



Professional Development Institute

Flex Course Syllabus

21st Century Thinking Skills that Promote College and Career Readiness (K-12)

PDI Course Number: 104T02

UCSD Course Number: EDUC40293

If you would like information about receiving post-baccalaureate (graduate) credit for completing this course, [please click here](#).

Course Timeline

Participants have one year to complete the course. Participants must spend a minimum of three weeks in this course.

Course Description

Do the phrases *college and career ready* and *21st century skills* keep popping up on your radar? Are you wondering exactly what they mean and what you can do as a teacher to help your students become better thinkers and learners? This online course is designed for K-12 teachers who are looking to explore strategies and initiatives for incorporating students' higher-order thinking skills into their classroom practices. In doing so, students become critical and creative thinkers and communicators who are able to work collaboratively while embracing others' diverse cultural perspectives in a global community of 21st century learners. This course begins by discussing how the age of acceleration has shifted how students are taught so that their very important social-emotional skills are embraced, skills which are essential to college and career readiness in the 21st century. Teachers will learn how to create a culturally relevant and globally accessible classroom environment that embraces the "6Cs of education." Teachers will take a deep dive into these six components of 21st century learning (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, culture, and civic and global readiness). By the end of this course, teachers will feel more confident in their quest to implement these essential 21st century thinking skills successfully into their own teaching practices.

Educational Outcomes

1. Teachers will understand how seven critical competencies (self-regulation, critical thinking, collaboration, creative thinking, communication, digital citizenship, and social competence) are related to students' social-emotional skills.
2. Teachers will learn about the essential qualities of 21st century thinkers and will learn strategies for supporting those qualities within their own teaching practices.
3. Teachers will explore the foundations of Visible Thinking, an approach to learning which focuses on developing students' thinking dispositions.
4. Teachers will take a deep dive into how they can support the thinking routines embedded in Project Zero's Visible Thinking framework into their own classrooms. They will learn a variety of strategies to support this new way of thinking which is required of all college and career ready 21st century thinkers and learners.
5. Teachers are introduced to the critical thinking process, and they will learn specific strategies for fostering critical-thinking skills within their classrooms.
6. Teachers will learn how guided inquiry helps students practice and master their questioning techniques.
7. Teachers will learn about the different types of questions and how they relate to Bloom's taxonomy.
8. Teachers will learn specific strategies to help guide students to produce and answer questions more deeply, thoroughly, and thoughtfully.
9. Teachers will take a deep dive into learning about the best practices for igniting critical thinking in the classroom.
10. Teachers will learn how higher-order thinking skills are related to Bloom's taxonomy and why they are considered necessary skills to possess in order to be college and career ready in the 21st century.
11. Teachers will learn different strategies to stimulate their 21st century higher-order thinking skills.
12. Teachers will understand how higher-order thinking skills provide the bridge between critical thinking and creativity.
13. Teachers will understand what creativity is (and is not), and the role which growth mindset plays in its existence.
14. Teachers will learn how to stimulate students' creativity through a variety of right- and left-brain activities that embrace their multiple intelligences.
15. Teachers will take a deep dive into learning about the best practices for igniting creativity in the classroom.
16. Teachers will learn specific strategies to engage their students in the process of metacognition.
17. Teachers will learn specific strategies for supporting collaboration within the classroom, including such things as active listening techniques, paraphrasing, and engaging with movement.
18. Teachers will take a deep dive into learning about the best practices for igniting collaboration in the classroom.
19. Teachers will learn how to define communication and they will understand the various social aspects that relate to literacy.

