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WHAT IS ACE LEARNING?

ACE Learning is a protocol that offers a fundamentally different approach to school accreditation compared to prior accreditation protocols. ACE Learning offers a framework for schools to reflect deeply on their 1) foundational structures and processes, and 2) their effectiveness as a learning community.

ACE Learning entails several phases culminating in the External Review Visit (ERV) by a team of trained peer educators that typically leads to accreditation for candidate schools or re-accreditation for member schools. Schools undergo a re-accreditation process every five years.

- Foundation Standards Report and Visit
- ACE Learning Principles Preparatory Report and Visit
- Internal Reflection and Report
- External Review Visit and Report

NEASC ACCREDITATION CYCLE

While traditional accreditation asks schools to reflect on what they do for students, ACE Learning challenges schools to reflect deeply on the Impacts they have on learners and to what extent these Impacts align with the ACE Learning Principles.

ACE Learning is as much a developmental process as an evaluative one. NEASC meets schools where they are in their process of building greater effectiveness as impactful learning communities for all learners. Having demonstrated compliance with Foundation Standards, schools move on to imagine new ways of supporting deep learning, using the ACE Learning Principles as both guide and provocation. While exploring each of the Learning Principles, schools are asked to indicate where they are on the dynamic ACE Learning transformational continuum as they help shape impactful learning inside and outside the classroom.

A key element in each school’s reflection is how the 4 Cs support or hinder the realization of a learning community’s vision: CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING, COMMITMENT, CAPACITY, COMPETENCE.
NEASC FOUNDATION STANDARDS

The Foundation Standards are the compliance-oriented guidelines that indicate essential, transactional relationships, structures, policies, and systems without which a safe, effective, and sustainable learning community cannot exist. All NEASC schools must evidence strong foundations at the start of their accreditation journey and provide Annual Updates. A thorough review, supported by documentation and a Visit, is conducted every four to five years. The Foundation Standards template contains indicators to rate alignment with each of the six Foundation Standards.

See Document #109 for the detailed requirements.

Learning Structure
The school has in place clear statements that express a shared understanding of learning and objectives that shape and drive its programs and practices. A curriculum articulating learning outcomes, expected teaching practices, and principles of assessment exist.

Organizational Structure
The school has in place a clear governance and leadership structure with defined roles and responsibilities, and a faculty and staff qualified for the roles to which they are assigned. Expectations defined in policy are carried out and observed in practice. Mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness and functionality of the school’s organizational structures have been developed.

Health, Safety, and Security
The learning environment is healthy, safe, and secure for all members of the school community. Effective and well-established policies and procedures exist and are acted upon to protect children, adults, and visitors alike.

Finance, Facilities, and Resources
The school has in place policies, practices, and procedures that ensure financial health and economic sustainability. The principles governing financial management are designed to provide the resources (in personnel, equipment, and facilities) required to support the school’s learning program and objectives. The school facilities are fit for purpose.

Ethical Practice
The school has well-established, transparent policies and practices in place to ensure that employees, learners, and parents are treated fairly, equitably, and ethically.

Boarding/Residential
The boarding/residential program, if offered, effectively supports the wellbeing, and enhances the learning experiences of all boarding students and staff.
In the ACE Learning 2.0 version, NEASC has moved away from rubrics that are tied to individual Learning Principles. Instead, Learning Communities use the same set of rubric statements and apply them to each of the ten Learning Principles.

Learning Communities use the ACE Learning Principles and their own [Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning](#) to continually reimagine their future. NEASC Visits give schools an outside perspective about where the learning community may be in its transformational process. The continuum is not a judgment on the school's quality or worth, but rather a way to understand its own process as it relates to working with the ACE Learning Principles. We visualize the continuum as a fluid process that may not always proceed in clear, linear fashion. The statements that describe the parts of the continuum can be applied to the school's work on any of the individual Learning Principles.
ACE Transformational Continuum Ratings

**Not yet evident**
The learning community has not yet begun to reflect on this Learning Principle. It may be committed to improving its programs, structures, practices, and conceptual understandings, but has not yet embraced or recognized the need to shift toward transformational approaches to learning.

**Thinking about it...**
The learning community has begun to think about the need to shift toward approaches to learning that are aligned with the ACE Learning Principles and its chosen future vision. The learning community is having initial conversations about its aspirations compared to what is currently observed in practice. An understanding of the implications for teaching and learning is developing.

**Working on it...**
The learning community has embraced the shift that is needed and begun to plan *how* to bridge the gap between its aspirations and current reality. The learning community has decided on what learning Impacts it is targeting; systems and structures are being designed; approaches are being trialed, and the community is gathering early feedback to inform the next phase.

**Living it...**
The learning community is aligned with this Learning Principle and that alignment is evident across the learning community. The learning community has structures and systems in place that are leading to the desired impact on learners. The learning community is gathering evidence, artifacts, and stakeholder feedback to ensure that all learners are benefiting.

**What if?**
The learning community and its practices represent a transformational shift that is innovative in design and reshapes the structure, purpose, and practice of schooling.
THE 4 Cs

Conceptual Understanding | Commitment | Capacity | Competence

---

**Conceptual Understanding**

Conceptual understanding of ACE Learning begins with being able to explain the meaning of each Learning Principle and Impact. To be effective, however, this understanding must then extend to the ability to transfer the meaning of each ACE Learning Principle to new situations, to apply it to new contexts, and to be able to describe what the Learning Principles and Impacts look like in a transformed, student-centered learning experience. Definitional understanding is required to begin the journey, but deep conceptual understanding is a prerequisite for the transformation of learning.

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**Commitment**

Commitment is a measure of determination to proceed on the pathway framed by the ACE Learning Principles and Impacts and described in the school's Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning. It is premised on an understanding that ACE Learning depends on student-centered learning and teaching and is grounded in a 21st century context. Additionally, it requires the learning community to recognize the gap between where it is today and where it is headed. Once the gap is identified, the community must be willing to take on the realignment and disruption of current patterns and the creation of the new systems and practices that may be needed to change the trajectory of learning and bend it toward the vision contained in the school's foundational documents.

