Characteristics of 21st Century Learning

From Distinct Schools to Global Classroom

Schools in the twenty-first century should be designed around general learning settings to form learning communities. These learning communities function at a variety of scales. There should be general learning settings that have 75 to 100 students and perhaps 4 to 6 staff members. These general learning settings include a variety of spaces to differentiate for learning. This includes small group rooms, large group rooms, mini-labs, presentation spaces, research spaces, and cafeterias.

This community learning functions at the next level which is beyond the general learning setting, in common shared spaces and exploratory spaces. The space between general learning settings is for movement, information, welcoming, performing and visual arts, and wellness. The intent is to make every aspect of the school environment available for learning, blurring the edges between the various instructional spaces. Some of these spaces may have walls and some may not, but all space should be useable for learning.

True 21st Century learning moves beyond the school and extends the learning space to the global DoDEA community through technology, virtual instruction, and real time projects. Students can view their global counterparts as classmates to extend their learning environment.

Indeed, learning occurs “any time, any place, any path” in 21st Century schools.