



What are 21st Century Learning Skills?

Twenty-first century learning skills can be categorized into three broad areas:

Information and Communication Skills: Information processing skills include information and media literacy, visual literacy as well as communications and technology literacy, and oral, written and multimedia communication. These include using research tools, such as word processing, e-mail, presentation software and the Internet, to access, manage, integrate, create and communicate with others. Students with these skills can articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively through speaking and writing. They demonstrate the ability to work well with diverse teams and exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal. They also assume a shared responsibility for collaborative work.

Thinking and Problem-solving Skills: These skills use problem-solving tools, such as spreadsheets, decision support and design tools, to develop critical thinking, systems thinking, problem solving, creativity and innovation. Students with these skills demonstrate originality and inventiveness in their work and develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others. They are open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives and act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution. They exercise sound reasoning in understanding and make complex choices and decisions. They understand the interconnections among systems and ask significant questions that clarify various points of view and lead to better solutions. They frame, analyze and synthesize information to solve problems and answer questions.

Personal and Workplace Productivity Skills: These skills include interpersonal and collaboration skills, the ability to self direct, adaptability, ethical behavior, social/personal accountability, leadership, as well as project planning and development. Students who master these skills have the ability to adapt to varied roles and responsibilities, work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities. They can monitor their own understanding and learning needs and demonstrate initiative to advance. They use time efficiently and manage workloads effectively. They also develop the ability to work productively with others of differing cultural backgrounds. They demonstrate diligence and a positive work ethic, including being punctual and reliable, as well as integrity, responsibility and ethical behavior.