

AIRISS model: Six Character Strengths for the Twenty-first Century

Empowering Families and Teachers for Quality Education



by José Manuel López Potente

Education today faces the challenge of developing well-rounded individuals who are prepared for an ever-changing world. This requires not only developing academic competencies but also cultivating essential life skills. In this context, the AIRISS model is presented as a holistic approach focusing on the development of six character strengths: Autonomy, Identity, Resilience, Integrity, Sociability and Wisdom. These strengths not only prepare students for the personal and social challenges of the twenty-first century but also foster values education, with families playing a key role.

This article explains what the AIRISS model is, how it can be implemented in the classroom and the importance of supporting families during their children's educational process.

THE SIX CHARACTER STRENGTHS IN THE AIRISS MODEL

At the core of the AIRISS model is the development of six character strengths that are fundamental to students' growth in today's world. Below, we outline each of these strengths and their importance in the educational process.

1. Autonomy

Autonomy is a person's ability to take decisions for themselves consciously and responsibly. In the context of education, it means that students not only gain knowledge but also develop the ability to manage their own learning, take informed decisions and accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

The key to fostering autonomy is preparing students to be curious, proactive, self-directed and capable of facing new challenges. Teachers play a crucial role in providing an environment that promotes reflection, decision-making and personal responsibility. This is achieved through activities that challenge students to solve problems for themselves and reflect on their choices.

Autonomy is not just an academic skill but a strength that extends to everyday life, from managing emotions to taking moral decisions. In the AIRISS model, students learn to regulate their urges and defer gratification when needed, thus enhancing their self-control. In addition, they have the opportunity to develop a healthy interdependence in their relationships and a sense of meaning and purpose in what they do.

AIRISS aims for students to develop a strong identity based on self-awareness and self-respect

2. Identity

Identity is students' ability to know themselves, understand their values, strengths and limitations and act accordingly. This strength is essential for the development of healthy self-esteem and a personal life plan.

The AIRISS model aims for students to develop a strong identity based on self-awareness and self-respect, and to interact with others assertively. Through activities that promote personal reflection, metacognition and self-awareness, teachers can help students to build their identity coherently and consistently. In addition, it is important to create an environment where students feel safe to express who they are, value differences and work on their personal growth.

A clear, positive identity is essential for students to deal with life's challenges with confidence and a sense of mission. The construction of this identity is a process that involves both the learner and their family and school environment.

3. Resilience

Resilience is the ability to overcome difficulties, adapt to change and emerge stronger from adversity. When educating students, this strength is crucial so they can face the challenges in school and their personal lives.

The AIRISS model fosters resilience by helping students to develop tools to manage stress, overcome failure and learn from it. Teachers should create optimistic environments where mistakes are considered a normal part of learning, forgiveness is encouraged and effort and perseverance are valued over immediate results. This involves seeing problems and obstacles with hope, as opportunities for growth, and having the ability to find creative solutions.

Resilience is also worked on with families to help them to understand the importance of not overprotecting children and young people but instead empowering them and allowing them to learn from their own mistakes and challenges, thus fostering an inner strength that will be useful throughout their lives.

4. Integrity

Integrity refers to acting in accordance with personal

and ethical values and standing firm on the principles that guide our actions. In education, this strength is fundamental in developing people who are loyal, sincere, responsible and consistent in their values and beliefs.

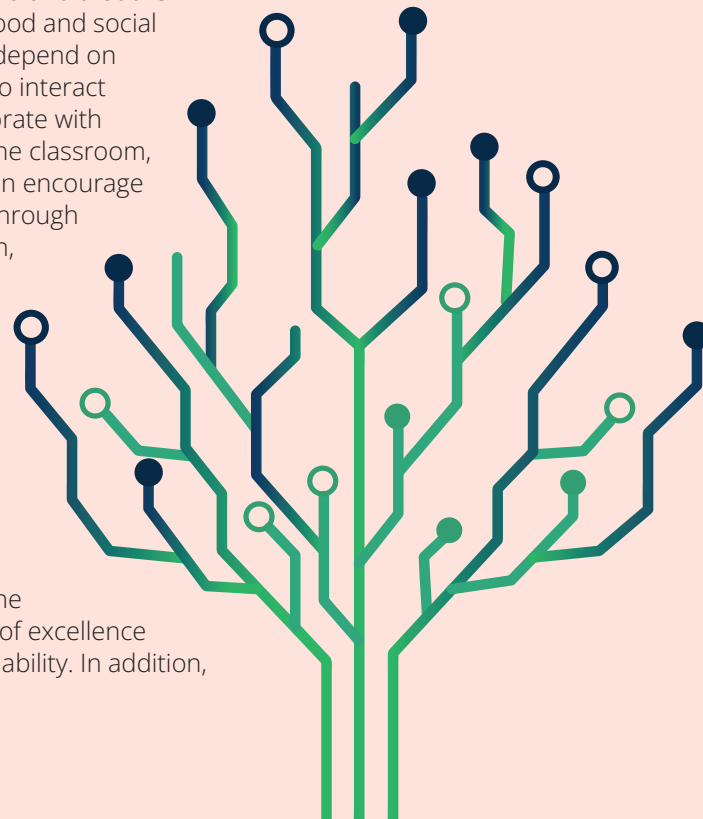
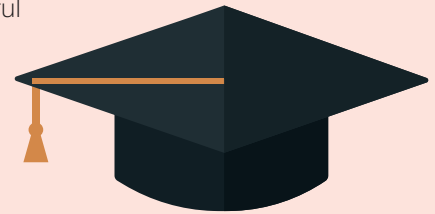
In the AIRISS model, integrity is fostered by teaching students to take ethical decisions, even when they are difficult or unpopular. Teachers can raise debates about ethical and moral dilemmas in the classroom to help students to develop critical thinking about what is right and wrong and act with commitment in their interpersonal relationships.