Commitment to the transformational journey is most powerful when it exists in all parts of the organization and among all stakeholders, but it often begins with a smaller group that has both the influence and opportunity to bring the learning community along on the journey.

Commitment is visible when learning communities are thoughtfully reflecting on how systems and patterns need to be changed to achieve the Learning Principles and desired Impacts and there is evidence of processes and behaviors that have been adjusted to create those realities. This might not mean immediate changes in performance, but rather indications of action – overcoming the status quo and engagement in purposeful movement.
Capacity is the ability and willingness of a learning community to commit resources (financial, personnel, institutional) to support the ACE Learning journey. Added resources such as increased budgets and new positions may be needed, but capacity does not necessarily mean adding resources. It often means reallocation of resources to focus them away from the systems that represent the status quo to critical changes that must be made to enhance the school's ACE Learning journey. Capacity also means that the Governing Body understands the community's direction and is willing to shape the organization's Strategic Plans, including the school's Major Learning Plans, operating budgets, facilities plans, and other capital improvements to align with ACE Learning.

Competence is the presence of the individual and institutional abilities required to convert Conceptual Understanding into action and progress toward the Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning and the community's Major Learning Plans. Competence is built through sustained opportunities for educators to engage in learning that builds their capacity to transform learning. Competence exists in learning communities that possess a growth mindset characterized by a focus on effort, learning from mistakes, and embracing challenges.
A Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning includes:

- a definition of the characteristics, skills, and attributes desired of the learners/graduates (which is the ultimate Impact);
- a description of the type of pedagogy and conditions that result in learners developing in those ways;
- a statement/story to illustrate what learners will be doing, what teachers will be doing, and what the learning tasks expect from learners.

One of the key products for schools engaging with ACE Learning is the development of a Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning. NEASC previously referred to this as a Definition of Learning. Our initial years of experience supporting ACE journeys by schools around the world have helped us clarify the process.

A school’s Shared Understanding is supported by a description of the specific pedagogy, chosen by the school, that is used to achieve the desired goals. For example, if a school’s Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning includes language and/or graphics that focus on self-directed learning, learner agency, and autonomy, then the school would likely be using some form of open inquiry or co-created inquiry, rather than teacher-directed inquiry.
In ACE Learning schools, the Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning is grounded in the ten ACE Learning Principles and Impacts, as well as other Impacts a school might have chosen. As the community develops its shared understanding, it can more easily identify the Major Learning Plans that are designed to close the gap between what the school aspires to and its current reality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Learning Plans</th>
<th>Why is it important?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toward the end of the Internal Reflection, the learning community is ready to prioritize a few Major Learning Plans (MLPs) that will create lasting Impacts on its learners. Plans may take many forms and may be individualized to contribute to the school’s own strategic objectives.</td>
<td>The Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning is the school’s North Star that will guide the rest of their reflection and their choice of plans to help the school on its transformational journey. Without a clear future direction, schools often lose focus on what is essential. The Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning holds everyone accountable for focusing on learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When is it developed?**

The Shared Understanding is generally developed and expressed at the beginning of the school's Internal Reflection, following the school's work to “unpack” the Learning Principles. A draft may be developed which is then reconsidered as the community goes deeper into their Internal Reflection work. The Visitors at the Preparatory Visit provide a workshop for the school to guide the school’s work to develop a Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning. On occasion, and when a school already has a firm grasp of the ACE Learning Principles and Impacts, the school may choose to develop its draft Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning before the Preparatory Visit. If a school has a clearly defined Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning before the accreditation cycle (or as a result of previous cycles), the school is invited to review its Shared Understanding and revise as needed to stay current.
A Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning can improve learning and teaching:

- when it is influenced by the ACE Learning Principles and other relevant research and thinking in education;
- when it is co-created and well understood by the stakeholders in the community;
- when it is observable in everyday learning and teaching;
- when it promotes collaboration among faculty and school leadership in service of High-Quality Learning;
- when teachers feel empowered and safe to try new ways of teaching to meet the expectations of the school's understanding of High-Quality Learning;
- when it creates a vision of learning that people feel inspired by;
- when it becomes the central focus of teacher development and appraisal; and
- when it is used as a hiring tool for new faculty and staff
ACE LEARNING PRINCIPLES STRUCTURE

While the Foundation Standards are compliance-oriented and transactional in nature, the ACE Learning Principles (LPs) are aspirational statements, more transformational than transactional, and intended to encourage schools to be reflective learning communities able to design learner-focused futures that may transform both learners and schools.

*Each LP includes the following content:*

**NAME AND STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE**
The core guiding statement of the Learning Principle.

**RATIONALE**
A statement to help explain the Learning Principle in narrative form.

**IMPACTS**
An Impact is a usually long-term transformational change in a learner. Impact statements can help schools measure the result of their efforts through the accreditation process.

**PROMPTS AND PROVOCATIONS**
These essential questions can be used by the school's ACE Committees to prompt reflection and engage the community in conversations. *Answers are not meant to be shared with NEASC.*

**EXAMPLES**
A few select pieces of evidence one might find in a school well aligned to the Learning Principle.

**KEY TERMS**
Important terms and their meaning as related to ACE Learning are linked to a [glossary of terms](#) located at the end of this document for your reference.

**RESOURCES**
We have posted a curated list of resources related to the ACE Learning Principles on our website. Make sure to bookmark the link and check back for updates and additions. [view resources online](#)
# THE TEN ACE LEARNING PRINCIPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Learning Purposes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Dimensions of Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Evidence of Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Learning Perspectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Learner Autonomy and Engagement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Research, Reflection, and Action</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Learning Space and Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Learning Community Wellbeing</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Principle 1: Learning Purposes

Learning builds understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions that can be applied across different situations. Learners become responsible and successful global citizens by actively engaging with complex real-world issues.

Rationale

Learners will be faced with a future in which memorization of content will be less important than the ability to analyze and assess complex information, find novel solutions, work across disciplines, learn how to learn new things, communicate well, collaborate, and to live with an understanding of the impact of their behaviors and decisions on the world.

Experiences that emphasize interdisciplinary learning (connecting the disciplines in challenging tasks) and transdisciplinary learning (such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking) are more representative of the real world now and in their future.

