Preparing Globally Competent Students:
The K-12 Schooling Challenge

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Abstract

The overarching purpose of schooling now is to prepare every student, every day and year in the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, values, and experiences that are required to live and work in a simultaneous local/global world. A new dynamic was created for education institutions world-wide when OECD's PISA declared that Global Competence was a set of basic skills, adding a new set of test items to its March 2018 administration to over 70 nations. With this new challenge, the inclusion of global learning into the daily life of a school takes on a new urgency. Working with educators around the world, the International School Connection, Inc. is designing fresh programs to help school leaders reframe school development systems toward a global purpose, and work with teachers to integrate global learning into daily life in classrooms. This paper reports the global realities for preparing competent and caring global citizens, along with the new ISC programs and services that are designed to help school leaders and teachers rethink and redesign schooling for this global era of living and working.

Key Words:
Global Competence, Global Learning, Global Citizen, School Connections, Global Schooling

Introduction

The global community now is so interconnected and complex that every feature in today's lives is influenced by its resources and opportunities, as well as its threats and sustainability challenges. Over the years this global dynamic has created a primal shift of power and opportunity to gain advantage and/or to create islands of sustainability that are both local and global. Mounting layers of complexity have led to a new kind of thinking and action in all work environments, whether it be politics, finance, trade, agriculture, climate change, supply chains, or war. It is time that educators everywhere take up the challenge to transform schooling, with a curriculum and learning systems that will adapt to the evolving web of life. Within this global context of rapid change and continuous learning, the schooling mission necessarily shifts to preparing globally competent youth to engage in and shape the future of the planet. This is both the challenge and the opportunity before us as educators.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the mounting demands of educators to prepare students as competent global citizens, which draw from international organizations as well as from the changing nature of living and work in the emerging global environment. This global context provides the back drop for the work of the International School Connection, Inc. a not-for-profit organization in the USA to provide programs and services to educators and their students for adding *global learning* to the basic daily curriculum of the school. It is anticipated that this example of assistance to educators around the world may inspire many others to respond to the global schooling challenges of this age.

Global Transformations

The global transformations today will without a doubt influence the successful preparation of youth for simultaneous local and global working and living. What global forces are stimulating the *global competence* pressure on schooling, and adding complex challenges for educators? What are the challenges for which students must be prepared? Essentially, students must be equipped with the dynamic new work processes that are rapidly changing careers and jobs, no matter the purpose or focus of work. The organization itself now resembles little of the 20th century bureaucracy and its management, for demands now include 24/7 work responses within local and global contexts, and in both face-to-face and digital environments that promote both worker entrepreneurship and accountability. Life has become too complex to continue with old habits of mind and work, requiring instead rapid collaborative adaptations to new conditions. If a sustainable global community is now an aim, as many are promoting, plans for the future need to be grounded in assumptions about the sustainability of education and its co-existence with healthy and vital national and international agencies and the business community (Halinen, 2017).

The forces that are creating this complex global dynamic for living include human sustainability challenges along with a dense web of global politics and commerce. In response new jobs, careers and work patterns within networks and organizations are altering fundamental traditions of working and making a living. Ban Ki-Moon, former Secretary General of the UN urges that "Sustainability is the pathway to the future we want for all." https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/?s=ban+k-moon+Sustainability+is+the+pathway+to+the+future+we+want+for+all). The human challenges of the world now include the *17 global sustainability goals* that the United Nations has identified, to which all nations as well as schools are expected to work toward by 2030, such as water, climate, food, and inequity (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300).

Another human challenge for living is the *global networked society that* Castells (1997) predicted over 20 years ago would emerge through the technology revolution, with *multinational and transnational enterprises, global networks of capitol, management and information*. *Emerging new jobs and careers* have multiplied since that time, requiring new kinds of competence that build upon the past and integrate possibilities thinking, innovative work processes, along with collective critical examination (https://www.cnbc.com/2012/01/04/21st-Century-Jobs.html). The world of work itself is shifting in fundamental ways: from a profit and results orientation to purpose, from hierarchies of authority to networks with collective responsibility, from controlling workers to empowerment and invention, from planning toward results and outcomes to experimentation and promise, and from privacy of work to transparency at all levels (Chakhoyan, 2017). With these major developments, new values, attitudes and competencies for work are also emerging.

