

21ST-CENTURY EDUCATION

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Education is uninterrupted in time, without cessation, that's why it is a dangerous thing.

In Learning Strand 5, Understanding the Self and Society, one of the strands in ALS, one of the elements which separate human from others, is education. People learn. Learning is fundamental to human beings.

But as the world transforms, the expectations placed upon education shift to meet these changes. Gone are the days when learning is confined only to the brick-and-mortar classroom and may not be the most efficiently structured for student engagement; and the teacher is the sole source of knowledge. Moreover, rote memorization, several studies revealed as an ineffective learning strategy. One-way route to learning is now part of the “educational past.” The world demands a more responsive paradigm of “keeping education alive” – the very nature of education. Understanding curriculum and curriculum development with an eye to this inevitability is the key to understanding 21st-century education.

We heard 21st-century education countless times in classroom discussions, seminars and conferences, LAC sessions, and even on television programs. It has become an integral part of educational thinking and planning for the future. Educators and administrators are actively searching for ways to prepare students for the future, and the educational system has been evolving faster than ever before.

A 21st-century education is about giving students the skills they need to succeed in this new world and helping them boost their confidence to practice those skills. With so much information readily available to them, 21st-century skills focus more on making sense of that information, sharing and using it in smart ways. And these four (4) skills are essential for the students to participate in global activities – creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. These four themes are not to be understood as units or even subjects, but as themes that should be overlaid across all curriculum mapping and strategic planning. They should be part of every lesson in the same way as reading, writing, and numeracy.

Creativity is about thinking through information in new ways, making new connections, and coming up with innovative solutions to problems. Critical thinking is about analyzing information and critiquing claims. Communication is understanding things well enough to share them clearly with other people. Collaboration is about teamwork and the collective genius of a group that is more than the sum of its parts.

21st-century teachers have to take into consideration the need of their students and prepare them to meet the challenges of the future. As the face of 21st-century education, they must be able to adapt the curriculum and the requirements to teach the curriculum in imaginative and technological ways; teaching styles to be inclusive of different modes of learning and diverse learners, and change and learn as the educational horizons and landscapes change. Taking into consideration the mentioned characteristics, 21st-century teachers must deliver student-centered instructions, teaching students to acquire new information as problems arise; promote collaborative learning, dynamic learning inclusive of other people regardless of status and culture; contextual learning, and teaching skills useful for students in any situation; and integrate school with society, helping students to make an impact in the community and the world.

We really have come a long way judging from how education has developed. And it is not even at the peak of its form.

Society has changed. Education has changed, too. We cannot adequately prepare students for the society that exists today or will exist tomorrow if we continue to prepare them for the society that existed yesterday. In order to prepare students to play their role in the 21st-century society we are a part of, a few things need to be considered when deciding how education will look in our schools and classrooms. And change is the only resort.

Education is uninterrupted in time, without cessation, that's why it is a dangerous thing, even more dangerous when it becomes stationary.

REFERENCE:

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