



# Maslow before we Bloom

*SANDRA RODRIGUES*



# Maslow before we Bloom: make belonging and love a priority in your practice

SANDRA RODRIGUES

Students have to Maslow before they can Bloom. What are the characteristics of the Bloom taxonomy? What does it have to do with Maslow's hierarchy of needs? What do they have to do with our English classes? Here I share some ideas that may help you make belonging and love a priority in your practice.

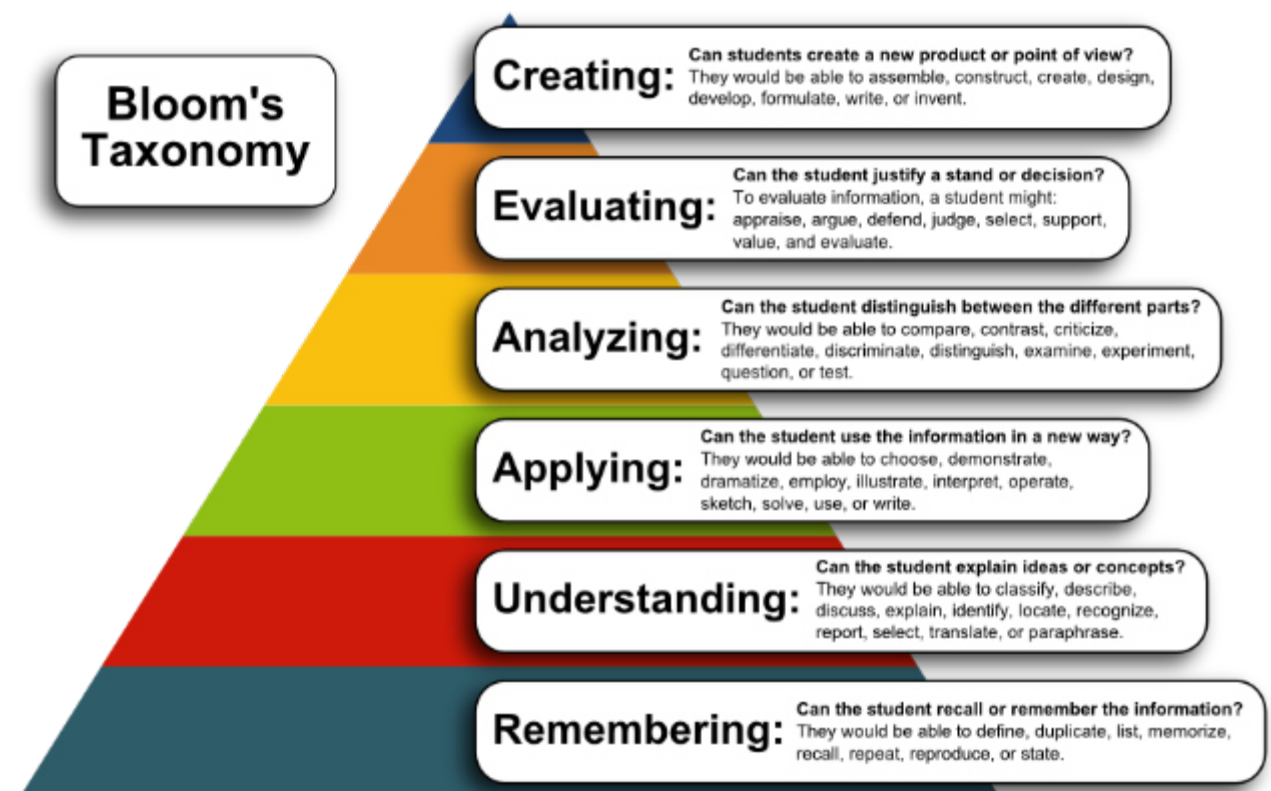
## Maslow before we Bloom, what does it mean?

Students have to Maslow before they can Bloom. This popular quote in education brings the idea that we, educators, should meet our students' basic needs for safety and belonging before academic learning can be fully considered and embraced. (Yeah, ok, that sounds simple and obvious but is it really possible? Are we talking about the same Bloom? Are we talking about Bloom taxonomy?)

