

Table of Contents

About the Editors	vii
Preface <i>Ron Brandt</i>	ix
Foreword 21st Century Skills: Why They Matter, What They Are, and How We Get There <i>Ken Kay</i>	xiii
Introduction <i>James Bellanca and Ron Brandt</i>	1
Chapter 1 Five Minds for the Future <i>Howard Gardner</i>	7
Chapter 2 New Policies for 21st Century Demands <i>Linda Darling-Hammond, Interviewed</i> <i>by James Bellanca</i>	27
Chapter 3 Comparing Frameworks for 21st Century Skills <i>Chris Dede</i>	43
Chapter 4 The Role of Professional Learning Communities in Advancing 21st Century Skills <i>Richard DuFour and Rebecca DuFour</i>	65
Chapter 5 The Singapore Vision: <i>Teach Less, Learn More</i> <i>Robin Fogarty and Brian M. Pete</i>	83
Chapter 6 Designing New Learning Environments to Support 21st Century Skills <i>Bob Pearlman</i>	101
Chapter 7 An Implementation Framework to Support 21st Century Skills <i>Jay McTighe and Elliott Seif</i>	131

Chapter 8	Problem-Based Learning: The Foundation for 21st Century Skills <i>John Barell</i>	153
Chapter 9	Cooperative Learning and Conflict Resolution: Essential 21st Century Skills <i>David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson</i>	175
Chapter 10	Preparing Students for Mastery of 21st Century Skills <i>Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey</i>	193
Chapter 11	Innovation Through Technology <i>Cheryl Lemke</i>	211
Chapter 12	Technology Rich, Information Poor <i>Alan November</i>	239
Chapter 13	Navigating Social Networks as Learning Tools <i>Will Richardson</i>	247
Chapter 14	A Framework for Assessing 21st Century Skills <i>Douglas Reeves</i>	265
Afterword	Leadership, Change, and Beyond the 21st Century Skills Agenda <i>Andy Hargreaves</i>	283