The school's chosen goals for student growth in understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions are designed to engage students in the complex problems they are likely to face in their lives. The school's chosen student goals are long-term in nature, written in language that is clear to teachers and learners, and directly influences learning tasks.

Learning Principle 1 asks schools to reflect on how the school's curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices as well as written and unwritten priorities promote learners' ability to use their knowledge and skills to engage in authentic work in various real-world contexts.

Impacts

1.1  Learners use critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, technological, and research skills, and transfer their learning across disciplines to solve local and global problems within real-world contexts. They do so with increasing autonomy over time.

1.2  Learners develop an ethical mindset and a global perspective when they engage with real-world problems and issues.

1.3  The learning community has clearly defined goals for student growth in understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions, which contribute to each learner's ability to become responsible global citizens.

Resources – view online
Learning Principle 1: Learning Purposes

Prompts and Provocations

• What are our desired goals (understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions) for our students? To what extent are those goals challenging, and require the use of transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills?
• Do our desired goals reflect the intercultural understanding necessary for a globally connected world?
• To what extent do teaching and learning practices facilitate the shift from traditional content acquisition to transdisciplinary learning, interdisciplinary learning, and real-world problem solving?
• What role does technology play in preparing learners for a globally connected, high-tech future?
• What local and regional issues are important to our community? How well do we integrate these into learning experiences?
• How do our learning goals reflect and include people from historically marginalized groups?
• Are our chosen teaching practices aligned with our learning goals?

For example, you might see...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners explain what they are learning and why it is important.</th>
<th>Learners explain which transdisciplinary skills they are using, how their learning is interdisciplinary.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners describe how they came together as a class to try to clean up a polluted lake on campus. They describe with passion how they identified sources of the pollution and its negative effects, while raising awareness and convincing the local government to address the issue.</td>
<td>Elementary learners join a discussion group to nominate each other for exhibiting the learner profile traits of kindness, risk-taking, etc. Learners describe in detail how these examples helped impact others in the learning community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners connect to others around the world to consider the impact of a global issue, e.g., global warming.</td>
<td>Students notice a lack of minority viewpoints in assigned reading and question whether the learning goals could be accomplished through more diverse perspectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Principle 2: Dimensions of Learning

Learners grow through regular engagement in creative, ethical, interpersonal, technological, environmental, physical, and entrepreneurial experiences. Learners explore ideas and develop solutions that may have impact beyond themselves.

Rationale

Learners thrive when they are given challenging opportunities to develop the many dimensions of who they are as human beings. As adults, learners will have to navigate work and personal lives that combine many dimensions sometimes simultaneously. Successful learners and adults will be those who can solve important, real-world problems creatively, find new ways to do things, and work in an inter-connected, highly technological world with diverse partners.

Students need to understand the impact their choices will have on others and themselves. They need to learn to be ethical, respectful citizens of a multiracial, multicultural world and to understand inequality and bias as it exists in societal norms, laws, structures, practices, and beliefs.

Students thrive when they are given opportunities to impact their world by tapping into these dimensions of learning to become changemakers for a better world.

Learners leverage technology to develop their work across these dimensions and they use technology to share their work with others.

Impacts

2.1 Learners develop and use higher-order thinking skills in the creative, ethical, interpersonal, physical, technological, environmental, and entrepreneurial dimensions of learning.

2.2 Learners actively inquire into and document their development based on a profile and definition of success in creative, ethical, interpersonal, physical, technological, environmental, and entrepreneurial dimensions of learning.

2.3 Learners engage with mentors inside the school and in the local and global community to support their efforts to engage with the dimensions of learning in a way that creates local or global impact.

Resources – view online
Learning Principle 2: Dimensions of Learning

Prompts and Provocations

- What existing opportunities are there for learners to engage in challenges that promote creative, ethical, interpersonal, physical, technological, and entrepreneurial development within the curricular program? How do we continue to strive for balance across these dimensions within the curricular program?
- What existing opportunities are there for learners to explore the complexities and interdependence of contemporary issues using the dimensions as a lens?
- How well do our curriculum, assessment practices, and teaching methods support learning goals that span cognitive, creative, moral, experiential, entrepreneurial, and social dimensions?

For example, you might see...

| On one day, a learner might be grappling with an academic challenge, navigating an interpersonal situation during group work, expressing themself in dance, and leading a meeting of a student club they helped start. | Students on service-learning trips are called upon to examine the systemic and historic factors that perpetuate the inequities between themselves and the people they are serving. |
| Learners use technology to set goals for physical development and track progress toward those goals | Learners in a High School math lesson are examining a theme they explored during a recent Theory of Knowledge course. |
| Report cards and learner profiles show evidence that the school community values multiple dimensions of learning, including but not limited to academic achievement. | Learners determine how to schedule their day in a way that ensures they have time for physical activity, creative pursuits, academic challenges, and building connections with others. |
| Students identify a social justice cause within their community, research the impact on the community, identify actions to address the needs, and connect with local officials to advocate for the actions. | Learners engage with feedback that promotes self-awareness, improvement, and mastery. Learners demonstrate growth and development in a variety of forms. |
Learning Principle 3: Evidence of Learning

Learners engage with feedback that promotes self-awareness, improvement, and mastery. Learners demonstrate growth and development in a variety of forms.

Rationale

Growth in understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions are tracked over time by the learner, his/her parents, and the school. The community understands that learners’ strengths vary according to the subject, the task, and the circumstances surrounding assessment activities. Assessment of learning is modified as needed to meet individual learner needs. Assessment is viewed as an opportunity to provide feedback so that appropriate support and challenge can be provided. Learning Principle 3 focuses on assessment practices that support a learner’s growth across multiple domains. It supports the notion of a growth mindset through which students learn to persist with difficult tasks knowing that learning and growth are not a product of fixed ability but rather of focused effort. Schooling has traditionally been characterized by high-stakes external testing that may not match the curriculum or culture as the school begins to transform toward a deeper focus on growth versus achievement. Learners, teachers, and parents use evidence to support learners’ growth in both disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge and skills.

