

RESEARCH ARTICLE	<b>Students' Perceptions towards 21st Century Skills Implementations in their Prospective EFL Classes: Gen Z Pre- Service Training</b>	
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<b>Abstract</b>		
<p>The chief interest of the present research work revolves around the investigation of perceptions of EFL Master 1 students at Maghnia University Center on 21st-century skills learning and implementation in their future teaching careers after graduation. As the informational age urges citizens, not least language learners to hold the magical quit of skills to succeed in modern times. To reach this end, this research work was undertaken using an exploratory research paradigm. It encompasses two sorts of research designs. The first was an exploratory case study to find out how the students felt about 21st-century skills being a must for them and their post-graduation prospective students. Focused group discussions were utilized as the next study tool to find out how well-informed the students were about these abilities and how important they would be to them as future instructors. Action research, the second study design, assisted the teacher researcher in putting those perspectives into practice through student presentations and instructional practices regarding how they viewed teaching 21st-century skills. To better integrate 21st-century skills into EFL/ELT classrooms, the intervention served as pre-service training for Gen Z. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The results uncovered that Gen Z favored both 21st-century learning and implementation in their future teaching practices. The main presented future teaching technique was project-based teaching as a method of choice. Thus, it is recommended to adopt a project-based syllabus in Algerian academic institutions so as to promote 21st-century teaching/learning.</p>		
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## Introduction

In the timeline calendar, the humanity spectrum has overpassed the previous lived era. It went from the early 1900s to the late 1990s and it was distinguished by the Gregorian calendar under the name of the 20th Century. This particular period in time was marked by scientific advancement, new modes of communication, and economic growth. On account of the

mass development happening worldwide, educational growth also took place and students were introduced to technology by studying about the advent of science.

Nowadays, in the onset of a new epoch according to the Anno Domini<sup>1</sup> In or Common era the so-called 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the world witnessed tremendous global change. Socially, the planet's population expanded at a high rate. Consequently, more private enterprises were established leading to the rise of global consumerism in the markets. Hence, economic growth began to vastly increase worldwide. Inevitably, telecommunication is much more spread and international. Namely, more than half of the global population are internet users and smartphone owners.

As a matter of fact, the mass population is online and more than 70 % of the mass population above 10 years old have a smartphone. In that event, education is no exception to the technological advancement happening worldwide. In due course, pupils under 18 years old along with adult learners possess advanced technical devices like mobile phones, tablets, air pods, and personal computers (PCs) .... This resulted in more developed digital educational environments.

21<sup>st</sup>-century education is marked differently than the traditional old-fashioned way of teaching in several aspects. Thus, the group interaction in the classrooms is more group-focused than individual learner approach. Consequently, the process of teaching/learning is centric towards the learners instead of the teacher, i.e. the information must be gathered and constructed by the learner. The shift from teacher-centeredness to a learner-centered approach implies more feedback, reasoning, and group input to encourage 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners to become more autonomous and active.

By now, the journey of our linguist researcher begins to unveil the casted spell on the 21<sup>st</sup> youngsters' generations. To make it clearer, it falls to the language teachers, especially at the tertiary level, to instruct those recent and updated skills to the postgraduate students to become more efficient teachers themselves in the future. University teachers have to rack their brains clarifying the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills to make their would-be teachers learn the ropes on how to climb the teaching career mountain safely as they go up higher.

### The 21<sup>st</sup> Century: An Overview

It all started when the time dice was rolled to add one digit to the previous era, which makes it 21<sup>st</sup> in number. Several labels, technological, environmental, social, cultural, economic, and educational, have been assigned to the number 21<sup>st</sup> in the time dice. In this respect, one way of tracking the different labels in the age of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to consider the profound transformations across multiple domains. First and foremost, the most deliberate progress is the technical advancement which lately has been associated with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation.

AI, to launch into an in-depth discussion, is the unlikely event of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the era of great accomplishment in human endeavor (Miller, Michalski & Stevens as cited in OECD, 1998, pp. 07). AI tools and applications are integrated into our day-to-day lives, industries, and machines. Undeniably, the widespread use of AI-led to decision-making processes being revolutionized in different domains such as economics, computer science, medicine...The ultimate aim given to AI by scientists is to increase the efficiency of humankind while performing tasks in societies where machines have to demonstrate a natural-like intelligence in accordance with people who coexist with technical gadgets harmoniously (Wolfensohn, 1999).

Furthermore, Technology in the cutting-edge era has shown a dramatic revolution in our societies with its fast-growing techniques and applications. As a matter of fact, AI, throughout the years from its beginning (from 2000 to 2015), has demonstrated progress and so to speak open-mindedness (Liu et al., 2018). In a very short period of time, people used more AI sites than ever before. As time goes on, AI chatbots move on from the fringes of technology to the most everyday utilized technical device on the planet. AI chatbots like ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity are second-hand applied by millions nowadays making the process of decision-making easier.

