

# Incorporating The 4C's

A Learning Resource for  
Teachers and Educators

## 21st Century Skills and the 4C's

The “21st Century Skills” movement is almost 20 years old now and over the years it became clear that the framework was too long and complicated. Out of this framework, four specific skills were determined to be the most important. They became known as the “Four Cs”— critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Now the challenge is to build the “Four Cs” into K-12 education, encouraging more educators to incorporate and stress the importance of the “Four Cs,” and put 21st century education into classroom practice.

## What are the 4 C's ?



## Making 21st Century Education Happen



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*Expressing thoughts clearly, crisply articulating opinions, communicating coherent instructions, motivating others through powerful speech—these skills have always been valued in the workplace and in public life. But in the 21st century, these skills have been transformed and are even more important today.*

## Communication

The power of technology and the myriad of communication technologies in all aspects of life make teaching strong communication skills even more important.

Communication is now essential as technology gives rise to a global economy that spans time zones, nations, and cultures. It is imperative that tomorrow's graduates communicate clearly and effectively in a variety of languages.

While it is important to emphasize communication skills, it can be difficult to separate them from the other Cs—especially collaboration.

Communication Rubric 

Why is communication important?





*Collaboration is essential in our classrooms because it is inherent in the nature of how work is accomplished in our civic and workforce lives. Fifty years ago, much work was accomplished by individuals working alone, but not today.*

*Much of all significant work is accomplished in teams, and in many cases, global teams.*

## Collaboration

Generally, collaboration has been accepted as a skill that's essential to achieve meaningful and effective results. It has become increasingly clear that collaboration is not only important, but necessary for students, due to globalization and the rise of technology.

As a result of students working collaboratively, the group can generate more knowledge, making collaboration a key ingredient to student success in today's global society.

The intersection between core subjects and collaboration can be integrated into classroom teaching and learning across a variety of grade levels and disciplines.

Collaboration Rubric



Why collaborate?






## Creativity

Creativity is fast becoming a requirements for personal and professional success.

The most successful individuals are those who have creative skills, to produce a vision for how they intend to make the world a better place.

Creativity is closely intertwined with some of the other skills previously identified and has a social component that requires adaptability, leadership, teamwork, and interpersonal skills.

Creativity Rubric 

Why is creativity important? 

*In the past, Americans perceived creativity and innovation as secondary in our national curriculum. Today, creativity and innovation are key drivers in the global economy.*



*Using the 'Four Cs' to engage students is imperative. As educators prepare students for this new global society, teaching the core content subjects—must be enhanced by incorporating critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. We need new tools to support classroom teachers as they implement new strategies in their classrooms..*

## Next Steps

Teaching critical thinking is most effective if the instructor models dispositions and the proper use of critical thinking skills in the process of their instruction.

Communication skills are intertwined with information, media, communication, and technology skills.

As a result of students working collaboratively, the group can generate more knowledge, making collaboration a key ingredient to student success in today's global society.

The ability to create is linked to the skills necessary to connect with others in the form of communication and collaboration.



*"I'm calling on our nation's educational leaders to develop standards and assessments that don't simply measure whether students can fill in a bubble on a test, but whether they possess 21st century skills like problem-solving and critical thinking and entrepreneurship and creativity."*

*President  
Barack Obama*

## Reflections

As you begin to integrate the 4C's into your classroom practices, consider the following questions:

1. How can you encourage students to be better critical thinkers and problem solvers?
2. How can students use technology and new media to communicate innovatively and effectively?
3. How can you create a learning environment that emphasizes collaboration skills?
4. How can you incorporate more creativity and innovation into your lesson plans?



## Artifacts & Reflections

Artifact #1 

Artifact #2 

Artifact #3 

Artifact #4 

Artifact #5 

Artifact Reflections 

*Artifacts are used in the learning process for creating knowledge, while in turn, knowledge creates new artifacts.*



# Resources

Larson, Tony. "The 4Cs Research Series." P21,  
[www.p21.org/our-work/4cs-research-series](http://www.p21.org/our-work/4cs-research-series).

"An Educator's Guide to the 'Four Cs.'" NEA,  
[www.nea.org/tools/52217.htm](http://www.nea.org/tools/52217.htm).