

What are the 21st-century skills every student needs?

Don't get left on the shelf ... brush up on your collaboration, communication and problem-solving skills

Image: REUTERS/Eric Gaillard

Written by

[Jenny Soffel](#), Website Editor, World Economic Forum

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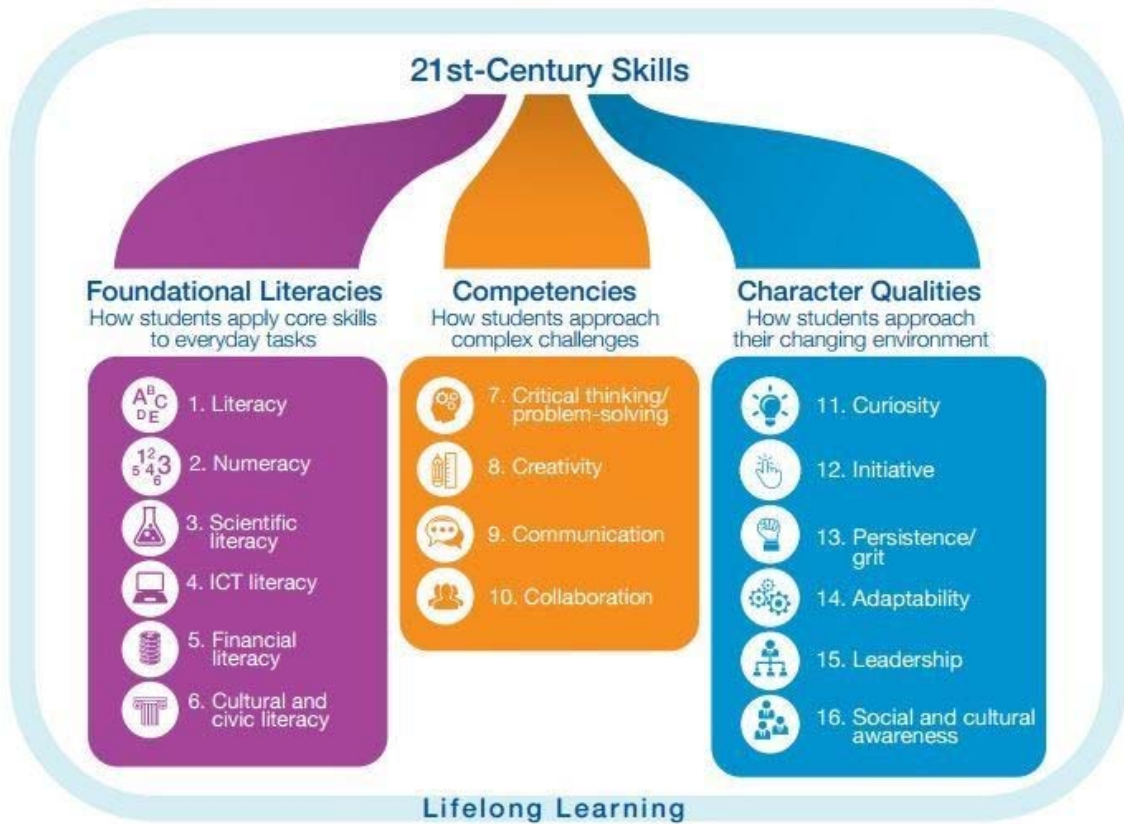
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The gap between the skills people learn and the skills people need is becoming more obvious, as traditional learning falls short of equipping students with the knowledge they need to thrive, according to the World Economic Forum report [New Vision for Education: Fostering Social and Emotional Learning Through Technology](#).

Today's job candidates must be able to collaborate, communicate and solve problems – skills developed mainly through **social and emotional learning (SEL)**. Combined with traditional skills, this social and emotional proficiency will equip students to succeed in the evolving digital economy.

What skills will be needed most?

Exhibit 1: Students require 16 skills for the 21st century



Note: ICT stands for information and communications technology.

An analysis of 213 studies showed that students who received SEL instruction had achievement scores that averaged 11 percentile points higher than those who did not. And SEL potentially leads to long-term benefits such as higher rates of employment and educational fulfillment.

Good leadership skills as well as curiosity are also important for students to learn for their future jobs.

Exhibit 3: A variety of general and targeted learning strategies foster social and emotional skills



Another Forum report, [The Future of Jobs](#), launched during the [Annual Meeting 2016](#) in Davos, looked at the employment, skills and workforce strategy for the future.

The report asked chief human resources and strategy officers from leading global employers what the current shifts mean, specifically for employment, skills and recruitment across industries and geographies.

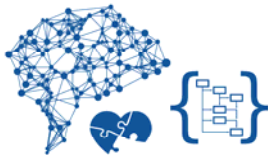
Top 10 skills

in 2020

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Critical Thinking
3. Creativity
4. People Management
5. Coordinating with Others
6. Emotional Intelligence
7. Judgment and Decision Making
8. Service Orientation
9. Negotiation
10. Cognitive Flexibility

in 2015

1. Complex Problem Solving
2. Coordinating with Others
3. People Management
4. Critical Thinking
5. Negotiation
6. Quality Control
7. Service Orientation
8. Judgment and Decision Making
9. Active Listening
10. Creativity



Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum

Policy-makers, educators, parents, businesses, researchers, technology developers, investors and NGOs can together ensure that development of social and emotional skills becomes a shared goal and competency of education systems everywhere.