



Educational Project - Clonlara School

2022 - 2025

"The main purpose of education is to create people who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done."
- Jean Piaget



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1. THE CLONLARA SCHOOL PROJECT, IDANHA

1.1 Introduction

With fifty-five years of experience serving off-campus, campus, and affiliate students around the world, Clonlara School, through Associacao Clonlara Portugal, is founding its first Portuguese campus in the region of Idanha-a-Nova.

The Clonlara School, Idanha project was launched in 2021 with a goal to open a school in September 2023.

It is an international, bilingual school based on the American curriculum of the State of Michigan, with a goal to offer all levels of education from grades 1-12. The grade levels correspond to Youngers, Middles, and Olders in the Clonlara system.

1.2 Territory Characterization

The municipality of Idanha-a-Nova is located in the District of Castelo Branco and is the fourth largest municipality in Portugal with an area of about 1,400 square kilometers, although the population does not exceed 10,000 inhabitants. The municipality is made up of 17 “freguesias” flanked by the counties Penamacor, Fundão, and Castelo Branco as well as the area of the Spanish Raia.

Idanha-a-Nova is the main town of this municipality, inserted in Geopark Naturtejo da Meseta Meridional, a UNESCO World Geopark, part of the European and Global Geopark Networks since 2006. This is a territory of high tourist potential with numerous attractions.

Idanha-a-Nova is centrally located geographically: 257km from Lisbon Airport, 309km from Francisco Sá Carneiro Airport in Porto, and 377Km from Madrid-Barajas Airport, Spain.

In 2015, Idanha-a-Nova was classified as a City of Music, under the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. The musical heritage of Idanha-a-Nova and the unique and innovative

experience that music provides in this municipality were the foundation for its inclusion in this category. Idanha has hosted several large-scale cultural/musical events, initiatives that take the name of Idanha to the most diverse corners of the world.

In 2018, Idanha-a-Nova joined the International Network of Bio-Regions as part of the first Bio-Region of Portugal. The growth of organic agriculture and the



increasing availability of ecological products and services are a main distinction of the area.

1.3 Education in Idanha-a-Nova

In addition to the many cultural initiatives, which make Idanha-a-Nova a dynamic and enterprising Council, the Council's Educational Project has also been working to make the area schools more innovative, inclusive, and up to date.

From this cultural and geographic backdrop was born the New Rural World School, a project that aims to provide a holistic strategy of pre-school education, from four months to five years, ensuring universal access for all children in Idanha-a-Nova to quality educational experiences in the early years of life. These experiences contribute to the improvement of their overall development with the objective of reversing the generational cycle of social exclusion.

Additionally, Idanha +Bebé, a project of the Idanha-a-Nova Council, provides the families of this Municipality, and to those who intend to settle in the region, free and adequate childcare resources for children aged 3 months to 3 years.

In 2020, the Idanha-a-Nova City Council started a collaboration process for the implementation of the innovative educational project VOAR (Learning Methodology developed by Colégio de São José, International School, Coimbra), with the Associação Aldeia dos Girassóis, coordinator of the initiative, and the José Silvestre Ribeiro School Grouping. This partnership aims to increase the results of curricular learning, improving pedagogical strategies and mobilizing the school community for the comprehensive education of children and youth.

1.4 "New Rural" Movement

Idanha-a-Nova has seen, for some years now, the arrival of more and more people and families who choose this territory in which to live. They are citizens of the world, national and international, who are exchanging big cities for the countryside, choosing to move to this territory for its geographical location, sustainable development, and unique beauty.

There are also several companies that have settled in this territory and bring foreign professionals from different backgrounds to the area as well as some emigrants who desire to return to their homeland.

Many of these families have more than one child in their households and are looking to this region for an educational alternative in line with their visions and dreams of a more conscious, holistic, and child-oriented education for the 21st century.



All these factors mean that the Municipality of Idanha-a-Nova meets the ideal conditions and clear need for the creation of a new school, based on the educational pillars of Innovation, Multiculturalism, Internationalization, and Sustainability. This new school is **Clonlara School, Idanha**.

2. CLONLARA SCHOOL

2.1 Introduction

In an ideal, balanced society, each human being is seen as unique, with different talents and challenges. Differences are respected and valued without the need for specific policies or special statuses.

"Today's world poses new challenges to education. Scientific and technological knowledge develops at such an intense pace that we are confronted daily with an exponential growth of information on a global scale" (Profile of Pupils Leaving Compulsory School, dispatch no. 6478/2017, July 26).

In today's world, information is immediately available and constantly changing. Schools no longer need to impart large amounts of information and knowledge to students. Instead, they need to help students develop the skills to access, process, and apply knowledge in different contexts.

The familiar image of students learning in a traditional classroom format, passively listening to a teacher, is no longer a vision of education that meets the needs of students in today's world. Rapid social transformations require today's young people to be increasingly participative and aware of their roles as citizens of the world.

Thus, teaching methodologies need to be reviewed and adapted so that the school of the future can embrace new possibilities and be prepared to face the technological development and the unpredictability of today's world.

The school's primary role is no longer to prepare students for the labor market, but rather to train autonomous individuals who are competent and aware of their responsibilities, holding a set of skills and competencies applicable to new contexts.

Traditionally, schools have required that all students learn the same set of information and skills. It has been the students' responsibility to understand the subjects being taught.

In the 20th century, the purpose of education expanded to include individuals' sense of personal fulfillment. Now, looking to the future, progressive education systems aim to implement dynamic and flexible curricula that recognize the differences between learners and provide the tools for them to reach their full potential. In this future that is uncertain in so many ways, schools seek not to



close in on themselves and their curricula, but instead to function as collaborative centers that continually contribute to and are influenced by the broader ecosystem.

The Michigan Department of Education has been moving toward Competency-Based Education (C-BE). This approach represents an important shift toward student-centered learning. If we want to mobilize the school and society for contemporary, high-quality education, we must avoid rigidly prescribing when and how a child needs to learn specific skills and content. The child's interest and development should always be taken into consideration when determining curricular choices.

The focus of the 21st century school is no longer only on the transmission of content; a holistic array of competencies and skills which will prepare students for global citizenship should be considered and developed.

From Clonlara School's perspective, the school institution should promote the development of learners' highest potential; the exploration of interests and abilities; the capacity to adapt according to students' individual needs; and the variation of the strategies and methodologies used for everyone.

This has been Clonlara's practice for over 55 years: to look at each student as a unique being and to facilitate strategies for their potential (physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual) to develop fully. Its practice is based on several theoretical assumptions, some of them centuries old, supported by the most recent discoveries (Rousseau, Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, Holt, Robinson, and Neufeld, among others), including research in the field of neuroscience.

Clonlara School bases its philosophy on five fundamental values:

- a) Mission
- b) Teamwork
- c) Adaptability/Agility
- d) Spirit of Generosity
- e) Sustainability

2.2 History

Clonlara School was founded in 1967 by Pat and Jim Montgomery in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. It currently serves students from grades K-12.

The goal of its founders was to create a school where children of all ages, ethnicities, and beliefs could learn and grow in a relaxed, stress-free atmosphere; a school with a limited number of students so that the educational community



could get to know and support each other; a school where families would have an active role in the life of the school and in the education of the children.

Democratic principles have become a reality in the daily lives of teachers and learners, cultivating respect for their individuality and agency.

Issues that have a direct impact on the management of their lives and issues related to world order have become an integral part of the Clonlara School curriculum, just as travel and participating in the local community have become some of the preferred forms of learning.

Clonlara School started the Off-Campus Program in 1979, one year after a family asked Pat to help them teach their children with the same approach used on campus. Pat's vision for the Off-Campus Program was to give families tools to foster students' independence and self-confidence by encouraging them to take responsibility for their own education. She believed, and still believes today, that students can identify their goals and passions, choose appropriate educational resources, and set their own schedules.

Since its inception, more than 5,000 students have graduated from high school with Clonlara School's Off-Campus Program.

Clonlara currently has more than 2,000 students spread over more than 74 countries between its Campus and Off-Campus programs, providing services in English, Spanish, German, French, Hungarian, Portuguese, Greek, and Turkish.

Clonlara graduates have followed many different paths, with each individual degree representing a unique journey to achieve their goals. Clonlara School students have been admitted to numerous universities, both in the US and in other countries.

Here are some examples of institutions where Clonlara graduates have been admitted in recent years:

Europe: Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Webster Vienna Private University (Austria); Royal Conservatory of Brussels (Belgium); Richmond University of London, University of Sheffield (England); The American University of Paris, IMEP Paris College of Music (France); FernUniversität in Hagen (Germany); Universiteit Leiden, The Hague University of Applied



Sciences, Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp (Netherlands); University of Edinburgh (Scotland), Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal).

