



# Exploring the Intersection of Science Education and 21st Century Skills: A Workshop Summary

*National Research Council, Margaret Hilton*

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An emerging body of research suggests that a set of broad "21st century skills"--such as adaptability, complex communication skills, and the ability to solve non-routine problems--are valuable across a wide range of jobs in the national economy. However, the role of K-12 education in helping students learn these skills is a subject of current debate. Some business and education groups have advocated infusing 21st century skills into the school curriculum, and several states have launched such efforts. Other observers argue that focusing on skills detracts attention from learning of important content knowledge.

To explore these issues, the National Research Council conducted a workshop, summarized in this volume, on science education as a context for development of 21st century skills. Science is seen as a promising context because it is not only a body of accepted knowledge, but also involves processes that lead to this knowledge. Engaging students in scientific processes--including talk and argument, modeling and representation, and learning from investigations--builds science proficiency. At the same time, this engagement may develop 21st century skills.

*Exploring the Intersection of Science Education and 21st Century Skills* addresses key questions about the overlap between 21st century skills and scientific content and knowledge; explores promising models or approaches for teaching these abilities; and reviews the evidence about the transferability of these skills to real workplace applications.

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