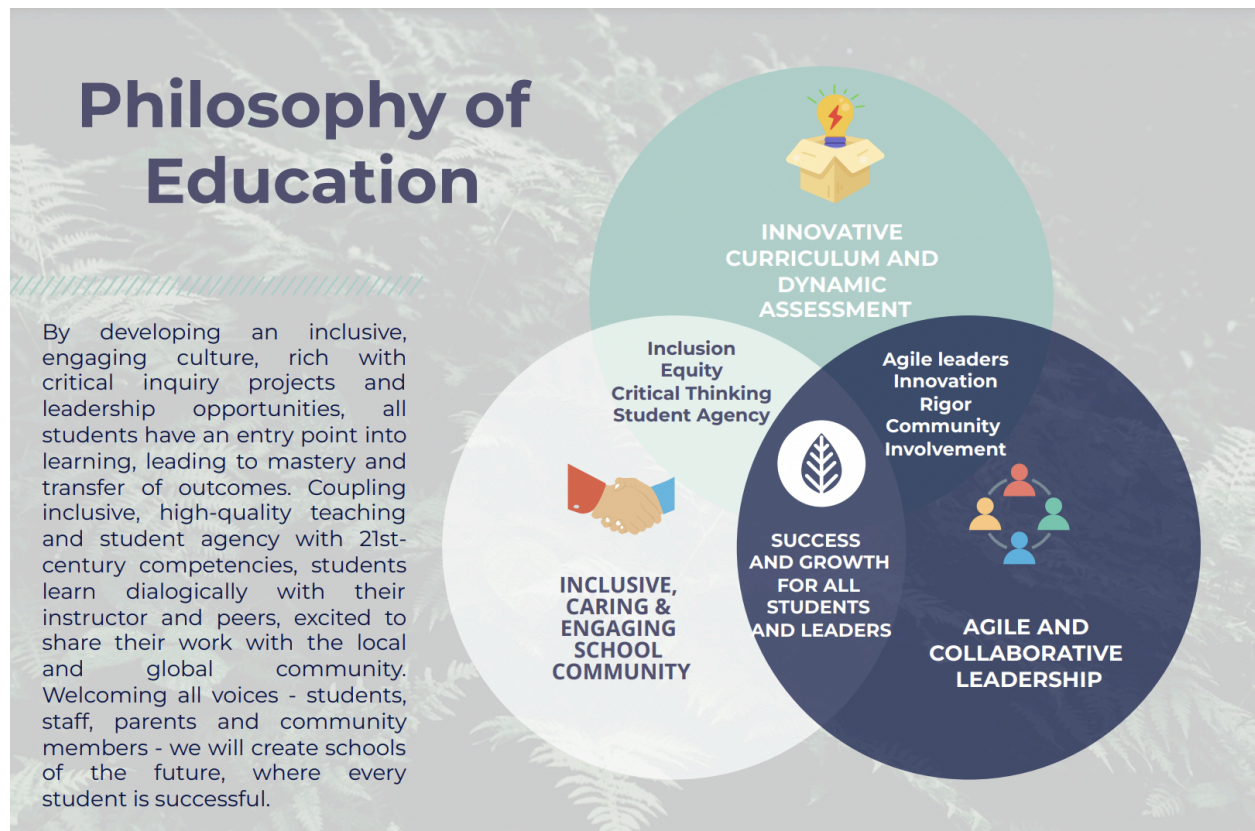# Philosophy of Education

Leanne Watson

"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way." John Maxwell

Vision: By developing an inclusive, engaging culture, rich with critical inquiry projects and leadership opportunities, all students have an entry point into learning, leading to mastery and transfer of outcomes. Coupling inclusive, high-quality teaching and student agency with 21st-century competencies, students learn dialogically with their instructor and peers, excited to share their work with the local and global community. Welcoming all voices - students, staff, parents and community members - we will create schools of the future, where every student is successful.

Mission: To be present, live with intention and inspire others to reach their fullest potential.

Philosophy of Education

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INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM AND DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT

Inclusion
Equity
Critical Thinking
Student Agency

Agile leaders
Innovation
Rigor
Community Involvement

INCLUSIVE, CARING & ENGAGING SCHOOL COMMUNITY

SUCCESS AND GROWTH FOR ALL STUDENTS AND LEADERS

AGILE AND COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Philosophy of Education Tenets

Inclusive, Caring and Engaging School Community

It is through the care of staff, students and families that we can effectively educate our students. A prosperous school community is developed and sustained by creating a climate of care for all stakeholders, allowing them the safety to teach effectively, learn fearlessly and share our knowledge with our community. By sharing a clear, data-informed vision (with effective strategies), our school and students will thrive. By caring for, and modelling care, students are regulated and can learn in a space where they master outcomes, socio-emotional skills, and community relations from staff and peers.