## What are the characteristics of the Bloom taxonomy?

Bloom's taxonomy is a hierarchical organisational structure of educational objectives. It was the result of the work of multidisciplinary specialists from several US universities in the 1950s, led by Benjamin S. Bloom (1913-1999).

The classification proposed by Bloom divided the possibilities of learning into three major domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Each of

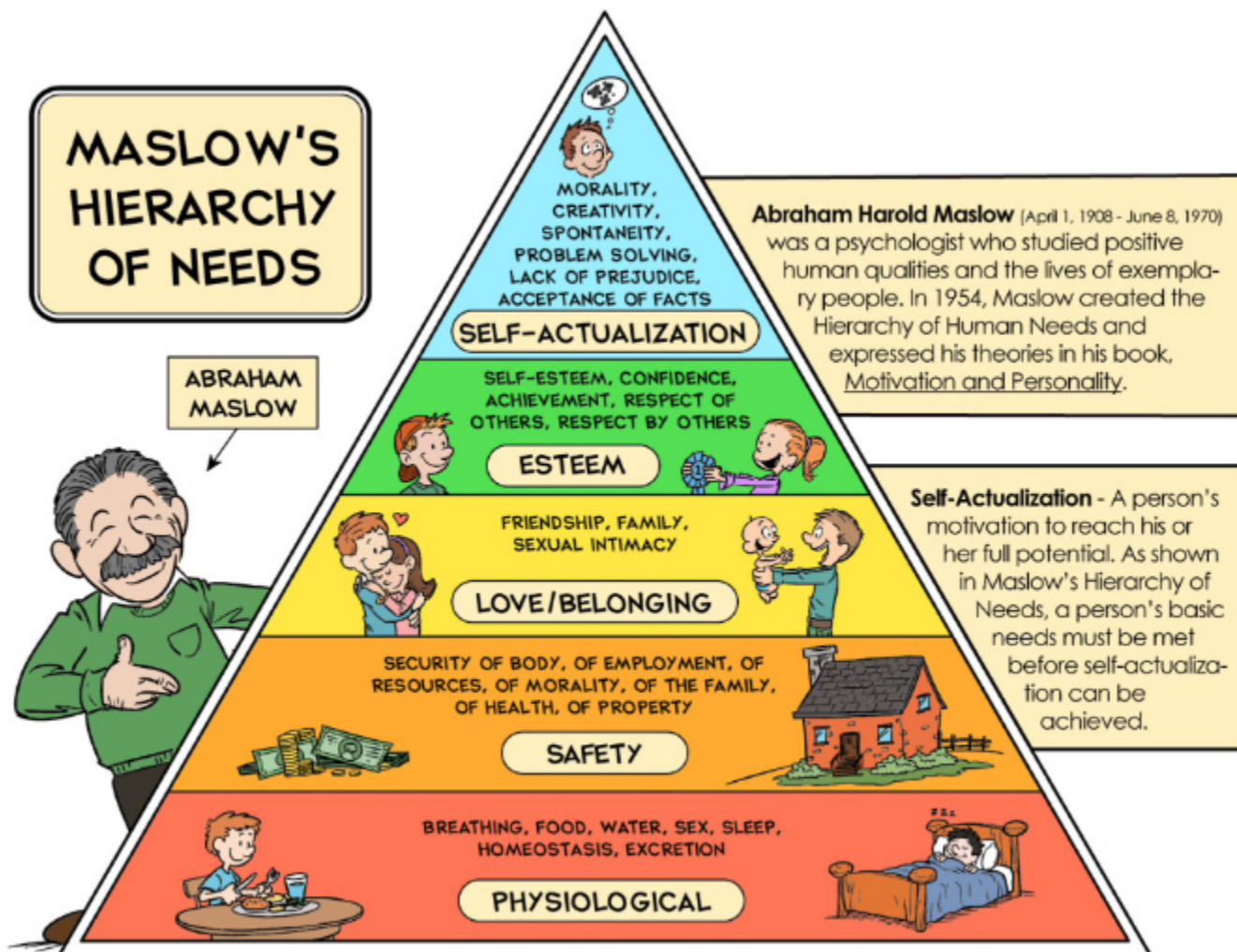


these domains has several levels of depth of learning. That is why Bloom's classification is called hierarchy: each level is more complex and more specific than the previous one. (Ok, it is the same Bloom, the same taxonomy, what about Maslow?)

