



## 21st CENTURY SKILLS: A WAKE UP CALL FOR INSERVICE TEACHERS

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### ***Abstract***

*In this 21st century, technology has changed the ways of educators to reach and teach their students. Modern technology has opened new doors to unique opportunities for learners. It has made easier to research, communicate and study the material. This idea encouraged author to make a small effort to highlight the significance of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for Indian in-service teachers. Dramatic technological revolution has originated an increasingly diverse, globalised and complex, media-saturated society. It has transformed the nature of school, class and curriculum. For the optimal outcome of the educational objectives of students teachers are also required to have adequate knowledge along with different modern skills and a favourable attitude toward their profession. Researcher observed that there is a lot of difference between pre-service and in-services teachers' knowledge of perceived skill and attitudes toward educational practices. Most of the in-service teachers are still doing with old chalk and talk based methods. Teachers must accept the truth that passive education can't help anyone and in this digital era the younger generation is becoming more and more tech savvy. For them time has come to understand and acquire new teaching skills to update their subject knowledge. It will not only help the students but will be beneficial for teachers also.*

**Keywords:** *21st century Skills, 21st Century Education, 21st Century Curriculum, 21st century In-service Teachers.*



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## **Introduction**

Today's kindergarteners will be retiring in the year 2072, but it seems from the working of many teachers that they don't have any idea of what the world will look after 50 years. So teachers of the day have a big responsibility of preparing our students for life in that world. Some emerging issues such as global warming, starvation, poverty, health issues, population explosion and other environmental and social issues has compelled the students to be able to communicate, function and create change personally, socially, economically and politically on local, national and global levels. Emerging technologies at global level has created unlimited opportunities for rousing new discoveries and developments in the field of education. Students of the day require mastery of fundamental subjects and 21st century skills. The term 21st century skills refers to knowledge, skills, work habits and character traits that are used by educators and others for achieving their goals. The base of 21st century skills lies in achieving the skills like, ability of critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, agility, adaptability, entrepreneurialism, effective communication, accessing & analysing information and imagination. This will help our students to become iKids and such kind of students may be referred as 'digital natives'. This generation of students belongs to media culture and are termed as digital learners. They understand the world via the use of computing devices like cellular phones, handheld gaming devices, computers and laptops etc.

## **Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

The arrival of technology has completely changed the concept of school, teacher, learner and curriculum for the 21st century. Now schools are expected to work as nerve centres and work beyond its walls connecting teachers, students and the community to the wealth of knowledge existing in the world. Now in-service teachers are required to shift the pole from 20th century classroom to the 21st century's classroom. 20th century's classroom was teacher centred, time based, focused on memorisation, textbook laden and full of passive learners. Whereas 21st century's classrooms are child centred, output based, real-life related project based, research driven and full of active learners. Surveys found that many students use electronic media for many hours a day, on average for listening to music, surfing the Web or instant-messaging friends and playing a video game. These electronic multimedia resources have good educational effect on them and teach colouring, numbers, letters, spelling and many more complex tasks such as problem-solving activities and developing reading habits. So now most of the students have become truly media literate and they must be provided research-based environment by inculcating the ability of researching, analysing,

synthesizing, critiquing, evaluating and creating new knowledge. All this required a new and challenging curriculum.

### **Curriculum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The curriculum of 20<sup>th</sup> century was textbook-driven or fragmented. Twenty-first century curriculum is interdisciplinary, project and research based. Schools are equipped with a project-based curriculum aimed at engaging the students addressing real-life problems. It connects the local community to state, national and global aspirations. The curriculum includes higher order thinking skills, multiple intelligences, technology and multimedia. This curriculum incorporates higher order thinking skills, multiple intelligences and technology based methods. New ways of designing and delivering the curriculum connected to students' interests, attitudes, aptitudes, experiences, talents and the real world has taken place. This curriculum has certain critical attributes. It is interdisciplinary, project-based and research-driven. The curriculum incorporates service learning component and promotes authentic assessments with the use of technology. It requires self-directed students who can work both independently and interdependently. The curriculum and instruction challenge all students and provides variety for diversity. Increasing problems related to the environment has explored new possibilities and directed to greening the curriculum and classroom.

