



## **PLRD: Small Schools Preparing Students for Big Futures**

**Curriculum Relevance** is about ensuring that curriculum and resources meet the learning needs and interests of 21 century students. We need to ensure that curriculum is less focused on memorizing information and more focused on assessing information and using it to understand the world, to problem solve, debate issues, and construct knowledge. Curriculum emphasis must be about real-world issues that require the ability to access, evaluate, and use information to understand the world and to problem solve: Less emphasis on curriculum as coverage and more about depth of understanding and engagement.

The tools and learning environment must reflect the world that students find themselves in today. The environment needs to be information and technology rich. Foundational skills are to be reinforced through real-time learning that calls for particular skills and facts in order to solve problems, construct knowledge about the world, or accomplish meaningful tasks.

**Curriculum Mapping** is a required planning device for 21 century schools that ensures that goals and outcomes are prioritized and presented through real-world learning and discovery. Learning must take the same discovery and co-construction of knowledge pathways that are taken in the field. Curriculum outcomes are to be successfully grouped across curricular areas to ensure a balance between coverage and depth.

**Student Engagement** is about ensuring that learning outcomes, resources, and learning activities are relevantly connected to real-world interests and problems, that students are motivated by the learning outcomes as presented, that time-on-task is high, that rigour and purpose exist in the learning environment, and that students are actively involved in constructing knowledge and solving problems.

**Rapport** refers to the way teachers and students of the 21 century interact and respond to one another in order to ensure that the learning environment is pleasant, safe, and purposeful. Rapport is about engaging with students in a flattened hierarchical world where respect, personal dedication, and proficiency are keystones, and authority is obsolete. Likewise, knowledge is no longer controlled by a few elite specialists; rather, information belongs to the people and is co-constructed through access to information, collaboration, debate, and discernment.

**Assessment as, of, and for Learning** ensures that planning is done with both the learning outcomes and the end point assessments that will be used to evaluate student success in mind. The emphasis is on ensuring that students know what it is they are trying to achieve and how they will know when they achieve a particular learning outcome. Tools such as scoring guides, rubrics, and exemplars of student work are used to empower students to develop the capacity to assess their own learning and that of their peers.

**Scaffolding** is about ensuring that all students can succeed by assessing students' prior knowledge to ensure that they begin their studies at an appropriate level of challenge that will spike their interest but not frustrate them. Using prior knowledge, unlearning incorrect information, assessing students' strengths and using these talents and skills, and supporting areas of need through accommodations and modifications are scaffolding techniques that teachers use in a successful learning environment.

**Metacognition** is the overarching learning outcome that equips 21 century students to ask themselves what it is they are supposed to know and whether or not they have successfully understood the essential information and knowledge, or can demonstrate the required skills. Metacognition challenges students to identify and select appropriate learning strategies, and it equips them with the capacity to assess themselves and others.

**Essential 21 Century Skills** are the skills that students today need in order to succeed in the world they currently inhabit and the one they will inherit as they leave school for post-secondary education and for the world of work. These skills consist of:

- Global awareness
- Cultural proficiency
- Environmental awareness
- Information literacy
- Digital Literacy
- Collaborative capacity