

Gifted Education, Common Core Standards, and 21st Century Skills

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Gifted Education

- The CCSS incorporate more rigorous content and the development of higher level thinking than was consistently present in many individual states' standards. They include evidence-based practices and content specifically designed to increase student success beyond K-12, in the workplace, and in the global community.
- The CCSS are *not*, however, sufficient on their own for gifted learners, and if adhered to without differentiation, may limit learning of gifted students. Specifically, the following statements come directly from the CCSS developers: (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/key-design-consideration>)
 - "While the Standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that can or should be taught."
 - "The Standards do not define the nature of advanced work for students who meet the Standards prior to the end of high school."
 - "The Standards set grade-specific standards but do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students who are well below or well above grade-level expectations."
- Curriculum for gifted students should align to the CCSS, but not be limited to the CCSS. Gifted curriculum should also include advanced content, acceleration in depth and pace, complexity, enrichment, and differentiated instruction and assessment. (<http://www.nagc.org/CommonCoreStateStandards.aspx>)

21st Century Skills and Gifted Education

- The 21st Century Skills is a framework that is designed to articulate the knowledge, skills, and understandings beyond content that all students must possess for success in the global community.
 - Students are encouraged to learn and apply the innovation skills of higher-order thinking, critical reasoning, creative production, problem finding and solving, and decision making.
 - Students learn effective practices in communication and collaboration.
 - Students develop life, career, and self-regulation skills.
 - Students develop effective information, media, and technology strategies.
- The 21st Century Skills include elements that have been a part of gifted education since its inception. Gifted education professionals can provide leadership for their colleagues in project-based learning, using technology, collaboration, and effective communication.

Summary: The Common Core State Standards and 21st Century Skills movements recognize that American schools need more rigorous expectations for student performance and that students need to gain more than content to be successful in the global economy. This is welcome reform for the general educational system. Gifted learners still differ from more typical learners in significant ways and the development of their talent requires further differentiation in services, curriculum, and instruction. For students this means work at a different level rather than more of the same work.