Many organizations that have quickly adapted to these major changes are being influenced by the Quality Management movement to create a customer focus with continuous improvement of services and products as the driver of work (ISO 9000 https://asq.org/quality-resources/iso-9000). Workers are more involved now at all levels of organization in using

information to guide decisions and invent more promising systems of work. The practices of management control are no longer sufficiently flexible for an organization to respond to the rapid pace of change today. In its place has emerged core values, which create the foundations for the systems of work in organizations, and which permeate the interdependency of all work functions.

The Global Schooling Challenge

Global forces at work are raising the bar for quality education and worker competence at all levels. UNESCO's challenge to education was given recently by Irina Bokova, the Director General: *A fundamental change is needed in the way we think about education's role in global development, because it has a catalytic impact on the well-being of individuals and the future of our planet* (https://news.un.org/en/story/2014/11/483212). Now more than ever, education has a responsibility to be in gear with the 21st century challenges and aspirations, and foster the right types of values and skills that will lead to sustainable and inclusive growth and peaceful living together" (www.unescodoc.unesco.org).

To inform educators of the capacities now required in the workplace, the World Economic Forum advanced three clusters of 21st century skills as a new vision for education, increasing the complexity of school learning and assessment in fundamental ways (https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/21st-century-skills-future-jobs-students/). The first skills cluster is the *foundation capacities* of literacy, numeracy, and scientific and cultural literacy, which reflect the basic curriculum of the 20th century. The second skills cluster is a set of *essential competencies* that include complex problem solving and critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration. The third, and newest skills cluster to the schooling curricula, identifies *essential character qualities*, which guide how students approach their changing environment and interact with others. These qualities include curiosity, initiative, persistence, adaptability, leadership, and social and cultural awareness.

The aim of a rather new initiative in the United Nations, called *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* challenges educators to promote and improve the integration of education for sustainable development into strategies and action plans at all levels, for all countries (https://en.unesco.org/education2030-sdg). The UN urges that the content for school learning needs to become its 17 Global Sustainability Goals, which requires rethinking learning environments that prepare students to act for sustainability and societal transformation. We need to change the way we think and act to create quality education and learning for sustainable development, so that we can learn to live together sustainably. The UN's program empowers people to change the way they think and work together towards a sustainable future, so that sustainable development can be integrated across the curriculum!

The pressure to transform the environment and content of school learning has mounted again with the declaration of OECD's PISA that *Global Competence* is a new set of basic skills, as evidenced in the March 2018 administration of its Exam to 15 year-olds in 70+ developed nations. What is global competence? PISA defines *Global Competence as the capacity to*

examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development, http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2018-global-competence.htm

Although some countries chose not to administer the global competence test items in the March 2018 administration, this declaration by PISA moves *the topic of global learning* from the fringes of school life into its center: *the curriculum,* which is the basic knowledge and skills that are taught and tested. The aim of OECD's Education2030 is to fund the answers to two questions: 1) What knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values will today's students need to shape and thrive in their world in 2030? and 2) How can instructional systems develop their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values effectively? PISA argues that *Learning to participate in interconnected, complex and diverse societies is no longer a luxury but a pressing necessity.* (http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2018-global-competence.htm) The new PISA exam section provides a framework for nurturing global competence among young people world-wide, using the three levels that Schattle (2008) put forth in his work: *The Practices of Global Citizenship*.

> *Awareness Level*: Awareness of oneself and the outside world, a global consciousness. Citizenship is a dynamic relationship among strangers who are transformed into neighbors, whose commonality derives from expanding consciousness rather than geographic proximity,
>
> *Responsibility Level*: Strengthening solidarity across humanity for values and for redressing the enormous imbalances that exist; notions of belonging with democratically accountable public spaces and respective ethics of responsibility for an evolution of public space.
>
> *Participation Levels:* Contributing to the political or social life of a community, whether it is local or global, that focuses on voice and activity. Political action influences the practices and decisions of governing institutions, with calls for accountability and reform.

Big Ideas for the Transformation of Schooling

How do educators conceptualize schooling today in this rapidly changing global context, whether it be the curriculum, organization, learning systems, planning or accountability to other agencies? To adapt to the complexities in the world today, the focus for schooling will necessarily become students and their competence development. Leaders will drive work toward this purpose as people organize in new ways to stimulate learning for a global age of living. Simply adding *global competence*, or other skills now needed will fail to sustain a school's performance in modern times. What is needed is rethinking the schooling purpose and processes of work toward a new end: *preparing students for a complex global age of living and working*.