## Maslow's hierarchy of needs

The Maslow Pyramid, also called Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is a concept also created in the 1950s by the American psychologist Abraham H. Maslow (1908-1970). Its objective is to determine the set of conditions necessary for an individual to achieve satisfaction, be it personal or professional. Hence, how a person develops through Maslow's hierarchy directly impacts their capacity and attention toward academic and social-emotional learning.

(Nice, but, what does it have to do with my classes? What does it have to do with the curriculum in my school? I guess this is not the priority at the moment).



## What is the priority in our schools?

Aristotle (382-322 BC) used to say that "there is nothing in the intellect that was not before in the senses". In agreement with Aristotle, neuroscience research also shows us the benefits that a stimulus-rich learning environment can bring to our brain. Furthermore, each year we discover the importance of looking for different ways to teach the same content. We know, for example, that by incorporating the five senses into our



lesson planning, we can stimulate learning by making several areas of our brain work simultaneously. Thus, the more senses are explored, the greater the chance that new information will be stored in our long-term memory.

However, how often do we consider the importance and benefits of multi-sensory learning in our classes? How often do we combine



social, emotional, affective, and cognitive development? How often do we make time to integrate social and emotional learning into academics?

(Ok, ok. Easier said than done. Always true. Never helpful.

Of course, I know we should provide a welcome and safe environment for our students.

Of course, I know we should make belonging and love a priority in our practice.

Of course, I know we should put Maslow before we Bloom, but, wait a second.

### Maslow before we Bloom? Who is "we"?)

#### The "we" is about YOU

Yes dear, you! The teacher! You will not be able to provide a welcoming, safe and loving environment for your students if you're not feeling good about yourself. This sense of belonging starts with us, with YOU being the priority.

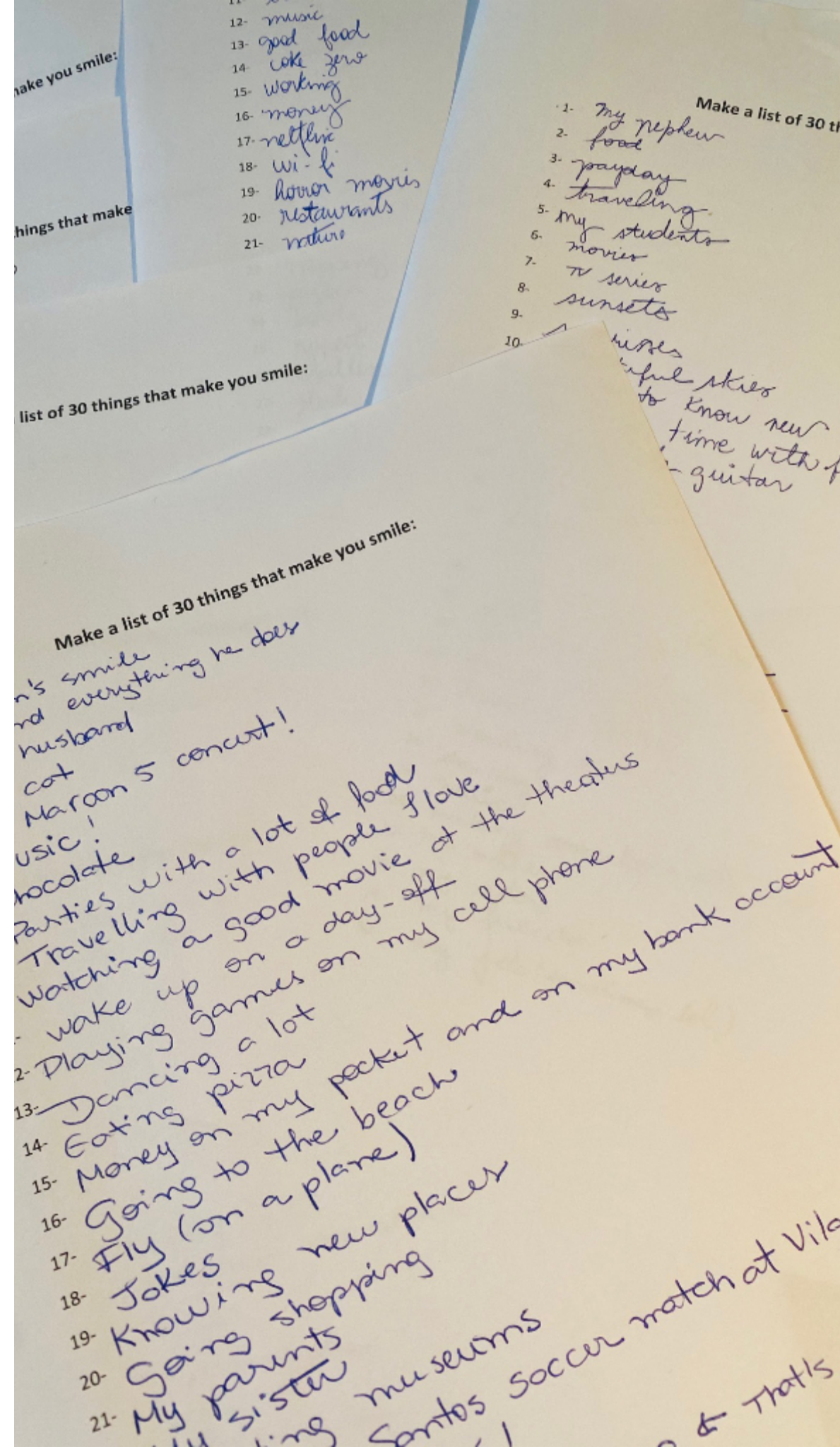
(Gee... how can I be the priority? How should I start? Do you have a list or something?)

