

21st Century Skills

In the News – Published Articles

The following provides some links to news coverage on the topic of 21st Century Skills:

Internet Project

Preparing Students for New Literacies in a Global Village

DONALD LEU / THE READING TEACHER / MARCH 2001

You've felt it; I've felt it. Change has become central to life in the 21st Century. Sometimes the speed of this change is overwhelming, especially in a world where the Internet places so much information right at our fingertips. While the Internet makes so many wonderful resources available, the most common question I hear is "How do I find the time to keep up?"

The pace of this change will be limited only by our ability to manage it. Our students will encounter even more rapid change when they graduate, especially in the information they will require to perform effectively in the workplace. Thus, the ability to read and write becomes even more important to our children's future than it was to ours. Rapid change will be increasingly a part of their lives, and we need to begin now to prepare them. This column will explore an instructional approach, Internet Project, which prepares children for their literacy future in a world where change is a defining characteristic of literacy and learning.

http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/RT/3-01_Column/index.html

Report: Reinvent schools for digital age; 21st Century learning environments must break through the barriers that separate learning from the real world, P21 says

ESCHOOL NEWS / JAN. 26

Educators can't truly deliver 21st Century instruction in schools that reflect Industrial-Age designs, with rigid schedules, inflexible facilities, and fixed boundaries between grades, disciplines, and classrooms, according to a new white paper from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21). Sponsored by Cisco Systems, the paper – titled "21st Century Learning Environments" – describes the kinds of school structures that have been shown to facilitate successful 21st Century teaching and learning: from flexible learning spaces that can be rearranged to fit different class sizes and subjects, to more malleable units of time than the typical 50-minute class period. The report can be found here:

http://21stcenturyskills.org/documents/le_white_paper-1.pdf

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/top-news/index.cfm?i=56922&page=1>



21st Century Education

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION / JAN. 2009

What constitutes a 21st Century education? The answers vary (Walser, 2008), but 10 states have already adopted the framework used by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.21stcenturyskills.org), and more states are preparing to do so. The Partnership's Framework for 21st Century Learning specifies student outcomes in four areas:

1. Mastery of core subjects (English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history, government and civics) connected by interdisciplinary themes such as global awareness and financial literacy
2. Learning and innovation skills such as critical thinking and collaboration
3. Information, media and technology skills
4. Life and career skills such as self-direction, adaptability, responsibility, social skills, and leadership

<http://www.districtadministration.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=1858>

PISA, TIMSS Join Forces with Cisco, Intel and Microsoft to Develop Next Generation of Assessments

MEDIA-NEWSWIRE.COM / JAN. 13, 2009

Three leading technology companies announced today a collaboration aimed at transforming global educational assessment and improving learning outcomes. At the Learning and Technology World Forum in London, Cisco, Intel and Microsoft unveiled plans to underwrite a multi-sector research project to develop new assessment approaches, methods and technologies for measuring the success of 21st Century teaching and learning in classrooms around the world. During the session, the three companies called upon educational leaders, governments and other corporations to join in the effort.

http://media-newswire.com/release_1084105.html

Assessing the New Literacies of Online Reading Comprehension: An Informative Interview With W. Ian O'Byrne, Lisa Zawilinski, J. Greg McVerry, and Donald J. Leu at the University of Connecticut

THE READING TEACHER / 2008

In this interview, we asked members of the New Literacies Research Lab, Professor Don Leu and his colleagues Lisa Zawilinski, Greg McVerry, and Ian O'Byrne, at the University of Connecticut to help shed some light on the nature, teaching, and assessment of the new literacies of online reading comprehension. Specifically, we asked them to (a) discuss whether there are differences and similarities between reading comprehension on the Internet and in printbased reading environments, (b) describe whether the new literacies of online reading comprehension can be assessed and how, and (c) report on recent and emerging work relative to the new literacies of online reading comprehension that they and others are doing around the world. The text of the interview follows.

<http://edwards.wiki.educ.msu.edu/file/view/09-RT-62-4-Mokhtari.pdf>

Schools tap 21st Century Skills; To prepare students for a fast-changing future, teachers are reaching beyond the R's.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR / JAN. 8, 2009

For decades, the emphasis in public education has been on making sure that students can read, write, and do math. But can they apply those skills in a real-world scenario, such as designing a bridge? Can they identify what information they need and use digital tools to find it?

Those are some of the capabilities known as “21st Century Skills”—what everyone from CEOs to President-elect Obama says that today’s students need for their fast-changing future.