In a recent multi-site research study of industrial mid-level managers, it was found there to be a lack of dialogue among leaders about what is leadership, what is culture, and what is meant by values in the organization (Snyder, Backstrom, & Ingelsson, 2018). Middle managers continue to be prisoners of a crisis management orientation, and need methods by which to create a culture of engagement and proactive development. Big ideas about systems of work and their leadership can alter the crisis management pattern, and elevate the organization to more sustainable results.

consider a few clues from physics for rethinking school leadership, organization, development, the curriculum, and learning systems. Gone will be isolation in any form, as well as silos of work. Communities of professionals working together toward new kinds of purposes will reshape the concept of schooling for this global age. This is a story about energy, for unleashing it within schools to reshape the systems of learning and working, is not only possible, it is essential to a sustainable future.

A *Systems Approach* to management entered the picture over 70 years ago to promote a shift in focus from small groups to the organization as a whole, where workers began to function interdependently within and across units toward a common purpose (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1974). In this view of organizations as living systems, workers linked together across groups to herald in an era of interdependence of work toward common goals (Snyder & Anderson, 1986). Separate functions began to connect, which had a surprising impact on organizational outcomes.

Researchers identified the impact of collaboration within and across teams in ways that effected professional performance and success patterns. With multiple professional perspectives and disciplines viewing the same challenges, a new dynamic was created that led to higher levels of organizational resilience. In time the assembly line mentality (the machine) began to fade with a growing interest in the potential of a System's perspective for promoting growth (a living organization). Fritjof and Luisi, in their recent book *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision* (2016), argue *Systems Thinking* is now vital as a way of life for the sustainability of communities and nations, and their schools.

The *Quality Revolution* has an impact on organizations as managers shift their focus from *goals* and *evaluation* to the *customer and a continuous improvement agenda for programs and services*. In the early 1990s our research team worked with school districts in the Tampa Bay area of Florida around systemic and quality principles for school development (Snyder et. al, 2000). What emerged was a model of Quality Management for education settings that continued an holistic and systemic approach to development, and included the basic tenants from Deming (1986) and Juran (1989). In a research study of schools in the Pasco County School District in Florida, which had integrated system thinking and quality management practices for some time, Snyder (1997) found that schools with the highest levels of Quality Management practices in use were schools with significantly higher student achievement

pattern, as measured on State tests. A student focus towards the integration of work systems shows promise for schools.

Chaos Theory offers perspectives on how natural systems change over time, which enables leaders to guide an organization's development using principles found in the emergence of living, growing systems of all kinds (Snyder et al., 2008). The idea is to stay tuned to the environment and adapt to the growing complexity of life. *Sustainability,* a more recent valued concept, has emerged as a premier global drive for development in every feature of life, with emphasis, at long last, on the importance of creating sustainability in education institutions as a building block for the future (Halinen, 2017). Building upon the sciences, *sustainability is defined here as the responsiveness of living systems to changing conditions over time.* The physics of Chaos Theory can influence our thinking about the natural dynamic process of change in living systems, such as schools, which is a departure from static bureaucratic practices.

Toward sustainability aims, *Networking Science* plays a vital function within organizations and their growth over time. Duncan Watts observes that complex networks live between chaos and order and are driven by their purpose (2003). Key features of networks include hubs of collective work that are connected to other hubs, and to smaller clusters of other important work for the network. Links that exist between and among hubs and clusters enable the network to grow in unpredictable and sustainable ways (Barabasi, 2003). We can now hypothesize *that sustainability over time emerges from healthy, growing networks of human activity around a unifying purpose!* Human networks emerge from a unifying purpose, along with independent and voluntary links, and with multiple leaders. The unifying purpose, systems of work, processes, values, and procedures, are all central to consistency across a network. These vital features prompt new pathways to open and enhance life within the network.

Recent studies reveal that purpose-driven organizations tap into the basic interests of their workers to create energy for innovation and continuous improvement (Quinn & Thackor, 2018*).* Networking, both outside an organization, as well as internally, is becoming a natural way of responding quickly and effectively to emerging challenges. A scale-free network of activity is a complex cluster of interconnectivity, which includes hubs that dominate network activity, along with smaller clusters of work that support and are connected to hubs and many other clusters (Buchanan, 2002). The distinction between various existing systems of school work (learning communities, teams, departments, houses, specials), for example, and networks is the connecting links that function between and among them.