#### Creating positive routines (for yourself, of course!)

We, teachers, are masters in developing great routines for our students, right?

We have warm-ups, transition activities, attention grabbers, brain breaks, and wrap-ups. All for our students. What about us? What is your "warm-up" first thing in the morning? What are your brain breaks during classes? Anything from the list of the 30 things that makes you happy?

(Ok, got it! Now that I have my routine, can we talk about our classrooms?)





## Classroom x Learning Spaces



Schools all over the world are adapting their spaces and embracing outdoor education. Some schools do not even have classrooms anymore. They have learning spaces. When you come back to your school, you will probably have to teach in different places. Allow yourself some time to be alone in this space. Then call your colleagues, discuss together the new possibilities. Some teachers tend to go outdoors with their students and give the same class as they were in the classroom. Remember, the environment is also an educator.

(Deal! I'll investigate the environment with my peers. But what should I do with my students?)

Sandra Rodrigues has been teaching English for 22 years. Founder of Smart Learning Brazil, she is a specialist in the Reggio Emilia Approach, educational consultant for Oxford University Press, and teacher trainer in Brazil and Kenya. Currently based in the Netherlands, she has a specialisation in teaching English to children and a Masters in Education from the Open University in the UK.

[www.smartlearningbrazil.com](http://www.smartlearningbrazil.com).

## "Just let them be themselves"

According to the poem "The Hundred Languages of Children", kids (no matter their age) have a hundred languages. We, teachers, also have a hundred languages. A hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking. Are we aware of our students' languages? Are we aware of our own languages? Piaget used to say that play is the work of children. Well, we know that in some schools the "playtime" is getting shorter and shorter every year. However, if we want to put Maslow before Bloom, if we really want to put love and belonging into practice while considering a hundred languages of our students, do not open your coursebooks and do not worry about the curriculum or Bloom taxonomy yet.

