

Preparing Our Students for a Future Yet to be Invented.

The pace of change of education in New Zealand has meant a rethinking of how we best meet the needs of our students and how we deliver a meaningful curriculum to them. We are no longer able to fill students heads with information and send them off into the world to regurgitate the same. Our school has become very far thinking in the way we develop and deliver programs and we are understandably proud of the number of teachers willing to undertake significant additional study to remain relevant and vibrant to our students.

Students come into our school with a wide variety of levels of readiness and our teachers receive them into a collaborative teaching environment. Once their level of readiness is established, they are placed within teaching groups which best address their learning needs. This means they will have exposure to multiple staff members and are no longer placed with one teacher exclusively.

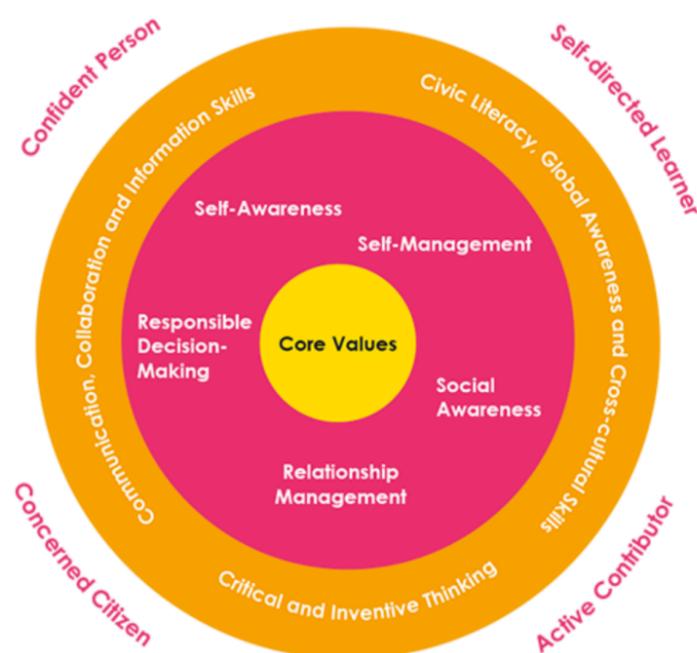
The early years of our students programs have the necessary focus on literacy and numeracy, but we also have an increasing focus on relating to others so we can set our students up of learning how to learn and not having a head full of facts with no application.

The foundation for success at school happens early, with growing literacy and numeracy knowledge, but also with confidence through success. Inquiry learning gives students ownership of their tasks and allows them to follow areas of interest to them. This begins with exploration, play and questioning and leads onto investigation, gathering and analysing information, generating solutions, making decisions, drawing conclusions and often a second or third cycle of action.

We talk increasingly about 21st Century skills and while there will always be a need for content knowledge and understanding, these skills are becoming critical in preparing our students for their future in jobs that may not even exist at present!

<https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/education-system/21st-century-competencies>

Framework for 21st Century Competencies and Student Outcomes



These skills are described as 'soft skills' and have been broken down into plain language by Cassie¹ as follows:

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

- ❑ The challenge is how do you do things that haven't been done before
- ❑ Find the solution, don't pose the problem
- ❑ Yesterday's answers won't solve today's problems

Interpersonal Skills

- ❑ The ability to work in teams, relate to people and manage conflict

Collaboration and Leadership

- ❑ Teamwork is no longer just about working with others in your class or school. Technology allows for global connections
- ❑ Leadership offers the ability to influence

Agility and Adaptability

- ❑ The ability to think, be flexible, change, and use a variety of tools to solve new problems

Initiative and Entrepreneurialism

- ❑ Coming up with ideas
- ❑ Developing ideas

Communication Skills

- ❑ Verbal skills, written skills and presentation skills need to be clear and concise
- ❑ The ability to write or speak to create focus, energy, and passion around the points they wish to make

Accessing and Analysing Information

- ❑ There is so much information available that it is almost too much. It's not only the sheer quantity of information that represents a challenge, but also how rapidly the information is changing.
- ❑ The ability to validate the information available

Curiosity and Creativity

- ❑ Students who learn to ask great questions and have the confidence to be creative are the ones who solve the biggest problems.

Resilience

- ❑ Being able to bounce back after a disappointment or setback, big or small, and continue to move onward and upward.

¹ Cassie, P. (2016) Educating for the Future/Unknown. Piper Magazine.

Schools must provide students with the opportunity to develop and hone these skills, in this way we prepare them to be Lifelong Learners who are willing to take risks and not be afraid to have a go. We must provide our students with the structures to be able to measure risk, understanding that mistakes and failure are part of the learning process.

Some other sources of supporting information:

<http://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/Initiatives/CrossSectorForumOnRaisingAchievement/ThematicNotes21stCenturyTeachingAndLearning.pdf>