



May 27, 2020

State of the School MEMO

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Dear CommuniTEA,

At TEA, we believe in helping our students (and ourselves) learn how to adapt and thrive in challenging situations (good timing, right?). We believe all students deserve a relevant, purposeful and engaging education (in person and virtually). We believe young people can have a positive impact on their world and the world around them, right now and perhaps now more than ever.

These principles remain at the core of our culture and mindset @ TEA. You know them because you are with us too.

If you witnessed any of the [8th grade passages last week](#), you also know our students have learned how to adapt and thrive by being pushed beyond their comfort zone. In their videos and presentations, it was clear these young people are ready to tackle their next adventure and are precisely the kind of humans we need in the world today.

One of our rising 9th graders, who has been at TEA since our first year said, “Facing challenges may be really difficult, but it’s necessary to figure out the person you are. It’s important to step into your fears and do what you care about. That’s what matters.”

Taking this advice from one of our students as we look ahead to next fall, we need to step into our fears and stay the course. That’s what matters.

We’ve got this. And we know those organizations who can stabilize, stay the course and adapt quickly come out of challenges stronger.

Sincerely,

Mara and Taylor



TEA Program: Learning How to Adapt and Thrive

By Mara Jenkins

As we look ahead, we know we will need to continue to roll with the punches, as we have been doing for the past nine years. We will lean into our core values and help young people learn how to adapt and thrive in today's changing world.

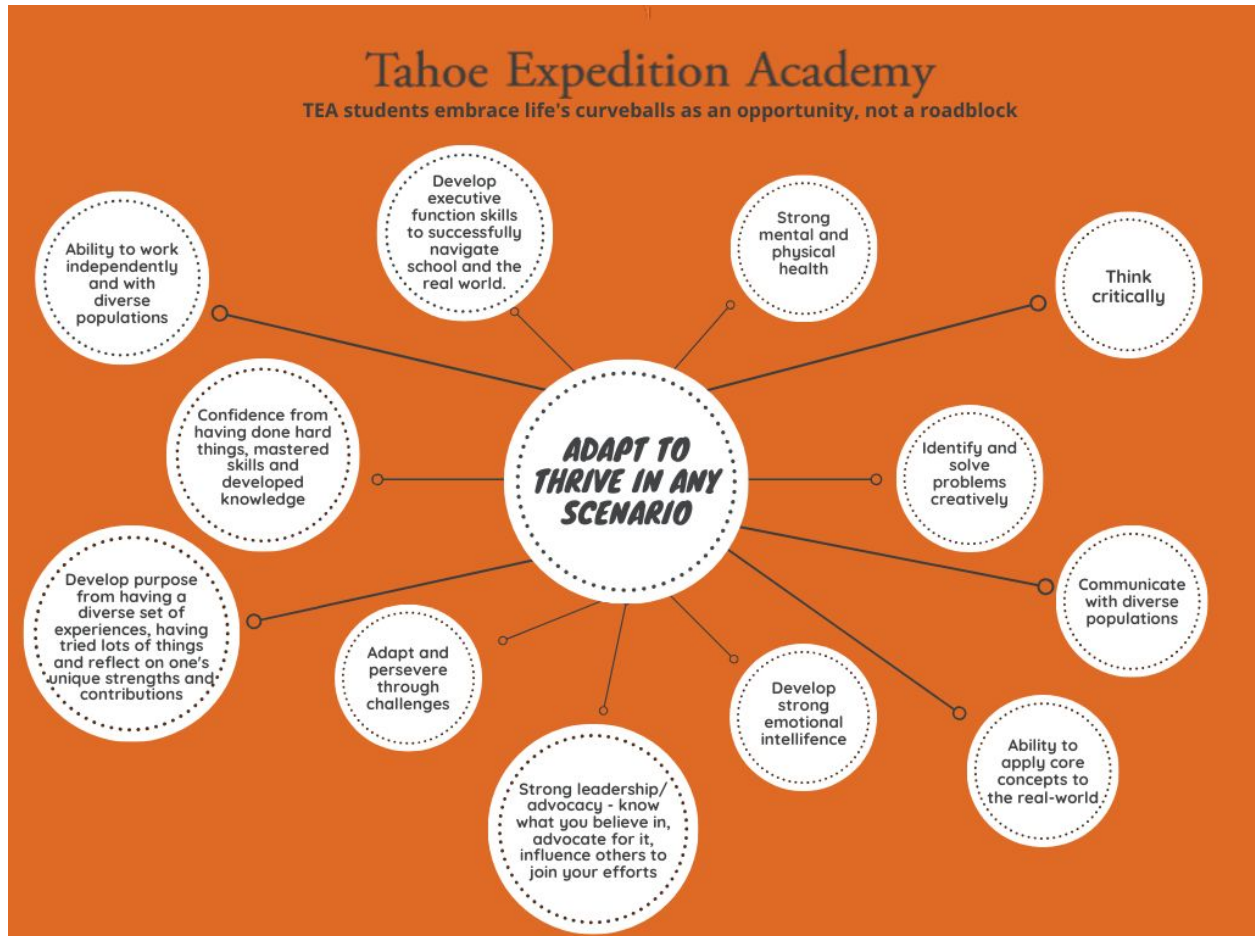
How will we do this? Continue to provide a plethora of real experiences with a variety of experts that push students outside of their comfort zones, regardless of the scenario.