For assessment to be growth-producing, learners need ongoing formative feedback that is aligned to their personal goals. They need clarity on what is going to be assessed, and they need to know what “quality” looks like in a work product. Reflection on learning helps students and adults become confident about their personal strengths and potential for growth.

In schools that are aligned to this Learning Principle, learners talk confidently about what they are learning, how they are demonstrating their learning, and what they need to learn next. Learners have choices about how to demonstrate their learning, and often assessment tasks are shared with authentic audiences. Assessment is never used to compare or rank students or teachers. All stakeholders, including parents, talk about the importance of growth and learning over test scores.

Impacts

3.1 Learners reflect on and document their learning relative to academic, creative, ethical, interpersonal, physical, and entrepreneurial goals. The school has systems in place for ongoing student reflection, goal setting, and acknowledgment of growth in all areas.

3.2 Learners play a central role in determining areas of strength, areas for growth, identifying appropriate evidence of learning, and ways in which they will share their learning journey.

3.3 Learners understand and can articulate the current state and progress of their learning.

3.4 Formative and summative assessment activities are routinely used by students and teachers to synthesize learning and gain deeper insights into a student’s learning process.

Resources – view online
Learning Principle 3: Evidence of Learning

Prompts and Provocations

- To what extent are we using well-designed and varied assessment methods to give learners maximum opportunities to show their learning?
- Do we encourage and value student exploration work that is not measured or assessed?
- To what extent do we involve learners in determining the measures of their success?
- To what extent are we providing opportunities for learners to personalize assessment (process and product) to make it more meaningful, relevant, doable, and achievable? What degree of autonomy is developmentally appropriate at various stages?
- To what extent are we empowering our learners to examine and revise their work in relation to quality indicators?
- How often do learners get feedback on their work from real audiences?
- How are the quality indicators derived? Are they anchored in the learning goals discussed in Learning Principle 1?
- How do we balance consistency and fairness with personalization across our assessment practices?

For example, you might see...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolios document a learner's growth in understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions.</th>
<th>Student-led, parent/teacher/student conferences have a central role in determining a student's goals for the upcoming term.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners are heard saying, “I don't know how to do that YET.”</td>
<td>Learners are heard talking about how their portfolio showed how they learned from earlier mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school has stopped highlighting the Top 3 Grades for each class level and has begun to give awards for personal growth in academics, skills, and character development.</td>
<td>Primary School teachers explain that self- and peer assessment builds in complexity as students move through the Primary School, quickly evolving from teacher-led assessment, using checklists and “traffic lights” (self-assessment), to the regular use of peer and collaborative assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Principle 4: Learning Perspectives

Learners face complex problems, challenges, and issues that promote deep learning. Learners consider multiple perspectives and take informed risks in the pursuit of knowledge.

Rationale

Learners must demonstrate appropriate risk-taking in the pursuit of learning as they explore a range of approaches and consider multiple perspectives when tackling a problem or challenge. This includes considering the perspectives of others as they continue to reflect and refine their work.

Learning communities have a unique opportunity and responsibility to cultivate a learning environment where all learners develop intercultural competence, as well as the ability and desire to consider different viewpoints. Adults in the learning community must both model this mindset and purposefully create opportunities for learners to see the world through the eyes of others. Communities where trust and empathy are pervasive typically exhibit a greater capacity for appropriate risk-taking in learning.

Impacts

4.1 Learners demonstrate insights gained through mistakes.

4.2 Learners adjust learning strategies and processes as they integrate new information and multiple perspectives.

4.3 Learners develop an understanding of cultures and life experiences different from their own through ongoing exploration, reflection, action, and feedback.

Resources – view online
Learning Principle 4: Learning Perspectives

Prompts and Provocations

- To what extent are learners learning from their initial attempts, errors, and/or misunderstandings?
- To what extent do our learners exhibit an understanding of diverse perspectives and an interest in becoming more interculturally competent?
- To what extent do learners feel supported as they try things and fail?
- To what extent do teachers use probing questions to guide thinking, broaden perspective, and encourage action?
- Does our learning community value good questions as much as we value the right answers?
- How are we growing learners’ capacity to critically examine sources to seek out opinion, truth, and fact?
- How do learners gain experience examining the source of information, and analyzing how it may play a role in the perspective taken or the angle in which it is presented?
- How does school leadership identify and make transparent the perspectives and biases that they use in decision-making?
- How prevalent are opportunities to develop empathy evident in the community?

For example, you might see...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners participating in a fishbowl activity where two sides debated a hot topic; three “jurors” listened and questioned, and then the “audience” had a chance to ask questions.</th>
<th>Learners using language such as “That’s an interesting perspective, tell me more…”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A school actively recruits faculty from underrepresented and minority backgrounds, knowing that diverse perspectives make a school stronger.</td>
<td>Students in a Year 9 French class participate in a humorous role-play activity in which they engage enthusiastically, accept mistakes in good spirit and keep trying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3 learners practice their poster presentations about how the media uses images and words to impact an audience.</td>
<td>Throughout the learning community, words and actions evidence a culture of understanding, curiosity, and interest in the opinions and viewpoints of others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Principle 5: Learner Engagement and Autonomy

Learners have age-appropriate, goal-oriented autonomy over their learning and make informed choices supported by guidance within and beyond the classroom.

**Rationale**

Learning Principle 5 asks learning communities to build experiences that allow learners to become more active, independent, and autonomous in their learning journey. As the world of work is changing, careers are becoming much more self-regulated, self-directed, and often entrepreneurial. Individuals need to know how to decide what, where, and how to learn and how to pursue their own passions and interests. Independent and autonomous learners are confident when dealing with uncertainty and crisis. They approach challenging situations with resiliency and self-efficacy. They understand how learning proceeds through a cycle such as an inquiry cycle.

Learners are also more motivated and engaged in learning when they can follow their intellectual curiosity and make choices about what to learn, how to learn it, and how to demonstrate their learning. To cultivate autonomy and engagement, learning communities must become adept at moving among teacher-directed, co-created, and student-directed learning experiences. Over time, learners should demonstrate an increased capacity to direct their own learning. In learning communities that promote learner autonomy, adults can shift from the provider of content to that of coach and mentor, and they are skilled at co-creating learning experiences with students. In such learning communities, even the youngest learners are trusted to pursue their own interests.

