

What are the 4Cs of 21st Century Skills?

(Applied from Bri Stauffer 2020: <https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/four-cs-21st-century-skills>)

4Cs	Learning in 4Cs
<p data-bbox="164 353 375 385">Critical thinking</p> 	<p data-bbox="611 353 1353 454">In addition to working through problems, solving puzzles, and similar activities, critical thinking also includes an element of skepticism.</p> <p data-bbox="611 495 1331 595">Critical thinking empowers students to discover the truth in assertions, especially when it comes to separating fact from opinion.</p> <p data-bbox="611 636 1425 736">With critical thinking, students don't just learn a set of facts or figures. Instead, they learn how to discover the facts and figures for themselves.</p> <p data-bbox="611 777 1417 909">They ask questions. They become engaged in the world around them. They help <i>others</i> think critically, too. That might be the most important part of critical thinking. Once one student has it mastered, it quickly spreads to their peers.</p> <p data-bbox="611 949 1401 1050">Whether they learn how to think critically from spending time online or simply asking "Why?" in everyday life, this skill prepares students for a life of independence and purposeful thought.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1090 1422 1223">Still, critical thinking is just one of the four C's in 21st Century skills. It works just fine when students use it alone. But when students combine it with the <i>next</i> skill, the sky is the limit to what they can achieve.</p>
<p data-bbox="164 1256 295 1288">Creativity</p> 	<p data-bbox="611 1256 1254 1288">Creativity is the practice of thinking outside the box.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1328 1417 1451">While creativity is often treated like a you-have-it-or-you-don't quality, students can <i>learn</i> how to be creative by solving problems, creating systems, or just trying something they haven't tried before.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1491 1406 1523">That doesn't mean every student will become an artist or a writer.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1550 1417 1610">Instead, it means they'll be able to look at a problem from multiple perspectives — including those that others may not see.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1637 1385 1697">Creativity allows students to embrace their inner strengths from big-picture planning to meticulous organization.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1724 1382 1785">As a student learns about their creativity, they also learn how to express it in healthy and productive ways.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1812 1342 1872">More importantly, they also become <i>motivated</i> to share that creativity with others.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1899 1401 1960">Just like with critical thinking, that makes creativity transmittable. One student creates an interesting or innovative solution to a</p>

problem. Then, when they share it, the next student can become inspired to try something similar.

That's not to say every single creative endeavor will be a ringing success. Students will fail at some point, and some of their ideas simply won't work.

But that's okay. The point of creativity is to encourage students to think differently than convention demands.

They don't have to do things the way they've always been done. Instead, they can figure out a better way.

Collaboration



(<https://www.transparency-initiative.org/blog/6369/collaboration-always-a-source-of-learning/>)

Collaboration is the practice of working together to achieve a common goal.

Collaboration is important because whether students realize it or not, they'll probably work with other people for the rest of their lives.

Virtually every job requires someone to work with another person at some point.

Practicing collaboration and teamwork helps students understand how to address a problem, pitch solutions, and decide the best course of action.

It's also helpful for them to learn that other people don't always have the same ideas that they do.

In fact, as students practice collaboration more and more, they'll learn that they have almost *none* of the same ideas that others do.

This can affect students in one of two ways. First, it could discourage them since nobody seems to agree with them that often. Second, it could embolden them because they realize they're bringing something unique to every conversation.

As a teacher, it's crucial that you encourage students to look at themselves through that second lens.

That way, students learn that they should speak up when they have an idea.

Communication



(<https://innovationatwork.ieee.org/why-communication-is-the-most-sought-after-skill-in-the-workplace-today/>)

Communication is the practice of conveying ideas quickly and clearly.

In the age of text-based communications — SMS, emails, social media, etc. — it's never been more important for students to learn how to convey their thoughts in a way that others can understand them.

Still, even in situations where vocal tone is available, students need to learn how to communicate effectively.

	<p>That includes minimizing tangents, speaking directly to an idea, and checking other participants to make sure they're engaged.</p> <p>Reading an audience — even if it's just two other people in a group discussion — lets students determine whether they should keep expanding on an idea or wrap up their point.</p> <p>The point is that as students practice communication, they become better at efficiently conveying an idea without losing their point "in the weeds," so to speak.</p> <p>Still, it's important to note that communication isn't enough on its own to help students with 21st Century skills. To really succeed, students need to use all four of these skills together.</p>

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