We are actively planning for 4 different scenarios for the 2020-21 school year. The [CDC issued guidelines](#) for schools last week, and we are working with our team to ensure we utilize their guidelines to provide a safe environment for our students. We are very grateful to our strong team for their hard work on this. In addition, we will be eliciting feedback from all parents and students to evaluate how to support our families' various needs paired with our learner outcomes.

We anticipate the need to be extremely flexible for the 2020-2021 school year, as it very likely could include moving between all of these scenarios at various times of the year. With each scenario, **the most important outcome for our students is teaching them how to adapt and thrive in today's changing world. This is our promise and commitment to you, our parents, and our students.**

ALL SCENARIOS

In all scenarios for next year, we will continue to develop the key academic, social-emotional and life skills that help our students adapt to thrive in today's changing world.





ALL SCENARIOS - Continued

Here we've outlined the overarching components for our Elementary and MS/HS programs that will be in place next year, regardless of the scenario we implement.

Overarching Components: PreK-5th Grades

- PK, K2 & 3-5 TEAcher teams
- Leaning into more differentiation that looks at both social-emotional readiness levels as well as academic readiness.
- Leaning into a scaffolded approach to teach students responsibility and initiative while increasing the options for student voice and choice.
- In line with research for deeper learning, students will have an increase of appropriate constructive adversity inside the classroom to grapple with concepts and develop adaptability and perseverance skills.
- 3-5 Teaching TEAm:
 - Colleen and Kate as math and science teachers
 - Carolyn and Katie as humanities teachers
- Guilds, art, and music embedded into the weekly schedule

Overarching Components: 6-12th Grades

- Humanities team (social studies and English and Language Arts)
- Math and science team.
 - Students placed by readiness level and math taught for foundational skill development and applied to science class
- Real-world intensives as electives
- Project-based learning
- Student-driven, teacher-facilitated
- Spanish embedded into high school classes (science and humanities)
- All high school courses approved by the University of California a-g system for appropriate academic rigor



SCENARIO #1 - 5 days per week with no social distancing

Pre-K: Getting Outside and Kinder Ready

- One full time crew leader and a full time aide
- Outdoor activities and explorations
- Actively preparing students for Kindergarten and beyond

K-2: Crews, Skills Fluency Blocks and Real World Projects

- Crew leaders as home base for social-emotional, academic, and adventure learning
- Moving to trimesters to support length of projects.
- Fluency blocks (math and literacy foundational skills) based on readiness levels.
- Fieldwork in crews / project groupings

3-5: Crews, Skills Fluency Blocks and Real World Projects

- Crew leaders as home base for social-emotional, academic, and adventure learning
- Moving to trimesters to support length of projects and different groupings
- Beginning of the year emphasizes grade level crew supports to establish the skills necessary
- Third trimester extremely student-driven with teachers as facilitators. Students being taught the skills needed to drive their own learning
- Fluency blocks (math and literacy foundational skills) based on readiness
- Crew and projects based on grade with open-ended projects that allow for differentiated learning to both challenge and support students at various levels
- Fieldwork in crews / project groupings

6-12:

- Fieldwork aligned to core classes as well as real-world intensives
- Seniors participate in individual fieldwork as part of the graduation process to demonstrate their ability to survive and thrive in the world.
- Fluid groupings based on readiness as well as interest levels across grade-band groupings (6-8, 9-12).



