

**Curriculum Standards and Process Redesign (CSPR) Project**  
**Action on Curriculum: Research Roundtable 2 – Event Overview**  
(May 6–7, 2011, Calgary, Alberta)

**I. Purpose of this document**

This document provides an overview of the themes that emerged from Action on Curriculum: Research Roundtable 2.

At a later date, a Research Roundtable 2 Report providing in-depth analysis of the discussions and directions provided by the delegates, and the implications for common understandings for each of the key concepts that were the focus of the roundtable, will be released.

**II. Goals for Research Roundtable 2**

- To move toward a common Alberta understanding of ways of knowing, student-centred/personalized learning, breadth and depth, and interdisciplinary curriculum, which are foundational to the redesign of standards and guidelines for the development of provincial curriculum.
- To add to the pool of research available to inform Action on Curriculum and to further ensure that curriculum redesign approaches are research-based.

**III. Participants**

There were approximately 145 attendees, representing public, private and charter schools, post-secondary institutions, government, business and industry, non-government agencies, students, parent and teacher organizations, and other stakeholders.

**IV. Key concepts discussed**

- Ways of Knowing
- Student-centred/Personalized Learning
- Breadth and Depth
- Interdisciplinary Curriculum

**V. Process**

Topics were explored through a dialogic approach, using Appreciative Inquiry questions through the phases of Discover, Dream and Design. Common themes from table discussions were compiled by table recorders. Some common themes that emerged from table group discussion are listed under each of the key concepts that follow.

## **VI. Common themes/Understandings**

### **Ways of Knowing**

Delegates described their common understanding of Ways of Knowing as being:

- Organic, dynamic, transforming, responsive and multidimensional over time.
- Holistic in nature, fluid and contextual, encompassing traditions, experiences, culture, experimentation, visualization and intuition. It links the cultural diversity within a community with the culture of a discipline in a manner that enriches both.
- Circular and beginning with the individual. Learning is intergenerational, based on relationships, time and place.
- In balance with a sense of place, intellect and emotions, and the universe that considers ethics and ecology through respect and creativity. People are at the centre of all learning through their collective consciousness and wisdom, where learning is authentic and universal.
- A kaleidoscope of ways of seeing the world, where there are various and shifting views and understandings that further develop the engaged thinker, who is an ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit.
- Personal, meaningful, experiential and connected to the learner in contexts that come from the sharing of knowledge between people and the land.
- Based on students' relationships and experiences between the spiritual and physical world; built on foundations from the past, but not held back by it.

### **Student-centred/Personalized Learning**

Delegates described student-centred/personalized learning as:

- Having meaningful connections that are authentic, holistic, deep in nature, engaging and purposeful.
- Providing flexible learning environments that are responsive to the learner: a "a one-size-fits-one" approach the supports students through scaffolded learning outcomes and resources.
- Allowing for student voice, where the "journey of learning" is guided by their passions, interests, and choices and where they are co-investors in their learning, taking ownership for the decisions they make regarding their learning.
- A social activity where students develop relationships and co-create knowledge in a dynamic, interactive process in which feedback is given to support their learning.
- Premised on students' strengths and paced to meet their needs and interests while promoting intergenerational (lifelong) learning.

## Breadth and Depth

The use of metaphors allowed delegates to describe Breadth and Depth as:

- An ever changing state, with the “surface” or the start of something (a path, a road, a journey) as being breadth, and further investigation or explorations (under water, over a hill, down a path) as depth.
- Breadth being the general knowledge, subjects and disciplines found in curriculum while depth is the analytical, critical connections, critical thinking, and inter-subject connections which expand across both discipline and metacognitive skills.
- Overarching themes (breadth) defined by learning outcomes that lead to deep understanding (depth).
- A dynamic relationship that encourages significant learning and real application. Depth and breadth in curriculum means including a range of interconnected concepts that are relevant and meaningful to students, enabling them to acquire and apply knowledge more deeply in their interest areas.
- The engagement of a dynamic tension (disequilibrium) between and among integrated disciplines.

## Interdisciplinary Curriculum

Delegates described Interdisciplinary Curriculum as:

- An opportunity to build bridges between subjects and to bring relevance and authenticity to the learning experiences of students.
- Experiences that allow students to see the practical connections to real world problems and examples.
- An integrated approach to developing core competencies that draws upon differences in individuals, content and situations.
- The ongoing use of assessment tools; informative processes that enables learners and teachers to better understand themselves and their needs.
- A flexible, responsive and collaborative structure that uses common language and has clear, more “user-friendly” outcomes that focus on big ideas and key questions.

## VII. Next Steps

- **Research Roundtable 2:** Final report to be released during the week of June 20, 2011.
- **Research Roundtable 3:** May 30–31, 2011 in Edmonton  
(**Topics:** Flexible Timing, Pacing and Learning Environments; Responsive Curriculum; Assessment; Assessment of Competencies)