional quality in the virtual and the physical class through all three crises. I also focused on keeping the students engaged especially when the teaching was done online. In what follows I am telling the stories of how I led the learning and what I focused on in every crisis based on the data collected from my communications with the school community in the last two years and two months.

The story started on the morning of October 27, 2019. Like every other Sunday since I was appointed school principal, I sent out my principal notes to school teachers and staff. I had to share my feelings with the community. we were all emotionally overwhelmed by what many considered a "refreshing" uprising that took over the political scene in Lebanon. I acknowledged that "at this point in time, things seem so blurry, unclear, and nobody can expect what or when anything can happen" (Principal notes, 27/10/19). Like many other Lebanese citizens, I was hoping that this is the start of a new era, not a protracted crisis. Very naively I thought that miraculously things will become better and we will all wake up in a safe, politically independent, and economically solid country. Quickly though, I realized that things can escalate. With school closures we do not have the luxury of time as our students, especially those sitting for official exams in grades 9 and 12, need to be preparing for their exams, and students in other grade levels, also should be completing the learning objectives for the school year. As a school leader I realized that we needed to get ready for the worst-case scenario and that despite my longing to be part of the movement on the streets of Beirut, I had to be focused on leading the learning through what ended up being a series of crises, starting with the uprising; to the COVID-19 health crisis; to the economic collapse of Lebanon.

Throughout the next two years I had to make the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process my only goal. In what will follow in this section I will be sharing the supervisory actions I took to 1) build teachers' capacity, 2) ensure instructional quality and 3) warrant students' engagement as well as the 4) social and structural activities used to support each of the above in every crisis and in any modality implemented.

Building Capacity

Leading the learning starts by building teachers' instructional capacity as explained by Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007). Building capacity is defined as the features of the school's organizational characteristics that support the teaching and learning process, namely: teachers' resources or their knowledge, skills and disposition, the technical resources and teaching material as well as access to a strong professional community that promotes high quality teaching and learning through a shared purpose in a reflective collaborative environment (Sergiovanni & Starrat). As explained in this section, leading the learning through the different crises required that I build the teachers' capacity by 1) developing their knowledge, skills and disposition towards different aspects of the teaching and learning process, 2) developing a professional reflective community with a shared purpose and 3) providing them with the materials and equipment needed to support teaching and learning.

Developing Teachers' Knowledge, Skills and Disposition. Building capacity in a crisis mode required providing teachers with specific knowledge and skills as well as an appropriate disposition towards different aspects of the teaching and learning process in the different modalities imposed by the crises. In the context of my school and as an instructional leader who was focused on leading the learning through every crisis, this meant for me taking supervisory actions to ensure teachers had 1) the

knowledge and skills needed to use technology, 2) the knowledge and skills needed to teach an IB curriculum in various modality, 3) the skills needed to handle behavior issues and have the proper classroom management skills to support teaching online and in person, and finally 4) the skills needed to assess the students' performance in any modality.

Technology Knowledge and Skills. At my school, teachers have always had all the resources and the infrastructure needed to use technology. They had access to smart boards, laptops, school wide Wi-Fi, iPad carts and other tech tools and gadgets. Yet, using technology in class has always been a struggle for teachers. They still avoided using the smart boards and felt better sharing printed material with the students than uploading digital resources on our platforms. Before the crises erupted, I noticed that they treated the use of technology as an extra-layer of complexity to the teaching process which was understandable knowing that the demand for incorporation of technology in teaching was optional, and with limited expectations. However, when the first crisis hit, using technology to teach became a necessity. As an instructional leader I had to promote the use of technology to make sure that we could run effective, purposeful and engaging classes on Zoom or Teams or any of the other platforms that were available. In what follows I will report on what were the different supervisory practices I used to develop the teachers' technology knowledge and skills and why I decided to implement these specific practices.

Monitoring the Needs to Ensure an Effective Use of Technology. In my role as an instructional leader I had assumed the responsibility of keeping the learning going and ensuring its effectiveness. This was not possible in a physical school given the

situation during Thawra and the frequent school closure. The whole school modality had to change, teachers had to use technology and I had to ensure that the use of technology is effective by building the teachers' capacity in the use of the school's digital platform and the running of online synchronous classes. In order to make sound decisions towards building the capacity of teachers, I needed to understand and monitor the needs of the teachers and students to ensure an effective implementation of the measures taken. I had to talk to the teachers, the academic leaders and the technology experts at my school. What made sense under the current circumstances? What were the resources available to us as a school? What were the challenges we expected and would we be able to mitigate them? There were plenty of questions, and not much answers but a will to find these answers and to keep the learning going.

When Thawra started, I was not well versed in the use of the new technology that the school decided to adopt, neither were most of the teachers: those were unchartered waters that we were venturing in, but our digital design teachers and our IT staff had the knowledge and the experience needed to train the others. Based on a generally diagnosed need, I had to delegate the technical training to the experts. The newly created VL team started the general teachers' training on the use of technology and continued the troubleshooting and the support to the teachers throughout this period. Later, during the second crisis, we had to start the academic year 2020-21 online after the August 4, Beirut blast. The blast caused an increase in COVID-19 cases in a country that lacked medical and financial resources to support those infected, so the schools were closed and I had to continue building capacity by training the new teachers on the use of technology with the VL team. On the 14th of August, 2020, I shared with the new and returning staff a full virtual orientation plan hoping that running workshops

online and not in person will help the teachers' struggling emotionally after the blast and concerned about the increase in the number of COVID-19 cases. Nobody was ready to get back to the physical school, however new teachers needed to be inducted into the school no matter what modality we use. I wrote to the teachers to share the orientation plan that tackles a number of areas including use of technology, safety, assessments in a virtual environment and the new IB guides (Principal Notes, 14/8/20). Teachers, especially new ones, needed to learn about school and the different modalities before teaching started. Leading learning had to extend to building the capacity of the new comers who had to develop their knowledge and skills in the use of technology among a number of other areas. The VL team and the support staff were ready to help. Technology had become part of the model to train the new staff on.

    Developing Teachers' Technology Knowledge and Skills. My role as an instructional supervisor building teachers' capacity in the use of technology required that I create and organize the work of the virtual learning (VL) team around the different technical skills the teachers needed to acquire in a timely manner and I help provide the teachers with the knowledge needed to run effective online classes governed by a specific structure that matched the requirements of their courses. Providing the teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to run classes on our Microsoft Teams school platform was one of the main technology capacity building activities that were implemented during the crises.

Teachers also needed training on the use of the school's digital platform: Teams. They needed to learn how to create and organize their online Teams and how to run online synchronous classes on this platform. They needed to acquire specific knowledge of effective online teaching governed by specific policies and procedures. Since the

onset of Thawra, I started by creating a virtual learning team to train the teachers promptly on gaining this knowledge and these skills. The team was tasked with organizing the school's model on the virtual platform then helping the teachers learn and implement the technical skills needed to run synchronous classes. These capacity building activities continued till the lockdown triggered by COVID-19. Through all of the crises, training teachers on the use of technology became a central part of our new teachers' orientation plans as a school.

During Thawra, by the 19th of November, 2019, I prepared and shared a virtual learning (VL) action plan with my teachers on how to conduct virtual teaching to ensure that learning never stopped. A virtual learning team made of our digital design teachers and our IT staff was formed to train and support the teachers in their new journey. The VL team's action plan included an introduction to the 365 Teams application, a training module on the use of the Teams platform, and a tutorial /overview that was to be shared with the students and the parents. The team was also responsible for creating the different virtual classes on the platform and for showing the teachers how to add students, set-up different channels and ensure they have control of the features of their Teams. On the 1st of March, 2020 when we received communication about the lockdown imposed by the government during the COVID-19 crisis, I communicated with my teachers to help them understand the plan to follow in a virtual world.   My messages to the teachers at that juncture were very technical and included a schedule listing starting and ending time of the virtual day as well as the time and duration of every period (Check Appendix J, VL School schedule during COVID-19). The message listed specific details about the running of visual and performing arts classes online in an asynchronous format as well as procedures to follow-up on students' attendance,

academic advising and homework completion. Since Thawra in October 2019, the training and development of the teachers, in terms of their technology knowledge and skills, never stopped.

    Strategies for Teaching the IB Programme Online. Teaching in an IB school requires specific knowledge of the international Baccalaureate curricula and philosophy as well as several skills to implement inquiry and engage the students in the teaching and learning process as set by the IB organization. To ensure that teachers have the knowledge and the skills required, we always organize, as a school, extensive orientation and induction sessions as well as specific IB recognized professional development courses to train new and returning teachers. When the first crisis started, we had another aspect of teaching to train the teachers on: teaching IB courses online. Learning the skills needed to run online classes that are student centered and that cover all the learning outcomes set by IB was a challenge. As an instructional leader, this required from me leading the learning by building teachers' capacity and providing them with the knowledge needed to implement an IB programme, to teach IB subjects in an online world and to report on the students' achievement based on the requirements of the school and the programme. As the teaching was moved to an online platform, it was imperative for me to visit classes regularly and to observe the implementation of the curriculum in a virtual class. These visits were essential to observe first hand, the challenges that teachers were facing in keeping the students engaged and ensuring learning is happening. Meetings with teachers and feedback received from parents and students helped confirm the areas that needed development. In this section I will report on the different supervisory practices I used to develop the teachers' IB teaching

strategies in different modalities and why I decided to implement these specific practices.

Monitoring the Needs to Ensure the Use of Effective IB Teaching Strategies.

Building teachers' capacity in teaching was an ongoing process throughout the different crises. Every crisis imposed a need to develop a specific type of teaching strategies. Teaching IB courses online was an essential skill to develop through Thawra and COVID-19 as we had to shift the teaching to the online platform. There was a particular need to train new teachers even without being able to meet them physically at the start of the academic year 2020-21. Through the different crises, I made sure to provide teachers with the knowledge, skills and disposition needed to teach the IB courses online or in person. To do this I had to organize, facilitate and promote workshops and meetings, to train teachers on reporting in IB curricula and to provide them with constructive feedback on their teaching strategies and techniques. However, these decisions were grounded in data I collected as a principal on multiple occasions to assess the needs with respect to teaching the IB program online and monitor the emerging needs. The data was collected from my visits to classes online, my observation of teachers and students' interactions, feedback from the parents, feedback from teachers shared on our teachers' group on the virtual platform, and discussions with teachers in staff meetings or during our regular reflection meetings.

When the COVID-19 induced lockdown started and we had to move the teaching to an online platform, we already had around a semester of work on campus with the teachers. Most of the training on teaching IB curricula was already done. When we moved online, the focus of the training was more on the use of technology to support teaching IB curricula in an online class.

In August of 2020, after the original shock of the Beirut explosion subsided, and as we all got back to work, teachers needed to get ready for school and there was no time to waste if we were to start school on time as per the calendar shared with the community. The orientation of new and returning teachers happened virtually in an effort to support teachers and give them enough knowledge of the programme as well as the skills needed to teach it. The induction of new teachers remained a challenging endeavor to be tackled especially when they do not have any International Baccalaureate (IB) background. This became even more challenging as we had to do it online; however, training teachers online helped them understand the challenges students face when learning online.

Towards the mid of semester one of the academic year 2020-21 we hoped to implement some teaching on campus and started thinking of rolling out a "hybrid model." However, the COVID-19 infections numbers did not decrease enough to allow for this. At the end of December of 2020, a re-assessment of the situation imposed that we return to our virtual model with all its intricacies. Again, we found ourselves trying to improve this modality of teaching to ensure better learning. Again, I resorted to research and tried to collect some information from practitioners or researchers on how we can make online teaching better. As a result, I had more tips and strategies to share and invited the teachers to share what they have as well.

Moreover, throughout the crises, we always had to report to parents about their children's performance. Online or in a physical school, report cards published to parents needed to show specific feedback and to reflect the criteria of an IB education and philosophy. Teachers needed to learn how to write proper, constructive error free feedback reflecting students' performance in their subjects. Before the report cards for

semester one of 2020-21 were published we had to work with the teachers on editing and correcting all report card comments.

On the other hand, the specificity of each programme and of each subject had to be respected. For instance, visual arts in the diploma programme was always a very challenging subject to teach even in physical school. In the virtual model teachers struggled to get the students to fulfill the requirements of the course and to display and publish their work in an exhibition as IB requires for reporting purposes. So, we had to create a virtual exhibition and the work done was celebrated because of the commitment and the efforts of the DP Visual Arts team (Principal Notes, 21/3/21).

Thus, the work done with teachers in their specific subjects led by subject leaders and programme coordinators initiated and celebrated by myself promoted the teachers' disposition for high expectations while ensuring the attention to individual differences. A combination of workshops, training sessions and meetings was used through the different crises to help the teachers develop the skills needed to teach specific IB courses online or in person, to develop an understanding of the expectations in terms of students' work and disposition and to know how to provide feedback on students' achievement to parents.

Developing Teachers' IB Teaching strategies in Different Modalities. Building teachers' capacity in terms of teaching IB curricula started early on during Thawra when we were in and out of the physical school and continued throughout the three crises but it was mainly linked to the change in the teaching modality. As an instructional supervisor leading the learning, I had to build the teachers' capacity by providing them with the knowledge, skills and disposition needed to teach an IB curriculum in a virtual or physical class through any crisis. My role as an instructional

supervisor required that 1) I organize, facilitate and promote IB workshops in the school led by myself, the programme coordinator or the subject leader, 2) I organize ongoing departmental or grade level meetings that promote the understandings of IB linked curricula, policies and procedures , 3) I help the teachers' understand how to report students' performance in an IB programme and that 4) I monitor the work of the teachers and provide them with critical specific and constructive feedback on their teaching to help them improve their practices in any modality.

As a school principal I had to organize, facilitate and promote a number of workshops geared at supporting the teachers in teaching an IB curriculum in the physical and the virtual classes. No matter what the crisis was, there was a general disposition among teachers to defy all odds and implement successfully the IB programmes. I had an unwavering support from all stakeholders. During the periods of time where we were able to teach in the building, a very interesting aspect of the international baccalaureate programme, IDU (Inter-disciplinary Unit), was tackled in a workshop organized and delivered by the school's middle years programme (MYP) coordinator. The workshop was a success and I applauded in my communication to my staff the effort exerted celebrating the success, investing in it to empower the teachers and trying to build a professional community (Principal Notes, 9/2/20). In the virtual school through COVID-19 and the lockdown, teaching IB curricula had to continue in whatever modality possible. Consequently, building capacity meant providing teachers with the knowledge and skills they needed to teach in the MYP or the DP. It continued during COVID-19 and happened online in August 2020 after the Beirut explosion. Teachers' training and development continued in the different departments led by the programme coordinators and the subject leaders throughout the COVID-19 crisis. I had

to make sure training sessions take place and to ensure teachers acquired all the knowledge and the skills needed to continue teaching the programmes so I kept pushing for trainings to happen and sharing calendar updates in my notes to staff. The programme coordinators oversaw setting the training agenda for every meeting.

Slowly, teachers started feeling more comfortable teaching the programmes in a virtual environment. They were trying different teaching strategies and techniques in their classes: inquiry, flipped classroom, Socratic circles, and simulations were few strategies used. I invited everyone to share what they were doing in their virtual classes on our Microsoft teachers' Team. We all benefited from this practice of sharing experiences which made the whole teaching journey less daunting. I also shared new ideas/ strategies such as the "workshop model" that emerged during this period. I pushed the teachers and asked them in one of my communications the following:

> Simple changes in pedagogy, grounded in the adoption of the workshop model, that can reduce unnecessary work and hopefully make our planning for distance learning more sustainable. Stuck in the virtual world, we hope to change our pedagogical approach to help us manage the work load and to improve our students' personal skills making them independent learners (Principal Notes, 15/11/20).

 Grade level meetings were also an excellent opportunity to build the professional community, invest in and strengthen the teachers' knowledge of the IB curricula in terms of expectations (Approaches to learning -ATLs, Global Contexts- GCs, Learner Profile- PL) and build on the teachers' existing skills in teaching, supporting students struggling in their subject and promoting excellence in class. The agenda of meetings was always linked to IB programmes' outcomes and its required teaching strategies and focused on the students' learning process and outcomes. Even when those meetings were run to collect feedback about different grade levels in April of 2020, we continued to build the teachers' capacity in teaching IB curricula. I wrote to

explain the structure of those meetings to the teachers and staff. The agenda of these meetings included:

- o "Introduction: purpose, frequency, and expectations.
- o Overview of each section: attendance, participation, spirit LP (learner profile attributes), outstanding students, students of concern, success stories.
- o Cross subject collaboration. ATLs (Approaches to learning)/ GC (global contexts)/ Service learning/ training needs/ resources/
- o Peer visits and collaboration" (Principal Notes, 4/4/21)

These meetings were an excellent opportunity to build on the knowledge of the IB curricula in terms of expectations (ATLs, GCs, LP) and on the teachers' skills in teaching, supporting students struggling in their subject and promoting excellence in class. They offered teachers the opportunity to continuously develop their knowledge of the different curricula and the expectations in all three IB programmes through such grade level meetings: they were exposed not only to the expectations in the programmes they taught (in this case the MYP) but also to the expectations in the primary years programme (PYP) and the diploma programme (DP). Teachers' knowledge of the IB programmes was expanded throughout the period of COVID-19 lockdown in the online modality and continued during the next crisis.

Even when we went back to the physical campus at the start of the academic year 21-22 and we started with the regular induction of new teachers during a severe financial crisis, there was no change to the focus: keeping the learning going and ensuring its effectiveness. To do so, I shared the orientation plan acknowledging that with many new teachers we were expecting some bumps along the road. I explained that the new teachers and staff needed training on the programmes and the different facets of the teaching process at our school. We had plenty of new faces in teaching and

in leadership positions so we ran a number of orientation/training sessions that related

to teaching IB courses and that I introduced to teachers in my communication such as:

- Introduction of staff and goals for 21-22-led by myself
- The MYP programme- Introduction-led by the MYP coordinator
- The DP programme- Introduction-led by the DP coordinator
- Policies digest- What are the policies you need to know about? led by myself
- Academic advising- How do we support our students led by the academic advisor (Principal Notes, 20/8/21)

Teachers also had allocated time in their departments working with their subject

leaders on addressing these emerging learning needs (Principal Notes, 20/8/21). The

teachers felt overwhelmed with all what they had to learn, but definitely they went into

classes a little more ready for what was expected from them in an IB class and they had

a better understanding of the modalities that they might use, the technology and the

policies that governed the work.

Moreover, and as part of the work done during this period of prolonged crises,

recording and reporting of students' performance continued in our virtual school.

Teachers were involved in this process and had to provide feedback about the students

and to the students. Feedback helped the learners to reflect on their learning strategies

and teachers to reflect on their teaching strategies to confirm them or make changes to

improve the teaching and learning process.

