

# IN BRIEF

## OECD LEARNING COMPASS 2030

The OECD Learning Compass 2030, a product of the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 project, is an evolving learning framework that sets out an aspirational vision for the future of education. It supports the wider goals of education and provides points of orientation towards the future we want: individual and collective well-being. The metaphor of a learning compass was adopted to emphasise the need for students to learn to navigate by themselves through unfamiliar contexts, and find their direction in a meaningful and responsible way, instead of simply receiving fixed instructions or directions from their teachers.

The framework offers a broad vision of the types of competencies students will need to thrive in 2030 and beyond. It also develops a common language and understanding that is globally relevant and informed, while providing space to adapt the framework to local contexts.

The components of the compass include core foundations, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, transformative competencies and a cycle of anticipation, action and reflection (see [concept notes](#) on each of these components). The concept of student agency (see [concept note](#)) is central to the Learning Compass 2030, as the compass is a tool students can use to orient themselves as they exercise their sense of purpose and responsibility while learning to influence the people, events and circumstances around them for the better.

The metaphor of a learning compass was adopted to emphasise the need for students to learn to navigate by themselves through unfamiliar contexts.

### KEY POINTS

- The OECD Learning Compass 2030 is neither an assessment framework nor a curriculum framework. It recognises the intrinsic value of learning by elaborating a wide range and types of learning within a broad structure, and acknowledges that learning does not only happen in school.
- The learning framework is the product of collaboration among government representatives, academic experts, school leaders, teachers, students and social partners from around the world who have a genuine interest in supporting positive change in education systems.
- The notion of societal well-being has changed over the years to encompass far more than economic and material prosperity. Even though there may be many different visions of the future we want, the well-being of society is a shared destination.



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## CORE FOUNDATIONS FOR 2030

The OECD Learning Compass 2030 defines core foundations as the fundamental conditions and core skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that are prerequisites for further learning across the entire curriculum. The core foundations provide a basis for developing student agency and transformative competencies. They are also the building blocks upon which context-specific competencies for 2030, such as financial literacy, global competency or media literacy, can be developed.

The international stakeholders of the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 project highlight three foundations as particularly important: cognitive foundations, which include literacy and numeracy; health foundations, including physical and mental health, and well-being; social and emotional foundations, including moral and ethics and digital literacy and data literacy.

While the OECD Learning Compass 2030 recognises the importance of moral and ethical foundations in decision making, self-regulation, and the conduct of self and society, it does not presume to articulate what moral or ethical norms are or should be, as these are contingent upon culture, history, place and society.

The core foundations provide a basis for developing student agency and transformative competencies

### KEY POINTS

- What it means to be literate and numerate in 2030 and beyond will continue to evolve. Given the expansion of digitalisation and big data into all areas of life already, all children need to be digital and data literate.
- With health as a core foundation, people can understand and act on the knowledge that will keep them well and healthy over their lifetime.
- To avoid curriculum overload, newer competencies, such as financial literacy or global competence, could be embedded within the existing curriculum in a meaningful way, so that all students benefit from both deeper learning experiences and quality learning in the core foundations.



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## KNOWLEDGE FOR 2030

As part of the OECD Learning Compass 2030, knowledge includes theoretical concepts and ideas as well as practical understanding based on the experience of having performed certain tasks. The OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 project recognises four different types of knowledge: disciplinary, interdisciplinary, epistemic and procedural.

Knowledge and skills are both interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Researchers have emphasised the growing importance of being able to understand, interpret and apply knowledge and skills in various situations.

Over the past few decades, there has been growing emphasis on thinking of the world as made up of inter-related systems, rather than solely as a series of discrete units. Education systems around the world have been moving from defining subjects and required curriculum knowledge as collections of facts, towards understanding disciplines as inter-related systems.

## Knowledge and skills are both interconnected and mutually reinforcing

### KEY POINTS

- Disciplinary knowledge, or subject-specific knowledge, continues to be an essential foundation for understanding, and a structure through which students can develop other types of knowledge. The opportunity to acquire disciplinary knowledge is also fundamental to equity.
- Interdisciplinary knowledge can be integrated into curricula: by transferring key concepts, identifying connectedness, through thematic learning; by combining related subjects or creating a new subject; and by supporting project-based learning.
- Epistemic knowledge involves knowing how to think and act like a practitioner. It shows the relevance and purpose in students' learning and helps deepen their understanding.
- Procedural knowledge is the understanding of how a task is performed, and how to work and learn through structured processes. It is particularly useful for solving complex problems.



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## SKILLS FOR 2030

Skills are the ability and capacity to carry out processes and be able to use one's knowledge in a responsible way to achieve a goal. Skills are part of a holistic concept of competency, involving the mobilisation of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet complex demands. The OECD Learning Compass 2030 distinguishes between three different types of skills: cognitive and meta-cognitive skills; social and emotional skills; and physical and practical skills.

As trends such as globalisation and advances in artificial intelligence change the demands of the labour market and the skills needed for workers to succeed, people need to rely even more on their uniquely (so far) human capacity for creativity, responsibility and the ability to “learn to learn” throughout their life.

Social and emotional skills, such as empathy, self-awareness, respect for others and the ability to communicate, are becoming essential as classrooms and workplaces become more ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse. Achievement at school also depends on a number of social and emotional skills, such as perseverance, efficacy, responsibility, curiosity and emotional stability.

Physical and practical skills are not only associated with daily manual tasks, such as feeding and clothing oneself, but also with the arts. To date, researchers have been unable to identify a comparable activity that develops the cognitive capacity of children in the same ways or to the same extent as music and arts education does. Engaging with the arts also helps students develop empathic intelligence, which enhances their emotional engagement, commitment and persistence.