**Impacts**

5.1 Learners demonstrate the skills and dispositions of self-directed learners, such as the ability to ask thoughtful questions, to design a plan to pursue an area of interest, to assess the state of their progress, and the ability to seek help when it is needed.

5.2 Learners pursue their personal strengths, challenges, interests, and passions in a variety of ways.

5.3 Learners exercise voice and choice in what they learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate what they have learned.

5.4 Learners develop through self-initiated exploration, research, and discovery.

**Resources – view online**
Learning Principle 5: Learner Engagement and Autonomy

Prompts and Provocations

- To what extent are learners encouraged to plan their learning according to their own strengths, interests, and challenges as they work toward school expectations?
- How has the teacher role changed to provide time and opportunity to co-create learning experiences with students?
- What are the necessary dispositions and skills for learner autonomy, both from a coach/mentor and student perspective?
- To what extent are we encouraging learners to access coaches and mentors beyond the walls of the school to support their learning?
- How do autonomy and self-directed learning look at different developmental stages?
- How are students coached on selecting resources to support their learning goals that will include underrepresented voices and perspectives?
- When do direct teaching methods have the greatest positive impact?
- What training/experiences do our teachers need to feel comfortable in adapting pedagogical practices and releasing control of learning to students?

For example, you might see...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students in Grade 7 are creating their own children’s books. Students were at different stages in the design and production process that had been co-constructed between teacher and students.</th>
<th>Self-directed learning was seen in a biology lesson in Year 6 and in Secondary School languages when learners self-assessed their progress and knew how to move on to the next stage of learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K learners move confidently from space to space as they choose the tasks that interest them.</td>
<td>High School students shared personal websites they created to curate the work they are the proudest of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners are explaining how they planned their time to complete a complex project over several weeks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Principle 6: Research, Reflection, and Action

The learning community applies current research, connects with other learning communities, and uses future-oriented thinking to improve learning for all.

**Rationale**

In schools that are strongly aligned to Learning Principle 6, there is an evident curiosity in understanding what improves learning, what can be learned and adapted from research, and how members of the community can work together to further refine approaches to learning.

The learning community's collaborative reflection, review, and revision processes ensure that its pedagogy, programs, structures, curriculum, and assessment practices remain relevant and serve the current and future needs of learners. Teachers routinely engage in action research to promote their own development as well as that of the learning community. There are structures and processes in place to frequently seek and act upon feedback from all stakeholders. This includes stakeholder surveys, focus group interviews, considering relevant educational research, and seeking inspiration from other forward-thinking learning communities. The learning community strives to connect with other learning communities around the globe to gain insights, share findings, and work together to transform learning. Distributive leadership permits innovative ideas to surface and be acted upon by the learning community.

Just as the community is encouraged to use action research or design thinking in its continuous improvement, so too are learners taught to use a design cycle in their projects. Learners need ongoing opportunities to engage in a design cycle such as study, design, act, reflect to become increasingly able to direct their own learning. Learners, peers, and the adults who support their learning play a key role in learning through collaboration and analysis. While much can be learned from studying the learning community itself, the members also understand the need to build understanding about current research and look to experts and other learning communities to deepen and challenge the school community's thinking.

**Impacts**

1. The learning community has an approach to design thinking and inquiry which is understood by all members of the community

2. Learners make connections with experts beyond the school environment to aid in their pursuit of solutions to problems that have meaning to them.

3. The learning community engages with complex issues and future trends by developing its own inquiry, trying out novel ideas, and applying design-oriented approaches to addressing complex questions and opportunities.

**Resources – view online**
Learning Principle 6: Research, Reflection, and Action

Prompts and Provocations

- What are the embedded structures and processes for collaborative reflection, review, and revision for faculty and for students? To what extent do the processes encourage refinement of learning experiences?
- To what extent has the learning community refined its Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning? Has the learning community provided visible examples to illustrate what High-Quality Learning looks like in practice?
- To what extent does the learning community have respectful, trusting relationships that cultivate an environment where people are excited to try new ways of doing things and learn and grow from those experiences?
- Does the language of communication within the school reinforce the school as a growing, changing learning community that is trying new ideas and ways of improving learning?
- To what extent is the learning community committed to looking at external research and examples to generate innovative ideas?
- Is there evidence of real change and improvement in learning across the community?
- To what extent are community members empowered to question the rationale for new or existing programs and initiatives?

For example, you might see...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The traditional appraisal system was replaced by professional learning communities. Groups of teachers identify an area for growth and use collaborative research and self-reflection to explore new perspectives and innovative ideas they can apply in their classrooms.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training and a book study over a one-year period focused on promoting student reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members engage in reading and dialogue on educational and fiduciary practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Principle 7: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Belonging

The learning community exhibits a culture of inclusiveness that enables the diverse needs, identities, and interests of all learners and community members to be acknowledged, actively celebrated, and proactively addressed. Differing viewpoints and opinions are invited in pursuit of an informed and welcoming community.

Rationale

Inclusive schools prioritize a culture where students and adults feel physically and emotionally safe, supported, and respected in their development, regardless of their race, background, disability, or status. Inclusive schools consider challenges and issues through multiple lenses, and practice “cultural humility”. School communities hold themselves accountable for examining and reforming policies, practices, and school climate factors so that all learners feel included and can thrive.

The Learning Community has adaptable and effective processes and purposeful programs that promote inclusion and belonging. School communities that embrace inclusion, equity, diversity, and belonging not only say the right things but act proactively to root out racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of abuse among all stakeholders. Transparent communication and respectful interactions contribute to an inclusive community where all members feel they belong and that it is safe to challenge practices that do not fit the community’s values. When seen or heard, racism and divisive actions are addressed.

Impacts

7.1 Access to learning is equitable.

7.2 The learning community actively supports the value and integrity of each of its members.

7.3 Individual and community success is supported through a variety of structures and processes.

7.4 The intended and taught curriculum is rich with opportunities for learners to engage with issues of inequity, disability, racism, poverty, and injustice.

