	Modern Learners: 10 Principles for Schools of Modern Learning: **The Urgent Case for Reimagining Today's Schools**
1	***Have a clearly articulated and shared beliefs about learning that are lived in every classroom.*** In most traditional schools, no consistent, articulated answer to the question of how children learn most powerfully and deeply exists. In our research, the vast majority of school communities rarely (if ever) spend time discussing what learning is, what conditions are required for learning that sticks beyond the test, and the disconnects between learning in the real world and learning in the classroom KEY QUESTIONS • How do children and adults learn most powerfully and deeply in their lives? • How does that happen for students and teachers in this school? • How do our beliefs drive every decision we make in our school?
2	***Live a mission and vision deeply informed by new contexts for learning.*** While all schools seem to have them, very few schools actually live their mission on a day to day basis, or act on a clear, consistent vision for what should happen in classrooms. In our experience, mission and vision are something that visitors can find on the school website or in the school board room. Rarely is it something that members of the school community use as a lens for their work. Equally as rare is a mission and a vision that fully embrace and integrate the new ways in which we can learn and become educated. KEY QUESTIONS • Why do we exist as a school? • What is our central value in the lives of students and in our communities? • When they leave us, what will our students need to be able to do and what kind of people will they be? • What practices and conditions in classrooms, schools, and communities are required for your students to reach those outcomes? • How do we live our vision in our classrooms?
3	***Have cultures where personal, self-determined learning is at the center of student and teacher work.*** True to traditional ways of thinking about education, most school cultures are much more oriented around teaching than learning. Teachers plan, organize, pace, and assess what happens in classrooms on a daily basis. The majority of teacher professional development is focused on becoming a better teacher (usually using technology) rather than developing as a learner (with or without technology.) Learners have little say in the learning process KEY QUESTIONS • Is my school primarily a learning culture or a teaching culture? • What is more important, learning or knowing? • Are teachers seen as learners?

	• Are learners able to follow their passions?
4	***See curriculum that is something that is co-constructed to meet the needs and interests of students.***
	Despite a recent push towards "personalized learning," and despite the explosion of access to online resources, schools have not re-imagined the traditional outcomes of schooling. Some students now have more choice as to how to "achieve" those outcomes, but textbook and testing companies still have vast control over what is learned and how it is learned. Students have little opportunity to create, plan, execute, and assess the learning process on their own.
	KEY QUESTIONS
	• To what extent is the school experience standardized for all students?
	• How has curriculum evolved to meet the expectations of the modern world?
	• Now that we have ubiquitous access to the sum of human knowledge via the Web, how do we decide what we should teach? Who decides?
5	***Embrace and emphasize real world application and presentation to real audiences as assessment for learning.***
	Very little of what students do in school attempts to solve a real problem or answer a real question that is relevant and meaningful to the world they live in. Rarely does an audience other than the teacher ever see or interact with student work. Similarly, students are rarely asked to defend the work they create to groups within the school community. In essence, school is conducted in a vacuum with little or no outside support, contribution, or intervention.
	KEY QUESTIONS
	• What real world problems or questions are students and teachers building their work around?
	• How does student work live in or change the world?
	• How do non-teacher audiences help play a role in student assessment of work?
6	***See transparency and sharing as fundamental to a powerful learning environment.***
	In most schools, very little is known from one teacher or student to the next about what happens in classrooms down the hall, and even less across the district. The "let me close my door and teach" mentality still permeates most school cultures, and there is very little collaboration or articulation of learning across disciplines. Few teachers create windows into their classrooms using online websites or apps, and students rarely publish their school work in local or global spaces.
	KEY QUESTIONS
	• How much do students and teachers learn from one another across classrooms and experiences?
	• What amount of student and teacher work is shared with the world?
	• What expectations are there around sharing work on a local and global stage?
7	**Use technology first and foremost as an amplifier for learning, creating, making, connecting, communicating, collaborating, and problem**

solving.

Despite increased access to technology in most schools, transformative uses for student and teacher learning are exceedingly rare. Technology is primarily a teaching tool not a learning tool. Laptop, tablet, BYOD, and smartphone uses are usually highly restricted and unimaginative. While some schools are offering "Maker Spaces" and coding "courses," these and others are primarily half measures that are not supported by a school culture where technology is an essential for self-determined learning rather than an add on.

KEY QUESTIONS
- How are students and teachers using technology to learn?
- What are students and teachers doing with technology that they couldn't do without it?
- To what extent are personal devices controlled by the user?

8	***Develop and communicate in powerful ways new stories of learning, teaching and modern contexts for schooling.***

One of the biggest barriers to meaningful change in schools is the extent to which the traditional story of education is rooted in people's minds, both adults and children. Most parents as well as teachers and students are unaware of the larger shifts currently happening, have no real practice around learning more about them, and have no alternative vision of a modern school experience. Most schools do little if anything in terms of articulating the urgency for change and telling a new story of learning to their constituents.

KEY QUESTIONS
- How is the school or district building the capacity of the community to understand the changes required for a modern education?
- What is the narrative of learning in the school?
- How does the entire school community engage in an ongoing conversation that develops a shared understanding of mission, learning, etc.?

9	***Encourage community-wide participation in the equitable, effective education of children.***

Most schools do very little to solicit input on decision making aside from monthly board meetings or the occasional special event. Schools in general are the least democratic institutions in society as students usually have little or no say in the day to day experience. If anything, participation outside of a small nucleus of decision makers is discouraged regardless how many people may be affected.

KEY QUESTIONS
- How are school community members engaged in decision making?
- In what ways do parents play a role in classrooms?
- How are school buildings used by the school community after school hours?
- How is diversity nurtured and celebrated?

10	***Embrace and anticipate constant change and evolution.***

By and large, schools are not comfortable with change. In our experience, most "innovation" that schools attempt are usually either neutered or discontinued completely within a short period of

time. "Change" is incremental and rarely challenges to any great degree the traditional systems and structures that are currently in place. Instead of seeking to understand and embrace the new, school cultures tend to undermine it in policy and in practice. Basically, change that cannot be subsumed within the existing narrative of education is to be feared and rejected.

KEY QUESTIONS

- How are teachers and students engaged in ongoing research and development about their work?
- Is there a culture that supports innovation and trying new things?
- What strategies are in place to stay abreast of change both inside and outside of education?