I worked with some of the school leaders on both of these areas and shared

information with the teachers in an effort to develop their skills in writing comments/

providing feedback to report on students' achievement. I communicated frequently

through written messages to explain our findings and to promote the use of the

comments bank that has been compiled through the years. I emphasized, in my

communication, that while feedback is an incredibly helpful tool, there are instances in

which the feedback that is provided is not as effective as is needed for positive student growth. I insisted that the most effective type of feedback, that we should use, is highly personalized and highly relevant to the subject area being assessed. I shared guidelines regarding the best use of feedback that should be: goal oriented, prioritized, actionable, student friendly, ongoing, consistent and timely. I shared general feedback with the group then contacted individual teachers with specific details, or changes to be done (Principal Notes, 7/2/21). Teachers, especially new ones, appreciated this continuous monitoring and support. They felt more confident providing feedback to students on their report cards.

Finally, and to be able to give individualized feedback to teachers about their teaching skills. Teachers' performance review plans were rolled out during COVID-19 and during the financial crisis. During COVID-19 observations happened in the virtual classes and observers (myself, coordinators, and subject leaders) used a digital instrument. During the financial crisis observations happened in the physical classes and reflection meetings with the teachers observed helped us understand the disposition of our teachers, build on their areas of strengths, and support them to improve their weaknesses. Different forms of observations were used: walkthroughs by the principal and the head of school, informal observations by the subject leaders and the coordinators, and formal observations by the principal, the coordinators and the learning and teaching director. Each type of observation had a different instrument and tackled a different aspect of teaching. Building capacity culminated with the classroom observations as I was able to observe the implementation of all the work done with new and returning teachers and to start tackling this dimension with the individual teachers based on their specific needs.

Classroom Management. Another area that teachers needed support in was classroom management. The different modalities used, the extended lockdown period, the lack of interaction between students and between students and teachers all affected students' behavior in class. Students were struggling to follow classroom rules and teachers were stressed out and felt helpless at times as they tried to teach rowdy disengaged and at times rude students. I stepped in frequently over the past two years to support teachers with classroom management in the different modalities and during the different crises. Leading the learning during a crisis meant building teachers' capacity in managing classroom behavior in person and online. In this section I will report on the different supervisory practices I used to develop teachers' classroom management skills in different modalities and will explain why I decided to implement these specific practices.

Monitoring the Needs to Ensure the Effective Use of Classroom Management Skills in Different Modalities. Classroom management is an important aspect of the teaching and learning process that teachers need support with. New and sometimes even experienced teachers struggle with handling behavior issues in classes. As a school we usually include training sessions on classroom management as part of our orientation and induction plans as a result of a chronic learning need among teachers on this area. Leading the learning during a crisis meant also building teachers' capacity in managing classroom behavior in person and online. As an instructional leader I had to ensure that this work is done with the teachers by engaging in monitoring and assessing the needs of teachers and the schools with respect to this skill set. From my communication with the teachers, and my class visits, I was able to observe students' behavior in class and teachers' sills at managing behavioral issues. The communication collected helped me

identify students with the highest frequency of behavior incidents as well as teachers struggling to control such behaviors. Based on this data, I was able to support the teachers with classroom management.

During Thawra, as we went in and out of the "real school" and had to adopt a virtual school model whenever we were not allowed or could not get to school because of safety concerns, teaching continued in whatever modality was possible. This instability and changes in routines created uncertainty and a feeling of insecurity among the students. Students were acting out. Teachers needed support in handling classroom management. Through my class visits and walks, I noticed that we "as a community" do not reinforce school's rules which contributes to the behavior issues in class" (Principal Notes, 12/1/19). The type of documented incidents on our school database, my observations in classes and the anecdotal evidence reported to me by the teachers was enough evidence of where we fell short. I reminded the teachers of the rules and pushed for consistent implementation.

Later, as we moved into our virtual school model when the COVID-19 crisis hit, our first focus was on the logistics and the technology to ensure the continuity of the teaching and learning process. As we settled into the new model and we went back to our routine observations and as the teachers started reporting on their classes, we realized that we continued to have behavior issues online. The students continued to act up in classes: they found out new ways to misbehave in a virtual class: they could mute the teacher or kick each other out of the virtual class. They were bored and disengaged. The school counselor was concerned for them. She pointed out that this was just the result of their emotional struggles given the situation and the disrupted teaching. As a result of these emerging needs we planned wellbeing sessions to help them feel better

about their new life in a virtual world. The IT team also tried to help the teachers

technically figure out how to control behavior issues but classroom management

continued to be tricky and demanding in the virtual class. Frequent incidents of students

muting a teacher or kicking her out of class reported to me clearly showed that this is

impacting the teaching and wasting valuable learning time. We had to be strict and we

had to review our behavior policies to fit the virtual world so we published the new

Digital Behavior expectations document (Appendix C).

In the physical world too, around a month after the start of the academic year

2021-22, the same phenomenon emerged: students' aggressive behavior started

escalating. We had major behavior issues break in the different classes in the middle

and secondary schools. Teachers were unbale to support at times. Many were new and

were not familiar with classroom management techniques or our school's behavior

follow-up plans. They needed to learn more about this aspect of teaching.

Behavior concerns continued when schools returned to in person instruction and

at times escalated to full-fledged fights: some students got hurt. I was devastated. What

were we doing wrong? How can we do this better? Reading reflections of other

principals around the world on social media helped me understand this phenomenon

better. The issue was global. The pandemic and the lockdown have affected everyone:

students lost their social skills. They were unable to listen or follow-instructions. They

needed help and so did our teachers. Teachers needed to understand that this is not their

fault. I wrote to the teachers to share my findings

> We are currently living through the "Post Lockdown" era. After a year
> and a half in a virtual school, students are back at school and they are struggling
> to conform and to adapt. We are all suffering because of this. The good news is:
> we are not alone. Apparently, this is a global issue and educators around the
> world are finding the kids to be more aggressive, and less conforming than
> ever. Obviously, this is a global issue and soon we might need to research the

implications the pandemic had on students' social skills not only their education. Hang in there everyone, and remember: CONSISTENCY is key! We can get this right if we all follow the system (Principal Brief on Teams- 6/10/21).

I was not able to support the teachers fully to address these emerging challenges alone, it took a lot of time and effort and students took advantage of my unavailability at times. Someone needed to follow-up on all the incidents reported and to take the proper action. We needed more staff: we had to hire a new supervisor as the old assistant principal who was in charge of behavior resigned during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

A combination of training, policies, systems and procedures as well as more staff appear to be needed to help teachers deal with classroom management issues in the different modalities and through the various crises. As an instructional leader building teachers' capacity meant that I provide them with the resources, the system, and the skills needed to deal with behavior issues to keep the learning going and to run effective classes in person or online.

Developing Teachers' Classroom Management Skills in Different Modalities. Building teachers' capacity includes helping them develop the skills needed to manage students' behavior in class. This has always been a part of our orientation plan at the start of every school year. During the crises, this training expanded to include managing behavior in a virtual class. My role as an instructional supervisor leading learning by building teachers' capacity , knowledge and skills in classroom management required that 1) I visit classes to observe and analyze students' behavior, 2) I review, share and help the teachers implement the school's behavior rules consistently, 3) I work with the students' support team and the IT team to create procedures to report and penalize unacceptable behavior and develop workshops to help the students, 4) I share and

emphasize the use of effective classroom management strategies and tips, and 5) I stress the importance of building relationships between teachers and students. On top of all of the above, I still had to recruit another staff member to supervise students and deal with behavior issues when we were back on campus during the third crisis.

During Thawra, and when we managed to be in the physical school, I visited classes and was doing walk-throughs every week as per my regular practice. These short visits were very informative and interesting. It was great to see the work teachers do with their students and how they engage them in activities. It was also interesting to see how behavior issues happen in some classes. Teachers needed help with managing the behavior of students who were living through a period of uncertainty caused by the political unrest and the school closure. I had to share the list of our school rules and reminded teachers that they need to reinforce these rules in class to be able to have a smooth teaching and learning experience uninterrupted by silly or unacceptable behavior. I reminded teachers that "the literature, as well as other teachers' experiences, praise the importance and benefits of consistency" (Principal notes, 12/1/20).

As teaching moved into a virtual platform during the extended lockdown for the pandemic, bad behavior developed in the online classes. We wanted to help the kids out so our counselor, a member of the student support team, developed a new set of workshops that tackle the emotional well-being of students. She facilitated a new "positive self-talk" initiative to work on with the students" hoping that this will decrease behavior incidents. (Principal Notes, 10/5/20). I also enlisted the help of the IT team with classroom management: they gave the teachers tips on how to take full control of their classes and disable any attempt of students to mute or disconnect another student on Teams. In addition, the assistant principal wrote a new set of

behavior expectations to fit the virtual world and shared it with the community (Appendix C- Digital Behavior Expectations). I oversaw the work of the assistant principal and shared the new behavior expectations' document with all teachers explaining what is expected differently and additionally from them. Everyone knew that we were serious about having safe virtual classes that are conducive to learning and that we will not compromise on any behavior issues. With all these measures and additional skills, the teachers became gradually better equipped to deal with those issues and the number of behavior incidents started to decrease.

The struggle with students' behavior and classroom management continued during the third crisis even when we went back fully to a physical school model. I had to intervene again and explain the situation to the teachers to help them cope and seek new learning to address the emerging challenges to achieve student learning. I communicated the following to them in a brief on Teams:

> Managing behavior in and outside classes has been quite challenging the past few weeks. We are all aware of the behavior issues that teachers have to deal with including bullying, aggressive behavior, acting out, wasting class time, not following directions,... These are usually managed according to the school philosophy. On our campus, we have always focused on positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) with clearly delineated responsibilities and consequences. This year has been more challenging given the fact that kids have been away for some time, lost behind their screens and they have forgotten their social skills. They have a hard time focusing in class and struggle with listening skills. Currently grade 6,7 and 9 students have been the worst groups to deal with (Brief on Teams- 5/10/21).

Throughout the crises I continued on reminding the teachers in my continuous communications of few important tips:

- o   Bored kids will act out,
- o   Students will take advantage of the lack of structure and clear class rules,
- o   Students will look for any hole in the system,

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- Students respond better to a calm and consistent approach,

- The best way to handle behavior is by building relationships.

These tips and messages were repeated at every occasion I had. In one communication I insisted that

> "the only way for us as a school to decrease behavior incidents is by following our own system, by being consistent, by talking the talk and walking the walk. No matter who is in charge of discipline, the secret is in consistency and as long as we are not, ALL OF US, implementing the rules we will never have a grip on this" (Brief on Teams- 5/10/21)."

I also shared with the teachers some strategies to help them manage behavior in class:

> To ensure a proper running of your classes:
> - Be on time, start on time, and have a clear structure of the lesson
> - Document and follow up
> - Do not engage in verbal arguments with the students
> - Do not allow students to bully/ laugh at each other: students are counting on us to protect them
> - Make sure you are the last one to leave the class
> - Ensure your students left the room clean and tidy and that the lights, AC and projector are off (Brief on Teams- 5/10/21).

I also made sure to share and celebrate good classroom management examples as a way to empower some teachers and to model best practices for the rest. On top of this the IT team and I created a system to document and report behavior incidents on our school's management system (Managebac). During a staff meeting the IT staff explained the procedure to the teachers. We had to give teachers the knowledge and skills but also the resources to support them with this challenge. Recording the incidents and analyzing the data helped teachers understand the trends and enabled me as a supervisor to support teachers better. I also shared my own experience as a teacher at times:

> Advice from a practitioner perspective: Do not enter the class before all the students are seated and ready for you. Wait at the door for them to settle then

enter. This will help set the expectations right and will help with a smooth start. It works! trust me (Brief on Teams, 6/10/21).

One last thing that I needed to work on with the teachers to ensure smooth classroom management was building relationships: I wanted to help the teachers use "relationship building" to control behavior in class. I worked with a colleague to show them how this can be done in a homeroom class. Together we ran an orientation session for all homeroom teachers. The session was very warm and highlighted the importance of communication in building relationships (Brief on Teams, 25/11/21.) Relationships take time to be built, but we could sure see few weeks after this session that teachers were putting more effort into communicating with students, trying to understand their individual differences and their specific contexts. Things were calmer in classes. The behavior incidents reported on our platform started to decrease.

Students Assessments. Throughout the different crises, but mostly in the virtual modality, creating and administering authentic assessments was a major concern. Teachers wanted to ensure the validity of the grades and the reliability of the assessments. This was a totally new area for all of us. We experimented with different methods and different platforms trying to find the proper combination. As an instructional leader, my role required that I lead the learning in this area too. It was imperative we build teachers' capacity by helping them acquire the skills, knowledge and dispositions needed to create and administer authentic assessments in a virtual environment. In this section I will report on the different supervisory practices I used to develop teachers' knowledge and skills in writing authentic assessments in different modalities and will explain why I decided to implement these specific practices.

Assessing Teachers Needs to Ensure the Effectiveness of Assessment

Practices in Different Modalities. A major area that we needed to work on with teachers especially during the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic was carrying students' assessments within a virtual model. Everyone was wondering about how to ensure the authenticity of the assessments as students were doing them online with access to internet and plenty of resources. Most international organizations like IBO had canceled their exams when COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), but as a school we wanted to protect our integrity especially vis a vis higher education institutions that accept our students at the face value of their transcripts. We had to make changes to our assessment model and we needed to implement these changes based on the changing modality of teaching. As an instructional leader, I had to lead the learning by building teachers' capacity to carry online assessments. This required a clear understanding of the emerging needs as well as the requirements that teachers need to fulfill to be ready for the implementation of the new type of students' assessments. Traditional paper and pencil assessments that tested students' knowledge of the concepts covered in a class were not possible in a virtual world, and given the high numbers of COVID-19 infections we were not able to bring the students to campus to take tests. Teachers needed to design new types of assessments that ensure that students internalized the knowledge and were able to apply it, and to evaluate information and synthesize conclusions in context knowing that they have access to information and support at home while taking these assessments. It was time we get creative with our assessment strategies and our testing instruments.

During the first year of pandemic induced school lockdown we had to think about the end of year assessments for our students. We wondered: how do we assess

students virtually and make sure our assessments are authentic? Around the globe, everyone was wondering. Like everyone, I sure did not have all the answers, but I was confident that there was no way we could come up with one size fits all solution for all the subjects taught. I worked with the team to create an assessment plan that catered for the needs of every subject in a virtual world. The plan tackled the needs of different subjects differently. Languages were easier to assess and authenticity could be ensured by using a plagiarism detecting software such as Turnitin. Social studies' projects were used to assess students' knowledge of history and geography. Math real life investigations were part of the Math assessment plans, and science virtual lab investigations and real-life applications helped make the assessments more authentic. The assessment criteria in an IB programme made this model easier to implement. We used interviews with students to assess knowledge of foreign languages and to authenticate students work when in doubt. A combination of assessment strategies had to be used in different subjects in upper middle school and in secondary school to make the experience more authentic and to ensure the credibility of the grades.

The model used worked under the circumstances but proved not to be perfect. At the end of the academic year 2020-21 we had the issue of assessments again: how do we ensure the validity of our grades? How do we protect our integrity as a school? How do we promote students to higher grade levels based on the grades of their online assessments? The focus of the whole teaching staff during this period of time was on finalizing assessment procedures and promotion decisions. As a professional community we needed to figure out how, again, we can do assessments that are meaningful and authentic. More discussions were needed and I called for meetings to review our assessment procedures to ensure the integrity of our exams and the validity

of our grades. The academic team had long discussions about the format and the logistics of these exams. The facilitators and the subject leaders had discussed the plan moving forward with the teachers in their departments as we compiled a "logical plan that satisfies the needs of every subject and every grade level" (Principal Notes, 18/4/21).

As a school we realized it was very hard to assess school age students online. There is still a lot of work to be done on assessments in a virtual world to ensure they are authentic and reliable and that the grades are valid. There was little control we had and they could get assistance at home easily. As soon as we were back on campus in September of 2021, we returned to the original model of IB assessments on campus. Teachers were more confident about doing assessments online but felt much better avoiding this option and sticking to "in person" assessments where they had more control over the environment where these assessments took place.

Developing Teachers' Assessment Skills in Different Modalities. As teachers struggled with assessments, my role as an instructional supervisor leading learning by building teachers' capacity meant building their knowledge, skills and disposition towards assessments in any modality. This required that 1) I entertain purposeful focused discussions with the academic team to understand the requirements of every subject, 2) I collaborate with the team on creating a new model of assessment in the virtual world, 3) I look at research and other schools' practices doing online assessments and share my findings with the community for more informed decision making 4) I organize the logistics of the assessments in any modality 5) I make sure new teachers are trained on how to write and administer IB assessments in any

modality, and 6) I ensure the implementation of the school's decision in terms of

running assessments in a specific form online or on campus.

As the crises started, teachers had no idea how to ensure the authenticity

of the instruments used to assess students' work. They started experimenting with

online assessments and different online platforms: Zoom, Teams and Exam-net were

some of these. Each of these had advantages and disadvantages but none provided the

perfect solution. I knew that we should take into consideration not only the modality but

also the programme and the specificity of every subject. As we started looking at

assessments in a virtual world during the COVID-19 crisis, I needed to understand

better the expectations. To ensure that I had all the details I met with the academic team

of coordinators, subject leaders and academic advisors. All the departments worked

collaboratively with the leadership team to create and implement a new assessment

model that fits this virtual world. The language teachers decided to use interviews, the

social studies teachers created project tasks, the Math teachers included a "real life" task

in their assessments, while the science teachers went for virtual labs and data analysis.

We all had to think outside the box to ensure that students had internalized the

information taught in their virtual classes and could implement them in an assessment

context. It was the best we could do under such circumstances. The "assessment"

discussions continued through the prolonged crises as long as we remained virtual. We

continued to improve our assessment model and implementation strategies.

Throughout, we learned a lot about ourselves and our students but also developed a firm

belief regarding online assessments. I wrote to the teachers to share the new model and

to say:

> Next year cannot be just us going back to our old routines. The learning we did
> about ourselves, our students and the system since March of 2020 is here to stay.

It will change the education system because it simply revealed how flawed it is. For 21-22, our whole vision should change. Researchers are inviting educators to reassess their educational priorities and to revisit and rethink their approaches to teaching and learning. As for us now, the decision is to go back to exams on campus starting with the mocks for grades 9 and 12. I organized for grade 12 Lebanese Baccalaureate and grade 9 Brevet students to have their mock exams on campus first (Principal Notes, 21/5/21).

That was the first decision taken and it was meant to help prepare the students sitting for official exams to get ready for face to face assessments. A different approach was needed for the students in other grade levels taking into consideration the subject and the grade level. I informed the teachers of the plan:

Meanwhile, students in other grade levels have to complete summative work for arts, digital design and physical and health education as well as the listening and speaking criterion in French, Spanish and Arabic language acquisition. Students were asked to work on these projects during their classes and submit the products as per a set schedule. (Principal Notes, 21/5/21).