7.5 All members of the community act ethically with respect for all others in the learning community.

7.6 All community members feel like they belong in this learning community.

Resources – view online
Learning Principle 7: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Belonging

Prompts and Provocations

- How well do we understand the various needs of all our learners? To what extent do we act upon those needs and continually assess our effectiveness?
- To what degree do our policies and practices support individuals and fight against discrimination?
- To what degree do our diversity and anti-bias initiatives truly impact the experiences of our community?
- How do we account for systemically and historically marginalized groups, and explicitly work to correct these exclusions?
- How do we audit our curriculum and library resources to identify opportunities to celebrate and integrate diversity into how and what we teach?
- How do we put into action meaningful and responsive plans to meet the wide range of differences in learners (e.g., language learning, social-emotional, physical issues, learning difficulties)? How do we know if the plans are meeting the needs of the learner?
- Have we mapped the ways that racism, homophobia, and sexism operate in our community? (Policy, curricula, discipline practices.)
- To what extent do our leaders represent the diversity of our staff and student populations?
- To what extent do we encourage community spirit to create a welcoming, nurturing environment? How does this environment contribute to the learner's sense of belonging and the possibility of growing in the community?

For example, you might see...

| Recent focus groups were conducted to get the opinions of non-teaching staff such as office staff, operations staff, security, and facilities staff about their experience as an employee. |
| Members of the community mention that non-discrimination policies are easily accessible and explicitly protect historically marginalized groups by name (i.e., race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity and presentation, sexual orientation, ability.) Stakeholders are aware of the process to report discrimination. |
| Teachers are able to describe how recent training in cultural competency content (e.g., implicit bias, privilege, and marginalization) has promoted their personal understanding of equity in the learning community. |
| Learners share how their own journey toward becoming a better advocate for social justice has impacted their understandings in social situations. |
| Several parents described how their own child had grown with the support of the SEN Department or EAL Department's support. |
| The native language teaching team expressed that they felt integrated into all of the important committees and meetings of the school. |
Learning Principle 8: Governance and Leadership for Learning

The roles of leadership and governance are aligned with the school’s learning goals, unified through a common mission, and organized through well-aligned structures that allow informed analysis, communication, and decision-making in support of learners.

Rationale

A learning community that is unambiguous in its goals, unified through a common mission, and organized through well-aligned structures of communication and decision-making can have a lasting impact on learners. Clarity, transparency, and follow-through are hallmarks of a well-led and well-governed learning community. Organizations that are living this principle have a common understanding of the learning impacts sought by the school and a common language to describe how to reach those impacts. Leadership for learning is often shared by stakeholders who serve in various roles that extend beyond management into learning-focused leadership.

Good ideas can emerge from all areas of the school and be acted upon. Leadership traits and skills are cultivated and supported at all levels including among the students themselves. Leadership is distributed and there are multiple opportunities for teachers to lead from their classroom positions. Learners themselves are also developing leadership skills through authentic opportunities to influence and lead within the school itself and in the local community. Leaders and the governing body seek feedback from stakeholders on a regular basis and use appropriate measures to determine the school’s success at achieving the desired learning impacts. The learning community has systems and structures that guide the community toward its common values and mission and protect members of the community when its values are not adhered to.

Learning Principle 8 asks schools to look at how well their leadership and governance structures serve their mission and their stakeholders and what could be improved further.

Impacts

8.1 Decision-making is grounded in the learning community’s core values, agreements, and desired goals.

8.2 The learning community systematically utilizes evidence of impact to direct future plans and actions.

8.3 Progress towards achieving learning impacts is regularly monitored, communicated to all stakeholders, and used in ongoing planning and implementation.

8.4 Governance, leadership, and management demonstrate a generative mindset, a focus on the future, and a strategic outlook when envisioning how best to support learners.

Resources – view online
Learning Principle 8: Governance and Leadership for Learning

Prompts and Provocations

- What is our decision-making process? To what extent is it designed to grow ideas and consider possibilities rather than preserve what already exists? Who has a voice in decision-making that impacts the whole school community?
- How are students invited into the school's decision-making processes, and do they have a voice in setting the school's future direction?
- To what degree is there appropriate separation between school operations and governance?
- How well does our learning community adapt to change?
- How well do we communicate with all stakeholders about the school's direction, initiatives, and decisions?
- How effectively do we cultivate leadership among all staff, and what structures and opportunities exist to cultivate leadership and promotion within the learning community?
- To what extent do our governance and leadership teams reflect the demographics and/or perspectives of our learning community?

For example, you might see...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students describe examples of how they are meaningfully involved in school improvement efforts and have been given opportunities to lead in authentic, impactful ways.</th>
<th>Leadership is distributed across many layers of the learning community. Teachers, coordinators, senior leaders, and students describe contributing to decision-making organized around key school initiatives/goals.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school's strategies are documented and understandable. Members of the community can describe how strategies and priorities have meaning for them.</td>
<td>School-based leaders describe a supportive, interactive relationship with the leaders at the school group level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board, Senior Leadership Team, and faculty describe the school's purpose and direction using similar language. There is a strong alignment among all stakeholders about where the school is heading and how it will get there.</td>
<td>The senior leaders represent the diversity of the student body with leaders from various countries, language backgrounds, gender identities, and cultural and ethnic backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Principle 9: Learning Space and Time

*The learning community optimizes physical environments, virtual opportunities, and time to support learning and wellbeing for all.*

**Rationale**

Learning is organized and happens in a variety of ways, spaces, and times. Being flexible with space and time allows for greater learner autonomy and self-navigation. Learning Principle 9 asks learning communities to consider how time and space can be organized to contribute to the school's overarching goals and priorities.

Learning communities who embrace Learning Principle 9 see space and time as factors that can be manipulated to serve learner-centered approaches rather than barriers to such. How does the virtual learning environment, coupled with the learners' home environment, work together to create optimal learning time and space? This principle also asks the learning community to consider the broader environment, community, and global context as aspects of the child's learning environment.

**Impacts**

9.1 Learning space (physical and virtual) and the structure of learning time contribute to the achievement of learning goals for learners.

9.2 Learners and teachers have the autonomy to manipulate learning space and time to maximize learning. Learners are given time to pursue interests and passions within the framework of the core curriculum.