Multiple leaders, rather than a few, are characteristic of networks, where power comes from the unifying purpose and a specific function that advances the organization. A surprising find is this: *The more complex the network, the fewer fluctuations there are in its performance and growth; the most stable type of network is complex* (Buchanan, 2002). More simple networks are found to be more vulnerable and less sustainable in performance and growth. *Complexity*

is a good thing, it seems, for it grows naturally in a healthy network, strengthens its structure as a living system, and leads to durability and sustainability over time.

Given these foundations to organizational development in recent decades (Systems Thinking, Quality Management, Chaos Theory and Sustainability, and Networking Science, let us now consider vital assumptions, foundations, and conditions that are necessary for transform schooling for this global age of living and working:

a. The Organization:
    . is a living, growing system
    . becomes its own dynamic energy force
    . embraces systems thinking, where everything is connected
    . engages in the global working and learning environment
b. The Organization's
    . work systems are interconnected
    . focus is on the customer, its purpose, and the empowerment of workers
    . goals link to continuous professional development
    . challenges drive improvement strategies
    . professional development program promotes high levels of competence and performance
    . growth is sustainable over time
c. Positive energy drives the culture of continuous improvement
d. Everyone owns the organization's development journey.

The International School Connection, Inc.: A Response

The International School Connection, Inc. (ISC) was launched 25 years ago when globalization emerged as a rather new phenomenon (Snyder et al., 2008). Beginning as an international network of educators across the globe, the ISC initially organized events for school leaders to learn with and from each other about *school-based management*, and exploring the links between school development and globalization. Two on-line graduate programs were launched in the College of Education at the University of South Florida, called *Global Organizational Development,* which were offered through the ISC to students from Sweden, Russia, Venezuela, and the USA. An on-line global community emerged for those graduate students, and from other ISC school leaders and academics from around the world to explore the opportunities of a global context to schooling.

In time it became clear that the focus of school development within a global context needed to shift from school development itself to preparing students as global citizens. Working with the ISC global community during three annual global summits, and online communications, the *Global Learning Benchmarks* (GLBs) emerged as a set of ideas to guide educators in preparing students as global citizens during the K-12 school years (Sullivan, 2019). In time the final set of GLBs was validated with this global community, generating a platform for helping school leaders guide their school's development as a global learning center. The ISC shifted its

attention eventually to support school partnerships where teachers and students from different time zones and cultures studied challenges together that were both local and global.

In 2017 the ISC launched a new era of services to schools around the world with its purpose: *to help K-12 educators prepare their students to become globally competent to support a sustainable global community.* ISC programs were either updated, redesigned, or created anew to provide teachers and school leaders with the knowledge and skills to create new school cultures and mindsets of learning for sustainable living. Our new platform was built upon two challenges: OECD's new PISA Exam with the items on global competence, and UNESCO's challenge to education to rethink its role in global development. The foundation of all our programs is the big ideas we have drawn from systems thinking, quality management, chaos theory and sustainability, and networking sciences. These big ideas provide a solid foundation to the task of rebuilding the education of youth in school environments.

Five New ISC Programs

ISC Program 1: School Partnerships

School partnerships provide easy access for students and teachers to life in another part of the globe, with its traditions, customs, and challenges. Students always find similarities between their partners' lives and their own, and come to celebrate in many ways the new connections. Often exchange programs evolve, as well as visits, friendships, and long term relationships. These are the building blocks for becoming a global citizen.

Schools everywhere are asking questions about how to prepare young people for success in this new century. Given the rapid growth of new knowledge about human learning, and the global context of living and working, schools are likely to become very different from 20th century models. The global learning environment will become increasingly important in school development as students engage more actively across curriculum, time, age groups, and national boundaries. In a school that becomes a Global Learning Center, informed decisions and intentional actions are guided by data from Benchmarking to global standards.

In 2006 over 50 schools participated in international partnerships with the ISC. A report was published in 2011 by the leaders in three school districts whose schools were engaged in a three-way partnership: Stockholm Sweden, Pasco County Florida USA, ad Shenzhen, China (Snyder, Mann, Johnson, & Xing, 2010). Currently 20 schools are engaged in partnerships from China, Australia, Finland, Sweden, and the USA. Plans are being made for linking together more schools in China, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Canada, USA, United Arab Emirates, and India. Partnership communications occur in many formats: Email, SKYPE, websites, WeChat, WhatsApp, and Facetime, where students and teachers exchange messages and work with each other, as well as share videos and other products from their work.