United States: DePaul University, Duke University, Harvard University, Harrington College of Design, Gallaudet University, Georgian College, Loyola University, New York University, Pace University, Parsons School of Design, Penn State University, Point Park University, Rice University, Rutgers University, School of Visual Arts, The Boston Conservatory, University of California Schools, University of Massachusetts, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University for Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Notre Dame, University of Oregon, University of Wisconsin, Wilfrid Laurier University, the Manhattan School of Music, and Quest University


2.3 Recognition and Accreditations

Clonlara School is recognized by the U.S. government, in the State of Michigan, as a non-profit educational institution (code [501(c)(3)]), and is in full compliance with state regulations, with MDE identification number 810106031M.


It is also recognized by the Michigan State Department of Education as a private school.


Private schools in Michigan comply with Department of Education (MDE) regulations by completing the "Non-public School Membership Report" form at the beginning of each school year.

Clonlara School is accredited by three organizations, which certify the quality of the services provided:

 <p>Accreditation International (Ai) www.aiaccredits.org</p>	<p>Accreditation International is a worldwide organization that maintains the traditional approach to accreditation, which emphasizes the collegial, peer-review, and self-study process, integrating 21st century skills based on research, international and U.S. references, and common core standards.</p> <p>Accreditation International (Ai) is unique in the field of accreditation in that not only does Ai accredit in five areas of education - school, career and technical, distance education, early childhood education, and further education, but it also encourages and works on practice.</p>
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 <p>Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA-CESS) www.msa-cess.org</p>	<p>The Middle States Association is a worldwide leader in accreditation and school improvement. For over 125 years, Middle States has been helping school leaders establish and reach their goals, develop strategic plans, promote staff development and advance student achievement.</p> <p>We recognize there is no "one size fits all" approach to accreditation. Our accreditation process addresses the unique qualities of each school and offers a choice in best-fit protocols</p>
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 <p>National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPA) www.ncpsa.org</p>	<p>The National Council for Private School Accreditation seeks to promote and support independent and autonomous accrediting associations that work with private preschool, elementary, and secondary schools and that are committed to the quality of their educational programs.</p>
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3. THE PEDAGOGY

Clonlara's mission is to transform education on a global scale, through a highly personalized approach, fostering authenticity, autonomy, and joy in the learning process.

To fulfill its mission, Clonlara has developed a personalized method of education where students are empowered and supported, thus building a solid learning base for life.

Clonlara School exists to give children the freedom to live and grow, and to empower them to develop fully while pursuing their personal interests, honing their unique skills, and fulfilling their individual needs.

Because learning happens everywhere and at every moment, the professionals at Clonlara School work on the premise that not only is the school able to provide an adequate education environment, but equally important is the learning that takes place at home and elsewhere.



The student at the center

Research in the field of neuroscience indicates that each human being has a developmental timeline, that this timeline differs from individual to individual, and that it depends greatly on each person's unique brain chemistry.

Experience helps to confirm this conclusion. Over the years, we have observed in Clonlara students that there are different methods and paces of learning, and that these vary according to the stage of development and the topic of study.

Clonlara School's low student-teacher ratio and small class sizes allow learners to explore their unique learning styles, set their own study pace, and pursue their distinct interests. Teachers have the time to get to know their students, to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and to facilitate subject mastery.

At Clonlara School we emphasize a child's natural learning process because we know that no one is the same as another, and everyone deserves to be recognized as a unique being. The central focus of Clonlara School is a personalized education for every student.

In the Campus Program at Clonlara School, Idanha, we structure classes and projects according to collective and individual student interests. Students, not curriculum, drive the learning process. This personalized approach allows us to design and follow lesson plans that include several approaches to content while focusing on the way each student learns, prioritizing each child's interests.

Clonlara School is developing its skills continuum based on the *Michigan grade level content expectations* and the *Michigan merit high school graduation requirements*. However, each student's learning is based on his or her individual interests, talents, and goals.

Students, teachers, and parents work collaboratively to design each student's personalized education plan based on their interests and needs. High school students (Olders), while working to complete individual graduation requirements, define together, with the support of their teacher(s), how best to approach each subject/discipline and what materials and resources they will use. Clonlara does not limit attention and instruction to academic knowledge or needs only. Through the Full Learning Circle (FCL) Model, it is possible to accommodate a wide variety of learning which can also have practical and empirical characteristics.

Theoretical Foundation

The nature of Clonlara's work can be described as research based. Our method, Full Circle Learning (FCL), and the pedagogical approaches used in the school, have a theoretical basis with consistent evidence of their potential in learning and development. Common to all these approaches is the concept of the student at the center of the learning process, and the idea that the needs, interests, and



abilities of each are rich enough to provide direction and guide the learning and development of each child/youth. Learning and development are considered a single unit, integrated into a multiplicity of contexts, all of which contribute to and influence each other in the way the child's potential flourishes. The following theoretical approaches provide the foundation for Clonlara's pedagogy:

- *Self-Determination Theory* (Ryan, R & Deci, E.)
- Attachment Theory, applied as the *Teachability Factor* (Neufeld, G.)
- Personalized Learning

The Full Circle Learning Model integrates the fundamentals of these three approaches.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposes "that all individuals have natural, innate, and constructive tendencies to progressively develop a more elaborate and unified sense of identity" (Deci & Ryan, 2002). However, certain socio-contextual characteristics are necessary to support this natural developmental ability. That is, unless a stimulating, reliable, and rich growth environment is present, the child will not benefit from the power of this innate drive. According to the concepts of the theory, three individual needs must be met: competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

Teachability Factor

The *Teachability Factor* refers to those factors or variables that are psychological, emotional, developmental, and relational in nature. It is unique in the sense that teachability depends on the student's prior experiences and the teacher's ability to relate to them and facilitate their learning through relationships. The quality of the relationship between the child and the adult is what nurtures that place of trust and safety from which the child leaves and returns when needed. This assumption, with its roots in attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982), evolutionary psychology (Hinde, 1974,) and even biology and neuroscience (Swain, et al. 2014), is at the heart of the *Teachability Factor*.

Personalized Learning

Personalized learning at Clonlara begins with the student. Teachers and/or advisors meet with each student and family to discover the learner's strengths and interests and to help them plan their learning using the Full Circle Learning Model. With a plan in place, students drive their own learning with the support of



teachers and mentors, working together to create authentic, relevant, and challenging learning experiences.

These three foundational approaches (self-determination theory, teachability factor, and personalized learning) all have the child at their center. But Clonlara's philosophy and approach is more than a pedagogical framework; it is a conception of childhood and youth that grows and develops from the quality of relationships. These relationships nurture and celebrate the complexity of each unique person.

These theories are like a framework, the structural support on which Full Circle Learning rests in its unique ability to adapt to every age group, all variety of interests, and to all human diversity in the sense that everyone is an individual and unique being.

Having a personalized learning approach means that different ways of learning and different interests are expected. Autonomy and independence (SDT) are encouraged by our method, each step of which parallels the scientific research method. The process often starts with a question or a problem and then progresses through a series of steps involving exploration, testing, discovery, and reflection. The relationships between the students and their mentors, teachers, and guides are always at the center of the Full Circle Learning process. We believe that this way of working embodies the true meaning of a learning community.



3.1 Goals

Clonlara's philosophy is based on the premise that students can and should participate enthusiastically and consciously in developing the course of their own education.

Experience tells us that children learn best when their interests guide their activities and discoveries, and that parents have the right and the ability to educate their children. We believe that learning begins with curiosity.

Clonlara sees the world as a classroom without boundaries and considers the environment to be an integral part of the learning process. Academic learning and mastery of skills are not limited to one space or location. At home, at school, or anywhere else, there is fertile ground for learning.

Clonlara believes that a school should allow students to participate in the design and implementation of its curriculum. When students' personal interests drive their educational activities, their motivation increases, and their learning is deeper and longer lasting. All aspects of a student's development deserve attention: physical, spiritual, emotional, and cognitive.

