

Spiritual Emotional Intelligence and Leadership



SEIL's 2020 journey had a lot to do with accompanying and holding our community of students and teachers.

In the face of a great challenge, we really put our heads and hearts around the question: How can we be the keepers of what is at stake in a virtual context?

Our intention was that we were to constantly "change the vibration" of the people we had to accompany. Help the community to have refreshing experiences that could mingle fun and deepness. To feel that people left our virtual gatherings and proposals feeling more energised. That was our design principle in everything we planned.

We want to share some of the initiatives we felt worked in this sense.

Our first measure as soon as the quarantine was announced, was to create Whatsapp groups for Y7 through Y12 and one for whole school staff. We would use them as "gathering wells" in which we could stay connected through the creation of weekly challenges. Just to mention a few of them:

Quarantine Challenge #14: Me and nature!

Today is a special day within a special context. It's been 50 years since the creation of Earth Day. We want today's challenge to bring us all together! Look for a photo which reflects a moment when you felt connected (in communion - common-union) to nature and share it. You can add a brief text, explaining what happened to you, or how it felt.

"I love to look at the immensity of the sky or the sea. I am touched whenever I have the opportunity to get on a plane at daytime".

Y10 Student

Quarantine Challenge #19: Family mythology today, elder wisdom

These are ideal times to delve deeply into the wisdom of our family mythology. So let's start with our grandparents! Share a picture of one of your grandparents together with a lovely lifestory, anecdote, lesson or phrase.

I want to tell you about my paternal grandfather, he was a very proper man; he always arrived everywhere very early, he complained when we ate badly or with our hands. He was a hard worker. He taught me that you have to work and make an effort to get what you want. And always by being polite, without disrespecting anyone, and you do not have to bother people or argue unless they bother you.

Another big exaple is my great-grandmother (she is 95 years old); her whole family escaped the Armenian genocide, they took everything from them. She always tells me how they had to get ahead, that they had to start over, always working. Despite everything she is the happiest person in the world; she never complains about anything. What she teaches me every day is to give thanks; she always thanks Argentina for having accepted her family; she is always thankful for everything she has. She never complains about anything. Being grateful is all she does. And it is what she transmits. Be happy and be grateful

Y11 Student

We had many, many more challenges throughout the year, more than 60 of them which kept us really united as a large community in which students and staff shared from their hearts.



Another important initiative was to have our **Good Vibe Friday!** space for staff. Every Friday for many months we gathered at 10 am to help each other have a space of connectedness and vitality. The intention of the space was aligned to a diagnosis: "One cannot give what one does not have". So, if we wanted staff to inspire vitality to our students, we would have to do it first among ourselves.

We honestly feel the pandemic gave us a unique real, concrete opportunity to come together as whole school staff. We had in that space teachers from all sectors, both academic and support staff. Always starting with the Beach Boy song *Good vibrations!* which we will hold dearly for years to come. We can honestly say that we are fortunate to have such committed people working to impact our students' lives.



Regarding perfect coordination, another area SEIL coordinates, the crew of Prefects created a space called **Breaking Fridays** in which they invited different members of the community to host various and vital spaces which included talking about politics, philosophy, improvising freestyle sessions, cooking, and many, many more spaces! Offered by students of different years, staff and even former pupils it was another actual opening that the virtual context permitted. I personally remember assisting to the freestyle session coordinated by two former pupils, Santi Coates and Benja Rinaldi in which staff, Intermediate and Secondary students and even some 4th graders had a lot of fun while polishing their rapping skills!



To finish with I would like to mention the opening and closing rituals we *could* have. We managed start the year with a beautiful retreat for staff right before we were locked down. More than 50 teachers assisted and we shared intentions for the year and ended up with a very enthusiastic karaoke!

We had the opportunity thanks to many courageous actors to have a closure activity at the end of 2020 called *Vigilia de Celebración* with our beloved Y12 students. An unforgettable night activity in which staff and students could have a closing ceremony by the fire under the stars. *What needs to be burned by fire so that the new can come?* was the invitation.

Some experiences cannot be put into words, but those of us who were there, really keep in our hearts what we felt: the undying and determined magic of being able to be physically close again and feel the ineffable experience of feeling as one again.

Juan Pablo Ventura
SEIL Team Lead