In a knowledge economy, the reasoning goes, the ability to articulate and solve problems, to generate original ideas, and to work collaboratively across cultural boundaries is growing exponentially in importance. The challenge for schools is to find ways to shift from traditional rote learning and teach these skills, while still doing due diligence to the three R's. The good news about 21st Century Skills, advocates say, is that they can be integrated into core subjects.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0108/p03s03-usgn.html>

'21st Century Skills' Focus Shifts W.Va. Teachers' Role

EDUCATION WEEK / JAN. 7, 2009

As West Virginia increasingly emphasizes the teaching of content in application, the shift demands a fundamental change in teachers' roles. Ms. Landin and teachers like her are no longer just purveyors of facts, but also the facilitators of elaborate activities that help students exercise what are often called 21st Century Skills. Business leaders and policymakers more and more say those higher-order, critical-thinking, communication, technological, and analytical skills are the ones crucial for students to master as they enter a service-oriented, entrepreneurial, and global workplace. After integrating such skills into the state's academic-content standards, West Virginia is now hard at work reorienting the training and professional support of its 20,000 public school teachers to ensure that they are capable of executing such projects.

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/01/07/16skills_ep.h28.html?tmp=575591

The Latest Doomed Pedagogical Fad 21st Century Skills

WASHINGTON POST / JAN. 5, 2009

Today on this page, we are ushering in the new year with the hottest trend in pedagogy, the latest program teachers are told they cannot live without. It is called 21st Century Skills. Education policymakers, press agents and pundits can't get enough of it. I am not so impressed. I have been writing cranky columns about 21st

Student work gains authenticity and importance when it becomes a resource available for the world beyond the classroom walls.

Century Skills on washingtonpost.com, calling the movement a pipe dream whose literature should be tossed in the trash. Granted, the 21st Century Skills idea has important business and political advocates, including President-elect Barack Obama. It calls for students to learn to think and work creatively and collaboratively. There is nothing wrong with that. Young Plato and his classmates did the same thing in ancient Greece. But I see little guidance for classroom teachers in 21st Century Skills materials. How are millions of students still struggling to acquire 19th Century Skills in reading, writing and math supposed to learn this stuff?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/04/AR2009010401532.html>

Can U Read Kant?

BOOK REVIEW / WALL STREET JOURNAL / MAY 13, 2008

It would seem that technology and culture both make the present a good time to be young. The digital tools that are reshaping our economy make more sense to young “digital natives” than to members of older generation, an imbalance of abilities that tips the economic and political scales in favor of young people. Meanwhile, aging boomer parents, rather than pass down a fixed, canonical culture to their kids, encourage a modern-day version of their own rebellion, inviting younger voices to disrupt stodgy cultural continuities.

To Mark Bauerlein, a professor of English at Emory University, the present is a good time to be young only if you don’t mind a tendency toward empty-headedness. In “The Dumbest Generation,” he argues that cultural and technological forces, far from opening up an exciting new world of learning and thinking, have conspired to create a level of public ignorance so high as to threaten our democracy.

http://online.wsj.com/public/article_print/SB121063808679386853.html

21st Century Skills Are Not a New Education Trend but Could Be a Fad

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT / DEC. 15, 2008

In public education today, “21st Century Skills” are all the rage. Educators, business leaders, and elected officials are united around the idea that there are new skills students must have to be successful in today’s economy. But while it is exciting to think we live in times so revolutionary that they demand entirely new skills, that assumption and others threaten to establish a false choice between teaching facts and teaching how to approach them—and to make the 21st Century Skills movement another fad leading to little change in American education.

<http://www.usnews.com/articles/opinion/2008/12/15/21st-century-skills-are-not-a-new-education-trend-but-could-be-a-fad.html>

Teaching students 21st Century Skills

BOSTON GLOBE / NOV. 19, 2008

If students are to succeed in today’s complex economy, they need to know more than just English, math, science, and history. They also need a range of analytic and workplace skills. So says an important new report on 21st Century Skills, which concludes that though Massachusetts schools have made impressive progress in the last 15 years, many students still don’t graduate with the abilities today’s jobs require.

http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/mcas/articles/2008/11/19/teaching_students_21st_century_skills/

A Teacher's View:

Assessing 21st Century Skills

LAS VEGAS SUN / NOV. 20, 2008

Leaders in business and higher education are taking a critical view of the current education system and find it lacking in the interdisciplinary thinking skills that are needed for the 21st Century work force.