I also made sure to take into consideration the fact that some students were not in the country and were attending classes online from wherever they were in the world. Those in the country had to come to campus and those not in Lebanon had to prove they were away to get the chance to do their exams later in the year. I explained this to my teachers:

Exams were to take place online and on campus (depending on subject) during June for all our students in Lebanon. Exams for math, science and Arabic were to take place on campus. Students in Lebanon not attending physical school were requested to sit for these exams (math, science and Arabic) in August. Their promotion was put on hold till then. Students out of Lebanon needed to submit proof of residence outside the country and to sit for interviews in the subjects above (math, science and Arabic language and literature). This proof of residence outside Lebanon had to be submitted before the exams week otherwise we were to assume the student is in the country and he/she will need to do the exams on campus. The school informed the parents that it reserved the right to call any student for an interview to authenticate their work (Principal Notes, 21/5/21).

The plan shared was implemented in June of 2021 and follow-up continued through August of the same year to make sure students who were not in the country in June had a chance to sit for the exams in August before the new academic year started. The whole plan was meant to ensure the credibility of the school while being fair with students and parents taking into consideration the challenges that everyone was facing in their own context.

The new teachers hired during the crises, also needed to learn about assessments in the IB programmes and assessments online. They needed to be trained on grading and reporting in the IB programme. Criterion referenced assessments and best fitting of grades were not easy concepts to understand. More training was due, one of which included this aspect: "Wednesday, November 10,2:30- 4:00: MYP Teachers: assessments in the MYP with your coordinators: best-fitting and Managebac entries (Brief on Teams, 9/11/21). Such trainings were meant to help new teachers learn about our assessment procedures. They started on a programme level led by the coordinator and continued in the different departments led by the subject leaders.

I saw how hard teachers worked to ensure the authenticity of the assessments and the integrity of the grades. I monitored the progress of the implementation of the newly instituted measures and guidelines, and made sure that make-up exams happened in August 2021 as announced in May of 2021 for all those who could not come to campus in June. Teachers needed to feel that they were in control and they were part of a professional community that supports high quality teaching and learning. The make-up exams happened despite all the challenges.

As a result of the continuous follow up and the support that helped teachers acquire the needed skills and knowledge, teachers felt better about their understanding of

assessments in IB programmes. They had the knowledge of assessments in the IB, the skills needed to write criterion referenced exams and the right disposition to promote achievement with high expectations, and sensitivity to individual differences (Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2007). They still hoped that teaching will always take place in a physical school and for assessments to be real and authentic to ensure the integrity of the process.

      Professional Community. Looking back at my communication with staff over the period of the three crises, I would definitely say that most of my efforts, as an instructional leader leading the learning, were spent trying to empower teachers and build a professional community. I saw that building this community is essential in order to build teachers' capacity in terms of knowledge, skills and disposition. To support the capacity building activities outlined above, I made sure to provide the teachers with "access to a strong professional community that supports high-quality teaching and learning and is committed to teachers' thinking, planning and working together in ways that enhance their abilities and performance as teachers. Plenty of activities were geared towards this in each of the different crises. During the different crises and in all modalities, I worked on building a professional community with a shared purpose that is collaborative, committed to caring, and reflective. The presence of such a community helped the teachers acquire the knowledge and skills needed and enhanced the teaching and learning. In this section I will describe the supervisory actions I took to develop a professional community that 1) has a shared purpose, 2) is committed to caring, 3) is involved in the school's planning and decision making and 4) that provided a positive supportive environment for new and returning teachers.

Developing a Professional Community with a Shared Purpose. Throughout the

different crises, teachers struggled with understanding the situation and predicting the

future of their jobs. They were emotionally drained and always described the situation

as a "rollercoaster" of events and struggles. They were not confident about the future of

the institution or their future as teachers. They felt purposeless. As an instructional

supervisor determined to be leading the learning despite the crisis mode, I tried to

develop a sense of shared purpose within the professional community by getting the

teachers' buy-in on major decisions, sharing information and research findings, and

involving them in the planning activities for the coming years.

When the COVID-19 crisis hit we were told we will be in lockdown for around

15 days. We were skeptical. As predicted, the 15 days originally announced by the

government turned into a month and then two months. Everyone was concerned that

this was going to last much longer than expected and as a school leader I had to think

about the implications of this decision on the teaching and learning. I tried to enlist the

buy-in of teachers and staff and to gain their trust as a way of building a professional

community. I wrote to teachers sharing my concerns:

> At a school level, we need to start thinking about: A short-term plan: What do
> we do if we remain quarantined for the rest of the year? How do we test
> authentically? And how do we promote fairly? How will our curriculum
> change? A long-term plan: based on the data received we can go in and out of
> quarantine frequently for the next two years; how would a school manage this
> type of uncertainty? How do we recruit staff? How do we admit new students?
> How do we plan a year? (Principal Notes, 19/4/20).

Plenty of questions and not much answers but at least I put them all out there for

discussion and started looking at schools around the world especially in China where

most schools had been in lockdown for a longer period of time. I thought we could learn

from other schools and for once everyone was ready to share. I wrote again to the

teachers and staff and recommended that like me, they look at other school models especially schools in China and Hong Kong who have been doing virtual learning for a longer period of time (Principal Notes, 26/4/20).

Throughout the pandemic I felt anxious about planning for the coming academic year. I had to have the teachers and the staff on board for major planning decisions so, for example, I communicated that "planning for 2020-2021 continues amidst the uncertainty but we will again consider different scenarios to help find some kind of a structure for next year" (Principal Notes, 4/5/20). As I continued to read and explore, how others are doing this around the world? I shared some of my readings with my staff hoping to give them some insight into how teaching and learning will look like in the near future. I shared articles, reports and research papers. Some resonated well with teachers such as one that describes the staff of 2030, by Barbara Holzapfel, the general manager of Microsoft Education. Here is what I wrote to the teachers, Finally, and in the spirit of planning ahead, the article below from Bett's community hub about the new generation of teachers that we are now preparing in our classes, is a very interesting read: https://www.bettshow.com/bett-articles/the-staff-of-2030" (Principal Notes, 10/5/20).

We were all thinking together about the plan for finishing one year and starting another uncertain about whether it will be in person or not. There was not much that I could assure the teachers about, but I had the courage to tell them that I did not have all the answers and they all responded beautifully to that and took part in the reflection and the planning for an uncertain future. As a community we all had a shared purpose: keep the learning going by adapting our practices to any modality that the situation imposes on us. Through my communication with teachers and staff, I kept celebrating our team

vision and our shared purpose while reminding everyone that our only goal as educators

through the crises is to keep the learning going:

> As we safely navigate through these different crises trying to find our new normal, suddenly we find ourselves at the end of August not really sure of what to expect. Like you all, we have been struggling with issues of fuel, electricity, internet, and everything else. We realize how challenging going back to a normal life seems, but trust me being at work the last few weeks kept me sane. Despite all the uncertainties, the collective approach we have to crises is helping. We all understand the challenges, we know the uncertainties, we realize we need to evaluate everything on a daily basis, but we also know the importance of our roles. Education remains the only way we can prepare the new generation for the future and hopefully make a positive impact on our future. Every day we look at the variables. We identify the "non-negotiables", and we plan accordingly. Our main goal is to keep the learning going! (Principal Notes, 20/8/21)

Developing a Reflective Professional Community Involved in the Planning and the Decision-Making Process. Through the different crises, it was vital that the

teachers felt part of a community and for this to happen they needed not only to

share a common purpose but also to work in a collaborative environment where

they feel trusted. Teachers needed to feel heard. As an instructional supervisor

leading the learning in crisis mode, I tried to develop a reflective professional

community committed to teachers' planning and involved in the decision making by

1) running reflection meetings with the teachers, 2) collecting feedback from the

teachers through surveys and during staff meetings, 3) sharing my own reflections

and 4) giving them the opportunity to reflect on my own work and evaluate my

performance as a school principal.

Throughout the crises, I ran reflection meetings at the end of every

semester whether online or in virtual school. These meetings were essential in building

teachers' capacity and in promoting this feel of a professional community with a shared

purpose and a common vision. I accommodated everyone's needs: meetings were

possible in person or online. I also made sure that new teachers felt part of the professional community that I worked hard to create even in a virtual world. I invited them for reflection meetings two months into a school year explaining the purpose of the meeting and encouraging them to contribute: During the meeting we will discuss your feedback about our school so far. The questions to answer are: during the past 8 weeks: What went well? What went wrong? How can we make things better for our community? (Principal Notes, 4/10/20).

The end of year reflection meetings were the richest and most informative. At the end of the year 19-20 I ran 54 reflection meetings and collected feedback from 57 surveys. I analyzed the data and tried to look for trends then shared the trends with the teachers in my notes as a way to start the academic year 2020-21 (Appendix K Principal Notes: Reflection meetings, June 2020).

Teachers' reflections continued throughout the consecutive and overlapping crises. Later I used forms before running the meetings: [Teachers' reflection form End of year 20-21](#) (Principal Notes, 16/5/21). When calling for these meetings I wanted to acknowledge the struggles of the teachers but also to highlight the importance for teachers to share their suggestions, concerns and views on decisions still under study. Often through the crises the school did not have clarity about the course of action to take. The administration was often unclear about what modality we were going to endorse. Although I was aware that the teachers were frustrated I insisted on soliciting their feedback framing the situation as a shared responsibility within a professional community. I made sure to let them know at every juncture that their contributions mattered and that their voice will indeed be heard while decisions are being deliberated at the administration level. I communicated this often.

Regarding our start of the school year: I have heard from some of you and I understand your frustration, but for us to be able to do this scientifically I will be sharing a short survey for you to let us know how we could have done things better. Your feedback will help me write my recommendation to the board (Principal Notes, 6/9/20).

I always collected the data from the surveys and looked at the teachers' feedback. During COVID-19 for example, there was a lot resistance among teachers to a physical return to schools. Teachers were anxious and scared for themselves and their families. They did not know what to expect. I gave them the space to share their ideas and their feedback and I related this to the head of school and the board. The feedback of the teachers was always taken into consideration when decisions about the modality to be implemented were discussed. Seldom were such decisions imposed on us which strengthened the feel of a community and ensured that decision-making was a collaborative process.

At another instance, I invited the contribution of the teachers when the school was considering a blended model during COVID-19. I wrote the following to reflect on the idea and to share my own concerns:

What we need to consider now is: do we bring in all those who want to attend physically all the time or we split them into two groups? How do we attend to the needs of those following virtually from home? Do we keep one virtual day a week? I will send these questions as a survey tomorrow during our meeting. Meanwhile I thought it is good to share these points with you to give you time to reflect before we meet (Principal Notes, 4/10/20).

I also called for meetings when controversial decisions were being discussed at a leadership level such as rolling out a hybrid school model or abiding by the ministry's decision to extend winter break in December 2021. When it came to the hybrid model, everybody had doubts, but as a school leader I had to have the courage to jump in first. : it was time for action! I knew that teachers were reluctant to attempt teaching in a hybrid model. They were afraid that this would require double the efforts as they

explained lessons to a group of students on campus while following up with another group on Teams. It was legitimate: this was definitely challenging. However, coming from our shared purpose of keeping the learning going, I informed the teachers and staff in my communication that this is being considered and called for their feedback on the new modality and how to implement it:

> The coming week is our first week of blended learning and there is plenty to learn and improve. Let's experiment for the coming two weeks with different procedures and see what works well for us. I would like to hear from you all about: homeroom procedures, communication with the group attending online, breaks in class, breaks in the cafeteria, dismissal procedures, technical issues in the blended model. I will send a survey at the end of week 2 to parents, students and teachers to get feedback but hope that you will continue to share insights on our teachers' team as we used to do in the virtual school (Principal Notes, 1/11/20).

During the financial crisis, and when we received the ministry's sudden decision to change the duration of the winter break last December, the roller coaster feeling that we felt during the pandemic came back. We were devastated. I wrote to teachers and staff expressing my indignation at the top down decision taken by the ministry of education:

> I was reading through some of the communication that I sent out during the Thawra and during the pandemic the last two years and as you would have guessed, the roller coaster mood resurfaced, especially after the sudden decision of the ministry. Again, our plans need to change because of "health concerns" and again we need to change our calendar, and our assessment and reporting timelines. I know how flexible you have all been and I am sorry I have to ask you again to be more flexible and to understand all the changes coming" (Brief on Teams, 2/12/21).

This new decision meant we had to reconsider our own calendar and assessment timeline, maybe go back to online classes and change our teaching plans as the new winter break will start four days before we originally planned. I had to explain the

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situation to the teachers and to acknowledge their frustration and their beautiful

disposition. They had a lot to deal with, plenty to reflect on and more to plan for.

It was important that I keep the communication going in both directions. The

virtual world was very challenging but it provided a venue for daily effortless

communication among staff. There was no need to call for daily debrief meetings: the

Teams platform provided this discussion space for us.

Through the crises, and since I was appointed principal, I always started the year

with a reflection on the data collected from teachers' feedback the year before. This

helps me put a closure to the previous year and use the feedback of the professional

community to plan for what is coming ahead. At the same time, to be able to know

more about my own performance and in the absence of a principal evaluation

instrument, I created one of my own: an anonymous survey that all teachers and staff

were asked to fill: " Principal evaluation form: You can fill this evaluation form:

[Principal Evaluation Form- 20-21](#)" (Brief on Teams, 24/5/21). The data collected from

this survey helped me reflect on my own performance but mostly formalized the

structure of a professional community. Sharing the survey meant that the opinion of my

teachers and staff on my performance mattered. The questions were also meant to

collect the teachers' feedback on our practices. Some of the questions shared were:

- o I feel my principal is strong in these areas

- o I would like to see my principal grow in these areas

- o Other comments or feedback I'd like to provide to my principal to help our
     school grow and continue to improve under her leadership. (Principal
     Evaluation Form, 24/5/21).

Two years into the crisis, I could really appreciate that the professional community built through the different reflections, the discussions, the empowerment of teachers, the listening and the sharing was able to handle the challenges of any crisis. Teachers felt empowered. Surveys helped them feel safe about sharing their opinions. Our reflection meetings were also a safe venue for them to discuss the challenges they have and to request support in specific areas. The team developed into a crisis management team that is flexible, adaptable and critical.

Developing a Positive Supportive Climate. All the activities I ran during the different crises and the communication I sent to teachers and staff trying to collect their feedback helped promote a positive climate and in turn strengthened the professional community. This was obvious in the teachers' feedback that I collected in reflection meetings or through surveys. No matter how grey and ill lit the future seemed, no matter how much uncertainty we were all dealing with, the only constant was the community's shared purpose to keep the learning going. Whether through Thawra, COVID-19, or the financial crisis I continued leading the learning and building capacity while promoting a positive climate within a professional community. As an instructional supervisor leading the learning in crisis mode, and in an effort to build teachers' capacity, I emphasized and enhanced a positive climate within a professional community by 1) communicating frequently and honestly with teachers and staff using different means, 2) celebrating the small successes of the teachers and the big successes of the team, 3) always encouraging teachers and pushing them to keep the learning going.

My communication with staff during the different crises consisted of weekly principal notes (45 every year) and short briefs every morning and afternoon to remind

teachers of the expectations for the day, any upcoming meetings, due dates, news and successes. I used the platform to encourage and empower staff and teachers and to promote a feel of community.

A lot of work was done since October 2019 to sustain this positive climate and keep the learning going. Despite all the challenges the school not only survived but thrived as we managed to help new teachers adapt to a totally new programme and new and returning teachers use different teaching modalities. The professional community spirit reigned supreme, and I had to acknowledge this in my formal communication in the principal notes at the end of the period under study. I ended the year 2021 by sharing these comments with my teachers:

> On a personal level, I cannot stop dreaming of Christmas and the long winter break. The past two months of school have been draining. We have had to deal with: an ongoing fuel crisis, multiple COVID-19 cases, closed classes, online teaching, a small war on the back street, unacceptable students' behavior, …. and other issues. But! We are still here! We are tackling the challenges one at a time, we are keeping the learning going no matter what and we are doing much better than many other schools in the country. Crises are usually considered threats to the organization and the community, but they also come with opportunities for growth and development. They present a chance for change and eventually when they do resolve (and they will) they leave behind a sweet taste of success and a stronger, tougher team. This I know from being here for some time now and watching "us" grow and develop through the crises, but I also know from listening to our new teachers reflect on the last two months of school. If there is one recurrent theme in the 14 reflections I have run so far it would be "the positive supportive atmosphere". Some of our new colleagues maybe struggling with the requirements of the MYP, and the long work hours, and finding the resources, but ALL our colleagues agree that we have a positive supportive environment and they appreciate all the help they are receiving from their coordinators, their subject leader, and their returning colleagues whether within or outside the department. So, well done colleagues! You prove that we are all in this together, and we are all in this for the kids, and I, am simply grateful (Principal Notes, 1/11/21).

The reflections with the teachers were always heartwarming. I was proud of having helped develop such a supportive professional community and I could feel the

positive effect on teachers and staff. Despite the struggles outside the walls of the school, people were happy as they felt appreciated, empowered and always heard. They worked well together as part of a professional community.

My last principal notes were sent out on the 17th of December. They were celebratory and informative:

> After 74 days of full face to face teaching and 3 days of online teaching, several cases of COVID-19 among teachers and students, quarantined classes, a mini-war in Tayouneh, a terrible fuel crisis, a crazy dollar exchange rate, we were able to make it! Through it all, we kept the teaching and learning going, we trained new teachers, we re-established the system, we assessed students, published check-in reports, had parents' teachers' conferences, a beautiful independence-day celebration, student council elections, an end of year celebration and activities organized by the student council. WOW! You guys ROCK! Someone told me today, we are progressing out of context, as if the outside world does not exist. We have our own standards to work towards and we are just doing that through thick and thin. Thank you, beautiful community for all you do! (Principal Notes, 17/12/21).

Looking back at the communication I could see how we made sure to build teachers' capacity and to help them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to teach an IB programme in any of the modalities imposed by a crisis. As a school principal I had to facilitate all the work, but I mostly had to make sure my teachers were part of a supportive professional community where they had all the resources needed to develop and improve their teaching.

Developing a Professional Community Committed to Caring. As students and teachers struggled with the cold impersonal virtual world during the lockdown in the time of the COVID-19 crisis, I wanted to make sure teachers were empathetic to the students and understood their struggles. I realized that it is part of my leadership responsibility to give some life and warmth to the impersonal world of the screens. Therefore, I tried to develop a professional community committed to caring by 1)

sharing with the teachers' the challenges students were facing, 2) validating the challenges they were facing as teachers but also as Lebanese citizens, and 3) supporting initiatives that promote a sense of solidarity in the larger community. I also had to model the caring attitude by being myself understanding and empathetic vis a vis our teachers. Everyone had his own struggle, and there was no way the leader could understand what each teacher and staff member was going through, but at least one could feel with them.

