Ontario's Draft 21st Century/Global Competencies

(December 2015 – Draft for Discussion)

Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario

Jurisdictions around the world are exploring how to prepare their students to lead fulfilling lives, be productive contributors in a knowledge economy, and thrive in an information and technology-intensive globalized world. Within this context, Ontario continues to be focused on the province's core priorities of high levels of student achievement, ensuring equity, promoting well-being, and enhancing confidence in publicly funded education.

In the fall of 2013, individuals and organizations from across the province were consulted on a new vision for education, which included a focus on the skills and knowledge Ontario learners will need in the future. The government received input from representatives both within and outside the education system.

Based on this input, the government developed and released *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, which made transforming education a key goal. To support this goal, the government committed to defining and developing measures for higher-order skills, such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and entrepreneurship, or what can be called "21st century competencies".

21st Century Competencies Discussion Document: What We've Learned

Ontario's *21st Century Competencies: Foundation Document for Discussion* builds on what was learned during the Achieving Excellence consultation and is informed by the latest research on 21st century competencies from both a local and an international perspective.

Research supports the need for today's students to engage in "deeper learning" – or learning that allows students to take what is learned in one situation and apply it to new situations. Deeper learning involves the interplay of the cognitive (thinking/reasoning), intrapersonal (behaviour/emotions), and interpersonal (communication/collaboration). Through the process of deeper learning, students develop 21st century competencies, which can be defined as *knowledge and skills that are transferable*. The deeper learning domains can be viewed in the visual below.
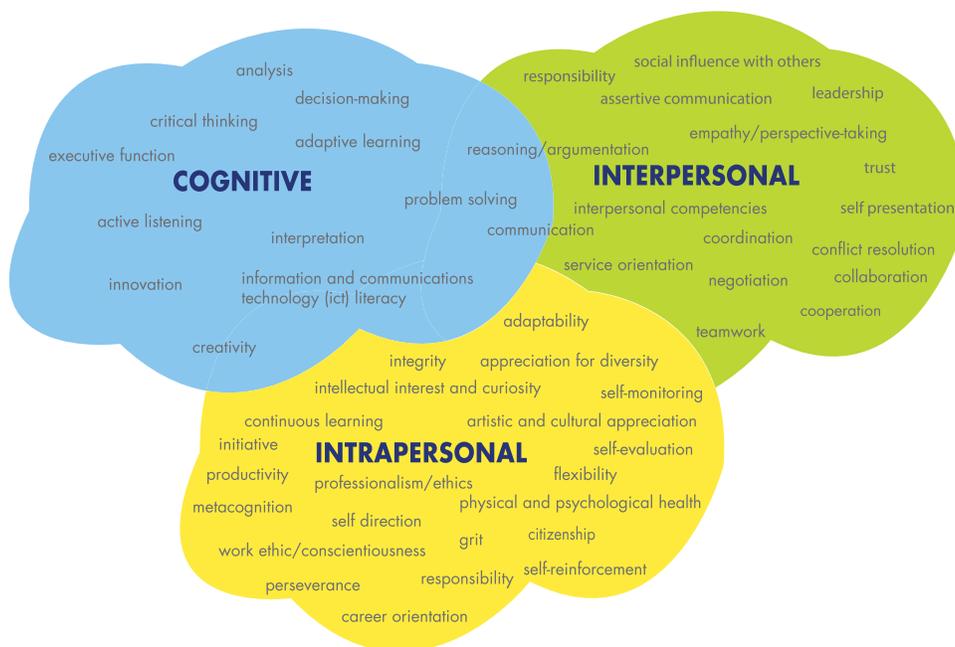
Figure 1: "21st century skills" grouped into three broad domains
(National Research Council, July 2012, p. 2)

Educators play an important role in providing the context for deeper learning, which is supported through new teaching practices that include the following elements (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014):

- The creation and use of new knowledge in the real world
- Learning partnerships between and among students and teachers that focus on the *process* of learning
- Access to digital tools and resources both inside and outside of school

Technology is playing more of a role in society as well as in the classroom and can be a powerful tool in enabling deeper learning. However, technology is only effective when used to provide access to richer content, develop stronger teaching practices, make links between classrooms and life, and enable assessments that align with new teaching practices.

Ontario's renewed vision for education to transform teaching and learning will ensure that students develop the knowledge, skills, and characteristics to become personally successful, economically productive, and actively engaged citizens.

Four goals guide ministry and sector efforts to achieve this vision:
- Achieving Excellence
- Ensuring Equity
- Promoting Well-being
- Enhancing Public Confidence

The competencies listed on the next page support the development of learning in all subject areas, including foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, and apply to both the face-to-face and the online world. (*The numbers in parentheses after certain descriptors relate those descriptors to priority areas identified by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada [CMEC], which are shown at the bottom of the page.*)

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

- Solves meaningful, real-life, complex problems (1), (6)
- Takes concrete steps to address issues
- Designs and manages projects
- Acquires, processes, interprets, and analyses information to make informed decisions (critical and digital literacy)
- Engages in an inquiry process to solve problems (1)
- Makes connections and transfers learning from one situation to another (1), (6)

Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship

- Contributes solutions to complex problems (3)
- Enhances a concept, idea, or product
- Takes risks in thinking and creating
- Makes discoveries through inquiry research (1)
- Pursues new ideas to meet a need of a community (3), (6)
- Leads and motivates with an ethical entrepreneurial spirit (1), (3)

Learning to Learn / Self-Aware & Self-Directed Learning

- Learns the process of learning (metacognition) (1),(3),(4),(5),(7)
- Believes in the ability to learn and grow (growth mindset) (1), (4), (5)
- Perseveres and overcomes challenges to reach a goal (1), (5)
- Self-regulates in order to become a lifelong learner (1), (4), (5), (7)
- Reflects on experience to enhance learning (1), (7)
- Cultivates emotional intelligence to understand self and others (1), (2),(4)
- Adapts to change and shows resilience to adversity (1), (5)
- Manages various aspects of life – physical, emotional (relationships, self-awareness), spiritual, and mental well-being (5)

Collaboration

- Participates in teams; establishes positive relationships
- Learns from, and contributes to, the learning of others (1)
- Co-constructs knowledge, meaning, and content (1)
- Assumes various roles on the team
- Manages conflict
- Networks with a variety of communities/groups
- Respects a diversity of perspectives (2), (3)

Communication

- Communicates effectively in different contexts in oral and written form in French and/or English
- Asks effective questions to acquire knowledge (6)
- Communicates using a variety of media (1), (5)
- Selects appropriate digital tools according to purpose (1)
- Listens to understand all points of view (2), (3), (6)
- Gains knowledge about a variety of languages (2), (6)
- Voices opinions and advocates for ideas

Global Citizenship

- Contributes to society and the culture of the local, global, and digital community in a responsible, accountable, and ethical manner (2), (6)
- Engages in local and global initiatives to make a difference (6)
- Learns from and with diverse people (2), (5), (6)
- Interacts safely and responsibly within a variety of communities (5), (6)
- Creates a positive digital footprint
- Relates to the environment and is mindful of the importance of all living things (2), (3)

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES DRAFT SCOPING PLAN AND RELATED CMEC AREAS

(1) Teaching and Learning	(2) Aboriginal Education	(3) Education for Sustainable Development	(4) Early Childhood Education and Development	(5) Wellness and Mental Health	(6) Experiential Learning	(7) Assessment