**Resources – view online**
Learning Principle 9: Learning Space and Time

Prompts and Provocations

- How does the learning community consider flexible use of time and space to achieve learning goals?
- Does our use of space and time promote or inhibit realization of our Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning?
- To what extent are learners empowered to move purposefully and/or change location according to learning requirements?
- How do Learners have appropriate autonomy in deciding on the pace of their own learning?
- How do we reimagine the use of space and furnishings to create opportunities for collaboration, independent work, creation, and design?
- To what extent do the online learning platforms facilitate the intended learning impacts?
- How well does the use of time and organization of the school day allow for meaningful and rich thinking, investigation, and creation?
- How does the learning space reflect the school's values in terms of social, economic, and environmental impact on the greater community?
- How does the learning community use its online environment to expand the time and space?
- How well do the physical spaces and time constructs contribute to the wellbeing of the entire community?
- How does the school account for inequities in home resources when assigning and assessing home learning tasks?
- How do the schedules of teachers facilitate their own professional learning and collaboration with others?

For example, you might see...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students have given input into the school's schedule and building/renovation projects.</th>
<th>Decision-making about building renovations is tied to intended learning Impacts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme weeks and “in-depth days” that provide opportunities for multi-disciplinary learning and other activities that are widely valued by the community, including parents.</td>
<td>A digital platform is designed to enhance collaboration and community building, two of the learning community’s intended Impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ developmental needs when determining divisional start times, and the number of hours children are at school.</td>
<td>The learning community has adapted all its programs to be interchangeable so they can run a face-to-face, blended, or fully online program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One room is designated for learners to take a “no-questions-asked time out” when they feel emotional or need to be alone.</td>
<td>Timetables finish slightly earlier on Tuesdays, enabling staff to meet and collaborate, share PD experiences, best practices, and discuss learning themes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Principle 10: Learning Community Wellbeing

The learning community is a healthy environment where all members thrive. Respectful, healthy, ethical, and honest relationships create a true sense of community. Community values are clearly stated, actively lived, and define a distinct, sustained identity.

Rationale

Learning communities that are aligned with Learning Principle 10 are characterized by respectful interactions and broadly accepted values that contribute to a sense of community. The community members can articulate what makes the learning community unique and what the community is striving to achieve through its Guiding Statements.

In these communities, members’ voices are encouraged and their opinions are heard and acted upon. The well-being of all members is highly valued and expressed through opportunities for members to attend to their physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs. The understanding of wellbeing includes an understanding of specific experiences of members of historically marginalized groups.

Members feel appropriately challenged by work or study, but also express that they are able to maintain a work/life balance. Members of the learning community are constantly learning new skills to improve their social-emotional wellbeing. Channels of communication are considered to be effective, timely, and facilitate the community’s sense of togetherness. Parents and staff express that they know what is happening in the community, what the major initiatives and goals are, and that they generally feel well informed.

Impacts

10.1 Members of the learning community express satisfaction with the ways in which they are treated and included as members of that community.

10.2 The learning community members are engaged, informed, and supportive of the community's goals.

10.3 Community members experience high levels of personal and professional wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

10.4 Learners use appropriate skills to enhance their own social-emotional wellbeing.

10.5 Learners transition successfully from grade to grade, between divisions, and into and out of the school community.

Resources – view online
Prompts and Provocations

- How well do various stakeholder groups understand and support our identity, values, and desired goals?
- How were these values developed; Are they still relevant or should they be revisited?
- How is feedback from stakeholders gathered and analyzed? How is it used?
- When people describe our learning community, what do we hope they say? What do they actually say?
- Do members of the community express that they can find a home/work balance?
- How safe is it to speak your opinion at this school?
- To what degree are staff members able to succeed in their roles as defined? Are workloads appropriate and conducive to creative, innovative collaboration?
- To what degree are learners experiencing well-thought-out, developmentally appropriate social-emotional learning experiences?
- To what extent does the culture of the community contribute to or hinder the school's achievement of its goals for learners?
- To what extent would various stakeholders describe decision-making as effective and well communicated?

For example, you might see…

| Learners expressing their ideas about how to revise the school's schedule and teacher leaders are listening respectfully and acting upon their suggestions. | Many members of the community describe the culture of the school as one of respect for diverse ideas, globally minded, and caring. |
| Parents share that their children come home happy from school and can't wait to go back each day. | Learners and adults report having time in their schedules to relax, reflect, and consider their goals. |
| School values are reinforced throughout learning experiences; e.g., learners are heard saying, “That's okay. Sometimes we will fail, but that's how we learn.” | |
| Teachers using positive behavior management techniques that result in a caring and supportive learning environment. | Teachers meet in groups to discuss how a recent crisis at school has impacted them personally. |
| Two students are observed working through a conflict using skills they learned during their morning meeting. | Learners and adults are observed using respectful interactions, such as “I never thought about it that way, tell me more…” |
NB: The definitions provided are not intended to be comprehensive or ‘final’; they are offered to stimulate further discussion and conversations about the nature of learning.

BLENDING LEARNING
A style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching.

DESIGN THINKING
Learners utilize the design cycle such as study, design, act, reflect to become increasingly able to direct their own learning. There are many different versions of the design cycle.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING
Yong Zhao defines entrepreneurial learning as “an individual's ability to turn ideas into action”. Entrepreneurial learning promotes creativity, innovative thinking, and problem solving. The Aspen Youth Entrepreneurship Strategic Group defines an entrepreneurial mindset as “a critical mix of success-oriented attitudes of initiative, intelligent risk-taking, collaboration, and opportunity recognition.” In other words, entrepreneurial learning should not be confused with “business studies.”

FUTURE DESIGN VS. STRATEGIC PLANNING
Traditional strategic planning often begins with an analysis of the learning community’s current situation, proposes goals intended to improve upon the present, and leads to the development of a set of actions over a period of three to five years. On the other hand, Future Design begins by examining the drivers of change, then imagines a preferred future and articulates goals aligned with the learning community’s raison d’être – learning. Future Design eschews long-range action planning in favor of more agile, nimbler strategies that are refined and adapted regularly based on evidence of success, stakeholder feedback, and desired modifications of the organization’s preferred future.