SCENARIO # 2 - 5 days per week with social distancing

Scenario 2 pulls the components of scenario 1 while maintaining social distance school 5-days per week. We are leaning into our creative problem solving skills to identify on-campus and potential off-campus facilities to allow us to implement 5-days per week of in-person school while maintaining social distance requirements (6 ft bubble).

All Grades: Facilities

We would dedicate specific spaces to each group to mitigate how many spaces and students everyone is exposed to each day. Teachers would rotate around, as needed, to deliver on academics.

We will lean into our beautiful 42-acre campus and other outdoor options to have as much open air learning spaces until the winter weather hits. See the FINANCES, FACILITIES, TRANSPORTATION AND RISK MITIGATION section for additional detail.

All Grades: Fieldwork & Experts

For both Scenario 2 & 3, we are evaluating policies to ensure we can deliver components of fieldwork in a healthy way. Examples of logistics include leaning into rural environments, science-based fieldwork, and simulations for humanities fieldwork. For example, many of our fieldwork experiences can still be implemented to include locations in the mountains, desert, ocean, and valley (i.e., Sea-to-summit, Meteorology fieldwork, Alabama Hills fieldwork, Death Valley fieldwork, Black Rock Desert, Point Reyes, TRT, etc). More gear is needed to accommodate individual gear versus previous shared gear. Experts will be increasingly utilized via virtual video calls to lean into our real-world learning while mitigating exposure.



SCENARIO #3 - Hybrid model combining in-person social distancing with some TEA@Home

This scenario looks at social distance requirements at school (6 ft bubble) with limited indoor facilities. Due to the space needs, if we cannot acquire additional facilities options we may need staggered days between in-person social distance school and digital days to provide as much in-person time as possible while maintaining health and safety.

All Grades: Facilities

In the fall, when weather permits, we can have an increased number of days on campus while we lean into our beautiful 42-acre campus (working on logistics like bathrooms but theoretically we could do 5 days per week in the fall while weather permits).

All Grades: Hybrid Schedule Examples

While we are optimistic that our creative problem solving skills will allow us to work out our facilities constraints to have space for all students 5 days per week, we are preparing back-up plans for when winter hits. This may require a hybrid model of some days on-campus and some days in digital format. For example:

- K-2: 3 days on campus, 1 day in the field, 1 day in digital
- 3-5: 3 days on campus, 1 day in the field, 1 day digital
- 6-8: 3 days on campus, 1 day in the field, 1 day digital
- 9-12: 2 days on campus, 1 day in the field, 2 days of digital learning

For all grades, we will prioritize the in-person experiences that are harder to facilitate digitally (i.e., science experiments).



SCENARIO #4 - TEA@Home Upgraded

We have been collecting data from parents, students, and teachers on what is working and what isn't during TEA@Home. Mara will be reaching out to everyone to further understand each family's individual needs so that we can differentiate to the best of our ability if we need to do any component of virtual learning next year.

What we know so far:

- Adaptability and perseverance during challenges have never been more important to learn than it is right now. Our kids have been preparing for this their entire time at TEA and we are so proud of them for their resilience.
- Screen time needs to be balanced to ensure continued mastery of core academics, engagement, and active learning based on various developmental needs. An increase of hands-on and real-world learning will be incorporated into next year as well as opportunities to get kids off-screens.
- Virtual learning allows for differentiated groupings and needs to be increased for the 2020-2021 school year to not only support students but challenge them.
- Families have different home situations that need to be differentiated for, to the best of our ability.
- The social-emotional component has never been more crucial and we are grateful to our crew leaders and counselors for providing excellent supports to our students.
- Social time is critical for young learners and we have to lean into our creativity to deliver this in a virtual learning situation.
- The increased screen time requires an increase in digital citizenship lessons that will, ultimately, benefit our students for the rest of their life.
- Virtual learning places parents of younger learners in an increased role and it is important to provide support from the community and teachers to help navigate the challenges. We will collaborate with TAP to set-up supports from as many angles as possible.



