

Arete's Educational Framework: Evidence-Based Practices

As most of our families enter the exciting transition to considering, entering or contemplating enrollment to Arete, the most frequent questions circle around our educational practices. Specifically, families want to know what makes Arete different from the public educational facilities and moreover the evidence that supports those learning processes. The purpose of this document is to provide families with the background and evidence-based knowledge that will skyrocket their child's future learning here at Arete.

Arete's mission is "scaffolding to build bridges" meaning for those who seek remediation building the necessary skills and processes to aid them in their learning success and for those who seek advanced or gifted work bridging their fundamental skills to advanced skills and personalized learning repertoires. There is always the possibility that by mastering basic skills through remediation a learner can also begin to build bridges into advancement. Our trademarked Interest Driven Project Based Learning Framework is comprised of several key educational components: interest-based learning, personalized systems of instruction, project-based learning and precision teaching.

Context personalization is an educational term that refers to the process of developing an instructional design strategy to incorporate a student's out-of-school interests into learning tasks such as math problems, reading and writing prompts. Moreover, recent research has indicated that context personalization affects student's performance on educational work positively by increasing their interest in educational work and their academic performance (Bernacki & Walkington, 2018). Research has also followed-up with students months after implementing interest-based learning procedures and found that they not only continue to perform well in the academic subjects, but also better than their peers who did not receive interest-based learning

(Bernacki & Walkington, 2018). Both of these outcomes are rarely seen together for students making interest-based learning an imperative component of Arete's learning framework.

As many of you may have experienced or know someone who has experienced difficulty with public schools regarding specific subjects that your child may have deficits, challenges or frustrations in, the common hold-back is a lack of personalized instruction. One of the challenges with personalized instruction is that it takes a large amount of time and effort to ensure that academic tasks given to students are arranged in a way that supports their own personal ideas, values, beliefs and strategies about their own agency, motivation and role in successful learning. As a private institution Arete can support personalized instruction even if it requires time and effort from our staff. The benefits from personal instruction outweigh the effort as it improves student engagement and academic attainment (Prain et. al, 2013; Richards, 2016). With this outlook, Arete recognizes each student as an individual with individual learning styles.

Student projects are not just the typical "let's purchase art supplies and throw this together" initiative. Project-based learning takes projects to the next level by providing students with goals related to what they are learning and provides hands on activities to promote creative and individualized thinking. Through the use of project-based learning, students make both academic gains and 21st Century gains; academically students gain STEM interests, general knowledge and possibly a research interest in higher education while 21st Century gains include self-confidence, technology skills, life and career skills, collaboration skills and communication skills (Sahin & Top, 2015; Barak & Assal, 2016).

Fluency is a term most often associated with reading and addresses the speed, accuracy and proper expression that students demonstrate while reading. Fluency is also applicable to reading (both aloud and silent), writing and mathematics by focusing solely on speed and

accuracy. By using fluency as the performance measure, the instructional cues that signal performance are student directed and furthermore eliminate the glass ceiling performance of 100%; when focusing on fluency, performance numbers can continue to increase (12 words per minute can increase to 25 words per minute instead of a percentage based measure). Precision teaching is the method of measuring and evaluating learning that focuses on fluency-based measures in a student's performance as the basis of mastery, maintenance and generalization of academic skills. This approach differs greatly from typical academic settings where percentage correct and accuracy-only measures are implemented. Precision teaching encourages high rates of responding to words, mathematics and writing. Precision teaching in the literature has been found to increase sight vocabulary, reading fluency, writing simple sentences and descriptive paragraphs and mathematics (Griffin & Murtagh, 2015; Datchuck & Kubina Jr., 2017; Weisenburgh-Snyder, Malmquist, Robbins & Lipshin, 2015).

Altogether, interest-based learning, personalized instruction, project-based learning and precision teaching comprise Arete's Educational Framework. These evidence-based measures not only set Arete apart from public school systems, but from many other private school places as well, as our educational framework focuses on processes that not only promote student development, but also encourage additional skills, fluency and 21st Century skills. These advancements are essential and will set Arete children apart from their peers.