



21st Century Terms

21st Century Curriculum: A curriculum that is integrated, interdisciplinary, flexible, and focused on the individual student, i.e. learner-centered. It promotes higher-order thinking skills, integrates technology and multimedia, and addresses the literacy of life in the 21st Century.

21st Century School Leader: The DoDEA 21st Century School Leader is one who educates, engages, empowers, and excels through visionary leadership that inspires ALL to be intentional learners, to think critically and to work collaboratively to meet the demands of a global, digital, and dynamic world.

Academic Learning Environment: An effective academic learning environment demands active engagement from all learners, consists of academically rigorous lessons, and differentiates to support and extend learning for every student.

Blended Learning: Blended Learning Instruction has face-to-face interaction, synchronous conversations, asynchronous interactions, as well as constant feedback (Holpert-Gawron, 2011). Course materials are delivered electronically while at the same time students can email their teachers and participate in chat rooms and threaded discussion forums. Electronic instruction and online learning activities are followed up by face-to-face interaction (U.S. Department of Education, September 2010).

Collaboration: Collaboration is the ability to work effectively with diverse teams, share responsibility of work, value others' contribution, and make the necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal.

Collaborative Leadership: The effective 21st Century DoDEA school leader builds and sustains strong and enduring relationships to engage, educate, and empower students, families, command, community, and other stake holders. The collaborative leadership role has a direct impact on morale, readiness and quality of life for our military partners.

Commons: The Commons is a place where school occupants can gather in part or in a whole, a place considered the physical "heart" of the school.

Communications: Communication is defined as a process by which we assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create shared understanding. This process requires a vast repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating. Use of these processes is developmental and transfers to all areas of life: home, school, community, work, and beyond. It is through communication that collaboration and cooperation occur.

Cooperative Learning: Cooperative learning is instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. (Johnson and Johnson, Holubeck, 1998).

Creative Thinking: Creative thinking is both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk-taking.

Curriculum Integration: Curriculum is a roadmap upon which instruction is based. Curriculum integration is a planned, multi-disciplinary approach to instruction that provides rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning experiences that make connections within and across subjects and within and across



learners. Embedded in Common Core standards, curriculum integration provides real-world opportunities for students to become analytical problem solvers. Rigor is the foundation of curriculum integration in that students are able to transfer their learning to real-life situations.

Flipped Instruction: Flipped Instruction is a model of instruction in which students receive direct instruction outside of class; in order to create time for student centered learning activities with teacher and peer support in order to demonstrate mastery of learning objectives.

Fusion: Fusion involves a medium degree of integration. Teachers fuse skills, knowledge, or attitudes in the regular school classroom. Example: Incorporating a theme, such as “peace,” through every thread of the school’s curriculum.

Inquiry-Based Learning: Inquiry-Based Learning begins with a student-composed question. A student-centered, active learning approach focusing on questioning, critical thinking, and problem-solving. This approach to curriculum design and instruction is associated with the idea “involve me and I understand.” Students develop their own curriculum, teaching methods, and assessments around areas of interest. Themes may include “Medical Issues Affecting Our Lives,” “Surviving Alien Environments,” or even broader, year-long inquiries such as, “Who Will Survive?”

Instructional Leadership: The effective 21st Century DoDEA school leader provides direction, coordination, and resources for the improvement of curriculum, instruction, and assessment through teaching, leading, and learning.

Interdisciplinary Integration: Teachers organize the curriculum around common learning across the disciplines.

Intradisciplinary Integration: Intradisciplinary involves the least degree of integration. Teachers integrate the sub-areas within a discipline. Example: Integrating reading, writing, and oral communication in language arts.

Learning Centers/ Parallel Disciplines: In Learning Centers/ Parallel Disciplines, there is a moderate degree of integration, and teachers address a topic or theme through the lenses of multiple subject areas. Example: Elementary learning centers; Secondary: Study a topic or theme in different classrooms. Teachers sequence their content to meet the content of other classrooms.

Learning Environment: The learning environment includes physical spaces, support systems, and the social-emotional climate, and actively seeks the involvement of all stakeholders within the community, school, and classroom. The environment allows students to reason, solve problems, collaborate with others, and apply technology effectively.

Multidisciplinary Integration: Multidisciplinary approaches focuses mainly on the disciplines. Teachers organize standards from the disciplines around a theme.

Neighborhood: Neighborhood is the primary organization structure for a variety of learning spaces for a small community of learners and teachers.



Organizational Leadership: The effective 21st Century DODEA school leader develops and utilizes systems and protocols to creatively and efficiently manage people, data, processes, and resources to foster continuous improvement.

Personal Learning Network: A personal learning network (PLN) is an informal learning network that consists of the people a learner interacts with and derives knowledge from in a personal learning environment. In a PLN, a person makes a connection with another person with the specific intent that some type of learning will occur because of that connection.

