The Battelle for Kids
P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning

Overview

Battelle for Kids provides the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) Framework for 21st Century Learning as a unified, collective vision to help practitioners integrate skills into the teaching of key academic subjects. This framework blends content knowledge, specific skills, and literacies that students must master to succeed in work and life. While developing key academic subject knowledge and understanding, students must also learn the essential skills for success in today's world, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration. Key subjects include English, reading, or language arts; world languages; arts; mathematics; economics; science; geography; history; government; and civics.

When a school or district builds on the 21st century knowledge and skills, combining the entire framework with the necessary support systems— such as standards, assessments, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and learning environments—students can become more engaged in the learning process. Then, they can graduate better prepared to thrive in today's global economy. The framework focuses on the development of 39 skills across four student outcomes:

Key Subjects and 21st Century Themes
- Global Awareness
- Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Civic Literacy
- Health Literacy
- Environmental Literacy

Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) Framework

Battelle for Kids

The Framework for 21st Century Learning represents the agreement of education, business, and association leaders for what it takes to transform school systems and advance 21st century learning—for every student. Deeper learning occurs through the purposeful integration of rigorous academic content with experiences that intentionally cultivate skills, mindsets, and literacies essential for students to become lifelong learners and contributors in our rapidly changing world.

- Karen Garza

The briefs in this 10-part series each describe an individual framework currently in use. They are intended to illustrate how frameworks can be analyzed and help practitioners learn to evaluate frameworks on the types of criteria that matter most in their settings. The briefs are not an endorsement of these frameworks.

Author:
Teresa Borowski
University of Illinois at Chicago

Learning and Innovation Skills
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication
- Collaboration

Information, Media and Technology Skills
- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy

Life and Career Skills
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Self-Direction
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity and Accountability
- Leadership and Responsibility

COMPETENCIES NAMED IN THIS FRAMEWORK*

- ✔ Creativity and innovation
- ✔ Critical thinking and problem solving
- ✔ Communication
- ✔ Collabortion

*Note that there are 39 competencies across four student outcomes (see text).

Further, 21st century learning requires innovative support systems to engage learners through applicable skills and knowledge, appropriate technologies, and real-world connections to make learning relevant, personalized, and engaging. Five critical support systems are identified to ensure all students receive the kinds of learning experiences that build 21st century competency:
- 21st Century Standards
- Assessments of 21st Century Skills
- 21st Century Curriculum and Instruction
- 21st Century Professional Development
- 21st Century Learning Environments

History of the Framework

The Framework for 21st Century Learning was created by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21), now a network of Battelle for Kids, with input from teachers, education experts, and business leaders. The framework defines and illustrates the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in work and life, as well as the support systems necessary for 21st century learning outcomes. Because career preparation and economic innovation are longtime goals of P21, the framework places a strong emphasis on business-related skills.

In 2018, P21 joined Battelle for Kids. Since this merger, developers are working to connect the framework with the idea of system transformation, focusing on getting to deeper learning. To do so, the developers are blending social-emotional and 21st century skills with academic content, rather than teaching these skills in isolation. When implementing and supporting districts and schools with 21st century learning, Battelle for Kids emphasizes whole-system alignment by creating a learning environment and culture that empowers teachers and students.

Purpose and Intended Audience

The purpose of the framework is to prepare learners to acquire the skills needed in a world of constant change and innovation. The Framework for 21st Century Learning was developed with input from teachers, education experts, and business leaders to define and illustrate the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in personal, work, and civic life. In addition, the framework intends to build the support systems necessary to achieve 21st century learning outcomes.

The primary audience of the framework includes PreK-12 school systems, leadership teams, superintendents, and teachers. The framework has also been used by early learning providers, out-of-school time staff in afterschool and summer programs, and university faculty at the postsecondary and graduate levels.

The framework is used by ministries and departments of education internationally. Resources are available for educators, policymakers, parents, communities, and project managers.

Settings

The framework has been widely adopted in schools and is supported by many corporations in the U.S. and abroad due to its focus on workforce readiness. The framework has been used by thousands of educators and hundreds of schools to put 21st century skills at the center of learning. The framework informs Battelle for Kids' network approach, which includes the EdLeader21 network of more than 220 districts across the country. In this and other networks, the framework is used as a tool to help practitioners and schools see where they are and how to move forward leveraging the assets they already have.