The ISC is building a data base of schools around the world whose leaders express interest in their students and teachers connecting with the same in a school from a different part of the global community. The GLBs promote school connections across borders for educators and

students to learn about global realities, conditions, and sustainability challenges. The ISC provides a service of linking schools together. School partnerships are guided by the Global Learning Benchmarks to facilitate planning for developing student global competence. Teachers and students select a focus for their work together, such as music festivals, sports, climate challenges, water challenges, literature, science, and so on. Some school partners are already working together on selected United Nations Sustainability Goals (https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300):

Poverty	Energy	Climate Change
Hunger and Food Security	Economic Growth	Oceans
Health	Infrastructure	Biodiversity, Forests
Education	Industrialization	Desertification
Gender Equality	Inequity	Peace, Justice
Women's Empowerment	Cities	Strong Institutions
Water Sanitation	Sustainable Consumption & Production	Partnerships

We anticipate featuring student partnership projects on the ISC website (www.iscnow.org), and also in future global conferences.

ISC Program 2: Global Learning Benchmark Integration

During the 2004 ISC Global Summit in Ottawa, CA, the idea of GLC Benchmarks emerged and a decision was made to establish Global Benchmarks for Schools as Global Learning Centers, which were develop over two years and then validated in 2006 (Snyder et. al., 2008). The Benchmarks were to become guides in school development processes of a school becoming a Global Learning Center, and as the framework for an ISC Global Learning Center Certification System. The ISC's Benchmark development was guided by this inquiry premise: "How might the ISC foster school development in a global direction?"

The Global Learning Center Benchmarks

The ISC Global Benchmarks are organized into two Clusters: (1) The Global Learning Environment for Students and (2) Preparation for Success in a Global Environment. There are Ten GLC Benchmarks with five Benchmarks in each Cluster (Snyder et al., 2008). Each Benchmark has five characteristics for further interpretation and clarification. These Benchmarks represent the best practices and ones of promise from other globally oriented schools around the world.

Cluster 1: The Global Learning Environment for Students

1. The curriculum provides opportunities to learn about local & global forces that influence change.
2. The School as a growing system has a vision and a plan to provide opportunities to connect with the Global Community & its dynamic forces.
3. Educators participate in professional development activity in a global networked environment to promote learning and exchange.

4. Partnerships with local, regional, and/or global businesses enhance the direction of school development.
5. The School has achieved high student performance results using either local, regional, and/or international measures.

Cluster 2: Preparation for Success in a Global Environment

6. Current knowledge about human learning guides learning practices throughout school life.
7. International projects are included in local curriculum to promote global learning opportunities for all students.
8. Students are developing capacities for success in the evolving global workforce, which includes emerging technologies.
9. Students in Global Learning Centers learn & use democratic decision making processes, peace building strategies, & practices for ethno-cultural equity as guides & foundations for becoming global citizens.
10. Students demonstrate an orientation for caring about the global community and its sustainable development.

A centerpiece of the ISC work is making possible a school community's development of students for success in this global age of living and working. In a Global Learning Center the student is the focus of attention, and the Global Learning Benchmarks are the strategic drivers of school development. The GLBs give a school community a relative measure of their preparedness for students to respond and adapt to local and global trends.

Global Learning Benchmark Support System

The Benchmarks make up the foundation of the ISC Global Learning Center Support System which has six elements:

a. *The GLB Diagnostic Tool* was created to assist educators in developing schools as Global Learning Centers. The Tool provides a relative measure of how globally responsive the school is in its processes and environment. The analyzed data becomes the basis for Strategic Action Planning and Implementation, and provides information to operationalize the Benchmarks into the school's life and that of all classrooms.

b. *The GLC Training Program* facilitates a shift in thinking and acting to a global orientation. The training program provides new knowledge and tools for working together while using ISC Global Benchmarks to shape schools as Global Learning Centers. The program also focuses on developing Strategic Leadership and Thinking for All.

The Training Program Outcomes are to:

1. Develop a school leadership team for working together to become a Global Learning Center school
2. Develop a working knowledge of the global context of schooling for

preparing students as world citizens.

