

DODEA IDEOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL PEDAGOGY



21st Century Learning Overview

Key Themes

Four major themes form the framework and set the tone for exploring the vision for 21st Century education, based on best-practices and promising new trends that promote student success. The four themes are as follows:

Differentiated Learning: Students are individuals with unique learning requirements. To facilitate more effective, accelerated rates of learning, 21st Century education must respond to students' individual learning needs. Scholastic needs vary greatly and students have varying skill and interest levels. Some students work best as individual learners, while others prefer one-on-one or group arrangements. Additionally, some students may benefit from atypical space layouts. The current model of one instructor to many students in a 900 square-foot classroom does not provide sufficient opportunities for personalized education. 21st Century learning models must empower each student by optimizing

learning potential through personalized, differentiated instruction.

Multiple Modalities: To accommodate this wide array of learning styles, students need facilities that adapt to different spatial and furniture arrangements, both inside and outside the educational facility. 21st Century education must evolve beyond the traditional classroom configuration and instead provide spaces that can respond to a variety of concurrent instructional activities, including team-building events, small group sessions, individual learning, and peer presentations—all potentially simultaneously.

Spaces shared between teachers, subjects, and even communities can provide opportunities for a wider array of room types without necessarily increasing the footprint and resultant cost of a facility. Instead, sharing spaces increases the usefulness of each room by keeping them fully occupied for more hours of each day.

Multidisciplinary Teaching: Teaching across disciplines adheres to the concept of differentiated learning while being directly supported by multiple modalities, as described above. Providing students with ways to approach new subjects within the context of familiar and more approachable topics can enhance each student's access to, and interest in learning.

Synthesizing subject content across disciplines enhances critical thinking skills. As teachers assemble lesson plans, they have opportunities to explore and integrate other subject matter while simultaneously receiving and providing expert peer input via collaboration. This contributes to the professional development of the teachers.

Real-world Skills Development: The ability to prepare students to be competitive in the real world is key to the success of the 21st Century learning program. To achieve this goal, learning environments must provide access to hands-on instruction and opportunities for students to apply their knowledge while still providing a rigorous focus on core curricular competencies.

Shifting the delivery method of core competency education to include related real-world problem solving, enhanced by multidisciplinary critical thinking, can provide an effective learning experience.