**Social and emotional skills, such as empathy and respect for others, are becoming essential as classrooms and workplaces become more diverse.**

### KEY POINTS

- As computer technologies have displaced labour in routine tasks, they have also created new employment opportunities for workers with non-routine cognitive skills, such as creativity, and social and emotional skills.
- To remain competitive, workers will need to acquire new skills continually, which requires flexibility, a positive attitude towards lifelong learning and curiosity.
- Social and emotional skills can be equally – and in some cases even more – as important as cognitive skills in becoming a responsible citizen.



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## ATTITUDES AND VALUES FOR 2030

Attitudes and values are a key component of the OECD Learning Compass 2030, which helps students navigate towards well-being and the future we want. They refer to the principles and beliefs that influence one's choices, judgements, behaviours and actions on the path towards individual, societal and environmental well-being.

Strengthening and renewing trust in institutions and among communities hinges on developing core shared values of citizenship (respect, fairness, personal and social responsibility, integrity and self-awareness) at school in order to build more inclusive, fair, and sustainable economies and societies.

Knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are not competing concepts; they are developed interdependently. As schools, workplaces and communities become more ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse, it will be more important than ever to emphasise the inter-relatedness of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Approaches to developing attitudes and values often draw on cultural and societal traditions while addressing global challenges.

### KEY POINTS

- Attitudes and values are increasingly integrated into curriculum frameworks – an acknowledgement that competencies require more than knowledge and skills.
- A diverse range of education systems are pursuing integrated approaches to developing values and attitudes, often drawing on cultural and societal traditions, while addressing global challenges.
- Recent trends in technology, notably the use of artificial intelligence, have put ethics high on the education agenda. Today's students will benefit from the capacity to evaluate the extent to which technology may or may not ensure a fair and equitable world.



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## STUDENT AGENCY FOR 2030

The concept of student agency, as understood in the context of the OECD Learning Compass 2030, is rooted in the principle that students have the ability and the will to positively influence their own lives and the world around them. Student agency is thus defined as the capacity to set a goal, reflect and act responsibly to effect change. It is about acting rather than being acted upon; shaping rather than being shaped; and making responsible decisions and choices rather than accepting those determined by others.

When students are agents in their learning, that is, when they play an active role in deciding what and how they will learn, they tend to show greater motivation to learn and are more likely to define objectives for their learning. These students are also more likely to have “learned how to learn” – an invaluable skill that they can and will use throughout their lives.

Agency can be exercised in nearly every context: moral, social, economic, creative. For example, students need to use moral agency to help them make decisions that recognise the rights and needs of others. While a well-developed sense of agency can help individuals achieve long-term goals and overcome adversity, students need foundational cognitive, social and emotional skills so that they can apply agency to their own – and society’s – benefit.

Agency is perceived and interpreted differently around the world. Some languages have no direct translation for the term “student agency” as it is used in the OECD Learning Compass 2030; interpretations will vary across different societies and contexts. Nonetheless, the notion of students playing an active role in their education is central to the Learning Compass and is being emphasised in a growing number of countries.

When students are agents in their learning, they are more likely to have “learned how to learn” – an invaluable skill that they can use throughout their lives.

In education systems that encourage student agency, learning involves not only instruction and evaluation but also co-construction. Co-agency is when teachers and students become co-creators in the teaching-and-learning process. The concept of co-agency recognises that students, teachers, parents and communities work together to help students progress towards their shared goals.

### KEY POINTS

- Agency implies having the ability and the will to positively influence one’s own life and the world around them.
- In order to exercise agency to the full potential, students need to build foundation skills.
- The concept of student agency varies across cultures and develops over a lifetime.
- Co-agency is defined as interactive, mutually supportive relationships—with parents, teachers, the community, and with each other— that help students progress towards their shared goals.

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## TRANSFORMATIVE COMPETENCIES FOR 2030

To meet the challenges of the 21st century, students need to be empowered and feel that they can aspire to help shape a world where well-being and sustainability – for themselves, for others, and for the planet – is achievable. The OECD Learning Compass 2030 has identified three “transformative competencies” that students need in order to contribute to and thrive in our world, and shape a better future.

**Creating new value** means innovating to shape better lives, such as creating new jobs, businesses and services, and developing new knowledge, insights, ideas, techniques, strategies and solutions, and applying them to problems both old and new. When learners create new value, they question the status quo, collaborate with others and try to think “outside the box”.

**Reconciling tensions and dilemmas** means taking into account the many interconnections and inter-relations between seemingly contradictory or incompatible ideas, logics and positions, and considering the results of actions from both short- and long-term perspectives. Through this process, students acquire a deeper understanding of opposing positions, develop arguments to support their own position, and find practical solutions to dilemmas and conflicts.

**Taking responsibility** is connected to the ability to reflect upon and evaluate one’s own actions in light of one’s experience and education, and by considering personal, ethical and societal goals.

Three transformative competencies can help students thrive in our world and shape a better future.

### KEY POINTS

- Students need to acquire three transformative competencies to help shape the future we want: creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility.
- When students create new value, they ask questions, collaborate with others and try to think “outside the box” in order to find innovative solutions. This blends a sense of purpose with critical thinking and creativity.
- In an interdependent world, students need to be able to balance contradictory or seemingly incompatible logics and demands, and become comfortable with complexity and ambiguity. This requires empathy and respect.
- Students who have the capacity to take responsibility for their actions have a strong moral compass that allows for considered reflection, working with others and respecting the planet.



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