

New 21st Century Skills Study to Map Education in a Changing World

Education is changing. Countries around the world are broadening their educational vision to equip students with what are often termed **21st century skills**. But what are these skills? How is the teaching of them incorporated into national curricula? And how do the local and global expectations of student proficiencies compare internationally?

The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (**IEA**) has just launched a unique, new study designed to map how countries around the world are answering these questions. The study, **21CS MAP**, will look at which 21st Century skills are valued within education systems and how they are integrated into the curriculum. Additionally the study will map what the expectations are for how students will develop competencies such as **problem solving, communication** or **critical thinking**.

Commenting on the launch of the study, **IEA Executive Director, Dr Dirk Hastedt** said,

“We all want to ensure that young people are equipped to **think critically and creatively**, to **solve problems**, and to be prepared **for lifelong learning** in a rapidly changing world. For many years we have been talking about these essential **soft skills** without a precise definition of what these skills are and how they should be taught. 21CS MAP will help countries meet the challenge of designing education systems that provide young people for life in the modern age.”

Study director, **Dr Esther Care, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution** continued,

“Our previous research has provided convincing evidence of a **global shift towards incorporation of 21st century skills into educational aspirations**, however to date the information has not shown the actual impact on curriculum change. By working with IEA, using their approach of having participating countries really embedded in designing the study framework and survey, we will produce the first multiple country dataset to give **a common definition of 21st century skills**, with the connections between them and core subjects, as well as **demonstrating how these are represented** within the subjects.”

21CS MAP will analyse how 21st century skills are represented across selected subjects at grades 4 and 8 in national curricula and/or comparable documents. The first meeting of **National Research Coordinators** is expected to take place in July 2020, with the study results due in late 2021. Unlike IEA’s current studies, [TIMSS](#), [PIRLS](#), [ICILS](#), and [ICCS](#), 21CS MAP will not have a student assessment component. Rather, the study is focussed on **opportunities to learn**.

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Notes to editors:

More information about 21CS MAP can be found on the IEA website [here](#), or in a recent Brookings Institute blog [here](#).

For further information, or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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