During the pandemic, people had a new normal to deal with. Students like teachers were struggling at home. They were not used to this new secluded environment where the only interactions with other students their age was through a screen. They were at home the whole day and they were bored and frustrated. I wrote to teachers and explained the situation:

> These are tough times for all of us, but especially for our students whether they are in grade 6 and they are trying to keep up with all our expectations while confined to their homes stuck behind a screen or whether they are the graduates who are currently worried about finishing their year, graduating and joining a university in these circumstances! Each one of us is making a difference in these kids' lives, and all of us can contribute to making them feel a little better with kind words of understanding and encouragement. These are kids after all, and around them the world is falling apart and they do not know how to handle all of this... I invited the teachers to make their priority the emotional health of the students, their well-being as well as their education." (Principal Notes, 8/3/20).

I wanted to ensure that the whole community is committed to caring. This was particularly essential at the start of the academic year 2020-21 when one of the worst industrial explosions in human history hit our already struggling country. Sadly, one of our own families lost a dad in the explosion. Despite being on vacation, I decided it is imperative that I communicate with my staff after such a devastating event. On the 5th of August, I wrote to the teachers and staff to enquire about everyone's safety and to share the sad news that the father of one of our families was injured in the blast and died

and that the mom was also injured and was currently in the hospital. I asked we all pray for them and urged the teachers to check on our students.

We were still under the shock of the explosion and we could not forget about the devastating impact it had on the people of Beirut. I decided to bring the school together around an initiative intended to serve our larger community. Donation stations were created, I made sure to send reminders for all to contribute: "Finally kind reminder about the donation stations at CCC. Our people need us, let's support them!" (Principal Notes, 14/8/20). Teachers felt well about getting together and supporting others in the larger community. The solidarity that was created through this type of communication was transferred to the professional environment. Everyone wanted to help. All teachers were struggling with one aspect or another of the work but they felt supported by the caring climate in the school professional community and this mattered a lot! The feedback received from the teachers highlighted this aspect of the school as a strength. Teachers shared their satisfaction in the reflection surveys. When asked about what went well this academic year, they answered:

- o Together we achieved more!!
- o Adaptation to all circumstances on all levels
- o The community spirit and support as always
- o The appreciation and the respect

It was heartwarming for me to read their reflections but what was more important is that this was a reflection of the positive atmosphere created through the different supervisory activities geared at developing a professional community during the period of crises.

Technical Resources. The instructional capacity of a school is a combination of 1) the teachers' knowledge of the curriculum, skills in teaching it and disposition to promote students' achievement; 2) the access to a strong reflective professional community with a shared purpose and 3) the availability of the technical resources needed by the teachers to do a good job (Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2007). As an instructional leader leading the learning in a crisis mode, committed to building teachers' instructional capacity to gain the knowledge, skills and disposition required, and to enhancing a professional community, providing the members of this community with the technical resources needed to teach in an IB school in any modality becomes central to success. During the three different crises, as an instructional leader leading the learning by building teachers' capacity, I made sure to provide teachers with the technical resources needed to facilitate their work. When such resources were not available, I created them with the teachers' community.

The technical resources included the materials and equipment to support the teachers: the documents, the policies, the timetables, the calendars, the books, the technology software and hardware, and up to date information and guidelines referring to the crisis situation. In my role as an instructional leader in a crisis mode, I gave teachers access to some documents, policies, books and resources; I published documents created by other leaders in the school; and worked with the teachers on developing some documents and resources that were not available.

Teachers needed to be provided with resources to do a good job no matter what the modality of teaching is. I had to support them with this. I provided access or sent documents that will help them in their teaching. What I stated in the following communication reflects my commitment to provide this technical support:

Also, as discussed during our last meeting, please find here a link to our school yearly calendar: Calendar 20-21 (sample in Appendix F). Teachers who need to collect books/ resources from school need to inform their subject leader/ facilitator who will specify the date and time of collection after getting the clearance from our librarian. This should be entered on the shared document provided for subject leaders and facilitators for our facilities people to be aware of the expectations (Principal Notes, 23/8/20).

The teachers were able to collect books and teaching resources from campus any time during the crises. They were also provided with laptops when their own devices failed. They had access to an IT department that helped them fix hardware issues. The school made sure they have access to specific platforms to help with the teaching online such as Exam-net and assess-prep (two online assessment platforms), Quizziz , Kahoot, Kamkalima and others. We kept subscriptions to these software since the onset COVID-19 crisis for as long as the school could afford them. During the financial crisis, we had to stop some of these because we did not have the financial resources to do so.

In response to the pandemic crisis, and when the school considered a blended model, some of the resources had to be developed with the teachers while others were available for collection. The structure of the day, the lists of students attending online and those on campus, COVID-19 guidelines, and other documents were important artifacts for the teachers who were getting ready for a new teaching modality. Teachers also needed resources in the form of books or handbooks or even laptops or digital cameras that they needed to collect from the campus. Students needed resources as well and were asked to collect these from the physical campus. Students getting these resources was important for the teachers as it meant they did not need to figure out how to share copyrighted material online.   I explained this in my communication when I shared:

We still have plenty to discuss and organize: timetables, class lists, resources, safety of students and staff, technology on campus,… For now, we will

brainstorm and collaborate on a "back to school" plan that reflects our own values and vision. Meanwhile we are going to continue with our virtual school model that seems to be running better now with a solid timetable and systems and procedures back in place. Simultaneously, we will be getting small groups of students on campus to collect resources and to meet their classmates and their teachers. The master plan for distribution of resources is available here: collection of resources(form). To prepare for this, teachers are kindly asked to sign in on this form to help with the preparation (13/9/20) (See Appendix G).

As we kept wondering about the modality to endorse based on the number of cases in the country during COVID-19, our virtual school was running and we needed to support the teachers in their quest to figure out how and when to assess the students' work and how to assign homework especially that homework meant more time spent behind a screen for the students. I collected the resources needed from the academic advisor and shared them with the teachers:

Homework timetables for MYP are shared by our academic advisor after being approved by the different departments. They will be posted on the students' channels (Appendix H). All departments need to follow the guidelines. Kindly do not give any extra-work to students. Assessment weeks (for MYP only) were finalized and shared with you. Kindly plan your assessments to match these weeks (Check Appendix I) (Principal Notes, 10/4/20)

Finally, during COVID-19 and even during the financial crisis when teachers and students were attending physical school, we still had to provide them with up to date information on the pandemic, that was ongoing, vaccination campaigns and centers, guidelines and instructions to promote safety in the building. Providing these resources helped the teacher focus on the teaching rather than on creating material.

Ensuring Instructional Quality

Instructional quality is defined as the curriculum content, the pedagogies used and the climate for teaching and learning. In the framework used for the purpose of this paper, instructional quality is basically about "teaching addressed to the mastery of basic information and skills,…, and a climate for learning characterized by high

expectations, an orderly environment and a commitment to caring and cooperation (Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2007, p.9). As an instructional supervisor leading the learning in a crisis situation, I had to ensure that teaching happened in a climate of high expectations.

To provide quality teaching and learning in a caring environment, I had , as an instructional supervisor, to ensure instructional quality while leading the learning through the different crises by 1) creating procedures to ensure learning is happening in a virtual modality, 2) setting high academic expectations for students, 3) promoting students based on set criteria 4) collecting numerical data (from surveys, test results,..), analyzing and publishing it 5) celebrating successes and 6) promoting opportunities for learning and development. In this section I will report on the different supervisory activities that I took through the different crises to ensure instructional quality.

Ensuring Learning is Happening. In a crisis mode it was easy to drift into alternative less-demanding paths especially when the focus was survival. In my role as an instructional supervisor leading learning in a crisis mode, I had to ensure instructional quality and started by ensuring that learning is happening in classes no matter what the modality is. During the COVID-19 pandemic, with changing modalities the curriculum completion could easily be compromised which would have affected the teaching and learning process and resulted in knowledge gaps being created in the students' schemata. To make sure that all the learning outcomes set by the school were covered during this period of time, I asked the programme coordinators to collect evidence of learning. This evidence was supposed to ensure that the objectives listed in the school's curriculum were achieved as per the timeline set by the department. I wrote to explain that: "This is a request that "evidence of learning" from March onwards is collected. (Principal Notes, 4/5/20). Teachers were asked to list all the chapters completed per subject and per grade level on a digital document to be reviewed by the academic team. We could not verify how much of the information was internalized by the students except by asking them to provide us with a "demonstration of knowledge" acquired. I prompted teachers in my communications with them:

> How do I know that the students know? How do I ensure they learned anything? This was never easy, but it is particularly difficult in a virtual environment where you keep losing students to technical issues, and you cannot see most of them because the screen allows you to see only that many at once…The best we can do is be intentional about asking students to repeat or re-explain what you said as you finish explaining a point. This will definitely take time. And it is ok as long as you can ensure that a certain percentage of your students were able to internalize some of the learning because otherwise we are maintaining "the teaching" but not the "learning" (Principal Notes, 24/1/21).

Teachers in the different departments added the information requested indicating that they have covered specific topics in their curricula and they assessed the students

formatively (most of the time) to ensure that they have internatlized most (or at least some) of the concepts covered in class.

      Setting High Academic Expectations. Throughout the crises and as we moved teaching from one modality to another, we needed to ensure that we stick to our standards while still being humane and understanding. In my role as an instructional supervisor leading learning in a crisis mode, I had to ensure instructional quality by setting high academic expectations in any modality. The situation was hard and each one of the crises we lived through came with a multitude of challenges that needed to be tackled. It seemed unreasonable at times to stress on instructional quality when it was barely possible to keep the learning going. I still tried and was able to succeed in setting high academic expectations as visible in the communication shared with teachers whether in my weekly notes or in my briefs on the school's digital platform Teams. As early as November of 2019, and during the time of political unrest when we first established our virtual school model and were in and out of the virtual world, I had to remind teachers about setting high expectations for the students. I wrote the following in my principal notes to the school community titled:

> Action plans in a fluid volatile situation": "I would like again to stress, in my notes this week, the importance of setting high expectations for our students and believing in their ability to rise up to these expectations (Principal Notes, 18/11/19).

      In addition, I kept reminding and pushing the teachers to follow the set guidelines and to stick to the set goals: "Starting Monday, the expectation is for everyone to be on board and committed to school's timing, goals and rules. We need to be vigilant and strict" (Principal notes, 30/11/19). It was imperative that we established the acceptable standard. Students were not allowed to lay back and watch as things

happened around them, neither were the teachers. I tried to establish this myself and to

inform the teachers in my communication:

> To help students achieve the "higher" expectations, we need to help them by being consistent in applying the rules. I urged the teachers to use regular assessments to make sure that the students have grasped the material. I suggested short unannounced quizzes or questions that can give them information about the teaching and learning process (Principal Notes, 30/11/19).

Later on, and while we were still teaching online, I informed the parents of the

set expectations. We sent out academic notices to the parents of students at risk of

failing one or more subjects: I also made sure to notify the teachers of all my actions in

this regard:

> Before the vacation our academic advisor has shared with parents 41 academic notices for students at risk of failing specific subjects with poor participation and work submission. These students are supposed to sit for evaluation assessments next week (Principal Notes, 6/1/21).

Students at risk of failing one or more subjects had to sit for evaluation

assessments at the end of the semester. To ensure that students' performance was at the

expectation level, we ran grade level meetings at the end of every semester. Based on

the discussions taking place in these meetings, action plans were put in place by the

different departments to support the students and help them reach our expectations. This

was evident in my communication with the teachers as in the following extract:

> Meanwhile we continue to have our academic meetings to discuss students' achievement and support plans. Support classes have already started in the Math department. Arabic LA (language acquisition) and Arabic L&L (language and literature) departments are developing their plans. Support plans are being communicated with the parents through the academic advising department (Principal Notes, 21/2/21).

At the end of Semester one of the year 20-21 and after publishing reports and

analyzing data, we shared our findings with the parents committee and made it clear to

all that everyone needed to be aware of the expectations and what we are doing as a

school to set them up. I made sure to share information about the meeting with the

parents' committee with the teachers and staff:

> Friday evening, after our lovely virtual "Teacher's Day" Celebration, we had our
> end of semester parents 'committee meeting to discuss the performance of the
> students and our success indicators for the teaching and learning process on our
> campus. We shared the concerns we have for Middle school: students at high
> risk of being invited to repeat, reliability of grades in the virtual world, gaps
> being formed, commitment of students (Principal Notes, 7/3/21).

No matter what the modality of teaching was, I worked at ensuring instructional

quality and setting acceptable academic expectations to be reached by our students

through the different crises.

Promoting Students based on Set Criteria . Despite living through crises, we

had, as a school to decide on the promotion of students to the next grade level at the end

of every school year. In my role as an instructional supervisor leading learning in a

crisis mode, I had to ensure instructional quality and to do this one of the supervisory

activities I attempted was setting specific criteria for the promotion of students in

different modalities that safeguarded the quality of learning. Students could not be

promoted automatically because of the situation. Those who were not committed to the

work or who failed to attend classes could not be treated the same way as those who

tried their best, submitted all their assignments, attended all the classes and contributed

to class discussions. Teachers were made aware of the expectations through my written

communication and through the school's plans for assessment and reporting. I also

informed the parents that Thawra or not, we had a minimum level of acceptable

standard that the students needed to reach to be promoted to a higher-grade level. I sent

a letter to the parents to explain our reporting plan:

> These reports are compiled based on the February 2020 edited promotion policy
> attached to this email. Promotion conditions were different per grade level and
> per programme. If a student is not meeting the school's promotion expectations,

s/he will be given, per subject: an academic notice at November or April check-in , an academic warning at the end of the first semester and an academic Probation for the following year at the end of the second semester .These warnings will be given per subject, so that we can track progress. The promotion conditions for students in grade 9-Brevet are linked to passing the official exams (Letter to parents, 9/1/20).

A climate of high expectations was set as we navigated through our first crisis. During the second crisis, and when we realized that we might be stuck for long in a virtual world, we were worried about assessments and reporting and following up on the academic expectations that we set for students and shared with parents during Thawra. The plan had to change again. The promotion conditions had to reflect the new school modality including attendance of online classes, commitment to the virtual world and engagement in classes. The assessments done online were not enough to decide on promotion expectations as was the practice. After agreeing on the changes, I informed the teachers in my communication as follows:

> At this point in time, we need to get our priorities right as there is no indication that we will be back to school any soon. Waiting for the Ministry to decide on the rest of the school year, as a school we need to focus on keeping the learning going, and covering as much material as possible. Things would need to be tackled differently on an academic level, and a full clearer idea about promotion and curriculum revision for next year will be decided on after we come back from Spring break. In view of the situation, teachers were asked to submit any available numerical scores for grades 6-11 before the exams so that we have enough time to analyze the data collected, look for trends and review the performance of all students who were at any academic risk last semester. The promotion decisions will take into consideration the attendance and commitment of students' to work (for virtual learning specifically). A promotion committee made of coordinators/ subject leaders/ academic advisors was set to make recommendations to the head of school and the board about each student at risk based on the data collected (Principal Notes, 5/4/20).

At the end of the first academic year spent partially in lockdown, I reminded the teachers of the academic expectations already shared with the parents and of the promotion decisions after the minister decided that nobody can fail the year. I wanted to

make sure that as a school we were fully aware of the performance level of our students and that we knew who was struggling and who was not able to meet our promotion expectations. I wrote to emphasize the school's expectations and our focus on quality learning: "Kind reminder to fill in the form about "students at academic risk" that I sent out on Friday. If you feel other names should feature on this list, kindly let me know and I will add them" (Principal notes, 10/5/20). I also made sure that we had some leverage over the minister's decision to promote everyone because of the pandemic and the lockdown. The minister used a "one size fits all" approach to promotion forgetting that some schools like ours were able to keep the learning going despite the pandemic and despite the lockdown. I wrote to explain the plan to the teachers:

> Promotion to the next grade level: Despite the fact that promotion is granted to all students as per the ministry's decision, please note that the school reserves the right to: ask grade 11 DP students to move to the high-school track if they do not satisfy the requirements of their courses, issue conditional promotion to students based on their performance and commitment to Virtual School, ask students to complete any missed work for any course over the summer break (Principal Notes, 31/5/20).

We needed to make sure that everyone took the expectations seriously. We were kind and accommodating of everyone's needs but we could not just promote unconditionally knowing all the work that teachers have put into teaching in the virtual world. We also needed to be fair to those who put in the effort and committed to the virtual classes.

Analyzing and Publishing Data. Data driven decision making is a hot topic in the education field. The idea started in the field of business and was transferred to the field of education. It basically focuses on how school leaders and teachers can use different sources of data to improve the quality of education. It includes the use of formative assessment data, educational research study findings and other data to decide on what do we need to do. During the different crises, my role as a leader leading learning required that I insure instructional quality. One of the actions I took to do that was monitoring closely the implementation of the instructional programs through collecting, analyzing and publishing data. Specific data was shared with the governing board during the board meetings. Some data was also shared with teachers and staff in my communication such as the data collected from surveys or the analysis of students' grades.

The practice was initiated by the school mode of operation as I was requested by the head of school prior to the crises to collect and analyze specific data. The areas of focus for data collection included: students' attendance, engagement in class and submission of work as well as the quantitative data collected from Brevet mocks, IB exams and school's assessments in middle and secondary school. The data was collected throughout the semester from different platforms, analyzed and published in a specific format to be shared with the board during board meetings.

I also shared results of data analysis from the surveys and the reflection meetings that I did with the teachers. At the end of every grading period, the analysis of grades was shared with teachers for their feedback and to look at trends per subject or per grade level. Findings were shared for any survey published after the data collected was analyzed.

One example of this would be sharing data from teachers' satisfaction surveys after specific events in the school year. Accordingly, at the beginning of a school year, and after the teachers' orientation was completed, I also sent out surveys to collect data about the plan implemented and shared the results: "Feedback from teachers regarding the orientation plan: (Daily surveys, the results from Friday August 21): 46 staff members took the survey and the results indicated: 52% had great learning ,34% had good learning , 13% had some learning" (Principal Notes, 23/8/20). I believed that everyone needed to know (especially new teachers) that we valued excellence and we strive to improve our practices by collecting and analyzing feedback. .

Some of the data collected was directly linked to students' learning. This included the grades in different subjects at the end of a grading period (we have four grading periods a year). Moreover, and in a virtual world students' performance was not about grades and assessments only. We had to follow up on attendance and engagement in the virtual class as well. I explained the data collection process to teachers in my notes: "Research has suggested that data-based decision-making (data use) can contribute to increased student learning and achievement (Principal Notes, 11/4/21). Data from students' grades, attendance, completion of work, engagement in class (reported as indicators) was analyzed every semester and was shared with teachers and academic leaders. Decisions on the curriculum and the pedagogy used were taken based on the results obtained and action plans to follow up on students at risk per grade level and per department were also made.