In addition, integrity is reinforced by the example provided by teachers and families. Students learn as much from what they are taught as from what they observe in those around them, so it is essential that both school and home promote behaviour consistent with the values they wish to promote.

5. Sociability

Sociability is the ability to interact with others respectfully and effectively. It involves social-emotional skills such as empathy, listening, communication, cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution.

The AIRISS model understands that human beings are interdependent, that we share a natural world and that the common good and social well-being depend on our ability to interact and collaborate with others. In the classroom, teachers can encourage sociability through cooperation, activities that promote dialogue, respect for a diversity of opinions and values related to a job well done or an ethic of excellence and sustainability. In addition,














	 AUTONOMY	 IDENTITY	 RESILIENCE	 INTEGRITY	 SOCIABILITY	 WISDOM
 PHYSICAL	value of things	personal management	healthy life	authenticity	sustainability	value of life
 EMOTIONAL	self-control	emotional awareness	optimism	self-esteem	empathy	flexibility
 SOCIAL	interdependence	assertiveness	forgiveness	loyalty and sincerity	communication	service
 RATIONAL	curiosity	metacognition	creativity and imagination	critical thinking	work and cooperation	strategic thinking
 TRASCENDENT	meaning and purpose	mission	hope	commitment	love	global vision

Figure 1. Table AIRISS Model

Teachers need to create optimistic environments, where mistakes are considered a normal part of learning

it is important to teach students to resolve conflicts constructively, always seeking solutions where both parties benefit (win-win approach), as well as personal appreciation for people.

The development of this strength also involves families, who should foster their children's ability to interact positively with others based on mutual respect and understanding.

6. Wisdom

Wisdom refers to not only academic knowledge but also the ability to take decisions with a global vision so that they benefit the people involved and bring added value. Therefore, it means they act judiciously and in solidarity with everyone. This requires acting flexibly, judiciously and ethically. In the AIRISS model, wisdom involves using knowledge, experience and values to guide actions to serve the common good and respect for the dignity of all human life.

Teachers can promote wisdom in students by encouraging critical reflection on complex decisions and having them analyse the consequences of their actions and consider the ethical values underlying each choice. It is essential for students to learn to act with strategic thinking, not only in terms of their immediate desires but also by thinking about the long-term impact of their decisions on their own lives and the lives of others.

As a strength, wisdom is closely related to self-knowledge and reflection, skills that need to be developed in both the school and family environment.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

At AIRISS, the teacher plays an essential role that goes beyond transmitting academic knowledge to foster integral growth that encompasses the emotional, social, physical, rational and transcendent dimensions. The teacher becomes a creator of meaningful experiences in the classroom by designing activities that encourage reflection, collaboration and self-knowledge. These activities seek to not only develop cognitive competencies but also promote growth in the six strengths of the AIRISS model. By focusing learning on the process and not just the outcomes, teachers create

a positive emotional climate where each student feels valued and motivated to explore their personal and collective potential.

The personal tutor is a key figure in the implementation of personalised education within the AIRISS model. Through regular meetings with students and their families, the tutor personalises growth strategies based on each student's strengths and areas for improvement. This close support allows AIRISS proposals to be uniquely adapted to each student, guiding them in their personal and formative development and aligning their personal goals with the educational objectives. The tutor is not only in charge of academic monitoring but also cultivates the virtues and skills each student needs to face challenges in a resilient, ethical and purposeful way.

CONCLUSION

The AIRISS model offers a holistic view of education, focusing on the development of six character strengths

that are fundamental to achieving a fulfilling life. For teachers, applying this model at school and in the classroom means supporting all students' growth, especially the most vulnerable ones, by creating a school culture that fosters the development of the entire educational community's strengths. Likewise, supporting families is essential so that students receive consistent and constant support both in school and at home, which will enable them to successfully face future challenges.

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