Where We Are Now: Celebrating an Unforgettable Year

We want to appreciate all of the real-world-problems our students have tackled this year. When time permits, click on each one of these links to read the stories, view the photos, watch the videos and listen to the podcasts. There's some pretty cool stuff in here.

- [Pre-K Students Tackle the Lost Art of Face-to-Face Communication](#)
- [Kindergarteners Study the Decline of Free Play](#)
- [1st Graders Promote Sustainable Farming and Eating](#)
- [2nd Graders Explored the Waste Stream to Limit Our Consumption](#)
- [3rd Graders Fight For Lake Tahoe Water Quality](#)
- [4th Visit Yosemite to Learn about Land Ownership Use and Stewardship](#)
- [5th Graders Learn How Can We Use the Arts to Raise Awareness of Human Rights](#)
- [6-10th-Graders Tackle Real-World Problems Related to COVID-19](#)
- [7th-Graders Study Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#)
- [Middle Schoolers Examine the Impact of Car Culture](#)
- [Watch all of the 8th-Grade Passage Presentations](#)
- [High Schoolers Study Biomimicry to Inspire Design Thinking](#)
- [High Schoolers Use Math, Science, and Craftsmanship to Build a Giant Camera Obscura](#)
- [High Schoolers Raise \\$1,000 for Keep Tahoe Blue Through a Virtual Art Auction](#)
- [High Schoolers March from Selma to Montgomery](#)
- [TEA Students in Action at the UNR Climate Strike](#)
- [Join Us in Congratulating Our Class of 2020 on Their College Acceptances](#)



Personalized Academic Supports for Summer 2020

We are committed to keeping your students engaged and connected throughout the summer months. Here's a preview of what's to come:

- Teachers have created personalized recommendations for each student to support summer academics that will be shared in end-of-year narratives. Narratives/report cards will be emailed to every family on June 12th.
- Mr. Joe and Mr. Stan are preparing music and art options for the summer.
- Guild and science website will stay up and running over the summer for anyone that needs an extra activity for their kids.
- Optional content is being created for different grade-band groupings to support students taking an active role in summer activities and continuing to develop skills like meal planning, trip planning, and identifying opportunities to challenge themselves while maintaining safe social-distancing.



Enrollment: Back to Holding Steady, with One Inquiry A Day

by Greg Wright

Where We Are Now: Holding Steady

As of today, we have 217 students officially enrolled and are projecting to be near 225 by the start of school, which is about 10% off of original projections after COVID-19 halted inquiries all together in late March through early April. Over the past several weeks, we have seen a return to historical trends with 47 new inquiries, 13 virtual shadow days conducted and 16 new students enrolled. In total, we currently have 24 new students committed to TEA for 2020/21.

In anticipation of a drop in inquiries, we launched a spring advertising campaign right when we moved to TEA@Home in mid-March. The campaign emphasizes “failing forward” and “real-world learning” at TEA. [This video](#), along with [each of the blog posts](#) from the past several weeks, have been promoted and targeted to families meeting our demographic and psychographic profiles by utilizing a combination of paid search, social media, email newsletters and internet radio.

Where We Are Going: At Capacity by 2022

We believe there will be an influx of people to our beautiful area, with remote working even more of a trend (and even mandate in some cases). Here’s a quote from a recent inquiry:

We heard about TEA through a friend of a friend. Since the COVID situation, our family has decided to move here full-time (home owner in Truckee since 2013) to prioritize our quality of life. The mission and values of the school resonates with us, and we want to soak in as much of the treasures the local area offers. We feel this school's unique approach takes advantage of the learning opportunities the Tahoe ecosystem holds.



Projections For 2020/21 By Class and Gender

	Male	Female	Current Enrolled Totals	Projected to Add by Class	Projected Class Totals
Pre-K	7	5	12	FULL	12
K	8	8	16	FULL	16
1st	3	8	11	-	11
2nd	6	6	12	2	14
3rd	7	9	16	1	17
4th	11	8	19	2	21
5th	4	4	8	1	9
6th	12	11	23	2	25
7th	16	10	26	1	27
8th	8	8	16	1	17
9th	6	7	13	3	16
10th	4	6	10	1	11
11th	6	6	12	1	13
12th	14	9	23	N/A	23
Totals	112	105	217	15	232

We are excited to have our largest graduating class ever next year. Our future projection now is to reach 238 in K-12 by 2021 and a capacity of 253 students by 2022.