Celebrating Successes. Through the different crises, and in my role of instructional supervisor leading learning in a crisis mode, I had to ensure instructional quality and to do this one of the supervisory practices I used was celebrating the

successes of our students, teachers and the school in general. These celebrations were made to reinforce the climate of high expectations as well as to sustain a high morale among teachers and students. I shared highest averages of students in official exams, admissions to top universities, and IB official grades for grade 12 students sitting for the diploma and for grade 10 students doing the MYP culminating activity: the personal project.   On day one of every school year specifically, I shared some of our success stories with the new and returning teachers, such as our students' grades in the personal project. I wrote to say: "also, and for our returning teachers who have supervised grade 10 personal projects last year, please find attached the personal project results for the class of 2022. As usual our average is way above the world average: as a school we have achieved a 4.9 out of 7 with all students passing and 2x7s." (Principal Notes, 14/8/20). Even later, during the financial crisis era, it was essential we keep abreast of the developments in terms of IB curricula especially that this specific crisis was local and the rest of the world seemed to be getting back into a "normal" life as the vaccination campaigns were rolled out globally. As an IB school we needed to at least preserve our performance standards if we were unable to improve them. Again, I decided to start a new academic year by celebrating our achievement in the middle years personal project. I wrote to the new and returning staff to share the news:

> Today we start the day with a very special session about the personal project, the culminating activity of the Middle Years programme, and our pride as we have already seen six of our cohorts go through the process and our school average of 4.8 out of 7 in comparison to the world's 3.9 says a lot about the work done with the team. (Brief on Teams, 27/8/21).

While things kept getting harder, and the demands on the teachers more stressful, I had to lift the spirit of the teachers by going back in history and bringing back to the memory of the teachers what our school is capable of offering and how their

experience with us becomes a springboard to grow and develop.   In the same spirit and

to ensure success is always celebrated I shared the story of success of one of our leaders

who left the school two years ago

> As a school, we have always had a reputation of developing our teachers
> and staff members. I have been here for 7 years, and I have seen new
> teachers become facilitators, subject leaders, and even coordinators
> whether here or somewhere else. And it was not a surprise hearing last
> Friday about one of our leaders who has now taken a job in curriculum
> and development with one of the leading educational organizations in the
> world. We are proud of her, an Arab woman who is now a member of
> the *** learning and teaching global team. Well done!" (Principal Notes,
> 14/11/21). And that was refreshing!

Promoting Opportunities for Personal Growth. Through the different crises,

and in my role of instructional supervisor leading learning in a crisis mode, ensuring

instructional quality required that I promote opportunities for personal growth for

teachers. l wanted to make sure that our teachers had enough learning opportunities and

were able to improve their own practices. We had enough resources to offer some

online training but not a lot. Fortunately, though, through COVID-19, the global

education network expanded. People were sharing resources and offering support

around the world through the virtual medium. All one needed to do was register. I

shared those global learning opportunities offered in the form of webinars with my

teachers urging them to attend and explore openings to improve their teaching practices:

> For the Math and Science teachers interested in attending some training/
> webinars kindly find the invitation below: Valued Educator, you are invited to
> join us for a series of complimentary (free) webinars that explore a range of
> trending topics in math and science education. Find out how online interactive
> simulations can help enhance your STEM curriculum, support student math
> achievement, affect growth mindset, and more in our webinar series. Explore
> Learning Gizmos, Reflex, and Science4Us enhance students' success in math
> and science, and our professional development team can help teachers build
> their own success in the classroom (Principal Notes, 23/8/20).

There were development opportunities for the teachers in the virtual world and I insisted on exploring them all and continued sharing them with my teachers throughout the crises. I shared details about activities with NEASC (New England Association for schools and colleges), CIS (Council of international schools), IBO, Microsoft and other organizations that were offering trainings, and organizing webinars to discuss specific subjects or only to share best practices. I shared the links to the meetings/ trainings with my teachers in my communication. Many attended, and some even started getting involved and leading some online workshops and webinars.

Warranting Students' Engagement

The last dimension of instructional supervision described in the Sergiovnni and Starrat's (2007) framework is student engagement. Warranting students' engagement is one of the functions that an instructional leader should explore to contribute more effectively to students' academic success. Students' engagement is defined in the framework as the students' commitment and participation in the learning process (p. 9).

Through the different crises, my role as an instructional leader leading the learning required that I warrant students' engagement in whatever modality was used for teaching. In this section, I will be explaining how I warranted student's engagement in the teaching and learning process by 1) engaging students' in relevant activities online and on campus 2) empowering students and allowing them to take part in school life in whatever modality we used and 3) ensuring all students are engaged in all aspects of the teaching and learning process.

Engaging Students' in Relevant Activities. One of the supervisory activities I took to ensure students' engagement during the different crises was making sure students were engaged in relevant activities. This was done in a number of ways. It was

done by involving them in the use of technology; running pastoral sessions that tackled issues students were concerned with and could relate to such as "anxiety" in a virtual world; engaging them in "service" activities they could relate to during the financial crisis; inviting them to assemblies and orientation sessions on campus or online to share information or celebrate success.

Early on during COVID-19 and when the classes shifted to online modality students were invited to engage in solving technical issues in the virtual classes. This was the time when we had just shifted our classes to Teams and everyone was exploring the platform. Students were more tech savvy than their teachers and quickly developed a solid understanding of the platform and what it offers. One of our IT staff created a students' IT help desk and trained students on how to handle specific technical issues during class. A number of students signed up and started their own virtual support team. I celebrated this initiative in one of my communications announcing that "the Students' IT help desk is already getting trained! Soon they will be supporting others and even us in our virtual classes!" (Principal Notes, 4/5/20). Students in the team felt good about themselves. They were more engaged in the classes as they were tasked with following up and helping the teacher if s/he faces technical issues.

During COVID-19, Pastoral sessions were organized for grades 6-9 students in their virtual Teams. I organized the sessions with the students support team and together we chose topics that were of interest to the students. I shared the topic of these sessions with my staff: "Pastoral this week: Grade 6: Study skills by our learning diversity teacher and grade 6 homeroom teachers, Grade 7: Study skills by our academic advisor ang grade 7 homeroom teachers , Grade 8: Study skills by our counselor and grade 8

homeroom teachers, Grade 9: Study skills by our university counselor and grade 9

homeroom teachers" (Principal Notes, 4/10/20).

We ran assemblies online when unable to do so in the physical school. I called

for assemblies where I celebrated students' success by sharing certificates of

achievement or certificates of attendance. These took the form of team events where

hundreds of students and teachers joined from their computers and listened to

presentations, songs, celebrations, and speeches. I made sure to share the purpose and

the agenda of each assembly with the teachers for example the "excellence awards,"

> Friday's assembly was celebratory! It was meant to create positive vibes and to
> motivate the students who are dwelling on the edge of apathy, unfortunately. As
> discussed in our staff meeting, our executive assistant has shared the subject
> certificates with the grade level teachers. You can distribute these in your
> classes or during pastoral. I will do my best to attend these celebrations. Let me
> know when you are having them. Thank you for the beautiful work done to
> produce those 240 certificates as well as the 17 Principal Awards in the MYP,
> and the 19 Excellence awards in the secondary school (Principal Notes, 2/3/21).

We also called for some activities on campus whenever possible even during

COVID-19 when teaching was done online. Grade 12 students were invited to take

graduation pictures and celebrate the end of their school's careers. I invited their

teachers too. Students wanted to connect with those teachers in a real world. They

wanted to feel that they are real people capable of being warm and caring and not only

facilitators of knowledge focused on sharing information: All grade 12 students will be

on campus on Thursday 19 May from 9:00am. Grade 12 teachers are welcome to visit

and greet the students if they wish to. Please let us know if you are coming so that we

keep track of the numbers." (Principal notes, 16/5/21).

During the academic year 2020-21, grade 6 students were probably the most

disadvantaged in the virtual world. They spent half of grade 5 in lockdown attending

virtual classes and joined grade 6 on a new "virtual campus" with a new curriculum without any background of what to expect except for a virtual orientation they had with me and the team in June of 2020. I knew that grade 6 students needed to come to the physical campus to meet their teachers and to get a feel of the place they are going to call school. Knowing that these students were struggling emotionally, we invited them to a picnic in the school's garden and the teachers joined them. I followed the event with this message: "A big thank you to all the grade 6 teachers who joined us yesterday for the picnic. The kids had a blast!" (Brief on Teams- 4/6/21).

During the financial crisis, I supported the students who were engaged in service activities to help the community. They actively collected money and supported the less privileged. The initiatives were created and organized by the students and supervised by their teachers. The service projects were always created in the classes between students and teachers. I had the task of facilitating the initiative, organizing the work and communicating with the community. There was plenty to celebrate here too:

> Thank you Arabic teacher and Arabic B students in grade 12 for the lovely service activity done last week. I had goosebumps looking at the pictures and hearing you talk about this. We are so proud of you and the work you are doing with the students. Service is the essence of the IB programme and we want to instill this value in our students. Well done! (Brief on Teams- 25/10/21).

Empowering Students and Encouraging them to Take Part in School Life.

Another supervisory activity I took part in to ensure students' engagement during the different crises was empowering students and encouraging them to take part in school life. This was done in a number of ways .It included creating a whole student team on our platform during the lockdown due to the pandemic where I shared information and discussed ideas with students. It also included electing active student councils no matter what modality we were using and allowing the council to get involved in school's life

by organizing events and fun activities, running assemblies, making recommendations to the school's leadership regarding food sold in the cafeteria, or collecting data from the students' body regarding the load of homework. It was also done by inviting the students to take part in major events that the school took part in such as in the IB MYP evaluation visit.

Through the different crises, I made sure to plan and organize for the students to elect an active student council with a president, a vice president and a representative from every grade level. The whole school was involved in the student council elections that took place in phases. First class representatives were elected in their class, then a president and a vice president were elected by the whole student body. The president would give a speech to the whole school after winning, then call the council for a meeting and run regular meetings with them from then on.   During COVID-19, the elections happened online and I shared the plan in my communication:

> At the beginning of the pastoral session we will run the elections of the class representatives for grades 6-10. A teacher will share the form to be filled and the procedure. Grade 11 students will vote on Thursday during their CAS session. The voting time for grade 12 is still not confirmed (Principal Notes, 4/10/20).

The student council members were invited to take part in virtual assemblies that took part in the form of Teams events. They were invited to speak to their colleagues and to share news, information, recommendations, or bring in a guest speaker to address their colleagues: Wednesday October 21st: Whole school assembly at 11:55 AM. The president of the student council will give a speech to the students' community. We will also have a short speech from two of our former presidents (alumni members) (Principal Notes, 8/10/20).

During the financial crisis, as we were mostly on campus, the student council president and vice president were elected using secret ballot. The experience was very interesting to the young students who had the chance to cast their votes in boxes and wait patiently for the announcement of the winners. It was a cheerful event and the students enjoyed feeling responsible and empowered. When the president and vice-president elections happened on campus, the class representatives elected in classes helped with the logistics:

> Plan for elections: 1st lunch break: Three tables for grades 6,7, and 8 with 3 staff members in charge. Our class representatives will also be helping out. 2nd break: Three tables for grades 9,10,11 and 12 (together) with 3 staff members in charge. Our Class representatives will also be helping out. Students will vote by secret ballot , the teacher in charge will check the name of the student off the list and ask them to ink their right thumb to prevent fraud. All of you are welcome to help out (Brief on Teams, 11/10/21).

The student council took part in the school's life and organized events and activities for their colleagues. They planned a very cheerful Halloween party, monthly dress down days, and secret Santa events. They collected money for the cleaning staff and served them breakfast before Christmas break. They organized bake sales and collected money for charities. I worked with the team on facilitating these activities, communicating the plans to the staff and the parents and providing the students with the venue and the resources needed.

Moreover, during COVID-19, and as the school had to go through the IB MYP evaluation visit, students were invited to take part in the meetings with the visiting team. Their input was focused and valuable. I chose a number of our well-spoken good communicators from different grade levels to take part in this event. The MYP coordinator and I met with them and we discussed the expectations for the visit. They were in the meeting alone with the visiting team and they answered questions pertaining

to their role in the teaching and learning process and in the school's life in general. Their contributions were celebrated: "We also wanted to thank all the students (in different grade levels) who contributed to the preparation for the MYP visit and met with the visiting team: They made us all proud!" (Letter to parents- 18/12/20).

Engaging Students in the Teaching and Learning Process. One more supervisory activity I took part in to ensure students' engagement during the different crises was engaging students in the teaching and learning process. This was done in a number of ways: using a new indicator for "engagement" when reporting to parents, allowing students who are away or quarantined to attend classes online on Teams and making sure they do the work assigned by the teachers.

During COVID-19 and as we had to teach online, I worked with the team on sharing an evaluation of the students' engagement in classes. We added an indicator called "students' engagement" onto our reports for teachers' to share their appreciation of the students' participation in class activities as meeting, exceeding or not meeting expectations.
I also made sure that teachers share specific feedback about the students' work and attitude in their class in the reports.

During the financial crisis, and as we were still living through a pandemic, some of our students had to quarantine because they either tested positive or they were in contact with a positive case. I asked teachers to check on them and to make sure they support them to do the academic work required as they spend their school days at home. Whenever one or more students had to quarantine, I reminded teachers in my communication that they should engage the students staying home in the teaching and learning process either by allowing them to attend classes on Teams or by sending them

asynchronous tasks and meeting with them one on one for further feedback or

explanation. The plan was shared with the parents and the students as well. To the

teachers I said:

> Two of our grade 6 students tested positive and are quarantining. Please post any work done on Teams/Managebac and check on them as per the email communication. Do not forget to check on the students who were asked to quarantine because of contact with a positive case (Brief on Teams, 8/11/21).

Structural and Social Support

While a school leader must be involved in leading the learning she still has to

provide the structural and the social support to teachers. Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007)

explain how the supervisory leadership and general leadership are both important

leadership functions that when done well together can help schools contribute

effectively to student learning. And while the supervisory functions impact directly

student academic achievement, the social and structural support made available to

teachers provide the proper structure and environment where teachers can expand their

capacity to develop and to teach more effectively (Sergiovanni and Starrat).

Throughout the three different crises: Thawra, the COVID-19 pandemic and the

financial crisis, in my role as a school principal and to be able to lead the learning, I also

had to attend to providing the proper social and structural support to set the proper

teaching atmosphere for the teachers. In this section I will explain how as a school

principal I provided my teachers with the needed structural support and will focus on 1)

changing the timetable structure, 2) restructuring the hierarchy to provide decision

making authority, and 3) procuring external assistance. With respect to Social support I

will report on ensuring the parents' engagement and getting their buy-in in specific

areas.

Structural Support. Providing structural support to teachers is a requirement of the general school leadership concerned with providing the quality of the instructional setting in terms of school/ class size, teaching time, a decentralized decision-making structure, and access to external assistance (Sergiovanni and Starrat, 2007). In my role of leader in crisis situation, I had to provide alongside the instructional supervision functions needed to lead the learning, the structural support that creates the proper teaching environment for teachers in all teaching modalities. This support included introducing continuous changes to the timetable, a change in the roles of some teachers and staff members, and the promotion of some staff members to leadership positions as well as providing access to external resources at times.

Timetable Structure. Throughout the different crises, I also tried to provide the teachers with the structural support they needed to teach as comfortably as possible. This included creating timetables that accommodate for the needs of teachers especially when the teaching moved to the virtual world. Running classes online needed to take into consideration the fact that everyone is at home behind a screen for long hours. The original eight hours day with two breaks created for a physical world did not make sense nor did it serve the purpose. By noon students and teachers were drained and physically struggling to remain seated. The timetable had to change. The first change happened two weeks after lockdown was imposed during the COVID-19 crisis. On the 15th of March, 2020, I informed the teachers in my weekly notes of these changes and acknowledged the efforts of the academic team especially the MYP coordinator who worked on a new timetable to accommodate some requests from parents and staff hoping to alleviate the pressure on the younger ones and to focus the learning in the virtual school. Timetables for the different programmes had to be adjusted and the needs of every subject had to be respected in the virtual classes (Principal-Notes, 15/3/20). Since then the timetable had to be changed again to reduce the number of periods allocated for Arts and PHE then to give more teaching time to Math and science as the academic team realized they would not be able to finish the curricula within the time frame provided. We were able to get back to the regular allocation of periods and the eight hours day in September 21-22 when school started again in a physical environment during the financial crisis.

Restructuring the Hierarchy. Providing structural support also required we relook at our hierarchy of authority and our human resources distributions. As a school

leader I needed to make sure that the school management is decentralized and that the

academic leaders had decision making authority in their respective areas. This meant

that some teachers had to be promoted to leadership positions during the financial crisis

especially when we lost a very large number of teachers and staff. These decisions were

documented and communicated in my communication to teachers and staff where I

wrote:

> The academic advisor was promoted to the position of MYP coordinator, our executive assistant became the new academic advisor, and teachers from different departments were promoted to the role of department subject leader in Science, Arabic, English, Math, Foreign languages and digital design (Principal Notes, 9/9/21).

The new MYP coordinator was now in charge of the curriculum and had to

supervise around 30 teachers. The new academic advisor was in charge of the reporting

and follow-up and was in close ongoing contact with the parents. Both staff members

were given more responsibilities within the new structure so that they can support the

new team better.   At times we had to even recruit new staff to support the current

management such as in the case of our new supervisor recruited in October 2021 to

handle the behavior issues that became more pertinent and aggressive in the physical

world.

Procuring External Assistance. The school's support staff did not have a

teaching role during the crises. They were there to support the teaching and learning

process. These people had specific jobs with the students such as the learning diversity

teacher, the counselor and the nurse or with the teachers such as the IT support staff.

The academic advisor had the dual role of supporting both students and teachers. The

role of all support staff was developed during the crises as I had to make sure they were

able to support the teachers in whatever modality they were using. As a school, we did

not seek any external support during the crises, but we sure needed additional support from our existing available human resources.   As a school leader leading the learning in a crisis situation, I had to make sure that support staff members were able to provide the teaches with the support needed to do a good job in class. This was imperative when we created the VL team during the online measures induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, and entrusted them with supporting the staff in the virtual world.

The student support team made of the counselor, the academic advisor, the nurse and the learning diversity teacher was tasked with following up on the students' wellbeing, health and safety as well as on their academic performance. The librarian was required to support the teachers by providing them with the resources needed to teach in a virtual world during COVID-19 and in person during the financial crisis when we had to cut down on the number of print and digital resources we had because of budgeting issues. The help that the support team provided made teaching easier through all the challenges that we faced during all the crises.