The next 21<sup>st</sup>-century label is the global economy. Globalization has miniaturized our world today into a village-like place. Consequently, everybody is connected to everyone on the planet. That is to say, increased interconnectedness between people and societies due to the web network called the Internet. Take the case of the e-commerce industry has witnessed a revival in recent times ascribed to Internet users all over the globe. The World Wide Web enhances the customer's shopping experience making it faster using visa cards online.

AI extensions on the other hand upgrade business operations on virtual markets as well (Biswal, 2025). The power of artificial intelligence spreads its tentacles to dominate the engine's recommendations for customers after analyzing and

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<sup>1</sup> **Anno Domini (AD)** and before Christ (BC) are two terms rooted in Christianity. The former (AD) means in Medieval Latin 'in the year of the lord', and the latter (BC) refers to the birth of Jesus Christ, i.e. 'before Christ'. The two words are assigned years ago in the Gregorian calendar.

interpreting their data, i.e., their behaviours, chats, comments, and likes while surfing the Internet. The customers' preferences online are the AI reference to suggest items, services, and products to clients for the sake of raising company sales along with customers' satisfaction (Ibid). Nowadays, AI chatbots guide and support shoppers by answering their questions, solving their problems, and providing help through their ordering journey. Amazon, Temu, and AliExpress, in particular, use AI-driven techniques to provide customers with propositions based on their research history, past orders, and most seen items. These e-commerce marketplaces changed the game of exchanging goods boosting both users' engagement and their sales.

Worldwide, global emerging markets grow besides the developing economies (EMDE.<sup>2</sup>s) in the global economy. The shift in economic powers marked by the developed nations in the global markets showed growth. Hence, the growing economies reshape the international trade channels and geographic industries. The urgent demand for various supplies creates growing market chains to satisfy customers. Investors, on the other side, find it of great use to devote liquid equity in local and abroad debts and markets to increase the trade volume and foreign direct investment (Scott, 2024). As pointed out by Perez and Scott (2024, pp. 01):

[Referring] to the Emerging Markets and Developing Economies. It typically becomes more integrated with the global economy as an emerging market economy develops. [...] It can develop modern financial and regulatory institutions. Some notable emerging market economies include India, Mexico, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, China, and Brazil.

Societies as well have crossed paths with the new era. This spot changes and challenges. As a matter of fact, urbanization favors the establishment of megacities over those small abandoned villages. For future reference, smart cities thrashed normal big cities with technology diffusion integrated for efficiency and sustainability. Inhabitants of cities in developed countries in this age, according to studies, are more aged in comparison to developing nations where the youth population is booming. This phenomenon implies global reshaping of the population growth causing both demographic changes responsible for remodeling the labor force and economic dynamics (Stern & Romani, 2023).

Social movements take place in novel communities in an unmatched way. As a result of the globalization process, citizens all around the earth have been enlightened about equality, diversity, and identity prompting transformative social evolution. Another side to be discussed at the societal level is the rapid cultural exchange of information the Internet offers these days. Technologies wide distribution and Internet ubiquity set up culture sharing with a click of a finger. Not only this, AI sites are integrated into global citizens' lifestyles facilitating their daily tasks, chores, and decisions. Smart personal devices like Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant are offering management, entertainment, and controlling household appliances (Ibid).

Another facet of the game is the critical dimension of this era which is healthcare and the longevity of modern societies. New technologies provide advancements in medicine and betterment in wellness science. Achievements in medical studies, stepping from enucleate emerging infectious diseases to laser surgeries. Nowadays, investments in health systems might be personalized and propose solutions to current illnesses leading to better healthcare and revisiting human longevity (Wolfensohn, 1999).

As for the environment, a tendency to play green energy cards is quite trendy at present. Those specialists and environmentalists often talk about the energy transition to more renewable powers. Debates and discussions carry on mentioning biodiversity loss, climate change, and global warming (Salus, 1995 stated in OECD, 1998, pp. 131). What will do the trick, though, is the global shift towards more natural and sustainable sources of power. Solar energy, wind, and nuclear fusion may be the shot in the dark for more renewable power sources that will reshape the impact of climate change. Sustainable sources help reduce the effect of global warming, i.e., the rising of sea levels, and extreme weather by proposing solutions to the ecosystem's unpredictable challenges. Probably, the environmental layer of this era will dominate the geographical, political, economic, social, and scientific agendas.

### Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In the cutting-edge era of today, everything has transformed from ordinary, old-fashioned ways to more sophisticated plug-and-play products. Education is no exception to this time-space shift. Education nowadays plays a crucial role in helping students succeed in the informational era that we live in. That is, modern success is no longer about the traditional job

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<sup>2</sup> **Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDE)** is a term used for the economy of developing nations which are witnessing more prospects and progress. Their markets are engaged in the international economy more than ever before. That is to say, countries are transitioning from low-income to pre-industrial economies with a higher standard of living.

market but rather about creating job opportunities (Driscoll, 2024). 21<sup>st</sup>-century education highlights the fact of giving students skills that they need to be victorious in the new world.

Consequently, the fast development of several fields changes the recent society needs leading to new jobs establishment. All this collected resulted in urgent demand to change the current educational system provided in schools and academic institutions. With this in mind, a change of the educational pace was requested radically to replace the existence of traditional teaching with technology implementation classrooms. It is of great importance nowadays to prepare not only students for the information-demanding world but also teachers who have to be creative enough to cope with the era's needs. Training programs for both students and teachers are required to equip them with the body of knowledge sought in different fields. Some scholars like Roger Kaufman (2018) believe that success has to be compatible with educational purposes aligned with society's goals (Jahanian, 2013).

Human knowledge today, according to educational specialists, is fastly doubled every two months (Jahanian, 2013). Consequently, schools all around the world have to equip their instructional systems with the necessary skills to suit the informational reforms happening worldwide. That is, to replace the old-fashioned way of teaching with the most recent advanced method of instruction. The use of technology nowadays must be the core of the instructional process in any institutional setting. As declared by Kozol (2012) 'schools are very far from life. It is an environment that does not show clearly the conditions of society for its members. To labor the point, schools in the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not match society's goals with the instructional targets, i.e., the educational systems could not link objectives, teaching content, and social life.

To achieve the end-product of 21<sup>st</sup>-century education, policymakers, course designers, and those in charge of planning the instructional content ought to be aware of the informational technological revolution that is leading to job changes in societies. Thus, development in education and training is highly recommended to fulfill society's requirements for modern jobs. Teaching new skills to learners in the current educational programs is of significant value nowadays. In addition to academic skills, professional skills are the new requirements for learners to be studied in the informational age to succeed in the marketplace.

Although learners are still acquiring the set of knowledge needed for a job, it is earnestly endorsed to teach them the in-demand bunch of skills for more opportunities in obtaining future occupations. As stated by Alvin Toffler (2016) 'today schools are producing workers for whom there is not any factory in future' to highlight the fact that educational systems are training students now for the workplace of tomorrow. When instructing students on professional skills different factors are taken into consideration such as learners' background, interest, age, level, culture, and so on. Hass (1987:44) confirms the pre-mentioned point by claiming that 'In schools in future some points are required to be considered seriously such as variation, individualism and concentration on the creativity of students'.

Development and change in educational systems according to the lived era is an investment to solve economic and societal crises. Harlen (2007) pointed out the importance of short-term schedules in institutional instructions as they must depend on society's objectives, realities, and priorities (Mewy 1984). In the industrial age of today, modern human beings ought to be educated about the sciences that are dominating societies at this momentous time. Additionally, people in current times must respect and accept the changes occurring that might occur in societies. The industrial age of today is distinguished by threefold powerhouse symbols which are knowledge, money, and power. The aforementioned elements are the incentive pillars for the societal, economic, and political infrastructures of contemporary civilization. Hence, it is of great importance nowadays to train children in educational institutions to cope with the changes happening in societies in order to make them ready for present and future challenges. Schools and educational systems have to adopt and adapt their curricula to the current criteria to prepare learners for the best teaching/learning conditions (Jahanian, 2013).

The quality of universal education requires compatible programs with the recent changes of this age. The environmental adjustments urge instructive reforms to make adaptable educational decisions in institutions in harmony with the duties transformation in societies, inside and outside household roles. As a result, educational systems should offer adequate training schedules to the circumstantial changes and always keep them flexible if needed. The evaluation of society's development is determined by rather the success or failure of the educational system proposed. Therefore, every single detail of the societal changes must be taken into consideration while designing educational programs to ensure quality education as well as reach the balance point (Chand, 2024).

Quality education in the informational age of today is called 21<sup>st</sup>-century education. What sets 21<sup>st</sup>-century education apart is the learner-centered approach. That is an educational system that highly emphasizes the students' autonomy and self-reliance. The learner-centredness as a learning approach equips students with a skills kit to navigate the changes occurring in societies, economics, and information. 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning focuses on the significance of having chief abilities related to adaptation to evolving global development. It helps students be trained and prepared for future jobs that might not exist in

the meantime. 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning encourages active, critical thinking and problem-solving while gaining knowledge. In simple terms, it motivates learners to discover and explore the educational content on their own (Leming, 2019).

### Teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

The teacher's role in the informational era has evolved from being an authoritarian figure to more of a facilitator character. The teacher's job evolution was due to the globalization process, society's needs, and technological advancements. Teachers are no longer information givers but rather advisors and guides who mentor their learners using a set of skills to enable them to succeed in the quickly mutable realm. Teachers' roles expand from traditional tasks in last-period classrooms to more innovative and modern activities in nowadays classes (Button, 2021). For now, it is more than just giving instructions and providing orders to demonstrate a sense of mentoring, handling students' creativity, and showing adaptability to different educative circumstances (Jan 2017).

The multifaceted role of 21<sup>st</sup>-century teachers displays numerous tasks like guiding students toward discovery and helping them construct knowledge by themselves while learning. Their role primarily revolves around teachers' commitment to improving learners' skills and proficiencies in order to succeed in modern life (Jan 2017). Consequently, the forefront of change in recent educational environments depends on teachers adjusting the instructive landscape by paradigm alteration. The latter means an urgent shift towards more adequate teachers' roles (Pires, 2023).

Professionally, educators empower and prepare their learners through the hardships of life in current societies. Teachers nowadays are technical guides when integrating digital tools in present-day classrooms like online platforms, educative apps, and virtual classes. They must encourage students' reasoning critically while performing assignments that need problem-solving abilities (Palmer, 2015). They have to raise students' awareness towards global diverse cultures and different social viewpoints. Teachers also should design instructive lectures according to their learners' needs along with encouraging students as well as teachers to collaborate while doing so. All in all, teachers must set a role models for their learners by emphasizing personal cognitive and emotional growth to ensure a lifelong learning experience (Pires, 2023).

### Learners' Role in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

In 21<sup>st</sup>-century education, learners' roles have evolved from just being passive receivers of knowledge to more engaged and involved participants in the teaching/learning process. Learners are asked to actively construct the learned information into a new interactive body of knowledge through inquiry-based and project-based learning (Llego, 2022). Learners must be the creators of educative content in the classrooms using a set of skills like creativity, critical thinking, and self-reliance. Generally speaking, education in modern days prepares learners for more complex real-life situations by equipping them with responsibility and autonomy which leads to their holistic growth as individuals (Agarwal, 2024).

Modern issues faced nowadays urge learners to acquire problem-solving skills to handle them. Moreover, they are asked to evaluate sources, analyze data, and question assumptions using critical thinking abilities across disciplines. As a matter of fact, they have to show the capability of working in groups as team members to attain these common goals (Kharbach, 2024). Recent education also motivates students to be creative and hold a sense of innovation in them, especially while using digital tools. This is due to the reason which states that technology in present times possesses an important value in current societies. Consequently, future professionals have to be proficient with technical

literacy, navigating information, and connecting to virtual communities, i.e., social media platforms (Potter, 2024).

### The Portal Keys to the Era: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills

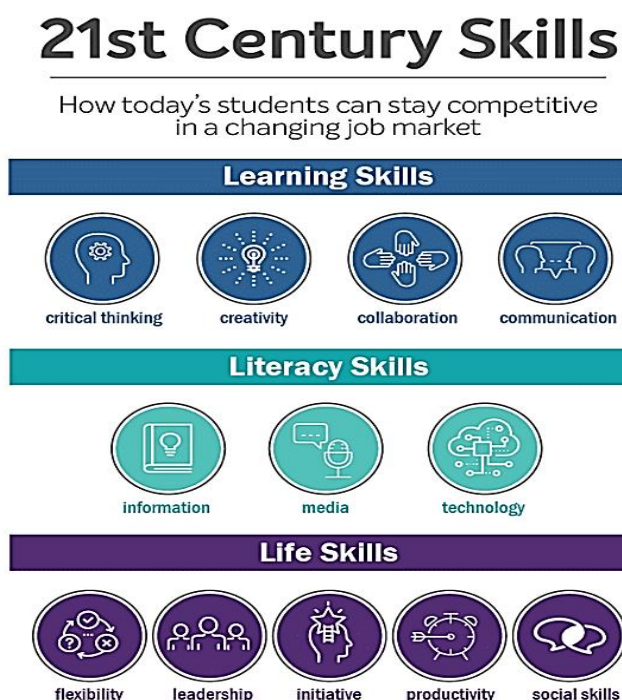
It has been a while now since we heard of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills in this modern era. Eventually, these skills are a broad set of capacities, knowledge, and expertise needed to succeed in the informational age of today's world. In different domains, nowadays, new equipment of skills are required to get promoted in workplaces, graduate from institutions, and better your daily activities while navigating information online in fast-changing societies. Societal demands urge modern citizens to adapt to new challenges in complex environments where preparation is the key to success in life in general and for future careers beyond classroom education. As stated by Ray McNulty<sup>3</sup> (2007) that 'The primary aim of education is not to enable students to do well in school, but to help them do well in the lives they lead outside of the school'.