GOVERNANCE VS. LEADERSHIP
Across NEASC membership, there are various governance and leadership models, including not-for-profit, proprietary, government-affiliated, and for-profit (including family-owned or part of a school group.) The governance of the school may look different across the various types of schools from a traditional non-profit Board to a management structure that is affiliated with a corporate entity. The key is to have a governance and leadership structure that prioritizes educational impact, in which roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated so there is appropriate separation between school operations and oversight, allowing those who are accountable to have appropriate authority, autonomy, and support to ensure success.

GROWTH MINDSET
A growth mindset, proposed by Stanford professor Carol Dweck in her book Mindset, describes people who believe that their success depends on time and effort. People with a growth mindset feel their skills and intelligence can be improved with effort and persistence.
HIGHER-ORDER THINKING SKILLS (HOTS)

Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) is a concept of education reform based on the concept that some types of learning and thinking are more complex than others. While more difficult to teach and difficult to learn, higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking and problem solving are associated with complex judgment skills that are necessary for adults to thrive.

IMPACT VS. INPUT/OUTPUT

Impacts

An Impact is a long-term transformational change we wish to see in learners over time. Some schools define Impact through their Vision of the Graduate statements, IB Approaches to Learning (ATLs), and Learner Profile or their Transdisciplinary Transfer Goals (TTGs). NEASC uses Impact Statements to help schools measure the result of their efforts through the accreditation process. NEASC Visitors and the schools themselves look for evidence of the Impact Statements for each of the ten Learning Principles.

Notice that Impacts typically start with “Learners...”

Outputs

Schools have often gauged their success as Outputs such as standardized test scores, summative assessments, or similar forms of academic achievement. We encourage schools to expand their understanding of success to include Impacts that describe the school's highest aspirations for its learners – learners who are prepared to tackle 21st-century challenges.

Example: Learning Principle 4.3, Learners demonstrate insights gained through mistakes.

Inputs

Inputs describe the resources that schools use to impact student learning such as specific pedagogies, programs, curriculums, policies, resources, or learning spaces. These inputs do not necessarily guarantee impact. That is why we encourage schools to stay focused on their chosen Impacts to gauge whether the inputs are having the intended result. Impacts are developed by focusing on the role of the student and the role of the teacher in the learning process, and the type of learning tasks that students engage in.

Note that Inputs typically start with “The school...” or “The teachers...”

Example: The school has a revised Assessment Policy that allows for students to redo assessments to attain mastery.

INCLUSION

The inclusion and celebration of diverse stakeholders and varying perspectives, anti-racism and anti-sexist policies and actions, equity, and the building of belonging for all are hallmarks of an inclusive learning community. An inclusive school is also one that successfully educates the students with disabilities whom they have admitted according to their Admission Policy. ACE Learning challenges schools to review the ways and means in which all stakeholders feel included in shaping the culture and direction of the community.
INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING
This type of learning involves connecting the academic disciplines via challenging, relevant, and engaging tasks.

INTERNAL REFLECTION
The school's Internal Reflection represents the core of ACE Learning. Following the award of Candidacy for Accreditation (or Re-Accreditation) status, the learning community commits to 12-18 months of self-reflection, which culminates in the learning community's Internal Reflection Report.

NEASC LEARNING SURVEYS
To launch the Internal Reflection, the school issues surveys to gather input about learning. Students, parents, staff, and leaders/Governing Body members complete a survey. The ACE Design Team and individual committees analyze the results of the survey as one set of evidence.

LEARNING GOALS
The long-term understandings, competencies, knowledge, and dispositions that the learning community has prioritized for its learners. Learners will build skills and experiences toward these goals throughout their years at the school so they can transfer this learning to real-world situations. Learning tasks will be designed to support growth and competence in these areas. Learning goals are not to be confused with the individual outcomes of a lesson, unit, or course, but rather the overarching, transdisciplinary goals that can be applied across disciplines.

MAJOR LEARNING PLANS
Toward the end of the Internal Reflection, the learning community is ready to prioritize a few Major Learning Plans (MLPs) that will create lasting Impacts on its learners. Plans may take many forms and may be individualized to contribute to the school's own strategic objectives.

SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING INCLUDES:
- a definition of the characteristics, skills, and attributes desired of the learners/graduates (which is the ultimate Impact);
- a description of the type of pedagogy and conditions that result in learners developing in those ways;
- a statement/story to illustrate what learners will be doing, what teachers will be doing, and the learning tasks expected from learners.

The school's Shared Understanding is supported by a description of the specific pedagogy, chosen by the school, that is used to achieve the desired goals. For example, if a school's Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning includes language and/or graphics that focus on self-directed learning, learner agency, and autonomy, then they would likely be using some form of open inquiry or co-created inquiry, rather than teacher-directed inquiry.

In ACE Learning schools, the Shared Understanding of High-Quality Learning is grounded in the ten ACE Learning Principles and Impacts, as well as other Impacts a school might have chosen. As the community develops its Shared Understanding, it can more easily identify the Major Learning Plans that can close the gaps between what the school aspires to and its current reality.
SELF-DIRECTED/PERSONALIZED LEARNING
Personalized learning places the learner at the center of the learning process. Learners have choices in what they want to learn, how they want to learn it, and the ways in which they want to demonstrate their learning. The resources of the learning community are dedicated to supporting learners in achieving their goals, following their passions, and developing their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Personalized learning as conceived by ACE goes well beyond differentiation and accommodating diverse learning styles.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING
Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

TRANSDISCIPLINARY LEARNING/SKILLS
Learning that aims to develop skills that rise above the traditional disciplines, and which will transcend the school years and serve learners into adulthood, such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. These skills are defined by the learning community and are often referenced as a learning community's desired Impacts for learning.

TRANSACTIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING
Transactional learning is often defined as the formal relationship between the teacher and learner, between learning content and learner, between learning environment and learner. It is focused on achieving specific, common learning goals defined by the school. Transformational learning focuses on nurturing holistic learning, expanding the learner's potential, and promoting deeper engagement with making meaning. As such, transformational learning changes lives. Transactional learning produces transcripts.