Therefore, Clonlara School's goals include the following:

- Contribute to the acquisition, deepening, and consolidation of **learning skills**
 - ✓ Put the **student at the center of their** cognitive and metacognitive, social and emotional, physical and practical **development** through the creation of personalized curricula and individual learning plans, taking care of all aspects of their development, strengthening their skills and natural predispositions, and allowing students to have ownership of their own curriculum
 - ✓ Nurture **enthusiasm and natural curiosity for** learning by creating an environment rich with diverse materials and resources, and relating learning to situations in the socio-cultural and geographic environment in which it takes place
 - ✓ Organize and develop **cooperative learning activities** oriented toward the integration and exchange of knowledge; the awareness of self, others, and the environment; and the realization of projects inside or outside the school
 - ✓ Use the **personalized learning model** (Full Circle Learning), which allows the implementation of autonomous study methodology



through experimentation with techniques, instruments, and diverse ways of working; intentionally promoting, in the classroom or outside of it, habits of observation, questioning, and integration of knowledge

- ✓ Ensure a joyful **education based on meaningful learning** in all areas of knowledge and life, giving attention to the integral development of each student: physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual, allowing the student to make choices, confront varied perspectives, solve problems, and make values-based decisions

- Contribute to the **improvement of living conditions**
 - ✓ Support the **social and emotional needs of families**, giving parents the opportunity to actively collaborate in the education process of their children
 - ✓ **Perceive the world as one big classroom**, considering that the environment where one learns is an integral part of the learning process. Taking school outdoors allows children to use values and skills that enable them to participate in the life and history of individuals and societies; to make free and informed decisions on natural, social, ethical, and other issues; and to have a capacity for civic, active, conscious, and responsible participation
 - ✓ **Learn to know and respect ourselves, other living beings, and the environment of which we are a part**, empowering students with the knowledge and values to build a more just society centered on the person, human dignity, and action for the world as a common good to be preserved
 - ✓ Foster **internal communication among all members of the education community**, promoting teamwork, involvement, and initiative for active participation so that students participate freely and responsibly

- Be an **innovative model in the field of education**.

3.2 Student Profile

The way people learn is changing. In the past, students focused on developing a specific skillset they would need for their future professional career. In today's



world, students need a set of transferable skills they can use to navigate changing and unfamiliar contexts. They need to be prepared and resilient in the face of uncertainty and change so they can develop a sense of purpose and self-esteem.

Students learning with Clonlara are students who:

- direct their own learning
- master subject area skills
- develop 21st century competencies
- connect to the community
- learn life and job skills
- promote sustainability
- provide community service
- mentor and teach
- develop skills for innovation and entrepreneurship

As part of Clonlara’s educational framework and philosophy, we recognize the importance of the 21st century skills of communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and confidence as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promoted by the United Nations.

In order to develop the above competencies, we have identified critical areas of focus:

- a. Development of Social and Emotional Skills
 - i. Relationships with self and others
 - ii. Personal empowerment
 - iii. Self-regulation, self-awareness, self-criticism
 - iv. Integrity
 - v. Emotional intelligence
 - vi. Global citizenship

- b. Development of Competencies for Personal and Professional Life
 - i. Decision-making ability
 - ii. Flexibility and adaptability
 - iii. Initiative and leadership
 - iv. Responsibility
 - v. Communication
 - vi. Collaboration and teamwork



- c. Development of Cognitive and Learning Skills
- i. Metacognition
 - ii. Communication
 - iii. Logical, scientific, and intuitive reasoning
 - iv. Digital and physical media literacy
 - v. Health and wellness
 - vi. Artistic sense
 - vii. Cultural identity
 - viii. Critical and systemic thinking
 - ix. Openness to new perspectives and opinions



3.3 Pedagogical System

Learning happens in many ways. At Clonlara School students can advance quickly through a topic or work on it in great depth. In this way, the school's education plans are personalized and tailored to each student's interests, goals, and ways of learning.

Clonlara allows its students to progress to their fullest potential, with no limits on programs or levels of instruction. The pace of skill development is determined solely by the student's own needs. This means that the time and depth of learning differs from area to area, from student to student, depending solely on the characteristics of each individual.

"Children don't need to be forced to learn how to be better, they don't need to be told what to do or to be shown how. If they are given enough access to the world,



they will see quite clearly what things are really important to them and to others, and they will make a better way for themselves in this world than anyone else could do for them." John Holt

In Clonlara School's daily pedagogical practice we work to

- Promote natural learning by
 - recognizing that each student learns differently
 - encouraging self-directed learning
 - maintaining a safe and friendly atmosphere
 - prioritizing formative evaluation
 - giving the student the freedom to design, implement, and evaluate strategies to achieve the goals and challenges they set for themselves

- Help our students become competent adults by
 - addressing real-life issues - regionally, globally, and environmentally
 - developing procedures that meet learners' individual needs, interests, and abilities
 - sharing empowering tools for resolving conflicts peacefully with empathy and thoughtfulness

- Respect others, the environment, and self by
 - building relationships, sharing and cooperating, and responding to personal and social needs

Learning activities are developed using the Full Learning Circle (FCL) Model. This pedagogical model invites individuals or groups to develop rich learning projects with effective educational outcomes.

Using FCL as a pedagogical model for guiding learning activities, our teachers, advisors, and mentors draw on strategies and principles from several pedagogues/pedagogies: Dewey, Freinet, Montessori, Steiner, Reggio Emilia, José Pacheco, Charlotte Mason, Krishnamurti, and others.

We also use practical tools from various approaches such as Positive Discipline, Growth Mindset, and Nonviolent Communication.

Another important feature of our pedagogical framework is our global learning community. The entire Clonlara community is seen as both "learner" and "teacher." Teachers, students, parents, and national and international staff members are commonly mentored through various FCLs.



3.3.1 Full Circle Learning

We believe that learning begins with curiosity.

All students, at all grade levels, learn through a personalized and meaningful process called Full Circle Learning (FCL).

This pedagogical model encourages students to ask questions and discover answers about subjects that capture their attention, leading them to a deeper level of understanding where they can share, challenge, and extend their knowledge.

FCL embodies the mission and philosophy of Clonlara School, offering a tangible framework that empowers each student to structure their learning and to do so increasingly independently. The method is inclusive and applicable to all age groups and developmental levels.

The Full Learning Circle Model is designed to encourage a highly personalized approach to learning for every student. This model identifies ten components of the learning process that are most relevant for a rich and effective education experience: **Topic, Pre-search, Research, Proposal, Mentor, Fieldwork, Summary, Portfolio, Presentation, and Reflection.**

With these components, students can make choices and decisions that help them plan and achieve their learning goals.

Through this process, students develop metacognition through which they exercise self-knowledge and reflection.

FCL is not necessarily a linear process. In some cases, the steps occur in the order of the image below, starting with the identification of the topic. Often, the student completes the steps in a different order.

Inspiration and motivation for choosing a particular topic to study can come in many forms: a motivating conversation (perhaps a mentor); an activity one has started to explore (fieldwork); a presentation from a classmate; a subject that emerges from another FCL. The possibilities are endless.



Students may follow FCL steps in any order. Factors such as the students' interests and their projects drive the process. All Clonlara students, regardless of age, employ the FCL process to some extent. Descriptions of each FCL component include:

Topic

To spark a passion that leads to a topic of study, Clonlara students ask themselves “what” questions: What captures my interest and drives my passions? What piques my curiosity? What are my strengths and talents? What are my goals and objectives? What challenges my thinking? What do I need to understand?

Pre-search

In the pre-search phase, students brainstorm questions about a topic of interest. From that list, they select a “guiding question” that will direct their learning and drive their research deeper into the topic.



Research

Learners in the research stage of FCL make a list of all possible resources for a topic of interest and develop a short description for their course of study to share with their program advisor. Questions that drive the RESEARCH component include: What ideas do I want to pursue? How will I approach the subject? What resources can I enlist/schedule/ check out/find/contact/watch to serve my study? What book, website, course, video, podcast, experience, or person will deepen my understanding of the topic? What places (museums, landmarks, historical sites) can I visit to enhance my inquiry? Can I formulate a short description of my course?

Proposal

Learners developing an FCL proposal finalize course details by determining daily/weekly performance goals and final course outcomes including competencies they want to develop such as collaboration or critical thinking. Students will submit their proposals to advisors for approval.

Questions driving the PROPOSAL phase include: What commitments do I need to make so I can maximize my learning? About how much time per day do I need to reach my learning goals? On what day will I visit the museum/interview the expert/travel to the monument, etc.? How many chapters will I read per day/documentaries will I view per week, etc.? When will I schedule the trip/read the journal articles/create my presentation/build the model/publish the book/conduct the experiment/recite the poetry, etc.? What is the end-goal of my research? What do I hope to show for my efforts? How will I determine successful course completion?

Mentor

Students choose a mentor who can guide and support them through the learning process. The mentor does not need to be a content expert but should be a motivator who will hold the student accountable for reaching goals and provide feedback along the way. The mentor will write a reflection for the student at the end of the course.

Fieldwork

Students may use this space as a learning journal throughout the course where they can write down observations, dates, titles of resources, changes they note, and more! In the Clonlara App, learners will be able to upload photos and videos as well. The information kept here will be useful when students reflect on their



courses. It will be a place to share evidence of their learning with course advisors, mentors, and teachers.