Social Support. As a school leader, I have always believed in the importance of the parent-school partnership and worked on developing it. During the crises, it was particularly important to enlist the parents buy-in and to get their support to ensure the students' commitment and engagement in the teaching and learning process. As a school principal, I wanted to provide the teachers with all the social support they needed during the crises and that was focused on safeguarding the parental support to the decisions and actions taken by the teachers and the school administration. Through the three crises I was able to bring the parents on board through 1) frequent, consistent and timely written communication, 2) frequent meetings, 3) a venue to share their feedback and feel heard as well as an insight into the school's performance by sharing data from

surveys and reports. This communication shared, the meetings, and the surveys were geared at engaging the parents and were paving the way for the instructional leader to partner with those parents on enhancing the students' engagement as this partnership was the only way we can enforce our decisions at home. Parents were home with their children during the pandemic and the lockdown and they needed to make sure they are up on time for the online classes, they were focused on the lesson and did not waste time playing games online or chatting on their phones and they committed to the school time and the work requested

Consistent Communication. One of the activities I was committed to as a school leader during the different crises was maintaining communication with all stakeholders. Everyone was anxious and needed to know about what was happening at school, why and how. I made communication with the parents a weekly task where I shared information/news from the academic team, the student support team, the IT team as well as calendar updates and structural changes. The communication changed to fit the crisis so during Thawra I shared information on the teaching modality to be used, during COVID-19 lockdown I shared information and tips on virtual learning expectations, and during the financial crisis while we were teaching on campus, I had to share protection against COVID-19 instructions as we were still living through a pandemic. From March 2020, till the end of the academic year 2019-20, I sent 17 letters to parents; during the academic year 2020-21 I sent out 37 weekly parents' letters while during the first semester of the academic year 2021-22, during the financial crisis, I sent out 16 letters to parents. I also shared updated school policies and procedures that were tweaked to fit the different school modalities such as the new homework policy, the digital behavior expectations and the new promotion conditions that we adopted in the

virtual world. The weekly communication included information about support classes, school events, assemblies and other activities. In my communication, I celebrated the small successes of students and staff. Through the different crises, and since Thawra started, I always shared a personal message, something to remind the parents that I am human, I feel with them and I share their concerns, such as in this message shared at the beginning of Thawra:

The past days have been really challenging for us as a school and, I am sure, for you as parents. Everyone in the country has experienced this emotional roller coaster where at one point you feel so proud and invigorated by the sudden surge of patriotism; then you feel so anxious about what will happen later especially as we have the responsibility of educating the youth and preparing students for universities and external exams. We have no way to find out when this will end or when we will have regular classes. The school is working on different plans to ensure our students are not disadvantaged and that they do fulfill the learning outcomes of their grade level. Based on this please note the following calendar updates , PTCs (Parents- Teachers conferences) , Saturday support classes for grades 9 and 12 , contingency plan for grades 9 Brevet, and 12 IB/LB: (on campus); grade 6-10 and 11: VL (instructions sent to parents on follow up including video about using Teams: Using Teams- Video. (Letter to Parents- 12/11/20).

Parents Meetings. Despite all my frequent, timely and consistent communication, it was predominantly done via email and lacked the warmth that I usually like to promote in my relations with the community members. To give a human touch to the interactions with parents I insisted on us (as a school) meeting them face to

face, which they definitely appreciated a lot. Meeting in person was not always possible so we went for zoom or Teams meetings especially during the COVID-19 crisis. Through the three crises we made sure to have parents-teachers conferences (PTCs) at least once a year. During Thawra, we had to postpone the conferences till December waiting for the political situation to settle before bringing in the parents to the campus. During COVID-19 we could not go to the physical campus and had to have the conferences online. It was very challenging to organize conferences for 300 parents each with 10-12 teachers over two days, but the support staff did a brilliant job and used the technology and a specific software to handle this. On top of the PTCs, we had one on one meetings with the parents of students at risk of failing in one or more subjects where myself, and the academic team discussed with each parent the performance of their child and our support plan.

During all the crises and throughout the various school modalities, I also ensured that parents are invited to orientation meetings where they learned in person or virtually about the school's programmes, the academic and the behavior expectations, COVID-19 guidelines, Virtual Learning instructions and other important information that impacted their children and their learning. We even had virtual coffee mornings and afternoon teas and as usual I always sent out communication regarding the plans:

> Two coffee mornings are planned for Tuesday November 17: Coffee morning with the students' support team (by invitation): 10:30- 11:30, Coffee morning for Grade 6 parents (open invitation): 12:00- 1:00, Both events will happen in a Teams meeting and not a webinar form to allow for parents to interact with the presenters (Principal Notes, 15/11/20).

Soliciting and Sharing Feedback. Through the three crises, and as a school leader, I insisted on collecting feedback from different stakeholders (parents, teachers and students) through surveys and analyzing this feedback looking for patterns and

common concerns and opportunities to improve the teaching and learning process. Through the three crises I surveyed parents to get their feedback on specific issues such as the hybrid model, returning to the physical campus, academic support in the virtual world. The most informative survey was the "End of Year- Parents satisfaction survey" that provided us with a numerical rating of the different activities done in our school in whatever modality we were following. I always shared the results of the data analysis from these surveys with the parents. I also shared with them the analysis of the grades in different subjects and different grade levels at the end of every grading period. I shared information regarding attendance percentages, the number of students at risk, frequency of behavior incidents, as well as the IB feedback after our five years virtual evaluation visit. Parents appreciated this approach and always had a good rating and very warm refreshing comments to include in the satisfaction survey (Appendix K- Excerpt infographic- Parents Satisfaction Survey, 19-20).

The Principal Supervisory Approach During Crisis

As I led my small private IB school through the three different crises, Thawra, COVID-19 and the financial crisis, I focused on the instructional supervision functions of building the teachers' capacity, ensuring instructional quality and warranting students' engagement in all modalities of teaching. I also made sure to provide structural and social support as another layer of provision to guarantee the continuity of learning in all classes. This required that I take decisions continuously through the crises. The goal was always to achieve the learning goals for students and teachers but the approach to decision making varied. The approach used to tackle each of the dimensions or pathways of the instructional supervision framework, will be analyzed in this section using the framework of the supervisory belief inventory (SBI) of Glickman

et.al. (2018) that categorizes supervisory approaches into: Directive, informational directive, collaborative or non-directive.

By definition, a directive approach, where the authority of the principal is enforced merely because of hierarchy, is linked to instances where teachers do not have the knowledge needed to attempt a task. This same directive approach becomes more informational when the supervisor is the major source of information and provides the teachers with restricted choices. The approach is collaborative when teachers have some expertise in the topic and they are involved with the principal in the decision-making process, especially in a situation where everyone is trying to find a viable solution to a pertinent problem. The non-directive approach is used when the teachers have all the expertise needed and they take the responsibility to solve the problem (Glickman et al. 2018).

The data collected from my communication with different stakeholders: parents and teachers through the three different crises was analyzed again through Glickman et al.'s SBI lens. In each entry the decision-making approach was categorized as directive, collaborative or non-directive.

The below table indicates the frequency of each approach in every supervisory dimension attempted under the Sergiovanni and Starrat's framework (2007).

Table 2

Supervisory Functions Decisions: Glickman et al. (2018)

Supervisory Function vs. Supervisory belief Inventory	Collaborative	Directive	Informational Directive	Non-Directive
Building Capacity	38	28	24	7
Instructional Quality	17	12	10	3

Student Engagement	19	7	8	2
Total number	74	47	40	12

Looking at the entries from this same lens per crisis does not show any specific pattern but what is obvious is that the approach is more directive at the start of any crisis and becomes more collaborative progressively. Through the three crises, the least used approach was the non-directive one.

In the coming section, for every supervisory approach: building capacity, instructional quality and student engagement, I will be analyzing the decision-making process through Glickman et al.'s SBI and identifying the specific functions where decision making was directive, informational directive, collaborative or non-directive.

Approach to Building Capacity

As an instructional leader through the three different crises, and in all school modalities, I worked on building teachers' capacity developing their knowledge, skills and disposition towards different aspects of the teaching and learning process, developing a professional reflective community with a shared purpose and providing them with the materials and equipment needed to support teaching and learning. Looking at the communication collected under this specific supervisory function, it was clear that the decision-making approach was mostly a mixture of directive and informational directive when requesting specific tasks/information from teachers; it was collaborative when we had to work together on designing new procedures and plans and was non-directive in few cases where teachers were asked to join in some events, activities or invited to read some literature, attend conferences or watch webinars.

While building capacity, the decision-making process was directive when I requested from the teachers that they follow a specific timetable or commit to a new schedule or record synchronous class sessions online. It was informational directive when I asked they abide by some structural procedures such as: taking attendance on Managebac, implementing the school's behavior expectations, writing report card comments in a specific format, and abiding by the COVID-19 instructions when on campus during the COVID-19 and the financial crises. I was also directive when I mandated the attendance of specific sessions during orientations and I requested teachers' attendance in departmental or grade level meetings. The approach was informational directive when I imposed a teacher performance review plan to be implemented in order to collect more information about the teachers' performance in various modalities.

The approach was more collaborative when I called on the teachers to share their feedback and to take part in discussions targeting policy reviews, procedure updates, support plans, and calendar updates. It was also collaborative when I worked with the teachers on planning for a new modality, an examination plan and even a new academic year. When using this approach discussions happened in virtual or in-person meetings, or feedback was collected from teachers and staff through surveys. Very seldom was the decision-making following a non-directive approach when building capacity.

Instructional Quality

In my leadership role through the different crises, on top of building capacity, I also worked on ensuring instructional quality. This was done by creating procedures to ensure learning is happening in a virtual modality, setting high academic expectations for students, promoting students based on set conditions, collecting analyzing and

publishing data, celebrating successes and promoting opportunities for learning and development. Looking at the principal notes and the briefs shared on Teams through the different crises, the decision-making process was a mixture of directive, informational directive and collaborative approaches. From the sample collected over the last two years and two months through Thawra, COVID-19 and the financial crisis, the frequency at which I was directive and informational directive in my approach, was almost the same as the frequency at which I was collaborative in my approach. While ensuring instructional quality, my approach was informational directive when I mandated setting high expectations for the students. I demanded that teachers set high expectations when it comes to the academics but also in relation to work ethics, students' attendance and their engagement in the class especially the virtual one. I was also directive when asking the teachers to be consistent in enforcing the school rules and expectations of attendance, homework and quality of work presented. This was equally important and similarly directive in all modalities. Teachers were "kindly requested" to make sure students followed the virtual and the "in-person" school rules. My approach was informational directive when imposing an assessment structure and timeline, requesting evidence of learning and setting new indicators to evaluate students' performance (attendance, commitment) in the virtual school during COVID-19. Meeting times, dates of assemblies to share awards, dates set to share academic notices with parents, due dates for collection of data/grades were all set and shared in a directive way.

The approach was collaborative when I invited teachers to discuss and decide on our priorities as a school. I was equally collaborative in my approach when I asked teachers to meet and discuss analysis of data, promotion conditions and promotion

decisions pertaining to every student in any modality at the end of every semester. I also

needed to assume a collaborative approach when I asked teachers to work with me and

the leadership team on evaluating the work done in virtual classes during COVID-19 to

assess students' performance and identify teaching gaps. Their feedback was also

solicited when I needed to take a decision on the changes to be done to our teaching and

learning model based on our experiences to suit the environment or the modality.

Very seldom was the decision-making approach non-directive when ensuring quality. It

only happened when I asked the teachers, like when building capacity, to read

articles/research and to attend conferences/ webinars. These were the only times they

were given an option.

Students' Engagement

To ensure continuity and while leading the learning during the three crises in the

context of this paper, I also worked on warranting students' engagement by engaging

them in relevant activities online and on campus, empowering them to take part in

school life in whatever modality we used and ensuring they are engaged in all aspects of

the teaching and learning process. My approach throughout the crises and in all

modalities was almost equally collaborative as directive and informational directive

with a tad bit more of a collaborative approach. The communication shared during the

three crises showed this almost equal mix.

To warrant students' engagement, there were instances during this period of time, where

I had to impose decisions and be very directive when setting schedules, contingency

plans, dates of events, guidelines for using the virtual platform during COVID-19, and

instructions for a COVID-19 safe campus during the financial crisis. I also had to be

directive when I shared a decision about the modality to be used in case of political

unrest during Thawra and the financial crisis basically to ensure that learning never stops, and all students have the means to attend school. Procedures were shared in an informational directive manner: taking attendance, supporting quarantined students during the financial crisis (those who tested positive for COVID-19) and imposing on the teachers the documentation of details/ incidents/ data on the school's platform.

Equally, I had to collaborate with the teachers to guarantee that relationships were built in classes and that activities relevant to the students run properly such as the pastoral sessions that were planned during COVID-19 in our virtual school. I worked together with the teachers to set a class structure that engages the students during synchronous classes on Teams and to collect and share feedback on students' performance in class in all modalities and through all crises.

Very seldom was the decision-making approach non-directive when warranting students' engagement. It only happened when I asked the teachers, like with the other dimensions, to read articles/research and to attend conferences/ webinars.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study follows a narrative inquiry research design using qualitative methods. Data was collected from the communications written by the principal to identify the different supervisory functions implemented during the compounded crisis that hit Lebanon between October 2019 and December 2021 (the duration of the study) to ensure the efficiency of the teaching and the continuation of learning. The purpose of the study was to examine the role of the school principal as an instructional supervisor and how the supervisory functions changed during the time of crisis. This chapter discusses the results of the study, and concludes with suggested recommendations. The first section discusses the supervisory functions and approach implemented by the school principal during the time of the compounded crisis and how they were adapted to the crisis situation. The second section includes the conclusion of the researcher as well as recommendations for practice and for further research.

Discussion of the Results

The supervisory functions implemented by the school principal during the period of compounded crisis were analyzed using Sergiovanni and Starrat's (2007) instructional supervision framework and were reported under the dimensions of building teachers' capacity, ensuring instructional quality and warranting students' engagement as well as providing structural and social support. The supervisory approach was also reported using the lens of Glickman et al.'s (2018) supervisory belief inventory. The discussion will examine the actions of the principal intended at leading

the learning in a time of crisis through these frameworks while comparing them to what is reported in the literature on leading effectively in a time of crisis.

The Supervisory Functions Taken by the Principal During the Crisis

The results of the study demonstrate that despite the demands of the compounded and consecutive crises stretching from Thawra in October 2019 through the pandemic and the financial crisis that is still ongoing, the decisions and actions that I took as a school principal revolved around leading the learning while manifesting most of the instructional supervisory functions as conceptualized in Sergiovanni's framework. The latter included: (1) building teachers' capacity in the different school modalities by developing teachers' knowledge, skills and disposition to technology, IB teaching strategies, classroom management and students' assessments; (2) maintaining instructional quality over the period of the crisis by developing instructional procedures for learning in a virtual modality based on high academic expectations for students, celebrating successes and promoting opportunities for learning and development and constantly monitoring the progress of learning through collecting numerical data (from surveys, test results,..) and analyzing and publishing this data; (3) ensuring students' engagement and their commitment to the learning process in the different modalities of teaching that were used during this period of time; (4) intentionally organizing the human and other resources while providing structural and social support to the teachers to enhance learning within the school. The manner in which each of the supervisory functions was implemented was responsive to and shaped by the demands of the crisis, with the goal of ensuring that these demands don't become obstacles that compromise the teaching and learning process.

In fact, the results of the study revealed that during the prolonged crises mode, the activities aimed at building teachers' capacity were closely linked to the emerging needs of the teachers and contingent on the curriculum changes and the teaching modalities adopted by the school. In response to the uncertainty of the evolving crises conditions, I constantly assessed the teachers' needs triggered by each crisis and decided accordingly on an action plan. The decision to develop the teachers' knowledge, skills and disposition toward technology resulted from the need to suddenly adopt the on-line teaching modality when the school shifted partially during Thawra and completely during COVID-19 to a virtual mode. Under these circumstances, the focus of the capacity building supervisory function became to provide the teachers, mostly with limited readiness to shift to this model, with training on the use of technology and the new teaching platform and with the support needed to develop this knowledge and to run the virtual classes. Given that the use of technology was the only way to keep the learning going, teachers were eager to receive the training offered and more intentional on seeking to learn what was needed to run their virtual classes. I built on this momentum and provided the nurturing, positive, and empowering environment that will allow the teachers to learn and develop these skills.

Moreover, the need to learn these skills was more pertinent for new teachers who joined the school while in its virtual model. As a result, I organized orientation and training sessions delivered online on different topics in response to these needs. Among these training sessions were those addressing classroom management in the virtual world, an environment where students were much more familiar with the technology than their teachers. These training sessions included familiarizing the teachers with

implementing a digital behavior expectation document in the virtual world enforcing a "zero tolerance" approach to wasting valuable teaching and learning time.

The focus on training teachers on classroom management remained a priority among the teachers even after students went back to the physical campus. The prolonged lockdown period impacted the students' social skills. Teachers were struggling and I had to step-in and help build teachers' capacity in managing classes through more training and more support. The challenges were mitigated taking into consideration the wellbeing of the students, that of the teachers and the fluidity of the current situation.

Building capacity during this period also meant helping the teachers develop the knowledge and skills needed to write authentic assessments to be implemented online. Assessing authentically online was an issue that teachers struggled with. As a school, the decision to build capacity on on-line assessment reflected a wide agreement among teachers to be serious about the centrality of ensuring that assessments are authentic across the school. It also demonstrated the commitment of the principal to building a professional community that supports high quality teaching and learning and where "teachers are thinking, planning and working together in ways that enhance their abilities and performance" (Sergiovanni, Starratt 2007, p. 7). In my role as instructional supervisor, I worked on developing this type of community, with a shared purpose, that is positive, supportive, reflective and caring and whose members are involved in the decision-making process. In response to the prolonged crises, teachers were invited to contribute to planning activities, reflecting on the learnings that happened in the past, and promoting a positive and caring climate. Teachers' participation in the professional community was facilitated through forming a crisis-management team and building

strong relations with the team members. As mentioned in the literature, this team building enhanced the ability of the principal to respond to the consecutive crises while keeping the focus on leading learning (Georges, 2009; James and Wooten, 2009; Menon, 2021; Mutch, 2015).

Finally, building capacity during the crises included providing the teachers with the technical resources needed to do their job effectively including the documents, policies, calendars, timetables, procedures, and other artifacts that were appropriate to the teaching modality implemented; as well as the software and the hardware that constituted the infrastructure needed to run classes in a virtual world. These actions are aligned with Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007)'s framework that considers the availability of the resources and the infrastructure provided by the school a prerequisite to building capacity. They were also a crucial response to the fact that leading the school in such a crisis requires specific infrastructure that most schools did not have (Abu-Moghli and Shuayb, 2020; Rahhal, 2020).