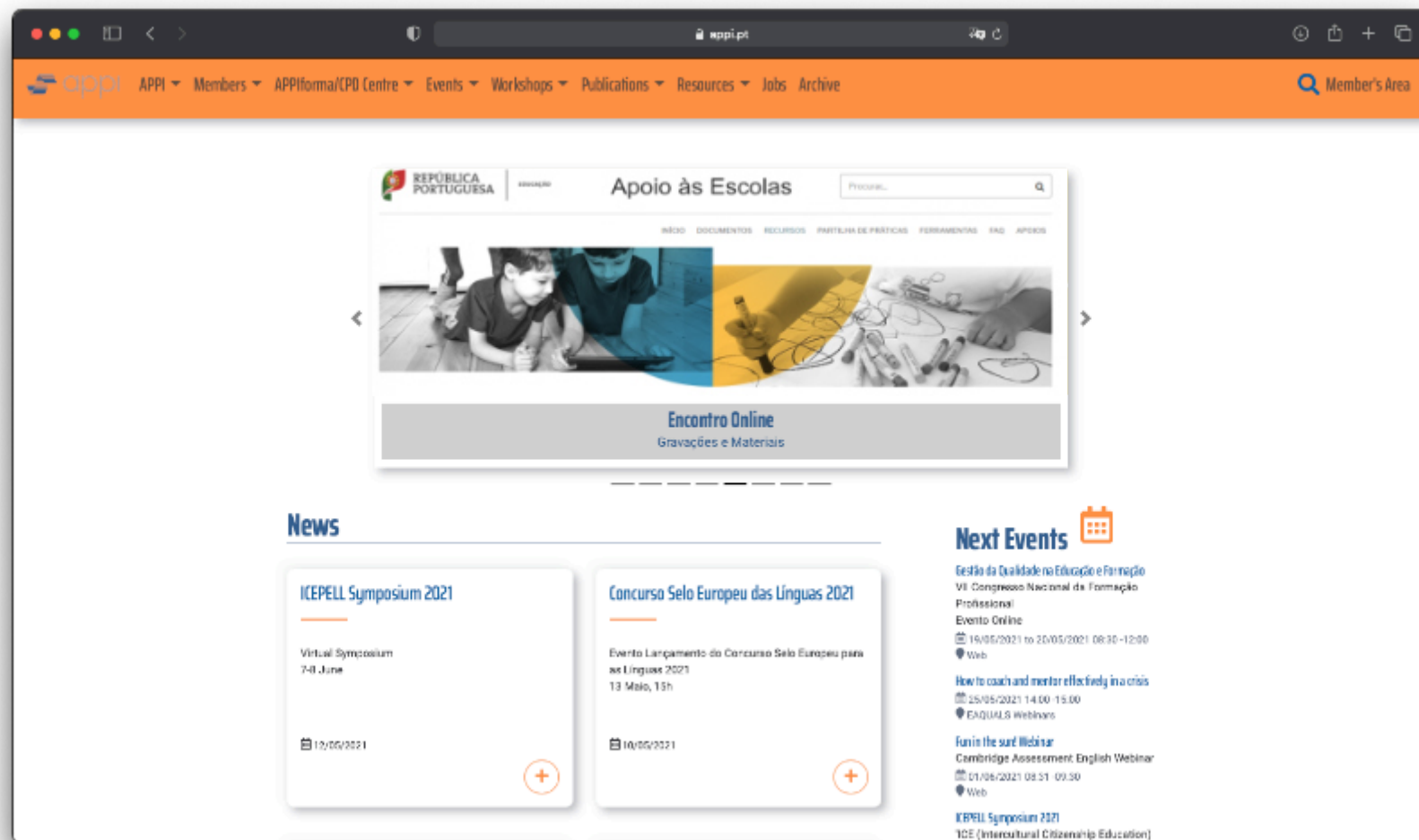
Let your students play! Let them bloom! Just let them be themselves!

## Bibliography

- Edwards C., Gandini L. & Forman G., *I Cento Linguaggi dei Bambini*, Edizioni Junior, 1995
- Freire, P., *Pedagogia da Autonomia*, Paz e Terra, 2011
- Hattie, J., *Visible Learning for Teachers*, Routledge, 2012
- Maslow, A.H. *A Theory of Human Motivation*, Wilder Publication, 2013



# Visit the new APPI website



www.appi.pt