Summary

Here, students can record an overview of their course resources and experiences. A concise synopsis allows advisors and teachers to see student learning experiences and growth at a glance. Here, learners answer their guiding questions and share what they learned through the course.

Portfolio

Students will show examples of their work and evidence of their learning. In the Clonlara App, learners will be able to upload work they think represents their learning in their course.

Presentation

This can be an exhibition, a demonstration, a performance, a speech, a meeting with a team to discuss the learning progress, and more! When presenting, students share skills and knowledge they learned through their course. A presentation can be oral, written, visual, or any combination thereof. Students can choose to make their presentations formal or informal.

Reflection

The reflection is a place for both the student and the mentor to think deeply about the learning and growth that happened during the course. Students should be honest and forthright as they examine their progress and think about their course evaluation.

Keep in mind evaluation includes progress in the 6 Cs: content, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and confidence. Student and mentor evaluations will be averaged for a final grade. Students can use the evaluation calculator in the Clonlara App to find their grade.

Questions to consider: What was valuable about this course? What did you learn about yourself? What went well (or didn't go well)? Did your goals for the course change or stay the same? Did you meet the goals you set for yourself? Will this experience lead to further study or a different course?

The use of this personalized learning model promotes self-knowledge, a love of learning, intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and excellence.



3.3.2 Global Learning Community

As a school with various programs and partners in 70+ countries, Clonlara has students and faculty living all over the world! We encourage participation in our global learning community where we value democratic principles and collaborative learning.

Clonlara is a student- and family-centered school. Parental involvement in school life is one of the essential factors for the child's educational success, so we seek to develop open and frequent communication between educational professionals and parents.

In addition to face-to-face interaction in the school space, families will communicate with Clonlara staff through our online platform which allows us to keep everyone up to date with what is going on in the school's day-to-day activities, including upcoming activities.

We are happy to arrange telephone or video calls, or face-to-face meetings with teachers. We adhere to our founder, Pat Montgomery's, belief that "parents are deserving of respect and patience to the same extent that children are."

We expect parents and other family members to actively participate in the school community. Involvement might include mentoring students, promoting activities, organizing presentations, attending celebrations, and more. Parental participation in the school, in addition to contributing to the success of the students, also plays a part in the success of the entire school community.

According to research conducted by INCLUD-ED (Research Project, coordinated by the Center for Research in Theories and Practices for Overcoming Inequalities - CREA - at the University of Barcelona), one of the factors proven to significantly improve student performance is the educational participation of the community, including parents.

At Clonlara, students learn that community is not just about getting along with others, but that it is also a commitment to help one another create shared goals and make decisions of real importance. Together, students plan schedules, develop projects, engage in assessments, organize field trips, arrange trips, resolve conflicts, and revise documents. Each student is given the opportunity to direct his or her education while at the same time being an integral part of a group with other autonomous learners. In this way, students work to articulate and improve their strengths while offering those strengths for the progress of the entire school community.

Students take advantage of the resources of our local, online, and global learning communities as part of their educational experiences. This includes seeking mentors in the local community, participating in field trips, attending lectures



offered by various institutions, engaging in activities in public libraries or museums, doing volunteer work, discovering partnership and internship opportunities, and more. We invite our friends and families to attend school celebrations, presentations, workshops, and lectures.

Students become involved in our global learning community by presenting their projects in group calls, finding mentors in other countries, participating in student exchanges, making friends through our Pen Pal program, engaging with one another in our clubs or workshops, finding friends in special interest groups, joining virtual and in-person meetings, and more.

Clonlara's professionals keep in frequent contact through various online and face-to-face meetings, professional development and training, project collaboration, and establishment of strategies and goals, in a continuous global collaboration.

3.3.3 Curriculum and Subjects

Clonlara's curriculum offerings at both the elementary and secondary levels are based on the requirements of Michigan's Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs), with core subjects offered at the elementary level (grades 1-8): English, math, social studies, science, health and wellness, art, music, and Portuguese.

For the Portuguese language curriculum, we use as our benchmark the Essential Learning established by the Portuguese Ministry of Education. We adapt elementary social studies content to meet the reality of our students which means we study our local community and the history and geography of Portugal, as well as each student's country and culture of origin.

In secondary school (grades 9-12), we offer the core subjects required for graduation (see page 29) as detailed in the [Michigan Merit High School/Graduation Requirements](#) by the Michigan Department of Education.

In the case of Portuguese language study at the secondary level, the benchmark used is the Essential Learning established by the Portuguese Ministry of Education. For social studies subjects (history, geography, and government), students can choose a broad survey approach and study the world, or they can select to conduct a deeper, more focused exploration of the United States, Portugal, or their country of origin. Government course content always includes the study of the Portuguese Constitution.

At all levels, although based on the above documents, the work and assessment of each student is always developed according to his or her unique interests, talents, and goals.

Students determine how they approach content and acquire their skills. They are given the chance to develop their confidence, resilience, and persistence, thus building personalized learning journeys based on their experiences and freedom.



Students, families, and mentors work together to create an educational plan unique to each student's needs, collaboratively determining the best approach, materials, and resources.

Emphasis is also placed on the development of soft skills. To this end, we are developing our Skills Continuum to document student growth in the competencies of communication, collaboration, content, critical thinking, creativity, and confidence.

The Skills Continuum is a list of skills, in different areas, that allows us to track each student's progress as they grow and learn. The areas covered include traditional academic areas, emotional and social skills, and 21st century skills. These skills are based on United States documents developed by subject area specific councils (Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, Collaboration for Social and Emotional Learning) and international documents regarding 21st century skills.

Since each classroom is multi-age with various levels and abilities, the education team uses differentiation and personalization methodologies to meet the needs of each student within the topic being studied.

The sequence of work and learning for each content area is determined at the beginning of each semester/year or project through the planning. This planning can be adjusted as learning develops based on the interests, needs, and specific conditions of the students involved.

Clonlara School, Idanha, as a U.S. school operating in Portugal, uses English and Portuguese as the languages of communication and instruction.

3.3.4 Assessment and Progression

Clonlara School cultivates a strong family atmosphere. Therefore, the teachers, as their relationship with students and parents develops, easily understand the needs, interests, and abilities of each student. In addition, at the beginning of each school year, an individual consultation is held with each family to evaluate the student's needs, abilities, and goals, and to establish the student's individual educational plan.

Throughout the year, teachers collect and document student work and encourage students to do the same. They consider not only the academic work and projects that the student develops in various media (paper, digital, photography, natural materials, art, or other), but also educational experiences such as cultural and artistic events, book readings, and all the experiences of the student that expand knowledge and can be documented. In addition to the individual education plan,



the student's portfolio serves as a focal point for assessment meetings between parents and teacher.

Teachers validate and evaluate the student's work in school in a timely manner, providing ongoing feedback. Assessment of student progress is a continuous evaluation based on set objectives, progress demonstrated during the project/semester, mastery of skills, effort, participation, and the student's self-assessment.

Evaluations are assigned based on evidence of effective learning, understanding, and ability to apply the concepts learned. In this way we ensure lasting and meaningful learning for the student. Students are involved in all stages of the assessment process, beginning with goal setting, modification of goals whenever necessary, careful reflection of work done, and self-evaluation.

At the end of each semester, instructors write an evaluation of each student's performance and progress in each of the subjects studied. These evaluations assess subject matter mastery, collaboration, written and oral communication, critical thinking skills, confidence, and creativity as well as any other factors that the instructor considers relevant to the student's progress.

All assessment records and documentation of learning are recorded in the LMS (learning management system) environment. Parents, students, advisors, teachers, and mentors have access to the Clonlara App and can document learning progress in real time, communicate whenever necessary, and work cooperatively for a holistic and meaningful learning experience.

Our assessment scale consists of four areas, each with six criteria. The student's performance in each subject on these criteria is the basis for his or her grade.