Finally, I engaged myself in organizing structural and social support to help the teachers perform well no matter what the teaching modality is. This included monitoring closely instructional quality by means of a close follow-up on students' attendance and engagement in virtual and physical classes while sustaining high academic expectations. To ensure a climate of excellence and transparency I developed a practice of collecting data through surveys or reflection meetings, analyzing them and publishing the results. This practice was also used with the students' community as I tried to warrant their engagement by creating opportunities for students to participate in the school's life whether in the physical or the virtual campus and by seeking their feedback on the different modalities and services provided by the school.

The supervisor's approach to decision making during the period under crisis

The data collected for the purpose of this study from the communications of the principal on the decision-making approach during the period of crisis was analyzed by examining every decision through Glickman et al.'s (2018) supervisory belief inventory and identifying whether it is directive, informational directive, collaborative, or non-directive. The fluid environment of uncertainty that reigned during this period imposed the need for flexibility. It implied that as an instructional leader I needed to make decisions all the time: I had to decide about teaching modalities, dates and deadlines, calendars and timetables, meetings and conferences, promotion and make-ups. Data analysis using Glickman et al.'s (2018) lens, showed that I have mostly been either directive or informational directive in my supervisory approach throughout the period of crisis. As we were all operating under a lot of uncertainty, and where most teachers had limited knowledge and skills in critical domains needed to respond to the crises, my approach did not grant teachers a lot of autonomy and while encouraging teachers to engage in learning, my decision making was seldom collaborative. It was much more informational directive given the amount of information that I shared with the teachers before I imposed a decision, sometimes leaving teachers with some margin for choice. I made sure to make it clear to all teachers that they had some limited autonomy in their classes with respect to the teaching modality used and the type of activities implemented. I also insisted that it is ok to try, even if this meant making mistakes as long as the learning continues. |George (2009) pointed out that in a time of crisis decision making in such circumstances shows a lot of improvisation. Research shows that in a time of crisis, successful leaders try to engage the community in the decision making process (Menon, 2020) while emphasizing the importance of making quick

decisions (Brion, 2021, Willermark et al.,2021). While leading during the crisis, I had

to take prompt decisions as the landscape changed unexpectedly, so despite my belief in

the importance of involving members of the school community through a collaborative

decision-making approach, my decision-making shifted towards a directive approach.

My intensive communications were my attempt to explain these decisions and

disseminate my rationale to the diverse members of the school community, namely

teachers, parents and students.

Leading learning throughout the crises

Schools in general are complex environments and principals as school leaders

must juggle a number of functions and cater for the needs of all stakeholders by

providing leadership and direction to all at all times. The literature established that the

role of a school principal is fundamental in leading the learning, a role considered

crucial in positively impacting the performance of the students (Patten & Jantzi, 2010;

Heck & Hallinger, 2013). During the extended period of the compounded crisis in

Lebanon, principals were faced with high levels of uncertainty while experiencing

unprecedented challenges. The key challenge was to figure out how to keep the learning

going with diminishing support and without prior preparation among teachers to

respond to the emerging demands of these crises.

The data collected shows that under the new constantly evolving learning

landscape and the unfamiliar teaching modalities, my role as the school principal, was

to adapt the key instructional supervisory functions to the changing context. In fact,

under the crises, leading learning changed in terms of its focus, my contribution as a

school principal, and the expectations from my team to respond to the demands of the

situation. I believe that I managed to navigate these changes while responding to the

challenges that the school faced during the crises because of the skeptical inquisitive problem-solving approach that I adopted. Like other leaders did during the pandemic lockdown as per my literature review, I had to develop teachers' knowledge and skills in using technology to deal with the lockdown (Mahmoud and Shuayb, 2021; Mitesour et al., 2021; Toquero et al. 2021; Truzoli, 2021; Willemark, 2021; Wong, 2021). I had a successful experience given the infrastructure and the resources provided by the school.

Moreover, my position on leading learning assumes that the organization itself must have the capacity to change to fit the requirements of the current situation. A such, I considered the crisis as an opportunity for growth and development at the personal and at the school level. On a personal level, I developed to become a focused, flexible, adaptive, engaged, responsive, resilient, empathetic and compassionate leader, typical traits that the literature on successful leadership in a time of crisis pointed at (Ben-Aritima et al., 2021; Bishop, 2015; Brion, 2020; Kwatubana et al., 2021; Marshall et al. 2021, Menon, 2020; Mutch, 2015) . Changes in our normal practices were needed on a continuous basis. We had to review policies and procedures to fit the crisis mode and the teaching modality. Timetables changed frequently and plans had to be rewritten almost daily. Crisis management also included continuous regular communication, visibility and accessibility, support and empowerment, as well as engagement with the others, all of which were celebrated characteristics of leaders in a time of crisis in the existing literature (Bishop, 2015; Menon, 2021, and Mutch, 2015). I was compassionate, empathetic, and human. I could see that everyone was fighting their own battle, and I realized that I needed, as the school leader, to understand the challenges teachers are facing while simultaneously providing the support they need. I provided the technical, the social and the emotional support. I stressed the fact that "I do

not have all the answers" and many times I did not have any answers. I still had the capacity to engage human resources and to locate and share other kind of resources.

Another aspect of leading learning under crisis that the existing literature and the results of this study confirm is the importance of communication (Bishop, 2015; Mutch, 2015). I was in an ongoing state of "communication" with information shared on all platforms as frequently as possible: weekly letters to parents by email, weekly principal notes to staff and teachers by email and on our school's digital platforms and daily briefs to teachers were some of the communications done.

Seeking support was also essential. I requested teachers' support and feedback on a daily basis. I made sure that critical decisions were made in a process that includes all/most stakeholders as much as possible (Menon, 2020). Mutch (2015) shared the stories of school principals who during the 2011 hurricanes in Australia pushed for collaboration within the community as a way to navigate the crisis successfully. Collaboration and shared decision making were both highlighted as characteristics of successful leaders leading in a time of crisis. Though my supervisory approach was predominantly directive, I developed a leadership team with the skill set needed to manage crises, thus, enacting a form of participatory leadership as the literature suggested as best practice in a period of crisis, (Georges, 2009; James &Wooten, 2009). I empowered staff members and worked at promoting teachers to formal leadership positions to provide expert support to new and returning staff. What brought us together as a team was our focus to "keep the learning going."

Furthermore, I always tried to set a positive optimistic school culture despite all the challenges. As a leader this meant providing the safe space for teachers to share their concerns and their ideas and being a good attentive listener. This also meant

acknowledging their struggles, and protecting their wellbeing as explained in the literature (Kwatubana et al., 2021; Mutch, 2015; Trizoli et al., 2021). Teachers wanted to do a good job in serving their students. Together we made a collective sense of what is happening around us and took decisions accordingly.

Unlike what the literature showed (Mahfouz et al. 2020), instructional supervision did not take a back role during the period of crisis in my practice as a school leader during the period under study. As a leader, I intentionally mobilized the resources needed to support the teachers in their teaching in whatever modality they followed. And teachers actually rose to the occasion, everyone stepped up and took ownership of the process. Our efforts were even celebrated in one of the local newpapers (the Daily Star, April 3, 2020):

> While distant-learning is clearly presenting challenges across the board, the resources available to different schools and families suggest that some are coping better than others. Schools such as xxx seem to be absorbing the shocks of lockdown as well as can be expected, through transferring class schedules to live-video lessons. Yet others are slower off the mark, or simply unable to implement such measures, suggesting that school closures are likely widening disparities in Lebanese education and putting further distance between the haves and have-not.

I led the learning through this period of crisis as an instructional supervisor operating in a survival mode, communicating constantly giving voice to both students and teachers, and reflecting endlessly. Through it all I made sure to celebrate all the successes, those of the students', teachers' and the school trying to maintain a positive atmosphere based on high achievement and pushing gently yet firmly towards keeping the learning going.

As I write this discussion, schools in Lebanon continue to struggle with the aftermath of the different crises and the ongoing pandemic global emergency state. The academic gap continues to widen between students from different socio-economic

backgrounds. As a school we are privileged to have had the resources to make it through the crises and as a school principal this had a great role in helping me succeed in enacting my focus on leading the learning when others were not even able to provide the learning space.

Conclusion

During the period of compounded crisis that hit Lebanon over the past two years and two months, I have focused on leading the learning at school X, one of the leading IB private schools in Beirut, Lebanon. Through the three crises: Thawra, COVID-19 and the economic and financial crisis, schools struggled to keep the learning going. Different modalities were used and learning had to shift between the physical school, the virtual school and a hybrid school model. Schools found themselves in a state of emergency, teachers struggled to meet the expectations, students were confused. It was a period of uncertainty for everyone in the country, yet some privileged schools, like the case school of this study, those catering for the needs of students in the middle and upper socio-economic classes, had the resources needed to shift the learning between the different modalities seamlessly. I was determined to bringing the best of both worlds in order to accommodate the needs of students wherever they are and to keep the learning going.

Using narrative inquiry, I presented a narrative of this period from the perspective of the researcher who is fully immersed in the story. Throughout the narrative I told the story of how, over the period of this study, I managed, as a school principal, the impact of all these crises on school X and fought to keep the learning going for all the students. The data collected was produced in its natural setting at school X during the period of crisis. It consisted of my communications with the

different stakeholders during this period to reconstruct the reality of the happenings framed to answer the research question on the actions I took as an instructional supervisor, my supervisory approach during the period of study, and the supervisory functions I emphasized to overcome the challenges brought about by each crisis. In fact, I used the different types of documented communication during this period of time and I reflected on each of them guided by the framework of Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007). The decisions taken throughout the period under study by myself as the school principal are also analyzed using Glickman et al.'s supervisory belief inventory (2018).

Reconstructing the narrative helped me make sense of a very complex and draining period where I felt, as an educational leader, that I am firefighting rather than leading a school. Despite all the challenges though, the school was able to keep the disruption to the teaching and learning process to a minimum. Learning stopped only for two weeks during Thawra before we rolled out an emergency plan that included the option of a virtual model in November of 2019. It continued virtually without any interruption during COVID from March 2nd, 2020 till the end of the school year 2019-20 and throughout the academic year 2020-21. It resumed in person with 6 days of virtual learning so far during the ongoing academic year 2021-22.

During this period of time satisfaction surveys shared with parents, teachers and students showed a high satisfaction rate. The average satisfaction rate of parents over the last two academic years was of 3.95 out of 5; the satisfaction rate of teachers at the end of the academic year 2020-21 was of 4.08 out of 5 while that of students was of 3.31 out of 5. Over these two years, the school ensured a 100% success rate of all students doing the full IB diploma in grade 12. The overall students' average in the IB diploma increased to 30.48 (out of 45) in 2020 and 33.52 in 2021 when the world

average was almost constant at around 30. The personal project average (the culminating activity of the Middle Years Programme) increased to 4.9 out of 7 when the world average was 3.9. The data collected along with anecdotal evidence of feedback from parents, staff and students tells a success story for a school principal who managed against every odd to lead learning under crisis in school X in Lebanon during the period under study.

Interestingly, being an instructional leader, my role as a principal did not change much, and I continued leading the learning, yet with a newly acquired set of characteristics that helped me get the school through the crisis. Throughout the period of crisis, I managed to lead the learning through implementing instructional supervisory functions aimed at making sure to keep the teaching and learning effective in any school modality. However, as a school leader in a time of crisis, I had to be flexible, adaptable and agile while extremely focused on leading the learning. With the learning landscape that was changing continuously, I had to lead with the realistic understanding that decisions will change daily. I also had to be very resilient to maintain a positive atmosphere to support my teachers by constantly boosting their morale. Empathy allowed me to build strong relationships with the team: we were all living in the same conditions, and I could not ignore their struggles or their concerns. I had to listen, acknowledge, and support while reminding everyone of "why" we are all here and pushing to keep the learning going.

Moreover, I had to communicate more frequently, and I was in a continuous state of offering staff orientation and building teacher capacity. My communication frequency to all stakeholders increased many folds. My communication to parents and students became weekly, while my communication with teachers and staff happened at

least twice a day daily. In addition, I had to make sure that the teachers had the knowledge and the skills needed to do their job well in whatever modality we were using; and while we usually had a specific focused orientation and induction period of around two weeks in August of each academic year for new and returning staff, we had to run ongoing orientation sessions and capacity building throughout the year to fit the expectations of the modality and the specific demands of each crisis. It was intense! Training and coaching were incorporated into the daily running, and happened in every meeting and some were even done informally through my communications. Through it all I naturally acted like the instructional supervisor trained through the graduate courses of the AUB education department Educational Administration and Policy Studies programme. I never thought to go back to my books and notes except when I started writing the project. I still acted the role naturally without thinking much about the literature. The findings of this study have shown that, I have internalized the supervisory functions and instructional supervision that I have studied throughout the program has become part of my professional habits and routines.

As a school we were in a continuous state of communication and orientation while going through the crisis. The principal image that I was able to identify with during this period of time overlaps a great extent with that of the successful leader in a time of crisis who was focused yet flexible, engaged and responsive, empathetic and understanding and who was continuously communicating and collecting feedback while making quick decisions in the shifting landscape of an educational institution trying to keep the learning going through successive crises.

Looking back at all the actions I took during the period of crisis, I have to acknowledge the huge learning that I personally made. If we ever have to go through

this again (and while we are still going through a crisis) I will continue leading the learning in the same way, while strengthening the same set of characteristics that I developed and those that my team developed. However, I will probably decrease the frequency of internal communication and make it more focused. It might have been useful at the beginning, but there was a time when it became redundant and people stopped reading. It also drained me completely. While leading in a time of crisis, the leader needs to acknowledge their own humanity and not burn themselves during the journey. I should have been kinder to myself.

Reflecting back at the past period of time, and looking ahead knowing what challenges are facing schools now in terms of staff shortage and learning loss, I see all educators on a transformational path and I hope we can invest in all what was learned from the past few years to start an education reform that makes learning more authentic and meaningful to the new generation.

Recommendations

This study is written from the perspective of a practitioner. It provides contextualized information about leading in the complex multiple crisis situation that we lived (and are still living) through in Lebanon since October 17, 2019. It provides insights to school principals that have to lead through a time of crisis with a recommendation to focus on the learning and to fight to keep the system afloat through all the challenges especially when the resources are provided and the human capital is available.

The results of the study can also guide policy makers in terms of decision making during a time of crisis. It urges government officials and those who have the capacity to close and open schools in such dire times, to ensure the buy in of the

members of the school of the decision made through thorough and timely communication that not only include directives of what needs to be done but also provide ample information to explain the rationale for these decisions and their intended outcome. Moreover, such decisions should be built on data to take into consideration the specificity of the school and its resources remembering at every juncture that one size fits all solutions do not always work.

The study results also inform preparation programs in departments of education while designing learning experiences for student teachers and leaders and raise awareness at the importance of preparing those educators to operate and lead in crisis situations. This recommendation is most relevant in context of protracted crises such as Lebanon.

Finally, and since there is a shortage of studies in the field of educational leadership in a time of crisis (Al-Khalidi et al, 2021; Nitel Ben-Aretima et al., 2021), this study will hopefully be a small step towards filling this gap. The study is limited in scope as it is specific to the geographical location and to the type of crises that happened during the period under study. Further research is needed to expand on the learnings comparatively by taking examples of schools with different populations characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds locally and globally. More in-depth studies can explore the scope of instructional supervision in a time of crisis as compared to the resources available for the school leader.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sergiovanni and Starrat Supervisory Framework

(Sergiovanni & Starratt, (2007). P. 8

FIGURE 1–1. Instructional Capacity, Instructional Quality, and Student Engagement: Pathways to Academic Achievement.
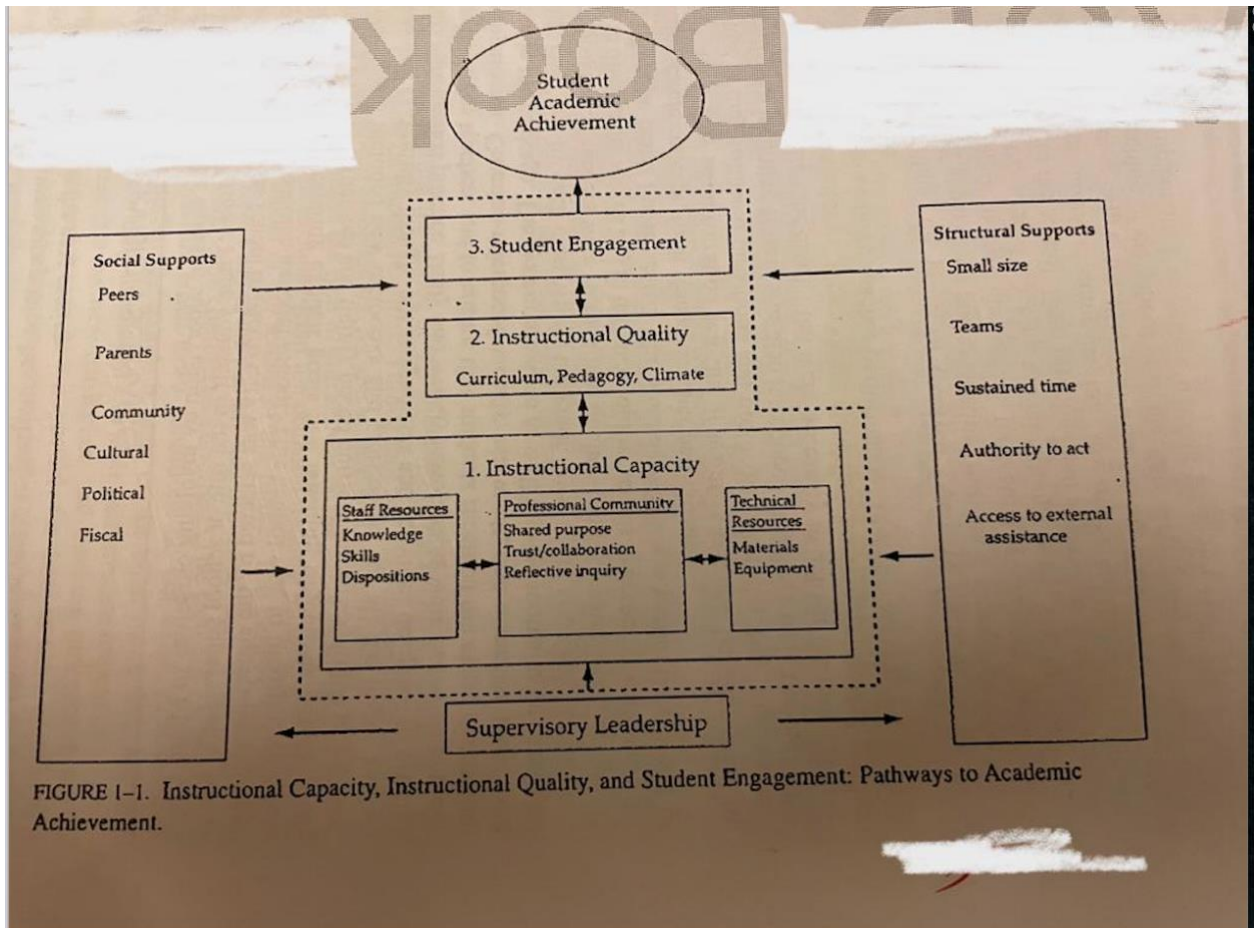
Appendix B

Glickman et al.'s Supervisory Belief System

Glickman et al.(2018). P. 116

Approach	Outcome
Nondirective	Teacher self-plan
Collaborative	Mutual plan
Directive informational	Supervisor-suggested plan
Directive control	Supervisor-assigned plan

Appendix C

Digital Learning Behavior Expectations

Our School is committed to maintaining a safe, responsible and respectful learning
        environment. Students are expected to demonstrate core values in every aspect
        of their school life, during all school activities conducted on or off campus,
        including their digital learning environments.