Physical Learning Environment: An effective physical learning environment is intentionally designed to integrate 21st Century skills such as collaboration, creativity, and problem solving across curricular areas. Physical learning spaces are not limited to the classroom. There is equitable access to quality learning tools, technologies, and resources.

Principal Leadership: 21st Century principals transform the educational community through a powerful and dynamic presence that promotes continuous school improvement, effective professional practice, and digital-age learning and citizenship.

Problem-Based Learning: Problem-Based Learning encompasses realistic and authentic ill-structured problems, where students are actively engaged in critical and creative ways of thinking. Effective collaboration and communication are essential ways of working in a 21st Century instructional environment.

Professional Learning Facilitator: A school level position who is responsible to implement, sustain, and support the teachers in order to educate, engage, and empower 21st Century Teaching, Learning, and Leading Professional Learning Framework.

Professional Learning Framework: 21st Century Teaching, Learning, and Leading Professional Learning Framework is designed to expand the use of instructional strategies in order to improve all learning experiences by engaging, empowering, and educating students to be critical thinkers, intentional learners and be prepared for a global, dynamic, and digital world.

Professional Learning Instructional Systems Specialist (ISS): A District/Area Instructional Support Specialist (non-supervisory) who is responsible to implement, sustain, and support the schools/districts in order to educate, engage, and empower 21st Century Teaching, Learning and Leading Professional Learning Framework.

Project-Based Learning: Project-Based Learning is "a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic question and carefully designed products and tasks" (Buck Institute for Education).

Self-Assessment and Reflection Continuum: The Self-Assessment and Reflection Continuum will serve as a self-assessment tool for school principals and as a guide for continued professional growth. It is intended to serve as a tool for dialogue and to deepen each principal's understanding of school leadership in 21st century schools.

Service Learning: In service learning, there is a moderate degree of integration. This category involves community projects that occur during class time.



Shared Leadership: 21st Century leaders transform the educational community through a shared vision that promotes continuous school improvement, effective professional practice, digital-age learning, and citizenship.

Smart Spaces: Smart Spaces are spaces within the school where the building itself becomes a learning experience. (Gauges indicating water or power usage, exposed areas that illustrate the engineering and science that is part of the building).

Social-Emotional Climate: An effective school and classroom climate integrates social-emotional learning with academic learning to increase student motivation and self-management while strengthening connections to the school.

Strand: A means through which dynamic, rigorous 21st Century student-centered teaching and learning practices are categorized (AdvancED Glossary of Terms). Each 21st Century strand has direct, deliberate connections to the military child.

Strategy: A category of professional learning that educators can choose to study. At least three of these fall under each strand (AdvancED Glossary of Terms).

Student Centered Instruction: Student-Centered Instruction is innovative pedagogy which promotes inquiry based learning (Project-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, Blended Learning, Flipped Instruction, and Problem-Based Learning) through the efficient use of tools, differentiation strategies and other integrated approaches.

Student leadership: Students act as leaders in the classroom by demonstrating competency in using and applying tools to process, organize, and analyze information. They work collaboratively with peers and teachers to support and empower others to use the tools successfully.

Support Systems and Resources: Effective 21st Century schools build relationships within the community and involve all stakeholders in the education of the students. Academic rigor and 21st Century skills are enhanced through community involvement and partnerships.

Teacher Leadership: Teacher leaders are embedded into the school site through teaching in classrooms, serving as instructional coaches, and fostering change through the CSI process. The role of the teacher leader is to enhance student achievement through promoting effective teaching practices in all classrooms and contributing to collective leadership in the building.

Technology Integration: Technology empowers learners to share self-generated knowledge and make real world connections that reach beyond school walls. Technology provides educators opportunities to utilize innovative and engaging teaching practices, expanded learning communities, and current information. Appropriate integration of technology increases student achievement, supports responsive and inclusive instruction and provides collaborative learning experiences that promote college and career readiness in a global society.

Theme-Based Units: In theme-based units, teachers plan collaboratively and it requires the highest level of integration. Three or more subject areas are involved in the study, and the unit ends with an integrated culminating activity. Example: Students explore the Pandapas Pond through the lenses of



science, English, and math. Teachers connect activities with the standards in each discipline. It ends with a culminating project, such as an oral presentation of learning.

Transdisciplinary Integration: Teachers organize curriculum around student questions or concerns. Students develop life skills as they apply disciplinary and interdisciplinary skills into real-life contexts (Drake and Burns, 2004).

Visionary Leadership: The effective 21st Century DoDEA school leader inspires and leads the development and implementation of a shared vision, goals, and plans for comprehensive integration of 21st Century skills to promote high academic standards and support transformation within the school.