RATING SCALES

Rating Scale (youngers)		
Excellent	86 - 100%	The student has exceeded the learning objectives of the subject
Satisfactory	66 - 85%	The student has achieved the learning objectives of the subject
Needs Improvement	50 - 65%	The student is working toward the learning objectives of the discipline

Rating Scale* (middles and older)		
A	93-100%	Outstanding performance in 7 or more criteria, from at least 3 different areas
A-	90-92%	Exceptional in 5-6 criteria, from at least 3 different areas



B+	88-89%	Exceptional in 2 criteria and competent in 5 or more, from at least 3 different areas
B	83-87%	Competent in 7 or more criteria, from at least 3 different areas
B-	80-82%	Competent in 6 criteria, from at least 2 different areas
C+	78-79%	Competent in 5 criteria, from at least 2 different areas
C	73-77%	Competent in 4 criteria, from at least 2 different areas
C-	70-72%	Competent in 3 criteria
D+	68-69%	Poor on 3-4 criteria, some competence on others
D	63-67%	Poor on 5 criteria, some competence on others
D-	60-62%	Insufficient in 5 or more criteria, minimal competencies in others

Academics

- Results in jobs or tests
- Mastery of the subject
- Quality of work
- Fulfillment of course expectations
- Dedicated time
- Efficient use of resources

Commitment

- Have initiative
- Accept responsibility
- Organizational skills
- Persistence and/or perseverance
- Intrinsic Motivation
- Trust

Result

- Progress
- Recalling facts (memorization)
- Research Capacity
- Participation in discussions
- Summarize information and ideas
- Plan and/or complete projects

Superior Skills

- Problem-solving ability
- Showing understanding
- Creativity/improvisation
- Ability to evaluate, analyze, synthesize or apply information
- Ability to relate to other subjects or life experiences
- Ability to share what you have learned

* In order to allow a Clonlara student who wishes to continue his or her studies in Portugal to obtain a fair equivalence to the Portuguese educational system, and in accordance with Portaria nº 699/2006 of the 12th of July, annex XI, the same may request from Clonlara an *Honor Course* to obtain an A+ grade.

To obtain the grade of A+, the student must complete an *Honor Course* with a grade of A. An *Honor Course* is a more in-depth level of work than is normally expected of a high school student, where the student undertakes further development and research on a given topic.

Students progress to the next year when their final assessment has a maximum of two subjects with *Need Improvement* (youngsters) or D- (middles and olders).



3.3.5 Graduation Requirements

Completing compulsory schooling at Clonlara involves fulfilling several requirements during high school. Some are unique to the senior year (grade 12), but most are accomplished throughout high school.

Academic work, in the different subject areas, is based on a credit system. Clonlara uses a system similar to the Carnegie unit of credit (180 hours = 1 credit). It is a standard unit used by many high schools in the United States of America, both public and private.

To complete high school the student must complete at least 22 credits with the following distribution:

CURRICULUM AREAS	REQUIRED COURSES	CREDITS REQUIRED
Portuguese	Language and Literature	4.0
English	Language and Literature	4.0
Speech		0.5
Science		3.0
Mathematics		3.0
Social Studies	History	1.0
	Government	0.5
	Geography	0.5
Health and Wellness		1.5
Electives	Subjects chosen by the student	4.0
Total Credits		22.0

In addition to the credit requirements, students must complete: a capstone project; a reading list; at least 180 hours of volunteer work; a portfolio representative of their high school learning journey; and an exit exam testing their knowledge and research skills.

The capstone project is an end-of-course, multidisciplinary project that challenges the student to explore their curiosities and interests in a deeper way while utilizing their strengths and talents. It often includes theoretical and practical research in an area that the student is interested in pursuing professionally.

The reading list is developed throughout high school. Students are required to read and comment on a minimum of sixteen books including four different genres of fiction and four different genres of non-fiction. Students will compose the reading list from in-class, guided readings in class as well as from independent readings, both suggested by the teacher and chosen by the student.



All students are required to complete at least 180 hours of volunteer work during their secondary education. Students may volunteer with local organizations, as part of school activities, with Clonlara employees, or even with other students. Students will compile a graduation portfolio throughout high school. It is meant to be an overview of the student's accomplishments, progress, interests, and learning throughout the high school years.

The exit exam is taken in grade 12. It consists of both fact-based and opinion questions along with a short essay.

Clonlara students have the option to pursue a diploma endorsement in one of the following areas: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Arts (visual, fine arts, theater, dance, photography, etc.), or Global Studies. This option is particularly useful for students who wish to attend university in the U.S. and already know which area of study they wish to pursue. To obtain an endorsement, the electives and capstone courses must be in the focus area. In the case of Global Studies, students are required to earn one credit in World Literature (in Portuguese or English), one credit in World History, one-half credit in World Geography, and one-half credit of International Government. Electives may encompass foreign language, religions, or cultures of the world and/or have an international focus.

Organizational Structure

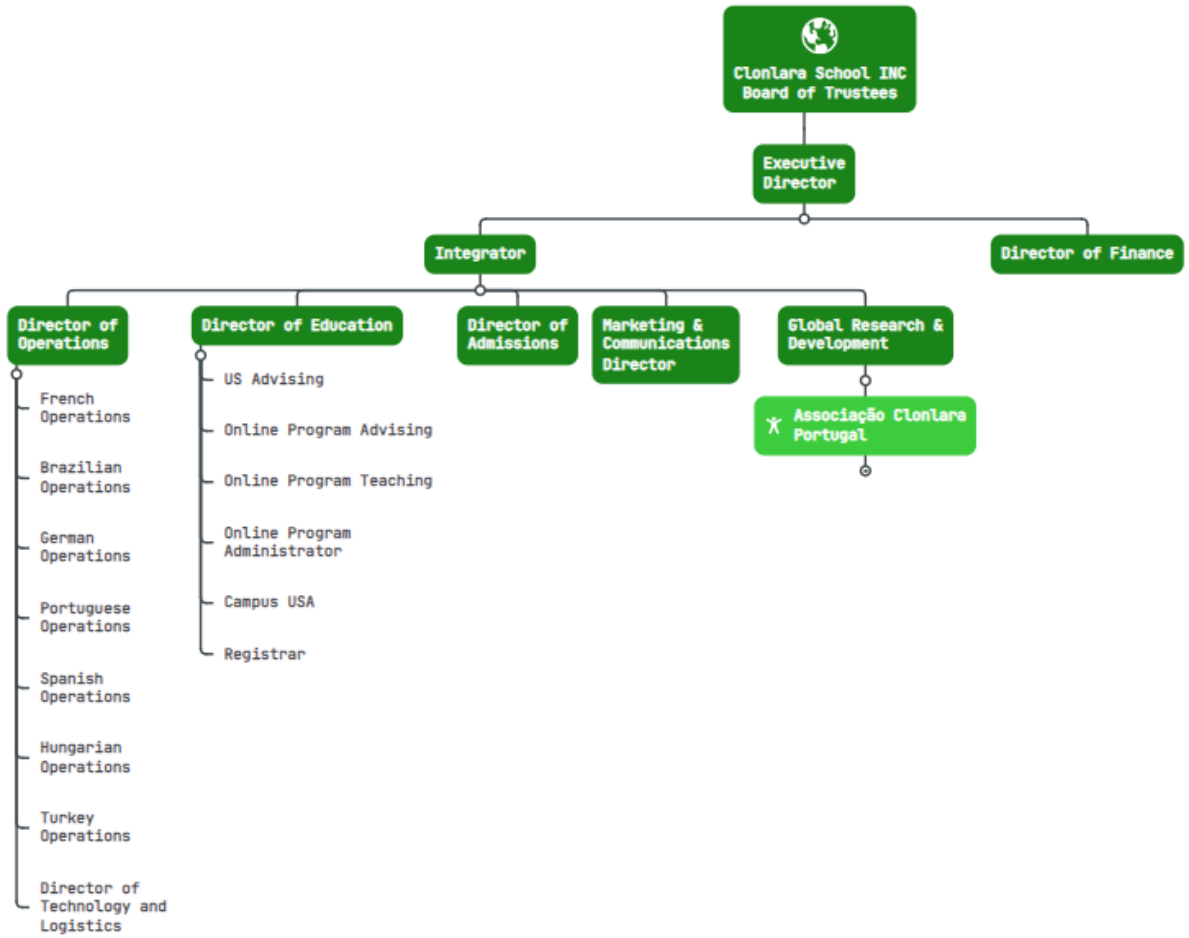
Clonlara School, Idanha is a school run by Associação Clonlara Portugal, a non-profit association based in Idanha-a-Nova, Castelo Branco, Portugal.

The Associação Clonlara Portugal was established in 2021 and is an association that integrates the organizational structure of Clonlara INC.