In order to ensure a digital learning environment that fosters safety, responsibility, and
        respect, students are expected to be:

Safe by:
Being kind to all
Following all teacher instructions
Making safe choices online, refraining from any sort of cyberbullying or inappropriate
        online actions

Respectful by:
Following all teacher instructions
Showing appropriate behavior
When muted on the platform, do not unmute without the teachers consent
Waiting for your turn to speak
Not adding anyone else to the group or chats without teacher permission

Responsible by:
Staying on task
Completing all classwork on time and with 100% effort
Showing up to class on time

Responses to Breaches of our Digital Expectation
Breaches of these expectations will result in a variety of responses:
1st incident – If a student is being disruptive, they will be muted as a warning and are to
        follow all behavior expectations above.
2nd incident – If a student continues to misbehave or defies a teacher, they will be
        completely removed from the class for the day
They may return to the class the following day after a thorough apology email is written
        to the teacher cc'ing the Principal and Assistant Principal. The apology must
        include:
What they did wrong
What they will do differently next time
Assurances this will not happen again
3rd incident - If a third incident arises, students will be removed from the class for two
        days and only be allowed back after a virtual meeting between teacher, parent,
        and student.

Reporting

All incidents will be reported on the school's behavior management system on
  Managebac and will be documented on students records.

Serious Misconduct
More severe incident such as online bullying or sharing inappropriate content will result
  in responses per our student handbook ranging from suspension to expulsion.

Appendix D

Sample Timetable

Wellspring Learning Community – CCC

2019 – 2020 Combined Timetable -**Virtual School – Effective March 16, 2020– Last Updated on Saturday March 14th**

Monday

Middle School Grades 6-10	6A	6B	6C	7A	7B	7C	8A	8B	8C	9A	9B	9C BREVET	10A	10B

Period One Grades 6 through 10: 8:00-8:40

| Period 1 8:00-8:40 | **Math** Lina O. | **English** Mira K | **Sciences** Layal T. | | | | | | | | | | | |

Period Two: 8:45-9:25

| Period 2 8:45-9:25 | **Arabic** Alaa S, Sahar K, Lena C, Zeina M, Siba H, Ola Mn. | | | **Physics** Nizar S | **Math** Ludmila A | **Chemistry** Rym Y | **PHE** Ahmad Y | **Biology** Riham S | **English** George S | **English** Radwan C | **English IS** Carrie M | **Geography** Nisreen A | **Chemistry** Nizar S | **Biology** Farah A |

Period One Grades 6 through 10: 8:00-8:40

| Period 3 9:50-10:30 | **French / Spanish / Extra Arabic** Ola Mz, Elena M, Karina M, Sonia A, Alaa S, Sahar K Siba H | | | **English** Nassab D | **Biology** Riham S | **Physics** Nizar S | **English IS** Brett W | **English** George S | **PHE** Ralph N | **Chemistry** Rym Y | **English** Radwan C | **Chemistr y** Reem H. | **Biology** Tala M | **EN/AR I&S** Imad L, Sarah S |

Break 9:25-9:50

Period Three starts at 9:50 and ends at 10:30

| Period 4 10:35 - 11:15 | **Sciences** Layal T | **Drama/Mus ic** Bassam A Fouad F | **Math** Lina O | **English IS** Carrie M | **English** Nassab D | **Arabic I&S** Imad L | **English** George S | **English** George S | **VA – Media** Sara K Omar S. | **Physics** Mohammed K (109) | **Chemistry** Rym Y. | **Arabic** Lena C, Ola Mn, Rana H, Zeina M, Abir K, Nahed J, Alaa S, Jinan S, | | |

Period Four: 10:35-11:15

| Period 5 11:20-12:00 | **VA – Media** Amy T (106) Omar S | **Sciences** Layal T | **Math** Lina O | **Physics** Riham S | **Physics** Nizar S | **Math** Ludmila A | **Drama/Music** Bassam A Fouad F | **English** George S | **English** Radwan C | **Physics** Mohammed K (109) | **Chemistry** Rym Y. | **Arabic** Alaa S Sahar K Abir K Ola Mn Siba H Rana H | | |

Period Five: 11:20-12:00

| | | | | | | | **French / Spanish / Extra Arabic** Ola Mz, Elena M, Karina M, Sonia A, Sahar K | | | | | | | |

Lunch 12:00-12:35

Period Six: 12:35-1:15

| Period 6 12:35 - 1:15 | **PHE** Ralph | **Math** Lina O (308) | **English** Nassab D | **Math** Ludmila A | **PHE** Ahmad | **Biology** Riham S | **Physics** Nizar S | **Math** Lina S | **Math** Rasha R. | **Physics** Mohamme d K | **English IS / Geography** Carrie M Nisreen A | | **English** Radwan C | **Physics** Maryam BT |

Period Seven: 1:20-2:00

| Period 7 1:20-2:00 | **English** Nassab D | **Math** Lina O (308) | **Drama/Mus ic** Bassam A Fouad F | **Math** Ludmila A | **EN/AR I&S** Carrie M Imad L | **PHE** Ralph N | **English** George S | **Chemistry** Rym Y | **VA – Media** Sara K Omar S. | **Biology** Riham S | **Physics** Nizar S Mohammed K | **Math** Malak D | **English IS** Sara S | **English** Radwan C |

Secondary School Grades 11-12	11 DP	11 LB	12 DP	12 LB

Period One Grades 11-12: 8:00-8:40

| P 1 8:00 -8:40 | **English** Denise D Todd D | **English** Denise D Todd D | **Chemistry** Reem H | **Arabic** Lina K, Diana R, Abir K, Karina M, Sonia A. |

Period Two: 8:40-9:20

| P2 8:40-9:20 | **Bio/Phy/ESS** Tala M, Nabih L, Lina S | **CAS Counselling** Jennifer D Lina H | **English** Denise D Todd D | **Math** Liwa S |

Break 9:20 - 9:30

Period Three: 9:30-10:10

| P3 9:30-10:10 | **Psych/ Business** Mohamad C Sara B | **English** Denise D Todd D | **Bio/Ph/ESS** Maryam BT Lina S | **English** Jema A |

Period Four: 10:10-10:50

| P 4 10:10-10:50 | **Psych/ Business** Mohamad C Sara B | **Arabic** Jinan S | **Biology** Farah A | **Chemistry** Nizar S |

Period Five: 11:00-11:35

| P5 11:00-11:35 | **Physics** Maryam BT | **English** Denise D Todd D | **VA/T/Chem /GPo/Econ** Amy T, Todd D, Reem H, Sarah S, Kath. S | **Physics** Nabih L |

Period Six: 11:35-12:10

| P6 11:35-12:10 | **CAS Counselling** Jennifer D Lina H History Nisreen | **CAS Counselling** Jennifer D Lina H History Nisreen A | **TOK** Kathleen S) Denise D | **Chemistry** Nizar S |

Lunch 12:10-12:45 then Period Seven :12:45-1:25

| P7 12:45-1:25 | **Math** Rana S Malak D Wissam M | **Math** Liwa S | **Arif/r/Es** Lina K, Diana R Abir K Karina M Sonia A | **Math** Liwa S |

Period Eight: 1:25-2:00

| P8 1:25-2:00 | **CAS Counselling** Jennifer D Lina H | **Biology** Farah A | **English** Denise D Todd D | **English** Jema A |

French / Spanish / Civics G9 / Arabic G10
Elena M, Ola Mz, Diana R, Abir K, Sonia A, Karina M, Nisreen A, Jinan S [Gr 10]

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Appendix E

Timings Per Programme

irtual Learning Schedule

			Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
orning Brief		07:45 - 8:00	⌣	⌣	⌣	⌣	⌣
P	Period 1	08:00 - 08:40					
YP	Period 1	08:00 - 08:40					
P	Period 2	08:40 - 09:20					
YP	Period 2	08:45 - 09:25					
P	BREAK	09:20 - 09:30					
YP	BREAK	09:25 - 09:50					
P	Period 3	09:30 - 10:10					
YP	Period 3	09:50 - 10:30					
P	Period 4	10:10 - 10:50					
YP	Period 4	10:35 - 11:15					
P	Period 5	11:00 - 11:35					
YP	Period 5	11:20 - 12:00					
P	Period 6	11:35 - 12:10					
P	BREAK	12:10 - 12:45					
YP	BREAK	12:00 - 12:35					
P	Period 7	12:45 - 13:25					
YP	Period 6	12:35 - 13:15					
P	Period 8	13:25 - 14:00					
YP	Period 7	13:20 - 14:00					

| ebrief | 14:00 - 14:30 | ↵ | ↵ | ↵ | ↵ | ↵ |

Appendix   F

Calendar Sample

August 23 - 29, 2020

Calendar*pedia*
Your source for calendars

Aug 23 Sunday	Aug 27 Thursday
	New student orientation MYP? TBC
	Orientation day Teachers and Staff
Aug 24 Monday	**Aug 28 Friday**
Orientation day Teachers and Staff	Orientation day Teachers and Staff
Aug 25 Tuesday	**Aug 29 Saturday**
Orientation day Teachers and Staff	
	Ashoura
Aug 26 Wednesday	**Notes**
Orientation day Teachers and Staff	

Survey: Collecting Resources

Distribution of Resources

Fill in the below information to help us plan better for our return to school :)

...

Hi, Mirna. When you submit this form, the owner will see your name and email address.

* Required

1. I am available to help with the preparation of student packages on:
   Pick three slots on one day.
   You will receive a confirmation of your time allocation ASAP. *

	8:30-10:30	10:30-12:30	12:30-2:30	All day 08:30-2:30	Not available on campus on this day
Monday September 14	○	○	○	○	○
Thursday September 17	○	○	○	○	○

Submit

Appendix H

Sample of Homework Timetable

Grade 6B

Note: All assignments are to be posted before **2:30 pm** and before **12:00 pm** on Wednesdays otherwise the students are not held accountable for completing the work

Homework assigned for Monday	Homework assigned for Tuesday	Homework assigned for Wednesday	Homework assigned for Thursday	Homework assigned for Friday
Math (10-15 min)	English (1 hr of writing or research)	I&S (10-15 min)	English (10-15 min)	Arabic L&L (10-15 min)
Arabic L&L (10-15 min)	Science (20 min)	Spanish/French (15-20 min)	Arabic L&L (10-15 min) Or Arabic LA (15-20 min)	Math (10-15 min)
Media/Music (30 min)	Math (10-15 min)		Math (10-15 min)	DD (30 min)
			Visual Arts (30 min)	PHE (30 min)
Max 60 min	Max 95 min	Max 35 min	Max 80 min	Max 90 min

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Appendix I

Sample of Assessment Weeks Plan

Assessment weeks – Week of November 26th –December 18th, 2018 - Grade 6

November 26th-30th			December 3rd-7th		
Subjects **Subject 1/Subject 2**	**Formative Assessments/Date**	**Summative Assessments/Date**	**Subjects** **Subject 1/Subject 2**	**Formative Assessments/Date**	**Summative Assessments/Date**
Foreign languages (all phases)	Foreign languages (all phases):Criteria B, C and D Monday, Nov. 26		Arabic (L&L+ Remedial)	Arabic (L&L+ Remedial) Grammar : Friday December 7th Writing: Monday, Dec. 3 (un-announced)	
Arabic (L&L+ remedial)	Arabic (L&L+ remedial Comprehension Wednesday, Nov. 28		I&S-Arabic-Civics		I&S-Arabic-Civics: Criteria A-B-C-D
Mathematics		Mathematics: Criterion B Thursday November 29			
December 10th-14th			December 17th-18th		
Foreign languages (all phases)		Summative assessment Criteria A,B,C and D Monday, Dec. 10th	Arabic (L&L+ remedial)	Writing Tuesday, Dec. 18	Reading – Monday Dec.17
Arabic (L&L+ remedial)	Comprehension + Grammar Monday, Dec. 10th		I&S-Arabic -Geography		Criteria A-B-C-D

Appendix J

Excerpt Principal Notes: June 2020

"Below is a summary of my findings:

How did you as a teacher/staff member handle the challenges of the year 2020?

Teachers feedback was very positive. They all seem to be very proud of themselves for handling the VL well. Some terms were common throughout the 57 received responses: challenging year, flexibility, resilience, adaptability, optimism, perseverance, setting routines, very long work hours, organization and planning, focus, determination and a lot of collaboration and support.

How did the school adapt to a new world in 2020? Teachers unanimously celebrated the approach the school took to keep the learning going in 2020.The recurring themes in the answers were: pioneers, leading school, flexibility, creativity, success, problem solving approach, empowering, caring and supportive leadership, setting new routines and practices for VL. Most importantly everyone confirmed we were able to keep the learning going, and interestingly thought the school managed to change the "I" to a "we".

What do you wish you have done to make things better in 2020?

Teachers shared their frustration with the workload and most emphasized that they would have liked to have managed the situation with less stress and anxiety and that they focused more on their physical and emotional wellbeing (27%). A large percentage of the teachers believe that they could not have handled the situation better (26.5%)

What do you wish the school had done to make things better in 2020?

Two major themes emerged in this question: 31% of the staff thought that the school did its best and went over and above while 41% thought the school should reduce its expectations from teachers and students in such trying times; they reiterated the need for shorter days, less teaching time and more planning time as well as less paper work. Few teachers also mentioned the need to reconsider the financial situation of the teachers.

<u>What should we as a school focus on in 2021 to develop and prosper as an organization?</u>

Very clear trends here; the areas teachers think we need to work on (in order of frequency): Reduced workload/ teaching hours vs. planning hours , better retention based on better packages for teachers, more consideration for the teachers' emotional wellbeing , transparent and clear communication that reflects a collaborative decision-making process.

Themes appearing from the reflection interviews:

- Workload, teaching hours vs preparation hours, very long day especially online (38%),

- Salaries/ packages (26%).

- Positive feedback about work in departments (23%).

- Positive feedback from PTC (parents teachers conferences) (19%),

- Curriculum articulation: Arts (visual and performing), French, individuals and societies , English concerns about PYP (primary years programme)- MYP and MYP-DP transitions (12%),

- Students are passive , not engaged and irresponsible (9.4%).

- Academic honesty/ integrity issues (7.5%)" (Principal Notes, 6/1/21)

Appendix K

Infographic: Parents Satisfaction Survey- 19-20
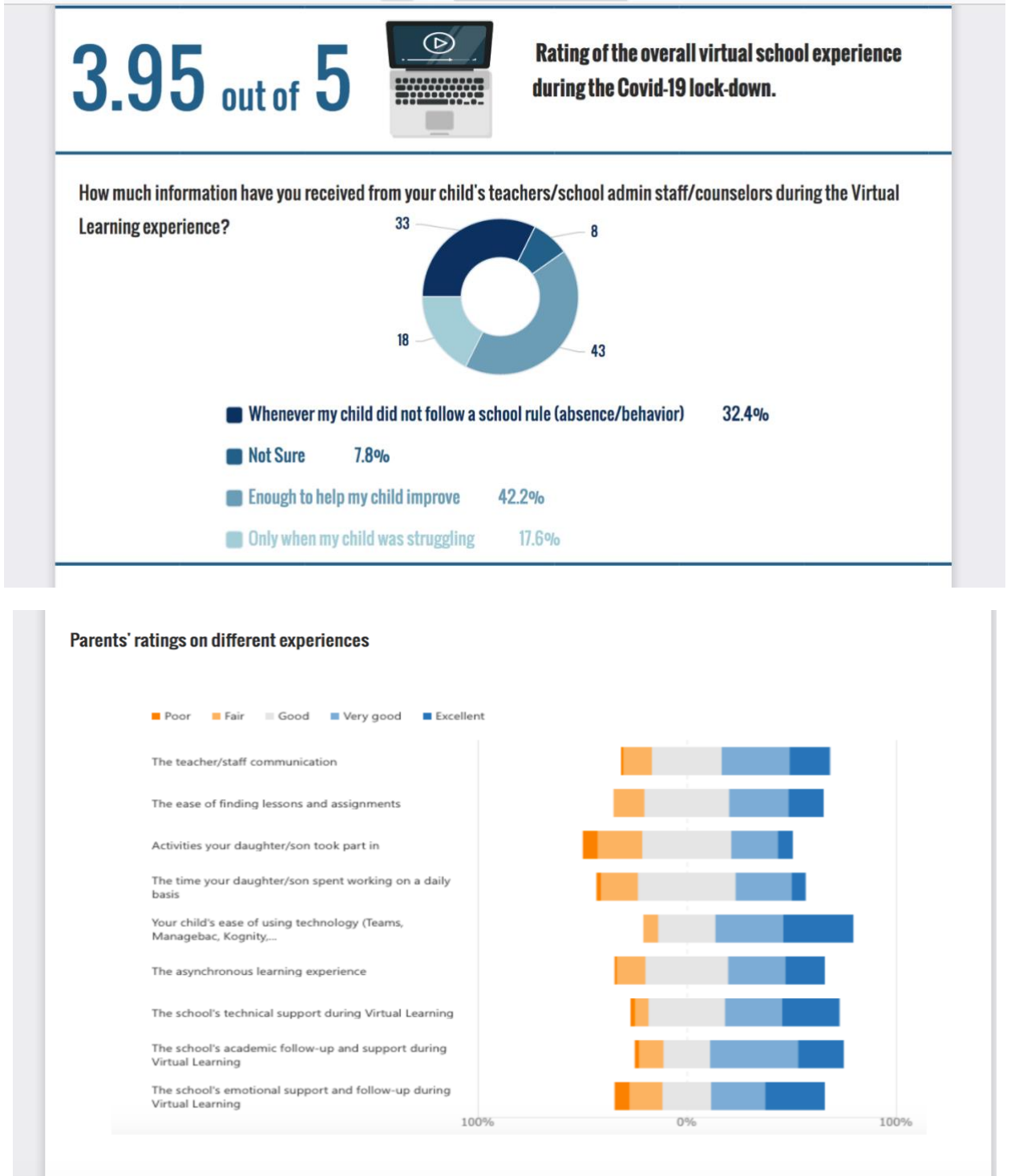
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