

Student Assessments for 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Needs by Alison DeNisco  
District Administration – Thursday, January 10, 2013

Assessments have always been a part of going to school. Teachers teach the students and then they administer a test to determine if the students have learned the content and/or skills. However, students are different today – they are 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners, with 21<sup>st</sup> Century needs. The days of paper and pencil multiple-choice exams are slowly fading away. Exams today are asking students to explain their thinking, their methods for solving problems.

The National Academy Foundation, partnered with WestEd, has created another type of assessment for high school students. Unlike traditional single multiple choice exams, this assessment consists of three components—an end-of-course test, a project and an internship. The idea is to really push students to become career ready. NAF's assistant vice president of strategic initiatives Colleen Devery claims that “older tests measure what a student know, this is an assessment that shows what the student can do.”

I believe that this might be the beginning of a valuable trend. Although the Common Core State Standards gears students up to be “college and career ready,” we often lose sight of the career ready part, with a focus solely on getting all students into college. it behooves those students who will not attend college to gain these practical skills while still in high school. They are afforded opportunities through this assessment to work in real jobs as interns thus potentially opening the door for future employment.