In conclusion, we are so appreciative of our families for the positive word of mouth regarding TEA@Home and TEA in general. You are our best advocates, and we will continue to look to you to bring in values-aligned families and kids.

Keep it up and thank you!



Facilities, Finances, Transpo and Risk Mitigation: Getting There

by Ken Martin and Taylor Simmers

Where We Are Now: Getting There, With A Stronger Team

It has been the focus of TEA's Board of Trustees over the past 18mths to get our financial house in order, and, with their support and guidance, we are making good progress on this topline goal.

Finances: A Stronger Financial TEAm - Welcome Our New Controller

To help catalyze this work, we sourced and hired a Controller. Her name is Kristina Shea, and she has helped many organizations develop strong systems and structures for their businesses. We are very excited to add her expertise and years of non-profit financial experience to our Business TEAm.

Finances: Cost-Saving Measures Implemented and PPP Loan Update

We have implemented cost-saving measures for the spring 2020. We have also made some expense adjustments where possible for the 2020-21 year to be as conservative as possible with our forecasting. We applied for the PPP loan in April, have recently received an SBA / PPP Loan authorization code and are currently awaiting funding.

Where We Are Going: Outdoors Of Course

Facilities: Leaning into Outdoor Space

In terms of facilities for this summer, we have already made the campus ready for summer camps, started summer construction on the ECE building to create a more open, multi-functional space for fall 2020, begun repairing the existing learning cottages (funded by MVEF) and added more trails around the campus.

In terms of facilities for next fall, we are looking into ways we can keep the modulars for an additional year to accommodate social distance requirements. We are also researching and exploring potential off-campus options to support our program. Finally,



we are planning on using more outdoor space at Martis Valley Campus (funded by MVEF) and are very appreciative to have direct access to the pristine 42 acres we call home.

Finances: A Sustainable Path Forward

With TEA 10.0 (and beyond) we are making good headway towards a more sustainable business model. Here's a preliminary 2020-21 budget (seeking approval @ June 10, 2020 Board Meeting) and a 3 year pro forma for reference.

School Year	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
School Operations				
Enrollment	272	225	238	253
Net Tuition Revenue	\$3,723,329	\$4,013,463	\$4,749,669	\$5,538,144
Payroll Expense	\$4,369,668	\$3,246,643	\$3,793,777	\$3,901,590
<u>General Expense</u>	<u>\$1,578,706</u>	<u>\$1,601,000</u>	<u>\$1,729,930</u>	<u>\$2,230,328</u>
Total Expense	\$5,948,374	\$4,847,643	\$5,523,707	\$6,131,918
Net Income / Loss from School Operations	(\$2,225,045)	(\$834,180)	(\$774,038)	(\$593,775)
Activities (Athletics, Clubs, Camps)				
Non-Tuition Revenue	\$445,000	\$200,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Non-Tuition Expense	\$131,000	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Net Income / <Loss> from Activities	\$314,000	\$100,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Fundraising				
Annual Giving Campaign	\$1,400,000	\$500,000		\$500,000
Auction/Grants	\$535,000	\$250,000	\$500,000	
Grand Total Net Income / <Loss>	\$23,995	\$15,820	\$25,962	\$206,225



Financial Summary / Analysis:

The TEA 10.0 redesign, begun last November, put us on a much more sustainable trajectory. Covid-19 is a curveball which has added some uncertainty to exactly how the 2020-21 year will progress.

The 2020-21 budget resources TEA for what we view to be the most probable scenario, which is a mix of modes through the year. It is important to note that if we must operate the entire year in social distancing mode, expenses will increase due to additional cleaning & sanitation.

As enrollment holds steady, we will be stronger together, and we will continue to find operational efficiencies so that 90% of operating expense will be covered by tuition and non-tuition revenue by 2021-22.

Transportation and Risk Mitigation: A Team of Experts

Thankfully, we have skilled transportation and risk management expertise on staff. And, because of all of the crazy things we have done over the years, we are well versed in navigating legal responsibilities (you know this because of all the forms you get to sign as parents), insurance needs, medical training and transportation and risk mitigation policies and procedures.