The Associação Clonlara Portugal is situated in the structure of Clonlara INC. in the following way:

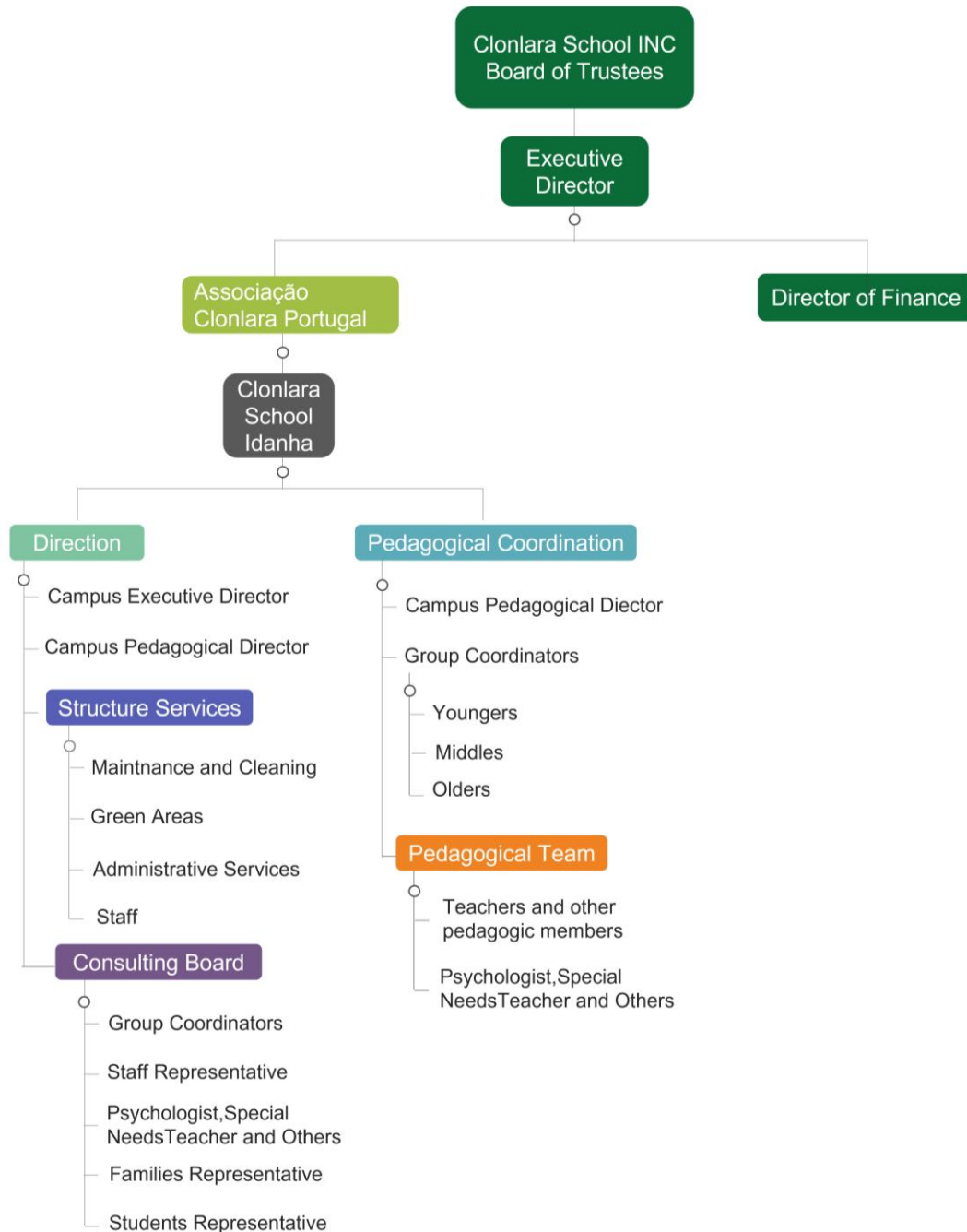


global learning community





Organizational Chart of Clonlara School, Idanha





Programs

As a global learning community featuring a highly personalized approach to education, Clonlara has two programs to meet the various needs of families: Campus Program and Off-Campus Program.

Clonlara puts its mission, philosophy, and principles into practice at every grade level and in all programming. We are looking for students who will benefit from the opportunity to direct their own learning while contributing to a global, inclusive, and joyful learning community.

Differentiating the programs from one another is the location where most academic learning occurs. Students enrolled in our Campus Program complete most of their work at our school building on campus while students enrolled in our Off-Campus Program complete their work off campus.

5.1 The Off-Campus Program

Clonlara School's Off-Campus Program provides its personalized and flexible learning method in the context of home and family.

The Off-Campus Program is highly personalized to support each student on their learning journey. Clonlara's academic advisors work with families to design an educational plan to fit their students' unique interests, needs, and goals. Advisors and mentors then monitor the learning process through FCL forms, portfolios, and presentations.

Off-Campus Program families receive the support of program advisors and choose to follow our educational process outside the school building. Our highly personalized education approach promotes students' independence and self-confidence, and it encourages them to take responsibility for their education with freedom and curricular flexibility. As students identify their goals, passions, and talents, and choose their teaching resources, they set their own timelines and define their own personalized education plans.

Each family is assigned an advising team, which closely follows the student's entire educational journey. The relationship created between the advising team and the family is fundamental to the whole process. Consultations are held, preferably by video call, to create the educational plan, provide training for parents, review reports, and give space for support and advice. Depending on the student's development and maturity, the support provided may be more focused on the student as an autonomous learner capable of directing his or her educational path.



Off-Campus Program students at Clonlara have access to all global, community-driven activities (clubs, family meetings, FCL presentations, interest groups) and online courses (for students for grades 6-12).

5.2 Campus Program

Historian Christopher Jenkins once said, "*Since you force children to be in school every day, the least we can do is make it enjoyable for them to be there.*"

The Clonlara School, Idanha campus building is designed to promote community spirit, creativity, and collaboration. Its central location allows the school community easy access to several sports, cultural, and recreational facilities. The outdoor area is large and wooded, providing an extension of the classrooms into nature, where teamwork skills, problem solving, play, and cooperative games occur naturally.

Inside the building, the classrooms are spacious and filled with abundant natural light and direct access to the outdoors. They are furnished with comfortable, multipurpose furniture that invites both independent and collaborative work.

All classrooms are multidisciplinary and multidimensional to allow the development of interdisciplinary FCL projects in a natural and fluid way. We amply equip our classrooms, according to the age group for which they are intended, with items from various content areas: computers, art supplies, science and laboratory materials, manipulatives, books, and games.

The campus building has a large common area called "The Exploratory." This central space functions as a library, playroom, multimedia space, and makerspace. Filled with comfortable corners and materials to explore, it is the school's space of choice for small presentations, get-togethers, and school-wide meetings. There is also a large multipurpose room where games are played to start the day, presentations are made to a wider audience, and concerts and plays are performed.

Families interested in enrolling their child(ren) in the Campus Program are invited to take a guided tour during which we explain the school's education philosophy. Prospective families may observe the school in action and can ask questions of enrolled students and staff.

If a family feels that the school fits their needs, they will complete an application form, and we will ask that the student spend a day with us on campus. During this visit we will look for a good match between the student and our educational community.

The teacher will observe and talk with the student, assessing whether the student exhibits characteristics that will provide a mutually beneficial relationship. The qualities we look for are academic (has a willingness to learn, academic goals



that align with our resources and strategies, academic readiness), personal (wants to attend Clonlara School, demonstrates interests/passions, shows intrinsic motivation, and is willing to participate), social (has an accepting attitude toward others, non-judgmental, and contributes to the community), and behavioral (is assertive, constructive, creative, and able to have fun).

If the teacher concludes that the student and the school community are a good fit and that the school has the resources to support the student, then the student is invited to enroll.

If it is not possible for the family to visit the campus and for the student to participate in an immersion day (as in the case of the opening year of the Clonlara School, Idanha), we will schedule an interview between the family, the student, and the teaching team by another means to ensure compatibility. Teachers and students develop a relationship based on honesty and trust. The primary goal is, above all, to support the student. The teacher's role is to be a partner in education: to educate the student in a compassionate environment and to enlighten the parents about what we do and why.

At Clonlara School, parents are central to the education process, and the school is not intended to be a place where parents leave their children without having any connection to the daily activities that take place. The best development happens when parents and teachers form a support team for the child. This is our expectation for parents.

Being part of a multi-age community, both in the school and in each classroom, promotes the family environment where students have many opportunities to be supported by more experienced community members and to take on leadership roles, such as organizing community activities and mentoring other students.

In a multi-age classroom, there is no expectation of homogeneity, and all students can (and are encouraged to) support each other in their growth toward mastery in different areas. There are many spontaneous moments when students are challenged within their zone of proximal development, as some of their peers will have a higher level of knowledge in any given area. Students can be mentors for other students' FCL projects in areas where they may have more knowledge.

We foster a familiar and trusting environment by limiting our teacher-student ratio. Each group has a maximum of ten students per adult, with each group having a maximum of twenty children. Groups are always accompanied by the head teacher and at least one other adult. This second adult, the assistant educator, may be a teacher, parent, collaborator, or member of the local community who will support the regular teacher, teach a specific subject, or be a mentor for a project in his or her area of expertise.