 I believe that school leaders should care for staff and students, ensuring that staff needs are met so they can, in turn, care for their students and families. When students know they are cared for, they will learn and transfer their learning. By working together with the community, schools provide a safe and caring space for students to grow and learn. It is only together that we can provide the best education for our future leaders. Schools should be inclusive, where all children feel there is an entry point for them in every lesson, and innovative thinking is expected and encouraged. Our schools should celebrate the many cultures that make Canada unique and special and work to embed First Nations, Metis and Inuit ways of knowing as a constant act of reconciliation.
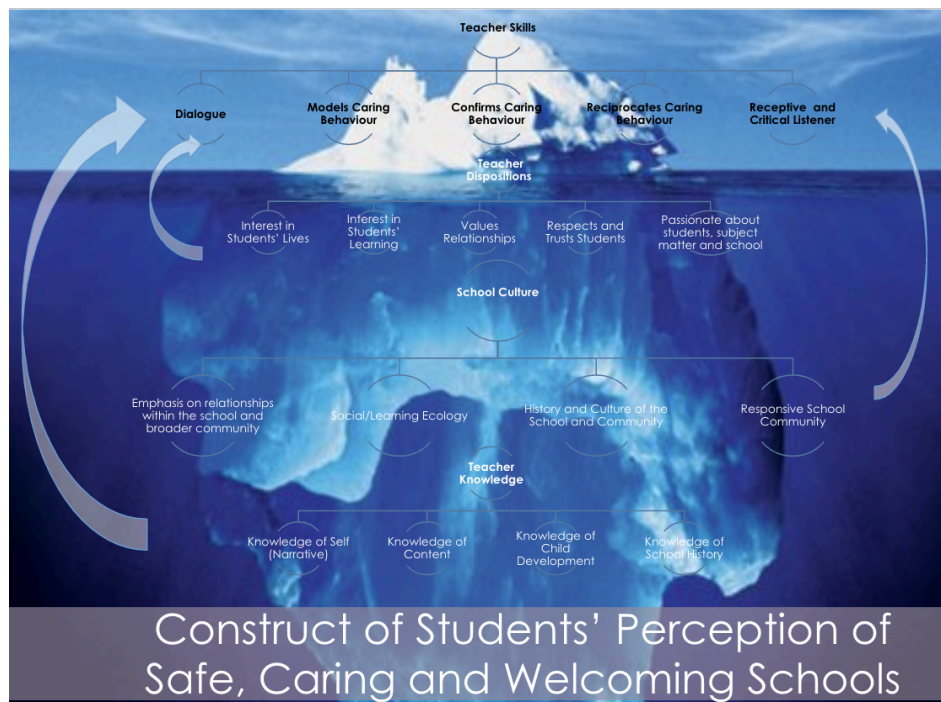

Figure 1: Watson, L. *Assessment tool design.* 2016.

Innovative Curriculum and Dynamic Assessment

In order to learn, educators must bring our curriculum to life (Doll, 2012). Effective instructional practices that are innovative, student-centred, research-based and full of critical thinking opportunities should be at the core of teaching. Teachers and leaders should stop at nothing to provide our students with lessons that make them curious and foster critical thinking skills. Coupling the rich, recursive and relational curriculum with a rigorous and responsive assessment plan, will allow students ample opportunity to learn and achieve. Through a dissipative, open curriculum, students have the opportunity to create their own knowledge and systemize it, providing a framework for transferring knowledge (Luo, 2004). With multiple entry points for learning and a responsive assessment plan, students will operationalize their own learning, the ultimate goal for all 21st-century learners.

By strategically aligning our work, we can use research-informed practice to enhance our pedagogy and assessment in our classrooms. Ensuring that we are critically analyzing our data with a focus on continuous improvement, learning and growth, we can integrate our collaborative response process to develop clear strategies and priorities. We can continually reflect on our achievement and perception data to inform the direction of our schools, ensuring success for each student.

Figure 4. Shared principles of curriculum theories, psychological theories, and assessment theory characterizing an emergent, constructivist paradigm.

Reformed Vision of Curriculum
- All students can learn
- Challenging subject matter aimed at higher order thinking & problem solving
- Equal opportunity for diverse learners
- Socialization into the discourse & practices of academic disciplines
- Authenticity in the relationship between learning in and out of school
- Fostering of important dispositions and habits of mind
- Enactment of democratic practices in a caring community

Cognitive & Constructivist Learning Theories
- Intellectual abilities are socially and culturally developed.
- Learners construct knowledge and understandings within a social context.
- New learning is shaped by prior knowledge and cultural perspectives.
- Intelligent thought involves "metacognition" or self monitoring of learning and thinking.
- Deep understanding is principled and supports transfer.
- Cognitive performance depends on dispositions and personal identity.