The 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills are divided into 3 categories: Learning skills, Literacy skills, and Life skills. First of all, the **Learning Skills** are categorized into the 4 C's as follows: critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. They teach students about the mental processes essential for workplaces. Next, **Literacy Skills** are about technology and informational gadgets, i.e., to detect trustworthy facts from misleading information on the Internet. Finally, the **Life Skills** focus on the

<sup>3</sup> <https://educate.iowa.gov/pk-12/standards/academics/21st-century-skills>



necessary elements for both personal and professional students' lives. These skills combined together to contribute to equipping students for future careers after classroom education. The following picture represents the 3 categories of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills altogether.



**Figure 1: Three Categories of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills** (adapted from iCEV<sup>4</sup> 2024: 1) **21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in Education: EFL and ELT**

Integrating the aforementioned quit of skills in modern education is of great importance, not least English Language Teaching (ELT), and mainly English as a foreign language (EFL). Language learners in general need to hold a set of capabilities to foster their proficiency such as collaboration, interactive communication, and problem-solving competencies. The core skills required in an ELT and EFL teaching/learning environment are chiefly critical thinking, creativity, ICT skills, digital literacy, and social and intercultural competencies (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009).

The chief objective of integrating 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills in EFL/ELT is tied to the importance of English worldwide as be it the lingua franca of global communication. Using and studying these skills are essential for students to be prepared for the globalized world, participating in multicultural environments and international markets. Innovative education of the English language nowadays has shifted towards more interactive classes where students are asked to demonstrate a sense of collaboration, communication, and creativity while performing language tasks. Unlike the traditional way of teaching the English language which was based on grammar and linguistic skills (writing, reading, listening, speaking) that solely focused on language acquisition rather than the development of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills needed for modern success. Possessing and training students to have these skills help them in the long run to become autonomous, responsible, productive, team workers, and adaptable to the world's ongoing changes (Itmeizeh & Hassan, 2020).

### Research Methodology

The present research paper tries to answer the substantial problematic issue which is about Generation Z.<sup>5</sup> (those born in the late 1990s to early 21<sup>st</sup> century) and how they are learning and how they are supposed to teach 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills to their would-be students in their future EFL/ELT classes. A case study was chosen to unveil the students' perceptions of learning and teaching 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills in future EFL/ELT classes. The ultimate goal of this research work is to ensure that Gen Z would acquire and instruct perfectly the needed modern skills to help upcoming generations open the doors of the gate for success in future times. In other words, what are students' insights into using and instructing 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills as would-be teachers? How would Gen Z as future teachers instruct 21<sup>st</sup> century skills?

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.icevonline.com/blog/what-are-21st-century-skills>

<sup>5</sup> Generation Z is perceived as being familiar with the use of digital technology, the internet, and social media from a very young age.

### Research Paradigm

For the study at hand, an exploratory research paradigm was undertaken. It encompasses two sorts of research designs. The first one was an exploratory case study to examine the students' perceptions of 21st-century skills as an essential quit for both them and their future pupils after graduation. The succeeding research instrument carried out was a focused group discussion taken to discover the student's awareness of these skills and their significance in the future for them as would-be teachers. The second research design was action research which helped the teacher researcher put into practice those perceptions into classroom presentations and instructional practices performed by the learners on how they perceived instructing the 21<sup>st</sup> century skill. The intervention worked as a pre-service training for Gen Z to better incorporate 21st-century skills in the EFL/ELT classes.

### Setting Description

The present study was undertaken at the English Department, Institute of Letters and Foreign Languages, Maghnia University Center, Tlemcen, ALGERIA where the researcher was teaching Academic Writing for Master 1 EFL students. At the Licence level, LMD EFL students at Maghnia University Center have a common program for their three first years in the English Department. Afterwards, for the Master's Degree, they have to choose between 'Language Studies' or 'Literature and Civilization'. Both specialties: 'Language Studies' and 'Literature and Civilization' master options offered an instructed module of 'Academic Writing' to foster students' ability to write their final graduation theses as a requirement to obtain their diplomas. The axes within the module content were about writing uniquely, creatively, and most importantly academically which are some of the core principal skills of 21<sup>st</sup>-century competencies.

