

SKILL BASED LEARNING

Why ISU values skills development to promote lifelong learning

Citations

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We are living in times of unprecedented change. Statisticians have found that more data was created between 2015 and 2017 than in the previous 5,000 years of human history, but by 2018 it was determined that 90 percent of the data in the world had been generated in the past two years alone.³ With access to this amount of exponential growth in information we have to stop and pause to consider what is worth teaching? What percent of that 90 percent is important for our children to know?

We are also living in a world generating new opportunities never dreamt of and new problems never before encountered. We want our children to be able to take hold of these new opportunities and find solutions for these new challenges. What capabilities should they have to be able to find success in these new opportunities and challenges?

We want the best future for our children. We are here to help guide them towards a life full of success. But this is also the exact challenge we face. How do we define success for our children's future when the future is unknown? How then can we help prepare them to be successful in their future?

Reasoning and Research

We hope to begin to answer these questions and navigate the dynamic future that lays before us and our children. In order to do this we are turning to current research. Educational psychologists, sociologists and business leaders are considering the needs of the 21st Century:

"To navigate through such uncertainty, students will need to develop curiosity, imagination, resilience and self-regulation; they will need to respect and appreciate the ideas, perspectives and values of others; and they will need to cope with failure and rejection, and to move forward in the face of adversity." (OECD, 2018)³

A multitude of research on the skills and competencies needed for the 21st Century has been conducted by global organisations, partnerships and thought leaders including UNESCO⁷, World Economic Forum⁶, OECD³, and P21⁸. Each framework is slightly different, however looked at collectively these are the areas suggested:

Collaboration
and teamwork
Communication
Information,
Media and
Technology

Creativity and Innovation
Critical thinking
Social and Personal Awareness
Initiative and Learning
Citizenship⁵

The International Baccalaureate has researched, discussed, consulted, and developed a set of skills appropriate for teaching and learning in the Primary Years Programme.

*“These skills are **grounded in the belief that learning how to learn is fundamental to a student’s education.** Five categories of interrelated skills aim to support students of all ages to become self-regulated learners who know how to ask good questions, set effective goals and pursue their aspirations with the determination to achieve them. These skills also help to support students’ sense of agency, encouraging them to see their learning as an active and dynamic process.”¹*

These approaches to learning (the skills and subskills) are:

- Thinking: Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Information transfer, Reflection and metacognition
- Social: Interpersonal relationships, social and emotional intelligence
- Communication: Exchanging information, Literacy, ICT
- Research: Information literacy, Media literacy, Ethical use of media/ information
- Self-Management: Organisation, States of mind

In this way we are educating the children of today for the future of tomorrow. We are equipping them with the skills necessary to be self-driven, lifelong learners. Their motivation and purpose will drive them to want to know more and these skills will have helped them learn how to learn. Equipped with these skills they will intrepidly traverse the changing terrain of the 21st Century. They will be able to participate in their world as active citizens who can shape their own futures and the lives of others.

“Education’s big goal, preparing students to contribute to the world of work and civic life, has become one of our century’s biggest challenges. In fact, all the other great problems of our times— solving global warming, curing diseases, ending poverty, and the rest—don’t stand a chance without education preparing each citizen to play a part in helping to solve our collective problems.” (Trilling and Fadel, 2009)²

We have chosen to look into the skills for the 21st Century because we care about the future success of all children. We want every child to feel competent and capable to know their potential and have the capacity to follow their passions and achieve their purpose in shaping our world.

Learning and Teaching

We have to prioritize what is important to learn as we cannot possibly know everything. At ISU we prioritise skills over content. With the skills for learning all content becomes accessible. We assess learning in relation to skill development not for the memorization of facts. We guide learners to be able to self assess through metacognition and reflection. When we understand how to develop our own skills we all become lifelong learners ready to navigate our own futures.

Partnership

We want to partner with you and we value your input and feedback. If you have ideas or questions we would love to talk with you in person to discuss this. You may find it helpful to consider the following reflective questions:

- What skills do I think are most important for my child to learn?
- How am I giving my child the opportunity to develop these skills?
- If we have to prioritise what children learn, what should be at the top of the list?

