

THE CHANGING ACADEMIC CORE

Changing Knowledge and Skills Needed for 21st Century Workers

Today's graduates need to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, and effective communicators who are proficient in both core subjects and new 21st Century content and skills.⁵³ Several influential projects have described the knowledge and skills needed by students for both college and the workforce, including the *American Diploma Project*,⁵⁴ whose approach has been adopted by 22 states; the *Standards for Success*⁵⁵ project in which college faculty identified what students needed know to succeed in college; and the research by ACT, Inc.⁵⁶ which defines a rigorous new college-preparation core curriculum.

Most recently, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills involved educators, employers, parents, community members, and students in identifying the 21st Century skills.⁵⁷ In addition to the following list of core content, the partnership specified that the skills should be taught in an integrated, balanced approach and authentic assessments should be used to assess student learning.⁵⁸

- Core Subjects - English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics, government, economics, arts, history, and geography
- 21st Century Content - global awareness; financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy; civic literacy; health and wellness awareness
- Learning and Thinking Skills - know how to keep learning throughout life, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, communication skills, creativity and innovation skills, collaboration skills, contextual learning skills, and information and media literacy skills
- Information and Communications Technology - ability to use technology to develop knowledge and skills
- Life Skills - leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility