

THE NEW LITERACY

Reading, writing, and arithmetic no longer guarantee students a place in the workforce. A different skill set is in high demand.

THEY BLOG, DOWNLOAD MUSIC AND VIDEOS, AND WHILE AWAY THE hours in online chat rooms. But how good are today's students at interpreting the words and images they encounter in our increasingly tech-driven world? How well can they communicate in multimedia formats what they are learning in the classroom?

Such questions underlie a new effort among researchers and ed-tech experts to ensure that students' critical-thinking and communication skills keep pace with their technological acumen. "It's not enough for students to master PowerPoint and Excel. They need to think critically about how they translate data and information into effective communication," says Karen Bruett, director of Education and Community Initiatives for Dell and board chairwoman of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

Scholastic Administrator asked David Warlick, ed-tech expert and author of *Redefining Literacy for the 21st Century*, to shed light on these new literacies. What follows is his take on why four E's—exposing knowledge, employing information, expressing ideas, and ethics on the Internet—are so important and what they will mean to administrators, teachers, and ultimately to students as they prepare for the future. >>