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The Text-Based Approach to Foster Communicative Adaptability

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Introduction

Independent thinkers, active learners and digital natives are the popular images constructed of learners with 21st century skills, and communication is not in the limelight. Unknown to many, in the framework for 21st century learning, communication and collaboration are among the four sets of skills, knowledge and expertise that students are expected to master in order to attain success in work and life in the 21st century. Communication and collaboration include the ability to:

1. articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and non-verbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts;
2. listen effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions;
3. use communication for a range of purposes (e.g. to inform, instruct, motivate and persuade);
4. utilise multiple media and technologies, and know how to judge their effectiveness a priori as well as assess their impact; and
5. communicate effectively in diverse environments (including multi-lingual).

(Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2016)

The focus of this article is the ability to “articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and non-verbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts”. The skill to adapt a message to context does not develop automatically. Contexts, broadly defined, lie on a continuum