

Curriculum Overview

Education for the 21st Century

British Columbia has one of the best education systems in the world. Teachers are skilled, facilities are sound, and students are performing near the top of international assessments. Yet it is an education system modelled on the very different circumstances of an earlier century — when change was much more gradual than it is today. Conditions in the world are changing greatly and rapidly. Today's students will grow into a world that is very different from and more connected than that of generations before.

To maintain high achievement, British Columbia must transform its education system to one that better engages students in their own learning and fosters the skills and competencies students will need to succeed. One focus for this transformation is a curriculum that enables and supports increasingly personalized learning, through quality teaching and learning, flexibility and choice, and high standards.

To guide the transformation, the province conducted reviews of trends in national and international jurisdictions and invited authorities on curriculum and assessment design to advise on proposed changes. In addition, as part of the work on core competencies, several commissioned researchers summarized the literature in critical thinking, creative thinking, and social and personal responsibility.

Student success through curriculum transformation

Today we live in a state of constant change. It is a technology-rich world, where communication is instant and information is immediately accessible. The way we interact with each other personally, socially, and at work has changed forever. Knowledge is growing at exponential rates in many domains, creating new information and possibilities. This is the world our students are entering.

British Columbia's curriculum is being redesigned to respond to this demanding world our students are entering. To develop new models, we consulted with experts in the field. They suggested that to prepare students for the future, the curriculum must be learner-centred and flexible and maintain a focus on literacy and numeracy, while supporting deeper learning through concept-based and competency-driven approaches.

The redesign of curriculum maintains a focus on sound foundations of literacy and numeracy while supporting the development of citizens who are competent thinkers and communicators, and who are personally and socially competent in all areas of their lives. British Columbia's redesigned curriculum honours the ways in which students think, learn, and grow, and prepares them for a successful lifetime of learning where ongoing change is constant.

[The educated citizen](#)

[Personalized learning](#)

Key features of BC's Curriculum

At the heart of British Columbia's redesigned curriculum are the Core Competencies, essential learning and literacy and numeracy foundations. All three features contribute to deeper learning.

Core competencies

Core Competencies underpin the curricular competencies in all areas of learning. They are directly related to the educated citizen and as such are what we value for all students in the system.

- [Review the Core Competencies, including profiles and illustrations](#)

Essential learning

The curriculum for each subject area includes the essential learning for students, which represent society's aspirations for B.C.'s educated citizen. The redesigned curriculum develops around key content, concepts, skills and big ideas that foster the higher-order thinking demanded in today's world.

Literacy and numeracy foundations

Literacy is the ability to understand, critically analyze, and create a variety of forms of communication, including oral, written, visual, digital, and multimedia, in order to accomplish one's goals.

Numeracy is the ability to understand and apply mathematical concepts, processes, and skills to solve problems in a variety of contexts.

Literacy and numeracy are fundamental to all learning. While they are commonly associated with language learning and mathematics, literacy and numeracy are applied in all areas of learning.