



# Leaps for Equitable, 21st-Century Learning

Transcend's Leaps for Equitable, 21st-Century Learning describes the key ways we believe the student experience must change so that schools can prepare all young people to thrive in and transform the world. These Leaps can help schools move from one-size-fits-all experiences that often leave young people disconnected, bored, or locked in place, to learning that is truly extraordinary for all and responds to the demands and opportunities of the 21st century. At their core, these Leaps seek to reimagine how we educate young people—centering on personal growth and equal opportunity for every child so that all young people not only maximize their own potential but also become equipped to tackle society's greatest challenges.

## Inequitable, Industrial-Era Learning

## Equitable, 21st-Century Learning

### Unequal Expectations & Opportunities

The expectations and opportunities learners experience are determined at a young age and are modest for most, high for some, and disproportionately low for others, too often based on factors connected to learners' identities and backgrounds.

### High Expectations with Unlimited Opportunities

All learners experience a deep belief in their ability to achieve at high levels and have equitable access to many opportunities, enabling them to progress toward their aspirations for themselves, their families, and the community.

### Narrow Focus

Learners engage in experiences focused primarily on the cognitive dimension of learning.

### Whole-Child Focus

Learners engage in experiences that nurture them cognitively, physically, and emotionally, honoring the complex factors that support learning and development.

### Surface-Level Learning

Learners engage in mostly rote, lower-order tasks focused on a broad array of content and are assessed primarily on their ability to recall and explain this information.

### Rigorous Learning

Learners use a range of thinking skills to make meaning of complex ideas and are assessed on their ability to recall and explain information as well as to apply, analyze, evaluate, and create with it across contexts.

### Irrelevance

Learning is disconnected from young people's day-to-day lives, interests, and goals, as well as a larger purpose that matters to them.

### Relevance

Learning supports young people's interests and goals, builds on their prior knowledge and skills, and enables them to tackle personally meaningful, real-world activities.

### Assimilation & Marginalization

Learners have little opportunity to explore and express who they are; instead, they are pushed to conform with a common culture or risk alienation.

### Affirmation of Self & Others

Every learner is appreciated for who they are while also embracing the uniqueness of others; learners' identities are nurtured, celebrated, and incorporated into learning in ways that promote understanding and respect.

### Maintaining the Status Quo

Learners are exposed to a narrow range of content and perspectives about why the world is the way it is, with limited opportunities to engage in conversations about societal issues and pursue change.

### Social Responsibility & Action

Learners critically examine and are exposed to a wide range of perspectives on complex local and global issues, developing the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to work toward a more just world.

### Isolation

Relationships are not prioritized; learners and adults work together in the same space, but often without knowing one another deeply, and teaching and learning approaches prioritize independent work and competition.

### Connection & Community

The environment is relationship-rich: learners are deeply known and respected by a variety of adults and peers; they collaborate closely; and they form meaningful relationships across lines of difference that nurture empathy, foster belonging, support well-being, and build social capital.

### Inflexible Systems

Learners experience a one-size-fits-all approach, where rigid structures and policies batch those of the same age together and engage them in the same content through the same activities at the same pace—holding some learners back from more advanced content and activities and leaving others behind.

### Customization

The focus, pace, and sequence of learning, as well as the resources and supports provided, are tailored to each learner's development and needs, ensuring that all learners have what they need to be successful and that those who need more receive more.

### Passive Compliance

Learners are expected to passively absorb the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and behaviors modeled and taught by adults and are pushed to comply with rules and routines developed for them through extrinsic rewards and punitive consequences.

### Active Self-Direction

Young people drive their learning; they participate in decisions about how, when, where, and what they learn in meaningful and developmentally appropriate ways.

### Siloed Schooling

Learning is largely confined to a single, physical space with a fixed schedule, and teachers take on all, or most of, the responsibility for educating young people.

### Anytime, Anywhere Learning

Learning can happen at any place or time and values the people, contexts, and experiences that play important educational roles in young people's lives.