Criteria Ratings: Conceptual Clarity

FIVE CONCEPTUAL CLARITY CRITERIA			
CRITERIA	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Specificity		Definitions are provided. While outcomes are defined, they are not translated into observable behavior for all competencies. For example, there are rubrics for the 4C's, as well as definitions and rubrics for the Early Learning Framework.	
Balance		This framework includes both social-emotional competencies as well as academic or technical competencies. While intrapersonal skills are included, they are less emphasized than interpersonal or intellectual competencies such as communication and creativity. Additionally, because 21st century skills are meant to prepare students for careers and civic life, the framework addresses personal, work, and community environments.	
Developmental		Information on developmental elements or an explicit learning progression is not provided. However, resources, rubrics, and self-reflection documents are different by grade span. Additionally, a specific framework for early learning was also developed.	
Culturally Sensitive		Multiculturalism and diversity are mentioned; and targeted resources for personal, work, and community environments are provided. Additionally, developers provide online professional development that helps teachers develop strategies to reach diverse students. Communities are encouraged to think about inclusivity of voices, as well as to focus on the competencies that are most important to them. Battelle for Kids is working with a variety of partners to develop and provide clearer guidance around such challenges.	
Empirically Grounded		The framework was developed based on research in that each skill or competencies included is supported by evidence showing the skill is important and malleable.	

These ratings are intended to help illustrate the strengths and limits of some popular frameworks. They are neither designed to formally compare frameworks nor endorse any framework. The ratings are based on criteria defined more fully in this brief and the process of rating and appropriate uses are discussed in the introductory brief to this series. We urge practitioners to review these and prioritize which criteria are most important for use in their particualr context.

Criteria Ratings: Implementation Support

FIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT CRITERIA			
CRITERIA	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Intended for Practice	The framework was developed with input from teachers, education experts, and business leaders to help practitioners integrate 21st century skills into the teaching of key academic subjects. Developers focus on providing tools (e.g., rubrics) for implementation. Within the classroom, teachers are encouraged to find examples within key content areas that maximize both social-emotional and academic skills and explicitly teaching these skills. Since P21 and Battelle for Kids' merger, more resources and supports for teachers are also being developed.		
Resources for Practitioners	A variety of resources are available for practitioners, including guides, toolkits, rubrics, and self-assessments for planning, implementing, and integrating 21st century learning initiatives into educational settings. Support materials include: • Handouts with descriptions of framework and definitions • In-depth research reports on various skills in the framework • Videos showcasing best practices, examples of successful initiatives, lessons from the field, and more • Blogs featuring insights/learnings from educators and experts • Guides and skill maps for integrating 21st century learning into key subject areas • Outlines of key characteristics of effective 21st century curriculum and instruction • Parent guides with tips and strategies • Protocols for school systems and leadership teams • Online and on-site professional development courses Selected resources are available to the public or online for a fee, and all resources are available to network members.		
Resources for Use with Children and Youth	Documents intended for use with students break competencies down into two to four attributes, skills, or observable behaviors. Students are encouraged to work through these documents directly to help them engage in their own development. Because power comes from helping kids learn how to explain their own growth, students are able to score themselves, write examples, and think about how they can continue to grow.		
Resources for Measurement and Data Use	Rubrics, guides, and papers that outline key characteristics of effective 21st century assessment systems as well as examples of assessments and guidance on how to implement them are available. Both summative (e.g., the National Assessment of Educational Progress) and formative (ranging from performance tasks to conversations between student and teacher) assessments are available, as well as self-assessment tools and resources (e.g., measuring how well a school is implementing 21st century skills and identifying strategies for improvement). A high emphasis is placed on assessment, and a variety of protocols around assessment tasks, implementation, and how to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate skills are available. Coaching around measurement and data use is an important part of the process and available to network members.		
Empirically Tested	Currently, Battelle for Kids and the Hewlett Foundation are working together to collect evidence of impact for practice.		
These ratings are intended to help illustrate the strengths and limits of some popular frameworks. They are neither designed to formally compare frameworks nor endorse any framework. The ratings are based on criteria defined more fully in this brief and the process of rating and appropriate uses are discussed in the introductory brief to this series. We urge practitioners to review these and prioritize which criteria are most important for use in their particualr context.			

