

21st Century Technology Skills Are a Core Competency for Today's Graduates

Posted By [K. Walsh](#) On November 10, 2013 @ 6:41 am In [Future of Education Technology, Making the case for Education Technologies](#) | [43 Comments](#)

Our students need to be comfortable with the information technologies that are inextricably linked to the 21st century skills the work place requires, and teachers need to help pave the way.

A May, 2013 Gallup Study, summarized in this article, "[In the U.S., 21st Century Skills Linked to Work Success](#)"^[1], indicates that young U.S. adults who say they developed 21st century skills in their last year of school are more likely to self-report higher work quality.

"Gallup, in collaboration with Microsoft Partners in Learning and the Pearson Foundation, developed a 21st century skills index measuring seven specific areas: collaboration, knowledge construction, skilled communication, global awareness, self-regulation, real-world problem-solving, and technology used in learning. According to the study, 21st century skills prepare and equip youth for the challenges and demands of work in today's knowledge-based, technology-driven, globalized environment." (Sidhu)



[2]

In 2006, the Partnership for 21st Century Learning published a [report](#)^[3] titled, "[Are They Really Ready To Work? Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce](#)" (*Partnership for 21st Century Skills*). This is one of many studies and reports published in the last 5 to 10 years that emphasize business's requirement for 21st Century Skills that are increasingly being applied using today's information technologies. Year over year, the requirement for these skills has continued to expand as businesses and the general population increasingly adopt a wide variety of digital technologies.

Some of the skills commonly being cited as vital in today's workforce include:

- The ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing (with almost all of today's written communications in business being conducted digitally).
- Teamwork skills and the ability to collaborate with others in diverse groups settings (information technologies are increasingly essential to many forms of organizational collaboration).
- The ability to innovate and be creative (today's information technologies empower innovate and creative capabilities in ways not previously envisioned).
- The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources.

What are "21st Century Skills"?

To clarify what is meant by "21st Century Skills", this quote from "[21st Century Learning Is Not A Program](#)"^[4], by William Washington (Ed.D. Scholar, Walden University) offers a perspective I certainly agree with:

"The Partnership for 21st century skills (2011) identifies these specifically: creativity, collaboration, critical-thinking, and communication. In order to help our [students] develop these skills to a high level, we must incorporate modalities that are relevant to present times (e.g. social networking, mobile technologies, digital computing, gaming,) and also engage the student with instruction techniques that facilitate learning (e.g. pinwheel discussion, group collaboration, projects). In other words, we need to put the student at the center of the learning and allow them to create their own meaning from experiences." (Washington)

Here again, we see skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and communication tightly linked to information technologies in the present day world. Many other academic assessments of 21st Century Skills assert this same precept, with some being more precise and assertive than others about the relationship between information technologies and these essential capabilities. As one such example, the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences includes these applications of technology in their [21st Century Skills Definitions web page](#)^[5]:

"Apply Technology Effectively

- Use technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate, and communicate information
- Use digital technologies (e.g., computers, PDAs, media players, GPS, etc.), communication/networking tools, and social networks appropriately to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information to successfully function in a knowledge economy
- Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information technologies" (*Institute of Museum and Library Sciences*)

Clearly it has never been more important for schools to provide students exposure to the information technologies that will prepare them for successful entry in to, and thriving careers in, the present day work place. In order to do this, our teachers need to be comfortable with a wide variety of technologies, yet many schools across the country and the world at large have been slow to accept and embrace this vital skill set. Of course, the fundamentals of reading, math, etc., absolutely and undeniably come first, but technology skills are now an essential part of the overall mix.

What is your school doing to prepare students for the 21st century work place?

Related Posts (if the above topic is of interest, you might want to check these out):

[Study Shows 21st Century Skill Development Clearly Linked to Career Success](#)^[6]

[Carnegie Mellon University Reinvents Instructional Technology](#)^[7]

[The 10 Most Important Emerging Instructional and Education Technologies and Concepts \(2013 Update\)](#)^[8]

SOURCES

Institute of Museum and Library Sciences. "Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills." [Institute of Museum and Library Sciences](http://www.imls.gov/about/21st_century_skills_list.aspx). 9 November 2013 <http://www.imls.gov/about/21st_century_skills_list.aspx>.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. "Are They Really Ready To Work?" 2006. [Partnership for 21st Century Skills](http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf). <http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf>.

Sidhu, Jenna Levy and Preeti. "In the U.S., 21st Century Skills Linked to Work Success." 30 May 2013. [Gallup.com](http://www.gallup.com/poll/162818/21st-century-skills-linked-work-success.aspx). <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/162818/21st-century-skills-linked-work-success.aspx>>.

Washington, William. "21st Century Learning Is Not A Program." 6 January 2013. [TeachThought.com](http://www.teachthought.com/learning/21st-century-learning-is-not-a-program/). <<http://www.teachthought.com/learning/21st-century-learning-is-not-a-program/>>.

**About K. Walsh** ^[10]

Kelly Walsh is Chief Information Officer, and an adjunct faculty member, at The College of Westchester in White Plains, NY and is the founder and author of EmergingEdTech.com. As an education technology advocate, he frequently delivers presentations on a variety of related topics at schools and conferences across the U.S. Walsh is also an author, adjunct faculty member, and online educator, periodically running [Flipped Class Workshops](#) ^[11] online. His latest eBook, the **Flipped Class Workshop in a Book** was published in September, 2013 and is [available here](#) ^[12]. Walsh also records and performs original and cover songs (look for "K. Walsh" on iTunes or Amazon.com or check out his original song videos on [here on YouTube](#) ^[13]).

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[1] In the U.S., 21st Century Skills Linked to Work Success: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/162818/21st-century-skills-linked-work-success.aspx>

[2] Image: <http://www.emergingedtech.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/21st-Century-Skills.jpg>

[3] a report: http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf

[4] 21st Century Learning Is Not A Program: <http://www.teachthought.com/learning/21st-century-learning-is-not-a-program/>

[5] 21st Century Skills Definitions web page: http://www.imls.gov/about/21st_century_skills_list.aspx

[6] Study Shows 21st Century Skill Development Clearly Linked to Career Success: <http://www.emergingedtech.com/2013/06/study-shows-21st-century-skill-development-clearly-linked-to-career-success/>

[7] Carnegie Mellon University Reinvents Instructional Technology: <http://www.emergingedtech.com/2013/10/carnegie-mellon-university-reinvents-instructional-technology/>

[8] The 10 Most Important Emerging Instructional and Education Technologies and Concepts (2013 Update):

<http://www.emergingedtech.com/2013/09/the-10-most-important-emerging-instructional-and-education-technologies-and-concepts/>

[9] Image: <http://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.emergingedtech.com%2F2013%2F11%2F21st-century-technology-skills-are-a-core-competency-for-todays-graduates%2F&media=%2Fwp%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2013%2F11%2F21st-Century-Skills.jpg&description=21st%20Century%20Technology%20Skills%20Are%20a%20Core%20Competency%20for%20Today%E2%80%99s%20Gradua>

[10] K. Walsh: <http://www.emergingedtech.com/author/admin/>

[11] Flipped Class Workshops: <http://www.emergingedtech.com/flipped-classroom-online-workshops/>

[12] available here: <http://www.emergingedtech.com/2013/09/announcing-the-flipped-classroom-workshop-in-a-book/>

[13] here on YouTube : <http://www.youtube.com/user/minstreltube>

[14] Image: http://www.addtoany.com/share_save