Classroom Assessment
- Challenging tasks to elicit higher order thinking
- Addresses learning processes as well as learning outcomes
- An on-going process, integrated with instruction
- Used formatively in support of student learning
- Expectations visible to students
- Students active in evaluating their own work
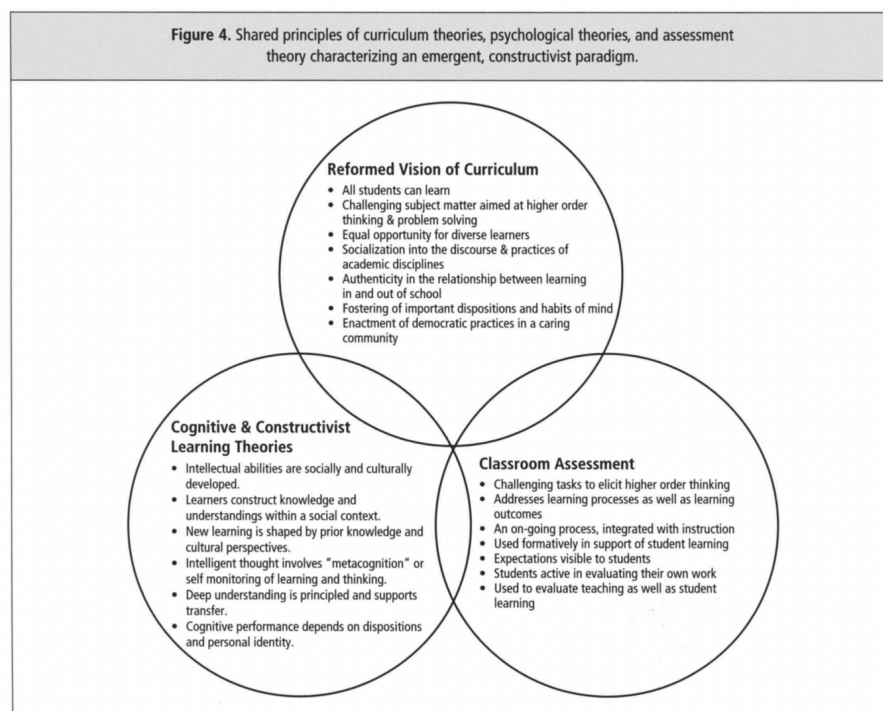- Used to evaluate teaching as well as student learning

Figure 2: Shepard, L. A. (n.d.). The role of assessment in a learning culture. In *Teaching and Learning* (pp. 229–253). Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Retrieved April 30, 2023, from http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9780470690048.ch10

Agile and Collaborative Leadership

A forward-thinking, agile, innovative leadership style separates me from many, as I am eager to be ahead of the game, preparing our students for an ever-changing world. By leveraging technology and creating an innovative space for students, I hope to create future leaders and inventors, who positively impact our world.

I am a collaborative and aware leader, and encourage everyone in our school to participate in a shared approach of leading and learning. I am constantly reading my school community, eager to engage in dialogue when questions and thoughts arise. Grounded in a theory of reciprocity, I consciously try to perceive patterns, recognize the interconnectivity of events and/or problems and subscribe to a transparent, participatory leadership culture, where we share growth responsibilities. I believe that through reciprocal conversations and collaboration, we can effectively leverage each other's strengths to collectively improve the school and contribute to the community.

Further to that, I strive to model leadership by valuing every person's voice and holding myself to the same standards as students and staff. I am decisive and prepared to make decisions when the opportunity arises. I am an effective, transparent leader who always makes sure everyone is aware of the vision and endpoint we are striving for. I lead by inclusiveness and example - I walk with everybody having shared a clear vision, hearing their thoughts and concerns and providing them with the opportunity to have input.

Leadership Development

Transformation and growth happen through building capacity in others (students, staff and stakeholders). All students and staff have genius and potential. It is my mission to help people discover their passions, allowing them to reach their greatest potential. By acknowledging student and staff contributions, noting their passions, and engaging in conversations about their successes, I hope to empower them to share their ideas and thoughts and allow them the courage to pursue their passions. I think that some peoples' potential is untapped and by giving them confidence and opportunity, I am giving them a purpose to pursue what inspires them. Schools and communities all benefit from empowered, innovative citizens.

There are many facets that affect education. A systems leader must create an environment where employees have contributed to the vision and know they are an intrinsic component for success. School divisions are complex systems, but with a shared vision and a clearly defined, responsive plan, students will be successful. Our work is challenging and complex, but working collaboratively with staff and the community creates a strong, agile teaching and learning culture. My philosophy of education continues to change over time, as I am

future-thinking, always with student success at the core of my beliefs. I consistently seek inspiration through scholarly approaches, colleagues, and authentic practices to ensure I have the most relevant information for those that I work with, and for, on a consistent basis.

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