Summary of the Framework

The Framework for 21st Century Learning is designed to help practitioners integrate 21st century skills into the teaching of core academic subjects. It focuses on the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in work, life, and citizenship in today's world. When a school or district build on the Framework with the necessary support systems—standards, assessments, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and learning environments—students are more engaged in the learning process and graduate better prepared to thrive in today's global economy. Because of the focus on implementation, a variety of support materials are available to practitioners in the form of guides, rubrics, toolkits, and more. Additionally, Battelle for Kids provides guidance and coaching around measurement (both self-assessments and performance tasks) and data use.

About the Developer

Battelle for Kids is a national nonprofit organization committed to collaborating with school systems and communities to realize the power and promise of 21st century learning for every student. Formed in 2001, Battelle for Kids innovates and partners with its networks, association and business partners, and school system leaders to design and implement educational experiences that prepare all students to become lifelong learners and contributors in an ever-changing world. As the premier leader in 21st century education, Battelle for Kids includes the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21), pioneers of 21st century learning that joined Battelle for Kids in 2018 as a network of businesses, organizations, and associations advocating and working to advance our mission. EdLeader21, also a network of Battelle for Kids as of 2017, includes 220+ members.

References

Useful Links to Explore

- Battelle For Kids Frameworks and Resources: http://www.battelleforkids.org/networks/p21/frameworks-resources

- EdLeader21 4Cs Rubrics: http://www.edleader21.com/order.php

- Portrait of a Graduate website and guide: https://portraitofagraduate.org/

About the Author

TERESA BOROWSKI, M.A.
University of Illinois at Chicago

Teresa Borowski is a graduate student in the Community and Prevention Research PhD program in Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), where her research focuses on social-emotional competence development, particularly through dance and other arts. She works as a research specialist with CASEL's research team and the Frameworks subgroup of the Assessment Work Group. She is also the co-editor of Measuring SEL's blog. Prior to UIC, Teresa worked as a research assistant in the Infant Cognition Lab and the Cultural Studio at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and for the Learning and Memory Lab at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology.

The Measuring SEL Series of Frameworks Briefs

The Establishing Practical Social-Emotional Competence Assessments of Preschool to High School Students project as guided by the Assessment Work Group (AWG) is dedicated to helping advance the effective use of data to inspire practice in SEL. In deciding how the AWG could best contribute to advancing the field and complement rather than compete with other efforts underway to address the challenges of multiple frameworks and inconsistent use of language, the AWG Frameworks Subgroup, led by Stephanie Jones and Roger Weissberg, developed four series of briefs designed for practitioners. Each series and each brief in the series is designed to help advance how people think about the issues and make reasonable choices that work best for them and their context. We hope they provide a set of "building blocks" that systems and practitioners can use to advance and improve their SEL efforts. Learn more at https://measuringsel.casel.org

Introductory Series

These briefs are about what frameworks are, how they are useful, the challenges and opportunities they present in practice, and defining criteria that are helpful when considering what frameworks to use.

Comparative Series

These briefs explore efforts underway to categorize and align ways of thinking about comparing unique frameworks. The briefs also describe tools available to aid systems and practitioners in their selection and use of a framework.

Special Issues Series

These briefs identify critical issues that frameworks must address or that influence how they are used that are important to consider when selecting and using frameworks, such as equity and SEL, and developmental considerations.

Descriptive Series

These briefs each describe an individual framework currently in use. They are intended to illustrate how frameworks can be analyzed and help practitioners learn to evaluate frameworks on the types of criteria that matter most in their settings. *(The briefs are not an endorsement of these frameworks.)*

The Assessment Work Group is committed to advancing dialogue on key issues in the field and stating a perspective when appropriate. The views and opinions expressed in these briefs reflect the general position of the Assessment Work Group. They do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of CASEL or any of the individual organizations involved with the work group.