At Clonlara, we serve the whole child; we address social and emotional needs so that students can grow and thrive. In addition to creating a strong sense of community and getting to know students as individuals, we consciously work in the area of wellness, addressing physical, social, and emotional well-being. Students are supported in expressing their needs and learning conflict resolution techniques to deal with disagreements. The school encourages students to resolve conflicts themselves with the support from school staff and peers when necessary. Issues affecting the community are addressed directly and compassionately as they arise.

Clonlara School, Idanha is a learning community where all members are valued and empowered to contribute and lead. The school year begins with two weeks of activities that promote team spirit and a sense of community. In this way we create space for students and staff to get to know each other, build relationships of trust, establish rules of operation, and create a joyful and respectful community. Throughout the year, daily activities involving the whole school foster a sense of family. Each day begins with a brief morning meeting and active games. In the middle of the day, everyone gathers again for a check-in meeting to exchange information, discuss any issues, and share celebrations. After a midday lunch, students enjoy free time and quiet reading together. At the end of the day everyone collaborates to tidy up and maintain the space.

As previously mentioned, Clonlara has one, unified pedagogical philosophy, adapted to the context of each program. Below, find a list of Clonlara's pedagogical practices:

Full Circle Learning (FCL)

Academic learning is closely related to each student's interests, strengths, and abilities. FCL is how students organize, direct, and reflect on their learning, as they become intrinsically motivated and reflective lifelong learners. With the support of parents, teachers, peers, and mentors, Clonlara students choose what they would like to learn, how they would like to learn it, how they will demonstrate what they have learned, and how they will present it to the community.

Planning Meetings

Each semester begins with a planning meeting where teachers meet with parents and the student to explore interests, set priorities, and outline a general plan—a highly personalized education plan—for the student's learning. Together, the teachers and parents determine how to support the development of the student's skills in different areas and to detail what kinds of projects the student would like to pursue.



Group FCL

At the beginning of each semester, all groups/classes brainstorm topics of interest in each subject. If enough students are interested in a topic, they plan a group FCL project in collaboration with the teacher. Students list specific areas of interest within the topic and ask questions that will guide the learning experience. The teacher works with the group to find resources and mentors, if needed, and to plan experiences that will support the learning. The group decides how to document and present what they have learned. In addition to contributing to student learning, these projects provide an opportunity for teachers to model the FCL process to students.

Individual FCL

Some FCL projects are independent.

The student chooses the topic, explores the possibilities through pre-research, identifies the resources needed, obtains a mentor, sets the learning objectives, and carries out the FCL project with feedback and support from faculty and mentors. Individual FCLs can also include experiences outside the school building, including internships and online classes.

Portfolios

Student learning is documented in portfolios. Students maintain a portfolio where they document their planning, learning, and reflection throughout their FCL projects. As part of the FCL process, students select evidence of work that demonstrates their learning in each project to include in their portfolio. This can take many forms, depending on the project, the maturity of the student, and their interests and goals. The portfolio may be a physical portfolio or a digital portfolio documented the Clonlara App.

Presentations

In addition to presentations to their group/class or other audiences selected by the students, we regularly schedule time for students to share their learning with families and members of our global learning community. Each semester we have two global FCL presentations scheduled where students present their work to a wider audience. They receive feedback and questions from that audience which provides deeper reflection about their learning. At the end of each semester, there is a portfolio presentation where all students display their portfolios in the style of a science fair and field questions from visitors.



Field Trips

Frequent field trips are an important part of the Clonlara educational experience. Students and teachers plan field trips collaboratively, choosing trips that enhance learning, allow exploration of career and educational opportunities, provide service to the community, and develop collaborative skills among students. Some visits are with the entire school community and others are specific to a group/class.

When you enter a Clonlara classroom you might encounter very different scenarios. Sometimes the whole group is working on the same Full Circle Learning (FCL) project, so you may hear students deciding, in a democratic way, what they want to research. They may all be watching a video related to the topic they are studying. You may find them discussing something they learned, doing an experiment, or conducting research on the internet or in books. You may walk into an empty room because research has led students outdoors or to another place in the surrounding community.

Even when working on a group FCL, students might be working independently or in small groups. If the FCL is in a final stage, students could be sharing their learning, either orally or through drawings, writing, or another means that makes sense to them.

Individual FCL work time means that each student is working on a different topic. Students may still be working in small groups doing a variety of things: practicing a song, working on a textbook, reading a newspaper, researching on the computer, and more. Some students will be working completely independently while others will have an adult or another student by their side helping them to develop their FCL.

Some periods of the day are dedicated to specific subjects. In a math, science, or social studies period, you may find the whole group of students discussing a problem, playing or creating a game, doing an experiment, or working individually. For all subjects of study, learners build their own knowledge with the support of their teacher as they research individually and in groups, at their own pace.

Organization of groups/classes

At Clonlara School, we do not consider grade levels to be the best benchmark of a child's growth and development. While children reach developmental milestones within similar age ranges, age is not the most accurate indicator of academic readiness.

We group learners into three flexible groups, according to their school grade, level of development, and specific needs:



Youngers (1st - 5th grade/age 6 to 11)

Middles (6th - 8th grade/age 11 to 14)

Olders (9th - 12th grade/age 14 to 18)

We may divide large groups into smaller groups, depending on enrollment. Students may stay in these groups for all or a portion of their day, depending on their academic levels, social needs, or subject interests.

With a maximum of twenty students, each group is always accompanied by at least two adults: the group's head teacher and an assistant teacher, who may rotate from group to group.

There are times when students from all groups work together, and they may have some classes in common based on their interests and desires.

Students in all groups and at all ages follow the Full Learning Circle Model in their daily activities.

a) Youngers Group (1st to 5th grades/age 6 to 11)

If justified by the number of children and/or the level of development, this group will be divided between pre-readers and independent readers (grades 1-2 and grades 3-5).

Playing, exploring, and moving are in a child's nature, so in our Youngers group, learning takes place through active, multi-sensory experiences, using outdoor space whenever possible.

In a rich environment and with adults who are affable, attentive, and enthusiastic about the world around them, the child will master essential learning in a way that is very meaningful to them.

In the early years, we prioritize the development of relational skills, language competencies (Portuguese and English), and mathematical reasoning, ensuring students work on practicing these skills through all FCL projects.

We explore science and social studies through group FCLs, allowing students to choose topics of study under the guidance of the teacher. These FCLs range in length from two weeks to one month. In group FCLs, we intentionally focus on the development of language, mathematical, and artistic skills.

Each student creates a personal FCL for Portuguese, English, and mathematics. We help learners construct personal FCLs so they can complete their work as independently as possible. At times, students will incorporate various manipulatives and learning aids into their projects.



Often, we introduce math, Portuguese, and English concepts to the whole group through mini lessons. After presenting the concepts, we provide multiple opportunities for application and discussion in everyday situations or in fictional situations, allowing each child to use their creativity to share their acquired knowledge with the rest of the group. In mathematics, we most often employ strategies from two sources: Cognitively Guided Instruction and Mathematical Mindsets.

In addition to individual FCLs in Portuguese, English, and mathematics, students also develop two to three individual FCLs in their areas of interest per semester. We incorporate practice in the arts as well as health and wellness throughout the week. Sometimes, we plan whole-school activities, and at other times, we limit these activities to small groups or classes.

Because Youngers learn best in context, through hands-on, play-based activity, from the concrete to the abstract, we incorporate an abundance of these kinds of experiences in the classroom, thus giving students the tools to become progressively more independent in their learning.

b) Middles Group (6th to 8th grade/age 11 to 14)

The age range between ten and fourteen can sometimes be complicated. As children enter puberty, changes in emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development occur at different rates, bringing an unfamiliar vulnerability. We aim to foster a supportive, compassionate, and nurturing environment for the Middles where they feel physically and emotionally safe.

The work done we do with the Middles is a natural continuation of the work we began in the Youngers group. At this stage, we promote greater independence and responsibility for actions, while providing a secure support network. We allow learners to explore their interests and have more independence in choosing their studies. Students can begin to explore an academic or artistic subject/topic in more depth.

This growing autonomy is realized, for example, at the possibility of pursuing an individual FCL when the science or social studies group FCL may not be aligned with personal study plans or interests. The number of individual FCLs for Middles may therefore be higher per student than for Youngers.

At this level, we introduce science and social studies concepts through mini lessons. Sometimes, mini lessons emerge from student challenges and "big questions."



Increasing focus is given to the specific strengths or interests demonstrated by each student through the development of individual FCLs, supported by mentors who are experts in the field.

