Here we are, midway into the second decade of the 21st century and growing ever closer, by connection if not through understanding. Money, goods, ideas and images flow freely across borders, creating both acquaintance and conflict. By one estimate, 70 percent of today's students will end up in jobs that have not yet been invented. They will collaborate with people on multiple continents through institutions not yet created, struggling to solve problems we do not yet recognize. The skills needed for our rapidly changing world will not be learned through the old models.

Preparation to succeed and contribute in this fast paced, often confusing global environment requires education that provides more than narrow job training and efficient information transfer. Such rapid change requires intelligence that is creative, adaptive, and thrives on challenge. More than ever before, students will need to know how to think, evaluate, and explore, even as what they think about may change and expand. They will need the creativity and the courage to challenge traditional ways of doing and working, and forge new paths and solutions.

The boundaries of traditional academic disciplines no longer map onto the radically interdisciplinary topography of today's pressing problems and concerns. Climate change, the nature of consciousness, income inequality, the challenge of providing more and healthier food to a growing global population, the discovery of new planets: All of these issues demand collaborative, cross-disciplinary responses.

Emphasizing direct pre-professional training at the undergraduate level is the worst possible idea for today's 18-year-old, placing short-term employability above long-term outcomes for both the individual and society. Stressing marketability over creativity runs contrary to the demands of tomorrow's economy. One recent survey of global business leaders ranked creativity as the most important factor for future success, and high tech companies increasingly search for graduates with broad backgrounds and creative skills, rather than narrow technical training.

In a global marketplace of ideas, students will need to take up different perspectives and forge an ethical stance that is sensitive to cultural difference while guided by principles of fairness, justice, and welfare.

What educational approach will work for this world? One that is not merely interdisciplinary, but also intellectually and artistically agile, in which students are encouraged to see how artistic endeavors are enriched and informed by ideas in mathematics and the sciences, or how scientific findings might be contextualized and made more complex by the humanities and social sciences. We also need an educational approach that creates lifelong learners who have internalized their motivations and goals.

Education for the whole person creates informed citizens who act to create positive change in the world, whether through political activism, scientific discovery, artistic creation, or sustainable entrepreneurship--people with a moral compass and a passionate belief in their capacity to make a difference. Graduates who are trained to address tough situations with ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and a capacity for mobilizing collaborative thinking and cooperative action are the most valuable contribution any school can make to society.

Prompt: After reading “Educating for Change,” write an essay between 500 and 800 words in which you argue whether or not your Cal Poly education has provided you with both a broad background and the creative skills necessary to create positive change in the world. If you believe Cal Poly has succeeded in providing an interdisciplinary, artistically agile educational experience that has prepared you to address tough situations with ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and collaborative thinking, support your position with compelling arguments that expand upon or go beyond those points already offered in the article. If you do not agree, then defend your position and explain why Cal Poly has not adequately prepared you to create positive change in the world. Your essay should show an understanding of the article without simply repeating it, and you should incorporate specific details from your own experience and knowledge into your response.