

# The skills agenda: Preparing students for the future

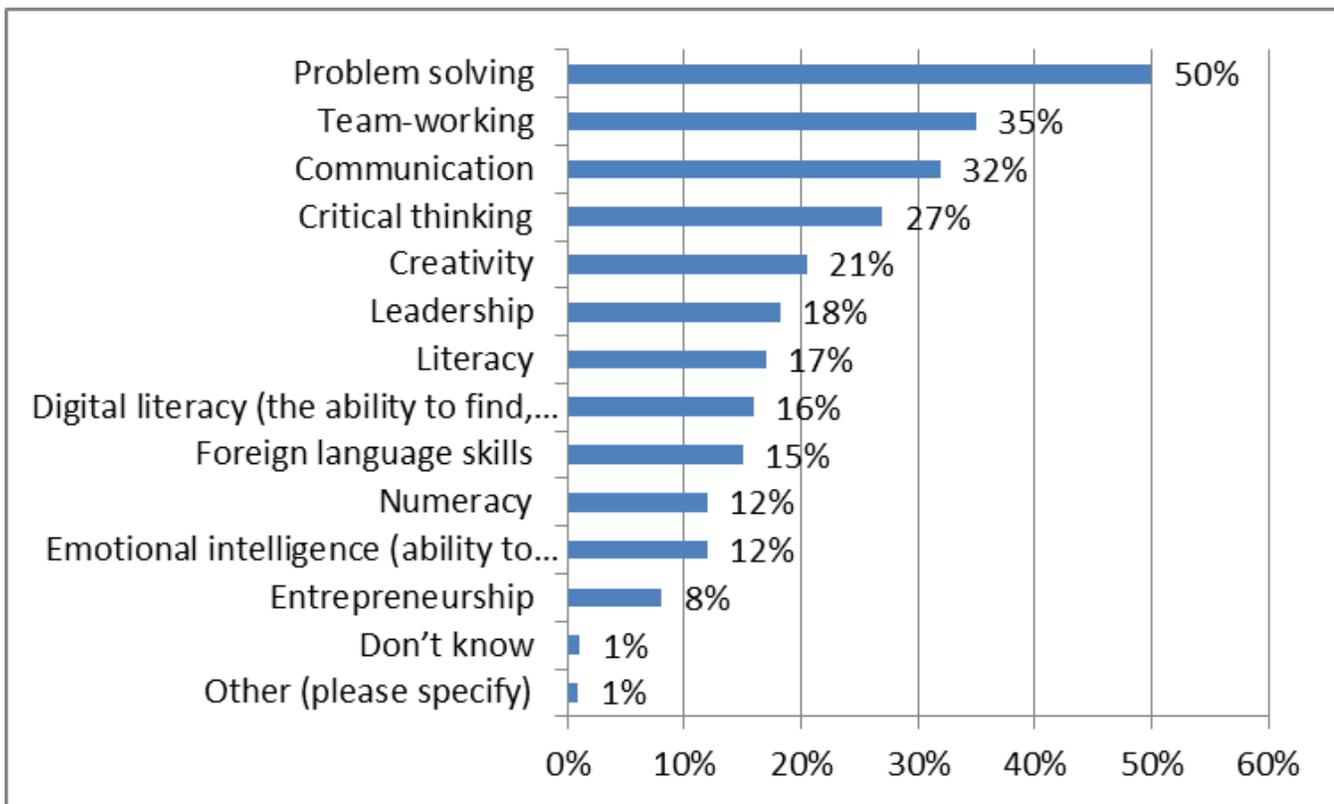


*The EIU conducted global surveys of senior business executives, teachers and students to investigate the extent to which the skills taught in education systems around the world are changing, and whether they meet the needs of employers and society more widely. The following outlines some of the key findings, which I will be presenting at Google’s Education on Air<sup>[1]</sup> online conference on 8 May.*

As technology becomes more pervasive, traditional trades disappear and the world of work becomes more globalised, the skills considered to be valuable for the future are shifting.

Problem solving, team working, and communication (commonly known as “21st century skills”) are the most-needed skills in the workplace, according to our recent surveys of business executives, students and teachers. Digital literacy and creativity— and the latter’s close relative, entrepreneurship—are expected to grow more important in the next three years.

*Business survey: Which of the following would you say are the most critical skills for employees in your organisation to possess today? Select up to three.*



Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

Incorporating these skills in existing education systems, however, is far from straightforward. Teachers report that lack of time in a strictly regulated curriculum is the biggest barrier to teaching 21st century skills, while digital literacy is one of the areas where they would most like further training (31%).

Meanwhile, the young have become more comfortable learning on their own, especially on topics of interest: 62% of teachers report that students are becoming more independent and able to gather information themselves. As one expert interviewed for the report puts it, “young people have an innate affinity with technology, and it would be a shame not to utilise that effectively”.

Countries all over the world are devising new innovative approaches to teaching and learning based on these changing trends. For example Singapore’s ‘Teach less, learn more’ initiative aims to help schools and teachers to engage more effectively with students, so that they connect with what they are they are learning and how and why they are learning it.

[2]

To hear more about the full research findings, register for the free online conference.



Register

[3]



[4]

## Zoe Tabary<sup>[5]</sup>

Editor, Amnesty International

More articles by Zoe Tabary<sup>[6]</sup>

## Have your say

Comment

CAPTCHA

This question is for testing whether or not you are a human visitor and to prevent automated spam submissions.

Math question

Solve this simple math problem and enter the result. E.g. for 1+3, enter 4.

## Links

1. [https://educationonair.withgoogle.com/live/2015-may?utm\\_source=Google&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=2015-EDU-NA-EDU-EDU-AIR-Blogs&utm\\_content=](https://educationonair.withgoogle.com/live/2015-may?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=2015-EDU-NA-EDU-EDU-AIR-Blogs&utm_content=)
2. [http://educationonair.withgoogle.com/live/2015-may?utm\\_source=Google&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=2015-EDU-NA-EDU-EDU-AIR-Blogs&utm\\_content=](http://educationonair.withgoogle.com/live/2015-may?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=2015-EDU-NA-EDU-EDU-AIR-Blogs&utm_content=)
3. [http://educationonair.withgoogle.com/live/2015-may?utm\\_source=Google&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=2015-EDU-NA-EDU-EDU-AIR-Blogs&utm\\_content=](http://educationonair.withgoogle.com/live/2015-may?utm_source=Google&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=2015-EDU-NA-EDU-EDU-AIR-Blogs&utm_content=)
4. <http://www.economistinsights.com/author/3273>
5. <http://www.economistinsights.com/author/3273>
6. <http://www.economistinsights.com/author/3273>

Get a free Evernote account to save this article and view it later on any device.

[Create account](#)