### Participants

EFL Master 1 students with their teacher/researcher in the Department of English, Institute of Letters and Foreign Languages, Maghnia University Center, Tlemcen, ALGERIA make the sample population of the current investigation. The randomly selected Master 1 students as informants of the focused group discussion (only present students at that time) represent 54% of the whole target population. That is, master 1 students in the English Department are 30 students in the academic year of 2023/2024 of both specialties. Sixteen (16) students from 'Language Studies' among 30 took part in the study. The sample population falls into 12 females and 4 males ranging in age from 21 to 25 years old. On the other side, the only teacher participating in this study is the teacher/researcher who taught the targeted group of students for one semester. The profile of the teacher is Didactics and Assessment in English Language Education who holds a Ph.D. degree in the same field of interest and is a full-time teacher at another University Center in Naama, Algeria.

### Research Instruments

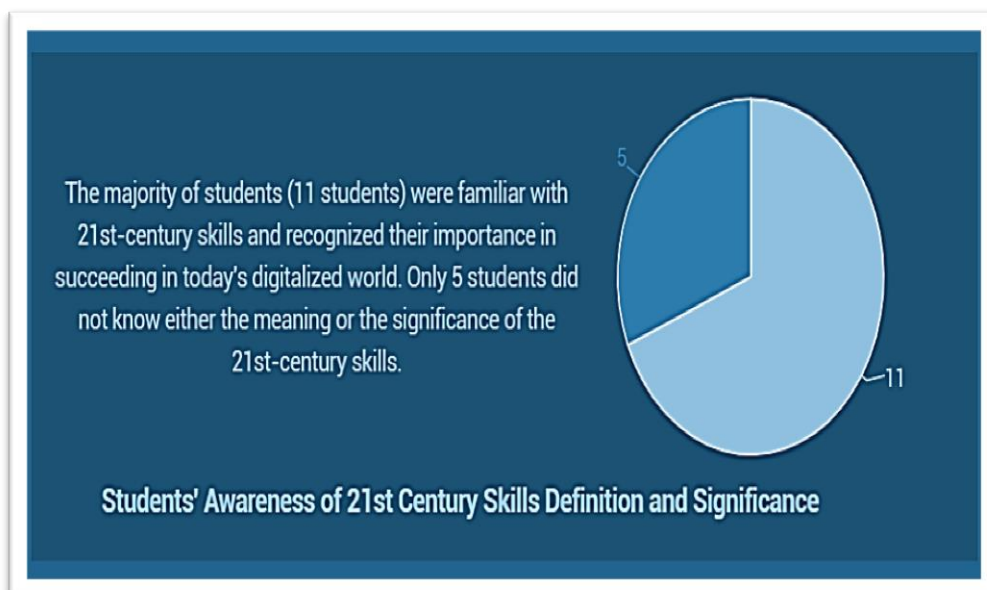
The researcher opted for a focused group discussion with 16 students at the English Department, Institute of Letters and Foreign Languages, Maghnia University Center, Tlemcen, ALGERIA. The focused discussion was composed of 8 questions to unveil the students' expectations and insight into 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills while studying and after graduating from college as future teachers. The discussion was held in a friendly manner during one of the sessions of Academic Writing on the site under investigation. In addition to this, an assignment was handed to students as a partial fulfillment of their final degree in the module to present a presentation that encompasses their instructional practices in their future EFL classes. The task performed by EFL students clears out the teaching ways adopted by Gen Z students as would-be teachers in relation to 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills integration in modern education. The multi-triangulation research methods assure the validity and probable generalizability of the research findings.

### Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the research findings was done qualitatively and quantitatively. The aim of using a focused group discussion was to uncover the students' perceptions of learning and teaching 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills after their graduation. The performed task by Master 1 students targeted the teaching ways that they will adopt to instruct the taught and mostly needed skills in the future: 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. The data obtained are laid out below.

### Focused Discussion

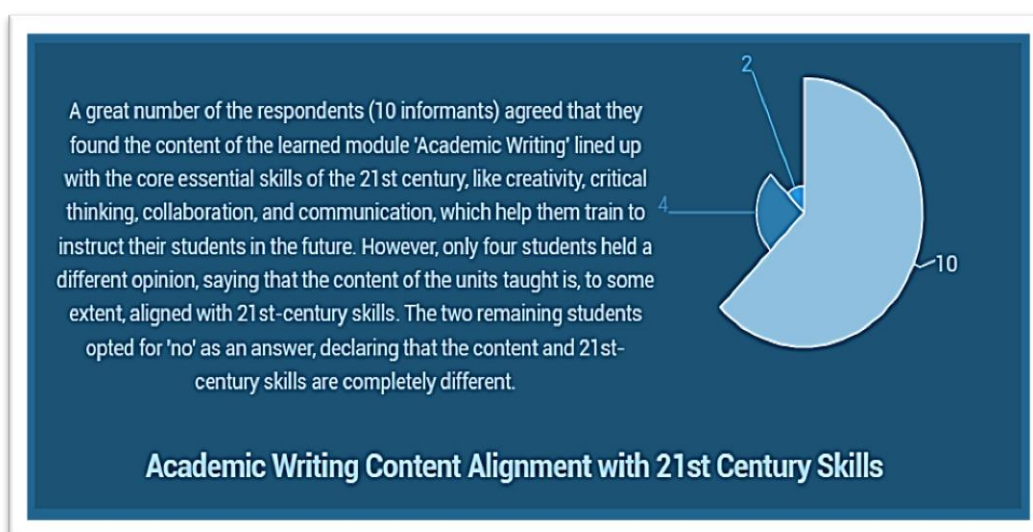
- The student's awareness of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills definition and significance