### **Classroom for the 21st Century**

Modern classrooms are very much different from old classrooms where only blackboards, chalks, diagrams and maps were used. Now educators are using audio-visual media instead of just text book learning. Classroom is adapting itself with modern digital technology. Modern teachers and students are joining collaborative projects with persons of other countries. Students are in touch with knowledge, multicultural experiences, media, information, emotional, ecological and cyber literacies. Real-life projects are developed with the use of technologies and internet to solve critical issues. In many schools, students are using mobile devices like laptops, tabs and iPads etc. These devices enhance their experiences of education. Students learning have become faster by accessing net, reading online materials and e-books. Students can access video lessons as well as a public directory of lessons in few seconds. Online conversation with experts from outside has boosted the learning experiences. The collaboration of SMART boards, workstations and the other devices has boosted the classroom activities. Students are able to work individually as well as by forming separate groups to engage themselves in group activities and educational activities as well.

### **What Kind of Qualities Must Be Acquired by In-service Teachers?**

This great change in the field of education has raised many questions. One of them which has been considered in this paper is, what kind of qualities must be acquired by in-service teachers in 21st century that does not yet exist there? Present state of in-service teachers indicates that our educational stakeholders need to focus on real-world problems and processes and initiate opportunities for collaborative project approaches to learning for them. They need to shift their approach from traditional techniques of manufacturing to new one emphasising information technology and knowledge creation. Following are some suggestion to be followed by the in-service teachers so that they can cope up with challenges needs of this 21st century.

- Attend some in-service programmes through face-to-face or distance mode in order to update you to know the latest developments.
- After school programs to learn the skills of the 21st century may also be organised at school level by arranging some good resource persons.
- Teachers will have to come out from the mode of knowledge dispensers and become knowledge facilitators.
- Emphasis on examinations and results should be replaced by technology-driven classrooms and continuous comprehensive evaluation.
- Link curriculum with life skills and emphasise value education for students.
- If necessary try to serve chalk and talk based methods with the flavour of technology.
- Learn how to use effectively information and communication technologies in class.
- Sharing resources with other teachers will benefit a lot to every teacher.
- Try to be adaptive to curriculum changes and teach that curriculum to students in an innovative way.
- There are so many things to learn. Be a visionary and make you ready to take risks. No one is too old to learn the new things.
- Conduct action research for qualitative improvement of classroom teaching.
- Develop your own teaching and learning (print and non-print) instructional materials, psychological tools etc. and use them frequently.
- Stay connected with educational conferences or workshops via social media platforms. It can provide you new opportunities to grow relationship with teachers of other schools in the same town, district, country or worldwide. You can easily interact, share and discuss with them your perspectives.

- Take part in discussion threads and chats on social media to improve your conversation skills. This is the best way to improve your thoughts, get different perspective of people talking about the topics of your interest in the field of education and gain recognition globally.
- Use social media like Facebook, Twitter, Tumbler etc. These sites will enable you to have better interaction with your colleagues, students and experts of the field.
- Use the mobile apps to evaluate and grade the performance of students. It can also provide the database to plan the lesson for the session.
- Make a room for discussion and feedback in the school and follow great education leaders and participate in chats organised by them.
- If students do not have computers or access to the internet at home then provide them sufficient time in school to learn technology.

### **Conclusion**

21<sup>st</sup> century skills can be applied in all the academic subjects, educational settings, careers and life conditions throughout a student's life. Modern students are well versed with the ability to use the technological and multimedia tools. They are able to design and produce web sites, television shows, radio shows, public service declarations, mini-documentaries, DVDs, oral histories and films. Now students use technologies to stimulate social change. In-service teachers must adapt themselves to it as early as possible. Technology integration can support them to learn valuable life skills that will enable them to become vibrant thinkers and confident individuals. Teachers should be more planned about teaching with cross-disciplinary skills in in their subject. They are required to learn research methods, articulation in verbal, written and graphic forms to use sophisticated technologies, software programs and multimedia.

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