Middles may “shadow” Olders in specific areas, according to their level of development and interest. For example, if the Olders are developing an FCL in marine biology or programming or realistic design—or any topic that may be an area of interest for one or more Middles, then those Middles may have the necessary skills and interests to follow the Older’s work and will, therefore, be included in the project.

c) Olders Group (9th to the 12th grade/age 14 to 18)

Throughout the course of the learning process, we expect students to begin to know themselves and their goals so well that they can take charge of their learning and follow their interests on their own.

Thus, our main goal, which takes on even greater significance in the Olders group, is to nurture the individual interests of each student while helping them become autonomous as well as active and engaged members of the community. Self-directed students will gradually and slowly take responsibility for their learning, and that learning will be in step with their maturity and preparation. Teachers of the Olders group aim to increasingly reduce their role as instructor and to move more toward that of mentor and guide as the students take on more and more responsibility for their learning.

The work is planned and developed based on each student's graduation requirements, so in the planning meetings, in addition to considering post-secondary goals, interests, and talents, special attention is paid to the outstanding requirements.

To achieve their goals through FCL, students design their own projects, define their objectives, and plan their strategies using a wide variety of resources, which include Clonlara faculty, external programs, independent work materials, volunteers, internships, online courses, museums, libraries, and more. To complement individual development, a strong focus is also placed on involving all students in the group, including defining the group FCLs to be developed.

At the beginning of each semester, the Olders group brainstorms together about the topics in which they are interested and on which they need to work. When enough students are interested in a topic, they plan a group FCL to design a course around it with the collaboration of the teacher. The difference between the Olders group and the others is that in this group certain courses are usually



offered in three-year cycles such as geography, government, history, and rhetoric. Students needing to complete one of these courses at a different time will have the option of doing so in an independent FCL or, in some cases, through a course delivered online.

Because so much learning now uses online tools, even in post-secondary education, Olders must complete at least one credit of online coursework during high school. Clonlara offers a wide variety of online high school courses, and all our on-campus students are entitled to one credit per year in available online courses.

Credits may be obtained in these three ways:

- Group FCLs led by a teacher
- Independent FCLs
- Online courses

It is important to reinforce that students are assessed not only on their academic skills, but also on the essential skills for the 21st century, using the Profile of a Graduate as published by the Michigan Department of Education and the Portuguese Ministry of Education's Perfil do Aluno à Saída da Escolaridade Obrigatória as a benchmark.

As a way of applying learning to real life contexts and developing soft skills such as problem solving, creative innovation, and communication in a collaborative way, all Olders annually conduct an interdisciplinary group FCL around the theme of sustainability. They start by researching, as a group, pertinent issues for the local (or global) community related to sustainability, and from that research they propose project ideas. This FCL is developed throughout the entire school year and is presented to the community at the end of the final semester. This project presents the opportunity for students to use all the different resources they have available to them through Clonlara School and throughout our local and global community. It also leads them to address current issues while providing meaningful service to the community with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations General Assembly.

Although emphasized in all student groups, some skills and activities take on greater relevance in the Olders group and are further described below:

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Through group/class activities, school-wide events, and integrated FCLs, students develop skills in design thinking, innovation, and entrepreneurship. STEAM challenges, field trips, interdisciplinary and practical sustainability FCLs,



and partnerships with organizations and companies provide opportunities to develop these skills in context.

Community Involvement

The local community of Idanha-a-Nova, the global Clonlara School community, and the alumni community are an extension of Clonlara School, Idanha. As part of their learning experience, students take advantage of local resources and global connections which include finding mentors, going on field trips, taking advantage of local offerings such as lectures and meetings, participating in volunteer service, and finding opportunities for partnerships and internships.

Involvement in the community is also evident in our volunteer service requirement. Although students can complete volunteer hours, in part, through service to Clonlara School, a portion of their required hours should be directed toward the needs of the local community. Students may choose to serve the disadvantaged, the hungry, animal support groups, nature preservation organizations, the elderly, or other institutions where they see a need.

Clonlara School Learning Center

In addition to offering a program for full-time students, Clonlara School acts as an After-School Learning Center. From 3:30 to 5:30 pm, we invite Campus and Off-Campus Program learners as well as students from the local community to join us for educational enrichment activities including 21st century skills labs; tutoring sessions or clubs; workshops in a variety of different subjects; or projects such as art, science, programming, or 3D modeling.

Skills Laboratories for the 21st Century

These labs are short workshops designed to help students develop 21st century skills. We embed these skills in our Campus and Off-Campus Programs, and we also practice them in skills laboratories which are available to students during after-school hours. Topics include design thinking, creative innovation, social emotional skills, growth mindset, entrepreneurship, and other 21st century skills.

International Students

As part of a global community, Clonlara welcomes international students to the campus. In order to increase the participation of students from other parts of the world, Clonlara School plans to promote the Olders group of our Campus Program through its international and affiliate programs. We hope to encourage social and cultural engagement between international families through student exchanges where local families volunteer to house international students.



Annual Trip

One of the highlights of the Olders' year is an end-of-year trip. With the guidance of teachers, the accompaniment of school staff, and the permission of their parents, students plan, fundraise, and enjoy a two- or three-day trip.

At the beginning of the school year, students begin planning by researching potential locations and activities. They prepare and present a proposal, including a budget and fundraising plan, to the Olders' teacher. Once approved, they create a timeline and implement logistics.

6. Protocols and Partnerships

Partnerships are central to the development of any project.

The Clonlara School, Idanha building belongs to Idanha-a-Nova City Hall via an agreement with Associação Clonlara Portugal, the entity that owns Clonlara School, Idanha through a Commodity Contract.

Facilities and equipment unique to the Idanha-a-Nova location—many within walking distance to the school—enhance Clonlara School, Idanha: Municipal Swimming Pool Complex; the Tennis Club; the Cultural Center and its auditorium; the Municipal Library; and the Municipal Stadium. The Catarina Chitas Music Academy - Idanhense Philharmonic is a future partner who already develops activities in the local community and will be an indispensable complement to the school's educational proposal.

Equally important is the proximity of the José Silvestre Ribeiro School Grouping and its school facility, including their gymnasium which will serve as a space for our students' sports activities.

The Clonlara Portugal Association is working to establish partnerships for the use of these spaces as a support to our pedagogical approach.

Clonlara considers the cooperation with local organizations to be vital. These connections serve to build bridges with the local community, attracting and involving our students—and the entire educational community in the region—both culturally and socially.



7. Team

Clonlara School, Idanha consists of a creative and dynamic team of people with experience in different areas such as education, psychology, special education, pedagogy, community projects, and many others. Our staff has in common an enormous will to build a school oriented toward the children of today through an innovative and contemporary vision of education.

Our team is further supported by a global community of 60+ employees from all over the world with diverse cultural and academic backgrounds who work closely together on the various projects Clonlara develops.

Our educators have academic training relevant to the levels they teach, and they learn our philosophy and approach through initial and ongoing professional training. Those who regularly interact with students—whether they are teachers, assistants, advisors, mentors, or volunteers—frequently engage in educational training through Clonlara School.

Our teachers and advisors are lifelong learners themselves, willing to share their passions and personal projects and willing to be "co-learners" with students. They understand the value of every step of the Full Circle Learning Model (FCL) from start to finish. They know that using the personalized approach of FCL allows for the study of any topic. They are well-versed in applying active methodologies and progressive educational practices, and they are committed to building strong relationships with each student.

8. Evaluation of the Educational Project

Clonlara School has more than 50+ years of experience; however, as a campus outside the United States of America, the Clonlara School, Idanha will be a pioneer.

For this reason, although Clonlara School values reflection and evaluation as an organization at the Idanha-a-Nova Campus, even more emphasis will be placed on this practice.

In addition to the biannual evaluation tools already in place such as reflection, evaluation, adaptation of the educational project, and pedagogical practice, this evaluation practice will be further rooted in the weekly meetings of pedagogical coordination.

As part of its self-evaluation, Clonlara School uses questionnaires throughout the school year. Students, families, teachers, and other staff members answer one satisfaction questionnaire per semester. These questionnaires are an overall assessment of activities and performance throughout the school year, and their results are used to produce conclusions in the annual reports.



The annual activity and self-evaluation reports are also key instruments in the evaluation process of the educational project. These reports include the necessary components required by accrediting entities.

Additionally, these reports are sent to Clonlara's education director who reviews them along with the leadership team. To prepare the self-evaluation report, a member of the Clonlara's U.S. pedagogical team will visit Clonlara School, Idanha every year.

Clonlara is working to establish collaborative partnerships with entities related to education, namely higher education, to monitor and support the Clonlara, Idanha-a-Nova project. We envision these partnerships as complements to the external evaluations.