**Figure 1: Students' Awareness of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Definition and Significance**

After asking students whether they knew the meaning of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills and their importance in teaching, eleven masters 1 students (11), or the majority, were aware of 21st-century abilities and understood how crucial they were to thrive in the modern, digitalized world. Just five students were unaware of the importance or relevance of 21st-century abilities. The results showed the students' acquaintance with what is needed in their field of study as they specialized in language studies.

- Students' opinions about academic writing alignment with 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills

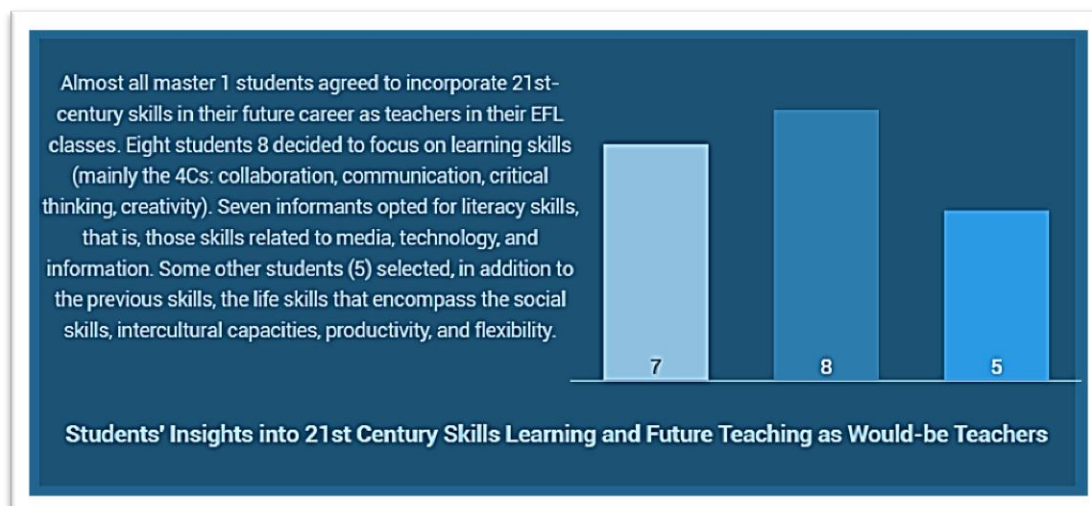


**Figure 2: Academic Writing Content Alignment with 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Skills**

When asking students about their point of view regarding the Alignment of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills with the content of the module Academic Writing, ten informants (10), or a large number of respondents, concurred that the material covered in the learned module "Academic Writing" aligned with the fundamental 21st-century skills—creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, and communication—that will help them prepare to teach their students in the future. Nevertheless, just four students disagreed, stating that the courses' content is somewhat in line with 21st-century abilities. Choosing 'no' as their response, the two remaining students stated that the 21st-century abilities and content were entirely different.

- Students' perceptions on how to teach 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills for their future learners