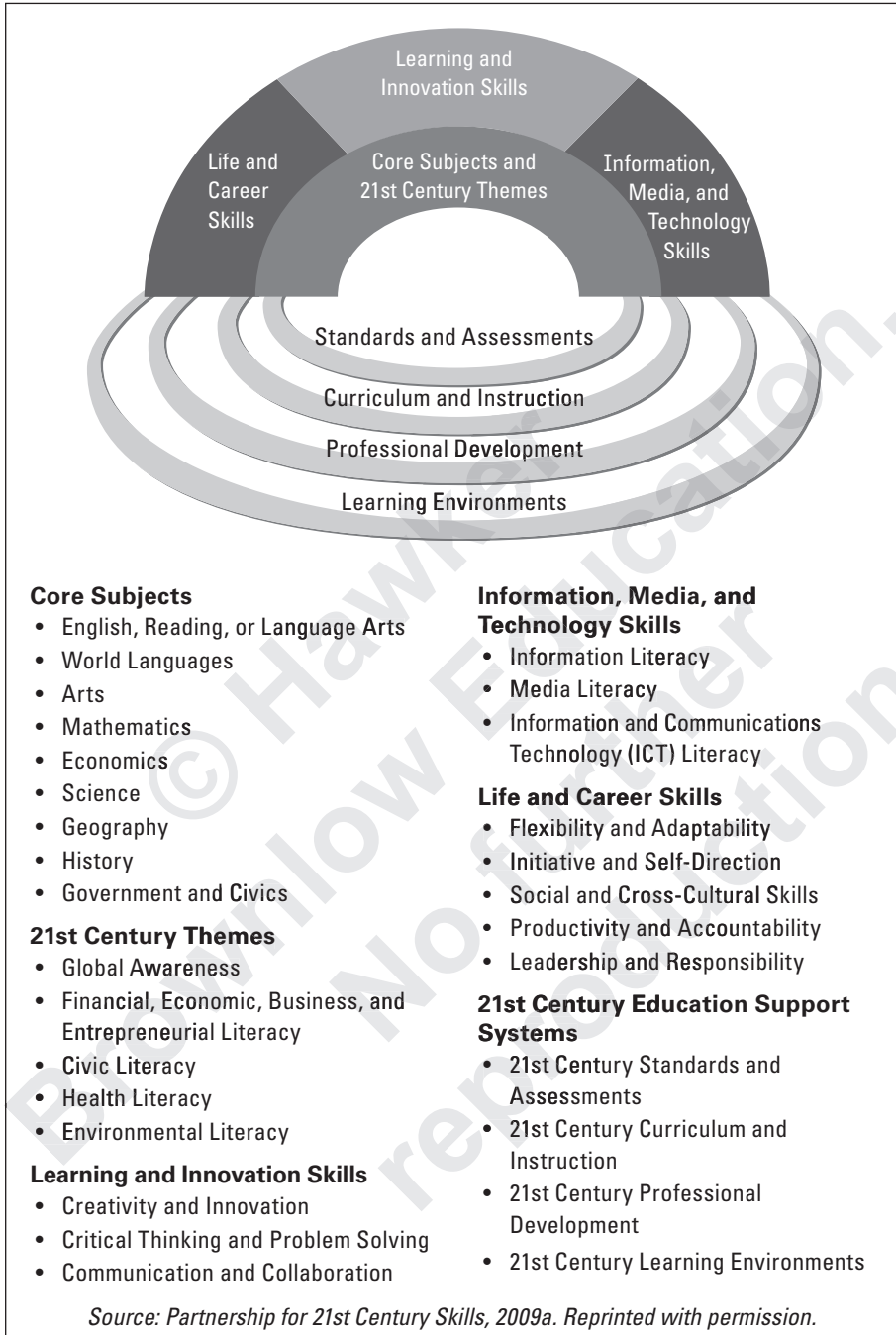


Figure F.1: The Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework for 21st Century Learning.

Chapter 4

The Role of Professional Learning Communities in Advancing 21st Century Skills

Richard DuFour and Rebecca DuFour

When the Partnership for 21st Century Skills articulated the knowledge and skills essential to the future success of students in the United States, it stressed that the traditional school culture was not designed to deliver those outcomes. To its credit, the Partnership recognized that if its initiative were to have a positive impact on student achievement, educators would need to transform their schools and districts into professional learning communities (PLCs).

The Partnership (2009) was emphatic on this point and stipulated that the environments best suited to teach 21st century skills “support professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practice.” The Partnership called for schools to be organized into “professional learning communities for teachers that model the kinds of classroom learning that best promote 21st century skills for students” and urged educators to encourage “knowledge sharing among communities of practitioners, using face-to-face, virtual and blended communications.”

The Three Big Ideas of the PLC concept mirror this emphasis from the Partnership. These three ideas are as follows:

1. A commitment to high levels of learning for *all* students
2. The imperative of a collaborative and a collective effort to fulfill that commitment

Chapter 10

Preparing Students for Mastery of 21st Century Skills

Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey

“Does it work?” asked a curious adolescent as she stared at the chalkboard at the front of the classroom.

We don’t like to think of ourselves as getting older, but the bewildered question of a teen who is flummoxed by the sight of an object “us old people” take for granted, a common blackboard, certainly makes us feel old. What led up to this question requires a bit of explanation.

Nancy was scheduled to speak to a group of school principals in a nearby community during a professional development meeting on quality instruction for all learners. It has become our practice to include students from the high school where we work in our presentations, whenever possible, to bring the audience a student’s perspective. Three tenth-grade students, Coraima, Susana, and Mariana, accompanied Nancy to this presentation. As the four of them entered the room where the meeting would take place, the girls stopped and let out an audible gasp.

“Does it work?” asked Coraima.

Nancy looked to the front of the room to see what Coraima was referring to, and then silently contemplated her own mortality. Coraima was referring to the chalkboard.

Given that there was a piece of chalk in the tray, Nancy was able to answer in the affirmative. She watched as the three teenagers approached the board and took turns making tentative marks with the chalk. “It’s soft,” said Mariana.