



Right here, Right now: Adapting to a Changing World

The world is rapidly changing to adapt to the 21st century. The ability to easily access information and share it with others has changed how we communicate. We now collaborate on a global scale with everyone having the ability to contribute to the world's collective knowledge. Hundreds of millions of Internet searches are performed daily and the usage of social media sites is increasing exponentially. Within the next few years, it is predicted that there will be changes to the ways information is shared and applied, which we have not yet begun to comprehend.

Environmental concerns, dependence on fossil fuels, poverty, social injustice, health issues, and global economics are the reality of today's citizens. We have to prepare our children to solve problems that we don't yet know ARE problems. It is clear that the need for critical thinking, creativity, adaptability and flexibility in highly dynamic situations is now the norm, requiring capabilities different from those we previously valued.

Knowledge is the new sustainable natural resource and a transformed education system is the key to building capacity in this resource. Since tomorrow's world leaders and citizens are today's students, our future depends on how well we prepare our children.

What Is Needed To Address These Challenges?

Around the world, stakeholders in education are researching and developing curriculum and models of instruction for the information age designed to prepare 21st century students to become fulfilled, productive, and informed global citizens in an increasingly complex world. These changes reflect the essential skills and competencies believed necessary to succeed. In developing guidelines and programs for education the international Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) identified 21st century core competencies as:

- Critical thinking and problem solving · Collaboration across networks - working in virtual teams
- Agility, adaptability and capacity for lifelong learning · Initiative and entrepreneurialism
- Effective oral and written communication (strength in mother-tongue/multilingual asset)
- Accessing and analyzing information, including digital information

How Will ISSL Prepare Students?

The OECD has also conducted research to note the most effective learning environments for 21st century students. They are:

- Customized learning: Each child receives a customized learning experience. Although a curriculum is set with expectations for each grade, there is room in the parameters to allow a measure of success for every student. A variety of learning strategies and assessments are applied with an understanding of learning styles to give optimum opportunity for success.
- Availability of diverse knowledge sources: Learners can acquire knowledge whenever they need it from a variety of sources including books, web sites, and experts around the globe. The internet, connection to New Brunswick Dept. of Education, and University of New Brunswick library systems, use of community experts and businesses will assist our students in collecting information. On-line courses bring resources to the students' screens.
- Collaborative group learning: Students learn together as they work collaboratively on authentic, inquiry-oriented projects. Group work is essential at ISSL. Students are taught the dynamics of group research, sharing and discussion toward using time effectively with greater results than individual efforts can bring.
- Assessment for deeper understanding: Tests which evaluate the students' deeper conceptual understanding, the extent to which their knowledge is integrated, coherent, and contextualized. Rubrics to direct student thinking, peer and self evaluations, portfolios, presentations, and projects demand more attention to the production of high quality work. Continuous assessments lead to a more accurate and thorough evaluation.

More simply put:

- To learn collaboration – Work in teams.
- To learn critical thinking – Take on complex problems.
- To learn oral communication – Present.
- To learn written communication – Write.
- To learn technology – Use technology.
- To develop citizenship – Take on civic and global issues.
- To learn about careers – Do internships.
- To learn content and research skills – Do all of the above.

(With appreciation to NB3 - A discussion paper on 21st century learning - Nov. 2009)

Competencies for the 21st Century

The following competencies are imbedded in the curriculum of ISSL and represent the 21st century learning goals for international school students. These competencies will be developed throughout a child's school experience, beginning in kindergarten and culminating with graduation. A key goal of this education is to instill in students an appreciation for learning and a desire to make it a life-long pursuit. It is the responsibility of each student, their parents/guardians, school and community to collaborate in developing the personal competencies of all students. Over time, this collaboration will form the basis for a stronger culture of learning.

Critical thinking and problem solving

Students will know and be able to use strategies and processes to solve problems, to think creatively to understand deeply, and conduct meaningful reflection. Students will demonstrate that they:

- Have learned the elements and processes associated with critical thinking and problem solving
 - Have a deep understanding of complex concepts and the ability to work creatively in order to generate new ideas, theories, products and knowledge
 - Have learning to think logically and to solve ill-defined problems by indentifying and describing the problem, framing and testing hypotheses, and by formulating creative solutions
 - Have explored and reached an understanding of their own creative talents and how best to make use of them
 - Are able to acquire, process and interpret information critically to make informed decisions
- Collaboration Students will be able to interact with others in generating ideas and developing products. They will use appropriate interpersonal skills within a variety of media, and social contexts.

Students will demonstrate that they:

- Understand how to relate to other people in varying contexts, including those in which they manage or are managed by others
- Are able to collaborate across networks, using various technologies · Are able to effectively participate as a team member and know their own capacities for filling different team roles
- Have developed proficiency in managing personal relationships
- Are able to use various means to manage conflict · Understand the creative process through collaboration, exchange of ideas and building upon the achievement of others
- Have been sensitized to the issues and processes associated with collaboration across cultures

Communication

Student will be able to communicate effectively using the listening, viewing, speaking, reading and writing modes of language(s), the arts, and mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols. They will express this communication using a variety of media and technologies. Students will demonstrate that they:

- Explore, reflect on and express their own ideas, learning, perceptions and feelings
- Understand ideas and relationships presented through works, actions, numbers, symbols, graphs, and charts
- Have a level of proficiency in a second language
- Manage, access, process, evaluate and present information clearly, logically, concisely, and accurately for a variety of audiences
- Critically interpret and evaluate ideas presented through a variety of media
- Think divergently and creatively through use of analogies, metaphors and visual thinking

Personal development and self awareness

Students will be resourceful, reliable, and resilient. They will see themselves as capable learners aware of their own potential. Students will demonstrate that they:

- Make decisions and take responsibility for those decisions
- Have developed techniques for managing change, risk and uncertainty in a wide range of contexts · Have persistence and determination
- Are self-motivated and have a "can-do" attitude
- Acknowledge and consider different points of view
- Are able to take control of learning · Are well-positioned and prepared for post-secondary studies

Citizenship

Students will be able to assess social, cultural, economic and environmental interdependence in a local, national, and global context. Students will demonstrate that they:

- Understand the implications of sustainable development for the environment and are able to find creative solutions
- Are able to critically analyze and debate political, social and economic systems in a global context
- Understand human rights issues, the contribution of multiculturalism to society, and cultural and social diversity in local, national and global contexts
- Have civic awareness and a sense of responsibility to their communities
- Use creative and critical thinking to develop innovative solutions to complex societal situations