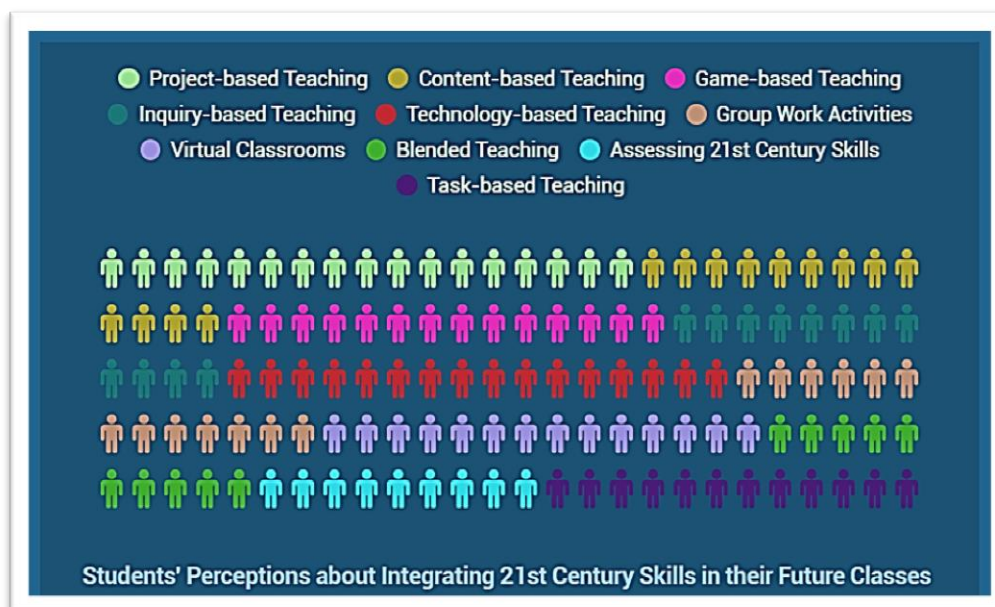


**Figure 3: Students' Insights into 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Skills Learning and Future Teaching as Would-be Teachers**

The next question was about the way and procedures students would follow to teach their future learners after graduation in EFL classes. The answers were that in their EFL lessons, nearly all Master 1 students committed to integrating 21st-century skills into their future teaching careers. Eight students made the decision to concentrate on developing their learning skills, particularly the four Cs: creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, and communication. Seven informants chose literacy skills, which include information, media, and technology abilities. In addition to the previously mentioned abilities, a few additional students (5) chose life skills, which include productivity, adaptability, intercultural abilities, and social skills.

#### Students Presentations

- A task performed by Master 1 students on how practically they would teach 21st-century skills in their EFL classrooms after graduation.



**Figure 4: Students' Perceptions of Integrating 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Skills in Their Future Classes**

In the practical side of the research work, students were asked to perform presentations where they selected and talked about their instructional practices and which method to use in their future EFL classes. Each student's presentation in response to this question is different. Twelve presenters (12) gave the majority of their presentations on project-based teaching, which involves giving their prospective students assignments to complete to showcase their 21st-century abilities. In their upcoming EFL sessions, the remaining Master 1 students continue to favor 21st-century teaching while selecting other interactive techniques and tactics such as content-based instruction and group projects, both of which are conducted

by nine correspondents (9). Ten students (10) chose virtual classrooms with game-based instruction. Following presentations by eleven students (11), technology-based instruction also received higher ratings. Eight informants (8) selected inquiry-based and task-based learning as their preferred modern teaching pedagogies. Only seven students (7) picked blended learning, whereas six students chose to evaluate 21st-century abilities as a means of improving their instruction.

To provide a summary discussion of the results mentioned above, reported both quantitatively and qualitatively, EFL master 1 students at Maghnia University Center all agreed on the significance of 21st-century skills in their learning and the future education they are expected to impart to their learners after graduation. Students also highlighted the importance of holding positive attitudes toward implementing 21st-century methods and techniques in their teaching careers. Those teaching practices would vary from project-based teaching to task-based teaching, content-based, inquiry-based, technology-based, and game-based instruction, group work activities, virtual classes, blended learning, and assessing 21st-century skills as a way of improving their instruction. Those innovative instructional methods would foster students' literacy, learning, and life skills to better cope with the 21st-century era.

### Future Implications

The advances in technology, including AI, robots, and virtual reality glasses, will still shape the way we teach and learn 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills in the future. The next generation after Gen Z would be those born roughly between 2010 to 2024 called Generation Alpha. By adjusting the pace and content to each student's needs, AI-powered adaptive learning systems will personalize education and facilitate more efficient mastering of critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork. Similar to humanoid teaching assistants, robots will facilitate individualized instruction and offer specialized support, especially for students with a range of needs. Education will become more accessible and interesting as a result of the immersive, experiential learning settings that virtual reality technology will produce, allowing students to engage virtually in classes from anywhere in the world.

### Conclusion

The present research work's aim was to unveil students' perceptions of how they learn and teach 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills to their prospective learners. The research work finding after being analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively revealed that the importance of 21st-century abilities in the students' study and the future instruction they are expected to provide to their learners after graduation was acknowledged by all of the EFL master 1 students at Maghnia University Centre. Students also emphasized how crucial it is to have a positive outlook when it comes to using 21st-century teaching strategies. Those instructional strategies would mainly fall to project-based teaching. Those instructional strategies would mainly fall into project-based teaching. Future implications suggest that more advanced teaching techniques would be used by Gen Z to instruct the next generation (Generation Alpha)

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