"Integrating 21st Century Skills into teaching and assessment ... is not only an economic imperative, driven by changes in the workforce, but a vital aspect of improving student learning," says "Measuring Skills for the 21st Century," a white paper that was released on Nov. 10 by the Washington-based think tank Education Sector.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2008/nov/20/assessing-21st-century-skills/>

Measuring 21st Century Skills

ESCHOOL NEWS

To remain competitive in an increasingly global, knowledge-based economy, today's employers need graduates who are adept at so-called "21st Century Skills" such as using information and communications technology (ICT) to gather and assess information, collaborate, innovate, think critically, and solve problems. Yet, in meeting this need, educators face a few key challenges: How can they teach these skills to students in the context of the core curriculum? And, how can they measure students' attainment of these skills?

With the generous support of Learning.com, the editors of eSchool News have compiled this collection of stories from our archives, along with other relevant resources from around the web, to help you and your staff best answer these questions in your own schools.

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/resources/measuring-21st-century-skills/>





Literacy Debate

Online, R U Really Reading?

THE NEW YORK TIMES / JULY 27TH, 2008

Books are not Nadia Konyk's thing. Her mother, hoping to entice her, brings them home from the library, but Nadia rarely shows an interest. Instead, like so many other teenagers, Nadia, 15, is addicted to the Internet. She regularly spends at least six hours a day in front of the computer here in this suburb southwest of Cleveland. Children like Nadia lie at the heart of a passionate debate about just what it means to read in the digital age. The discussion is playing out among educational policy makers and reading experts around the world, and within groups like the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. As teenagers' scores on standardized reading tests have declined or stagnated, some argue that the hours spent prowling the Internet are the enemy of reading — diminishing literacy, wrecking attention spans and destroying a precious common culture that exists only through the reading of books. But others say the Internet has created a new kind of reading, one that schools and society should not discount. The Web inspires a teenager like Nadia, who might otherwise spend most of her leisure time watching television, to read and write.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/27/books/27reading.html?_r=2

The New Literacies

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION / OCT. 2007

Foundational or traditional literacy is about print on a page, or decoding and making sense of words, images and other content that a reader can string together and then begin to comprehend. They are the words and pictures students read and pore over that are contained in textbooks, in novels, on standardized tests, and even in comic books. The new literacies encompass much more. Their utility lies in online reading comprehension and learning skills, or 21st Century Skills, required by the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs), including content found on wikis, blogs, video sites, audio sites and in e-mail. They require the ability not just to “read” but also to navigate the World Wide Web, locate information, evaluate it critically, synthesize it and communicate it—all skills that are becoming vital to success in this century's economy and workforce.

<http://www.districtadministration.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=1292>

More and More, Schools Got Game

Teachers Turn to Simulations, Other Software for Variety of Lessons

WASHINGTON POST / JAN. 4, 2009

Teachers have long yearned for the rapt attention students lavish on mutants and aliens, but stereotypes of video games as violent or brain-numbing have slowed their entry into schools. While the military and even medical schools are turning to “serious games” or simulations for training, the Software and Information Industry Association estimates that instructional games make up only a tiny portion of the \$2 billion-a-year educational software industry.

But lately, researchers and educators say sentiment toward gaming is changing. Advocates argue that games teach vital skills overlooked in the age of high-stakes tests, such as teamwork, decision-making and digital literacy

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/03/AR2009010301556.html>

Change has become central to life in the 21st Century. The pace of this change will be limited only by our ability to manage it.



Partnership for 21st Century Skills Adds 3 States to Membership

DAVE NAGEL / T.H.E. JOURNAL / JUNE 9, 2009

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has added three more states to its membership. The group announced Tuesday that Illinois, Louisiana, and Nevada have joined the organization, bringing the total state membership to 13.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills is a coalition of business and education groups focused on technology education and the integration of technology into education. The group provides the Framework for 21st Century Learning, a roadmap for education centered around technology and skills-focused learning. It also provides information and tools for educators for boosting 21st Century Learning in K-12 through its Route 21 site. States that choose to join the initiative do so through the State Leadership Initiative, which is focused on statewide programs to change classroom learning to address the demands of the 21st Century.

In joining the group, representatives from the three states cited their desire to connecting education to workforce needs and bolstering the academic and skill achievement of students as some of the reasons for committing to the Framework for 21st Century Learning – a commitment that includes both supporting the Framework and helping to develop it.