3. Create a vision and a working plan to guide school development that is grounded in the ISC's Global Learning Center (GLC) Benchmarks.
4. Promote the GLC Benchmarks as an orientation to active, essential and enduring learning.
5. Acquire a model for school development that is based on Systems, Chaos and Complexity sciences.
6. Develop a digital culture with emerging technologies for learning and communication.
7. Become an ISC Network School.

c. *Coaching and facilitation* guide a school's Leadership Team to become a global learning center. The ISC creates an inquiry-oriented environment to guide using school data for organizing change initiatives

d. *A 5-Step GLC certification process* includes: *Application, Discovery, Recognition, Certification, and Re-certification.* After a three-year period based on a portfolio and an ISC representative school visit, a School is recertified as a Global Learning Center.

In 2007 the A.Y. Jackson Secondary School in Ottawa, Canada became the first certified ISC Global Learning Center School. The award was given at the Annual ISC Global Summit that year in Beijing, where students and teachers shared features from their school portfolio for each of the ten Global Learning Center Benchmarks.

ISC Program 3: More Options for Results in Education Training (The M.O.R.E. Approach),
The M.O.R.E. Approach training program prepares teachers and school leaders to create brain-friendly learning environments to accelerate the learning process. The M.O.R.E. Model, developed over the years by J. Swarzman (Cohen, 2003) has been the core set of values and practices of the Corbett Preparatory School, in Tampa, Florida. Educators in Spain and China have also been trained in the M.O.R.E. Approach over the last several decades, with trainers now in each country.

The Seven Components of the M.O.R.E. Model

Component 1: *Child-Centered Vision*, which facilitates a more joyful and effortless learning community by leaning heavily on the change process and lessons from neurobiologists to accelerate learning.

Component 2: *Appreciating the Uniqueness of the Learner* focuses on how people intake and process information through learning preferences. This is the foundation for creating a learning environment in which all students are able and expected to succeed. Academic, behavioral, social and emotional styles are included.

Component 3: *Motivational Strategies to Increase Time on Task* are used by teachers to make full use of an array of brain-friendly strategies and gimmicks to

capture student interest, mix fun into the learning process and bring learning to life.

Component 4: *Creating Dignity and Respect*, using a Positive Mental Set and positive phrasing are at the heart of all interactions. Faculty and staff work to focus on what they want people to know or do. Having a positive approach involves choosing options and seeking solutions, rather than creating and dwelling on obstacles. Core values are emphasized along with specific communication skills to support an environment that adds credence to the power of dignity and respect.

Component 5: *Teacher Presence, Making Connections* supports the long-held belief that the teacher makes the difference in setting the tone, culture and academic success in the classroom. Teacher presence represents the nonverbal behaviors and mental set that send a message to the student about the teacher's intention, subconscious confidence and ability to make strong connections with the learner.

Component 6: *A Learning Community* is grounded in the use of cooperative learning models, team instruction and communication strategies that enhance group dynamics to create a synergistic, cohesive and successful learning community. A vibrant learning community includes teachers, parents and students in the process.

Component 7: Curriculum Development is the intention to engage students meaningfully while creating a comprehensive framework for classroom application. At its heart is the use of multiple learning strategies woven into a seamless plan that can lead to elegant teaching and insightful learning opportunities.

ISC Program 4: Leadership for Sustainable School Development (LSSD): A Training Program for School Leaders

LSSD Training was first developed for the Pasco County School District in Florida in 2006. Since that time over 600 school level and school district administrators have completed the 10-module/one year training program. The program gave the school district a common set of values, along with a common language and collaborative work systems and processes to create sustainable schooling results. In 2018 LSSD was updated completely to reflect the global context and dynamics of current global conditions. Today this 10 module training program is offered both online by the ISC through Drake University for four hours of graduate credit, and also from a 10-day on-site delivery program, over the span of a school year.

The LSSD Program develops leadership capacities for systemic and sustainable school development to foster the preparation of youth for success in this global age of living. The program fuses together the concepts of systems thinking, sustainability, quality management,

chaos theory, the human networked organization, and global competence as essential elements for leading schools in this global age.