Now and through the summer we will be working with our team and experts to ensure our policies and procedures are up to date, as the health and safety of our communiTEA is top priority. Further, our transportation department will continue to work with local agencies and personnel to evaluate our options, revise protocols and procedures and implement new policies where necessary. And we will also continue to work with our school's medical advisor to outline and execute the training needs for our staff.

We are already working through plans and scenarios with our Operations and Risk Management TEAMs to be able to deliver summer camps, if allowed, and all the program scenarios we are planning for next fall. Please ask for clarification here if you have any questions, and expect to hear more regarding our risk mitigation



Fundraising Update: You Are TEA Champions

by Courtenay Wallpe and Taylor Simmers

Where We Are Now: Incredibly Grateful

Thanks to our amazing fundraising volunteers and thanks to all of you, we completed a tremendously successful 100% Positive Impact Annual Giving Campaign in the fall of 2019, raising \$1.4M for scholarships, salaries and benefits.

In March we quickly launched the [TEA Champions Campaign](#) in order to compensate for the postponed spring [Simply Mad About TEA](#) Auction. Despite the financial shifts and challenges created for most of us by COVID19, you again demonstrated your tenacity and inspiring dedication by generously participating. To date we have secured \$535,000 in donations from our communiTEA.

We have continued to look outside our parent body for support and received a small grant in support of TEA's Drama program from the Community Players Trust, thanks to the extraordinary effort of Courtney Simpson, our fabulous Theater Program Director.

Where We Are Going: Expanding Our Reach

Pre-Covid19, TEA 10.0 reduced the annual operational deficit from \$2M to \$500K. This critical shift with respect to sustainability is not something we want to unravel. However, given the impact of COVID19 on enrollment, we are now anticipating an increase of \$234K to our overall deficit, which brings our fundraising need for 2020-2021 to \$734K.

In the very short term, we will be finishing the Champions Campaign by June 30th, with the hope of raising funds necessary to offset summer camp revenue losses. Looking ahead to next fall, we are planning our September 25th, "[Simply Mad About TEA](#)", auction with the goal of raising \$250K to further develop our failure lab, reward our amazing talent (TEAchers), fund expeditions and travel, and award transformative scholarships.



For our Annual Giving Campaign in 2020-21, we are preparing for a November launch, with a goal of 100% participation from board, staff and parents in order to raise \$500K for scholarships and faculty salaries and benefits.

Finally, we are also making important strides to increase our funding opportunities outside of our immediate communiTEA by preparing letters of interest and proposals to local foundations and creating targeted campaigns to individuals in our larger community who are passionate about revolutionizing education and supporting students who are real world problem solvers.



SUMMARY: STAY THE COURSE. WE'VE GOT THIS.

Not to toot our own horn so much, but since we are in like-minded company we feel like we can take a short moment to celebrate the achievement of one of our original goals. Since day one of TEA, part in jest-part in truth, one of our goals was to prepare our students and ourselves for the inevitable Zombie Apocalypse. Well, this is probably (and hopefully) as close as we are going to get. And, from looking around, we are very proud (and fortunate) to say that our students and teachers are as ready as they could ever be and have weathered this challenge as well as humanly possible.

We have faced many challenges on our journey over the past nine years, and this is another one we will navigate together. We will remain nimble and continue the process of adapting and thriving, all the while staying the course and staying true to our promise to you and your children.

That promise is simple: we'll take care of your kids. We are committed to their engagement in learning, to helping them develop creativity, collaboration and compassion and to their safety. Their academic, social-emotional well-being and excitement for adventure are our first priorities, and by knowing each and every one of your children well, we can ensure they continue on their learning journey regardless of the external forces upon us. Your kids are known well by multiple adults, and it is those strong relationships that are the most important factor in your child's education.

We know it takes a lot to send your child to a private school, and we believe this is precisely the time for us and you to stay the course, as your child will learn more now than ever. As educators, we know this IS the test. This IS the learning opportunity. Together, let's lean in, take advantage and be a part of the solution.

In a call last week to check in with our Pre-K families about next year, every single one said, "We are in." They are staying the course, even if they will need to be flexible and adaptable with 4 year olds. This is real world Constructive Adversity and we are embracing it together. We've got this.

Sincerely,

Mara and Taylor