20. Teachers will learn strategies to enhance their communication skills in the 21st century so that they become more critical communicators (verbally, non-verbally, written, and visually).
21. Teachers will take a deep dive into learning about the best practices for igniting communication in the classroom.
22. Teachers are introduced to the concept of culture and they will learn specific culturally responsive best practices so that they can teach students to become culturally competent thinkers in the 21st century.
23. Teachers will learn how the teaching of character traits helps to prepare students for future civic and global responsibilities.
24. Teachers will learn what it means to be a global citizen and they will learn specific strategies for embracing it within their classrooms.
25. Teachers will learn about the backwards design process and how it relates to 21st century assessment best practices.
26. Teachers will learn specific strategies for assessing students' thinking in the 21st century through observation and rubrics.

Instructional Media

- Online Discussions
- Online Engagement
- Online Collaboration
- Instructor Feedback
- Instructor Interaction
- Online Resources and Websites
- Supplemental Instructional Materials
- Printable Classroom Resources

Evaluation

- Test #1 (5% of final grade)
- Test #2 (5% of final grade)
- Test #3 (5% of final grade)
- Test #4 (5% of final grade)
- Test #5 (5% of final grade)
- Autobiography and Goals for the Course (10% of final grade)
- Article/Video Reflection (15% of final grade)
- Course Collaboration/Share Ideas with the Class (10% of final grade)
- Cumulative Assignment/Project: Design Two Lessons and Two Assessments (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

Topical Outline

Unit One

- The Age of Acceleration
- The 21st Century Thinker/Learner
- Making Thinking Visible
- **Assignment #1**
Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about incorporating the 21st century skills of critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, culture, and civic and global readiness into your teaching practices. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.
- **Test #1**

Unit Two

- Critical Thinking in the 21st Century
- The Art of Questioning
- Best Practices to Ignite Critical Thinking
- **Assignment #2**
As an educator, it is important to be aware of the research, studies, and professional work done in the field. In the course, you will find an article and video that are relevant to the specific course content. Read the article and then write an essay with your thoughts.
- **Test #2**

Unit Three

- Higher-Order Thinking Skills
- Defining Creativity
- Best Practices to Ignite Creativity
- **Assignment #3**
Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to effectively incorporating the teaching of 21st century skills into the classroom so that students will be college and career ready. The tip, strategy, or idea that you share needs to make a difference to other teachers in their own classrooms. Your assignment should be a minimum of three paragraphs and detailed enough for another teacher to follow easily. This is a great opportunity to share and collaborate with other teachers at your grade level around the country. Take time to review and respond to other postings that are relevant to your classroom population in order to gain effective ideas to use immediately in your classroom
- **Test #3**

Unit Four

- The Importance of Student Engagement and Motivation to Collaboration
- The Foundations of Collaboration
- Best Practices to Ignite Collaboration
- **Test #4**

Unit Five

- The Many Faces of Literacy
- Communication in the 21st Century
- Best Practices to Ignite Communication
- **Test #5**

Unit Six

- The Importance of Culture in the 21st Century
- Civic and Global Readiness
- Assessing 21st Century Skills
- **Assignment #4**

Choose two areas from the “6Cs” of 21st century education (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, culture, or civic and global readiness) and create a lesson plan for each of them. Each lesson plan must specifically address its requisite chosen 21st century skill. The lessons should be written with enough detail so that another teacher can easily teach them. The teacher must also create two rubrics or observational checklists, each of which is designed to address its specific “partner” lesson from above. The grade level, content area, and content objective(s) should be included in both the lessons and assessments, as should the requisite 21st century skills and state-specific standards. While the teacher can use any of the strategies that were introduced throughout the course, s/he must not copy them directly from the course material.

- **Assignment #5**
The culminating practicum is a three-step process. (1) In the first assignment, you were asked what goals you had and what you hoped to learn from the course. Think back to your original goals for this course. Write a minimum two-paragraph reflection specifically describing how what you learned can be used to help you reach those goal(s). (2) Next, write a minimum three-paragraph plan that specifically describes the ways in which you intend to implement a particular strategy you learned in this course into your own teaching situation. (3) Last, write a minimum two-paragraph reflection describing a student you have or have had in the past. Then, discuss how the strategies you learned in this course will specifically benefit that student as you put your plan into action.

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