Participants in training create a learning organization environment together with common purposes, goals, work organization and assumptions about continuous improvement. Credit for participation in the LSSD Training Program includes continuous engagement, practice of each LSSD Dialogue and Group Research Tools, an electronic portfolio, and a final presentation of what has been learned during training about creating and leading a sustainable schools for all students.

The LSSD Training Program is designed to promote the integration of school functions: (a) visionary strategic leadership, (b) planning and cooperative work systems, (c) human resource and professional learning systems, (d) 21st century curriculum, (e) student learning communities, and (d) a global learning culture. These six work clusters comprise a theoretical map of the whole school's work culture, which is driven by common values and priorities.

The 10 training modules guide learning as a system of interdependent practices, and include the following concepts and theoretical foundations:

1. Global Transformations and Systems Thinking
2. Chaos Theory of Change for Sustainable Futures
3. Disequilibrium as the Target for Change
4. Developing a Shared Vision and Plans
5. Systemic Systems of Work: The Networked School
6. Professional Learning Communities
7. Student Learning Communities
8. Students and Educators as Global Citizens
9. Benchmarking Progress
10. The Impact of My LSSD Journey—Participant Presentations.

To facilitate the continuous improvement of the school's systems of work, and to make productive use of the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the Program, the following dialogue and group research tools are taught in training and then practiced in a school setting:

. Brainstorming	. The Basics	. Mini DDT
. Leverage Point Analysis	. Delphi Dialogue Technique	. Strategic Planning
. Case Study Technique	. Strategic Funnel	. Network Building
. Benchmarking Progress	. The World Café.	. Force Field Analysis.

Together these theoretical and conceptual bases, combined with dialogue and group research tools, equip school leaders to guide school development processes continuously toward the successful preparation of competent and caring students for a local and global future. *Sustainability is the growth of a living system as it responds to changing conditions THE AIM!*

ISC Program 5: International School Study Visits

International School Study visits promote learning for school leaders and teachers about features of high performing schools in another country, which promotes global learning and inspiration for transforming existing school work systems for a global future. The ISC has facilitated successful international school visits over the decades in Sweden, Finland, Ontario Canada, Russia, China, and the USA (particularly in Florida). The International Study Visits Program offers school leaders and teachers an opportunity to spend up to a week visiting high achieving schools in other countries. The purpose is to facilitate learning about other schooling practices that can reinforce and inspire new ways of viewing school development in this global age of living for preparing students for success as global citizens.

Currently an international school study visit prototype is being developed with a school district near Helsinki, Finland for private school leaders in Spain. The ISC leadership team is working together with the Finnish school district leaders and the Spanish representative to create a week long study visit prototype, to provide a rich learning experience for all involved educators. In time this prototype will be expanded to include high performing schools in at least Canada, Spain, the USA, China, Sweden, and others in Finland. A personalized school study guide is prepared for visitors to consider eight features: 1) similarities and differences between schools; 2) outstanding school features and initiatives; 3) global learning activity in the classroom, and throughout the school; 4) student success patterns; 5) systemic thinking throughout the school; 6) strategic leadership at various levels; 7) evidence of possible school sustainability; and 8) fresh ideas to consider for school development.

Conclusions

The dramatic human challenges, the emerging nature of work and careers, and the rapidly changing adaptations to the organization of work and its leadership creates the urgency for schooling everywhere to adapt to these rapidly changing, complex times. The international agencies of the UN, UNESCO, OECD, and PISA have given a clarion call to transform the purpose and practice of schooling everywhere. The International School Connection is one example of the kind of support system for educators that can provide connection systems along with programs for acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values for shifting to a global orientation for the education of young people.

School Partnerships link students and their teachers with others across the world to learn together and from each other. The *Global Learning Benchmark System* provides a practical guide for teachers and school leaders to elevate learning to a global stage, both historically and currently. *The M.O.R.E. Model* prepares teachers and instructional leaders to create brain-friendly, nurturing learning environments for student, with an emphasis on both emotional and social development. *The LSSD Training Program* prepares school leaders in a systemic approach to school development that embraces quality leadership, global competence development, networked organizations, and continuous professional development. *The International School Study Visits* offer opportunities for teachers and/or school leaders to learn

about exemplary schooling in another country that encourages professional thinking and learning that is both local and global.

Preparing students to promote sustainable global development and living throughout their lifetime is now the challenge for educators everywhere. Hopefully the ISC story will encourage others to begin connecting educators and their students with the drama that now is unfolding on the global stage of life.

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