

21st Century Skills: (Adapted from Tony Wagner, Harvard School of Education)

1. **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving** – businesses want to continuously improve their products, processes and services. The heart of this is the ability to ask the right questions. Yesterday's answers don't necessarily solve today's problems. The markets are changing very fast in our high skill and high knowledge economy.
2. **Collaboration and Leadership** – Teamwork is no longer just about working together with others. Technology now allows for virtual teams, via conference calls, web casts, and net meetings. The ability to persuade and influence is also valuable.
3. **Agility and Adaptability** – Employers expect employees to be able to think, be flexible, change, and use a variety of tools to problem solve. The jobs people are hired for change or may not exist in the future. Adaptability and lifelong learning skills are more important than technical skills.
4. **Initiative and Entrepreneurialism** – If you try five things and get all five of them right, you may be failing. If you try ten things, and get eight of them right, you may be a hero. Employers say that employees will not be blamed for failing to reach a stretch goal, but they will be blamed for not trying.
5. **Effective Oral and Written Communication** – Verbal, written, and presentation skills are a necessity. People need to be clear and concise in order to create focus, energy, and passion around the points they want to make. Fuzzy thinking and not knowing how to write in a real voice hurts effectiveness. Additionally, employees need to peer teach, defend opinions, negotiate, research facts, reach informed decisions, organize, plan,
6. **Accessing and Analyzing Information** – Employees today have to manage a large amount of information daily. Employees need to be able to process information effectively so they don't go on information overload. It's not only the quantity of information but the fact that information changes quickly. Additionally, employees need to be able to collect evidence and scaffold many skills at once.
7. **Curiosity and Imagination** – People who learn to ask great questions and have learned to be inquisitive are the ones who move the fastest in our new environment because they solve problems in ways that have the most impact. With increased abundance, people want unique products and services. Developing young people's capacities for imagination, creativity, and empathy is increasingly important for maintaining the US's competitive advantage in the future.
8. **Additional Life Skills** – Social skills, grit, self discipline, honesty, perseverance, passion, optimism, gratitude, productivity (work ethic), cultural understanding, time management, reflection, take responsibility, build confidence, debrief, emotional control.