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## The Futures of Learning 3: What Kind of Pedagogies for the 21st Century?

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THE FUTURES OF LEARNING 3:  
WHAT KIND OF PEDAGOGIES FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?‡

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**ABSTRACT**

Since the emergence of a global movement that calls for a new model of learning for the twenty first century, it has been argued that formal education must be transformed to enable new forms of learning that are needed to tackle complex global challenges. Literature on this topic offers compelling arguments for transforming pedagogy to better support acquisition of twenty-first century skills. However, the question of how best to teach these skills is largely overlooked. Experts recognize that the ‘transmission’ or lecture model is highly ineffective for teaching twenty-first century competencies and skills, yet widespread use of this model continues. In spite of worldwide agreement that learners need skills such as critical thinking and the ability to communicate effectively, innovate, and solve problems through negotiation and collaboration, pedagogy has seldom adapted to address these challenges. Rethinking pedagogy for the twenty-first century is as crucial as identifying the new competencies that today’s learners need to develop. This paper, the third and last in a series on the Futures of Learning, explores pedagogies and learning environments that may contribute to the development and mastery of twenty-first century competencies and skills, and advance the quality of learning.

**SECTIONS**

- **Preparing learners for 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies and skills**
- **Overall vision of twenty-first century pedagogy**
  - Renew the focus on quality
  - Foster participation
  - Personalize and customize learning
  - Emphasize project and problem-based learning
  - Encourage collaboration communication
  - Engage and motivate learners
  - Cultivate creativity and innovation

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\* These papers are for internal discussion within CESA - on topics related to the Mission and Vision of CESA.

‡ Scott, Cynthia Luna. 2015. *The Futures of Learning 3: What kind of pedagogies for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?* (ERF Working Papers Series, No.15). Paris: UNESCO Education Research and Foresight – 21pp.

A copy of the original paper is available from [tshannon38@gmail.com](mailto:tshannon38@gmail.com)

- Employ appropriate learning tools
  - Strategic questioning
  - Capitalize on learners' interest in mobile technologies
  - Make the most of social media
- Design relevant and real-world learning activities
- Teach metacognitive skills
- Build the right relationships for learning
- Include every learner through technology
- Highlight learner-centred models
- Promote learning without borders (anytime and anywhere)
- Encourage lifelong learning
- Recognize learning through open education
- Accredite and credential non-traditional learning
- Assess for deeper understanding and competency
- Redefine teacher roles and functions
  - New teacher roles
  - Meaningful professional development
  - Innovative teacher education
- **Conclusions, next steps and future issues:**

Many factors are driving change in the ways that learners are educated. Pressures may vary from nation to nation, but the message is fundamentally the same: education is failing to prepare learners for the challenges ahead. Students are not learning under the current system of education and are being short-changed. Learners are missing out on experiences that will prepare them for more satisfying lives and productive work. Nations are also losing opportunities to prepare youth for citizenship, and economies are suffering from a lack of innovation. The twenty-first century has immense potential to reaffirm the role of education with a view to equipping young and old learners to address complex societal, economic and environmental issues. The transformation from teacher-led learning to self-directed learning to self-determined learning will provide learners with a range of competencies and skills needed to succeed in modern global societies. Personalized and tailor-made instruction will help learners to reach their full potential. Learners will be better prepared to interact with their own communities, virtually and in person, and to deal confidently with people from different cultures, while continuing to learn throughout their lives.

The increased tempo at which new developments are emerging will demand that young people quickly recognize the importance of lifelong learning. Re-skilling and updating competencies will enable learners of all ages to adapt to new expectations in the twenty-first century workplace and life. Education providers must adopt curricula that are comprehensive yet flexible, and centre on content that extends thinking and reasoning, so as to equip learners to tackle twenty-first century challenges and pressures. There is also a strong need for curricula that are open to learner input, interdisciplinary in focus, and effectively blend informal and formal learning.