



PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE CHALLENGES OF 21ST CENTURY: THE CHANGING ROLES OF TEACHER

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Abstract

The 21st century world is changing rapidly. The new technologies help us to grasp all the information we want. We are facing a world in which communication and information revolution has led to changes in all spheres of life. On the other hand, it is also altering the relationship continuously and decreasing the stability of environment. To be competent in preparing the students of 21st century to face the future with self-confidence, responsibility and accountability, the crucial role of teacher cannot be overemphasized. Achieving the 21st century skills, information is not enough. To accumulate the right information and opt the right process, they have to rely on the teachers. The role of teacher is not of an instructor who just impart content-based knowledge but more of an orchestrator of information, giving students the ability to turn knowledge into wisdom. In this 21st century we address the teacher as the learner, the facilitator, the visionary and the collaborator. So, the roles of teacher are also changing with the changes occur in the universe. The present study intended to highlight the changing roles of teacher to prepare the students in this changing world of 21st century. This study is based on secondary sources like Articles, Books, Journals, Thesis, Expert opinion, and Websites. The method used here is Descriptive Analytic Method.

Keywords: 21st century skills, changing world, challenges, roles of teacher.



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Introduction

At the dawn of the 21st century we are facing a world in which communication and information revolution has led to changes in all spheres-scientific, technological, political, economic, social and cultural. Therefore, the education system, the learning approach, the perspectives of learners and teachers, the aspirations of people from education- all are changing. In order to educate in the 21st century, teachers and administrators need to cultivate and maintain the student's interest by showing how the acquired knowledge applies in the real world. They must also try to increase their student's curiosity, which will help them to be lifelong learners.

Objectives of the Study

The present study intended to highlight the changing roles of teacher to prepare the students in this changing world of 21st century.

21st Century Skills

Teachers should be flexible with how they teach and give learners the resources to continue learning outside of school. There are many skills that students will need in order to be successful in the 21st century. These skills are called “21st century skills”. While each framework has slightly different list of critical 21st century skills, all agree on four critical areas for development:

- Collaboration and teamwork
- Creativity and imagination
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving

The term 21st century skills refer to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed by educators, school reformers, college professors, employers, and others to be critically important to success in today’s world. These skills can be applied in all academic subjects and discipline, and in all educational, career, and civic settings throughout a student’s life. In a broader sense, however, the idea of learning in the 21st century should open to interpretation. 21st century skills enable the students to master while producing, synthesizing, and evaluating information from a wide variety of subjects and sources with an understanding of and respect for diverse cultures. Apart from those four skills, there are many skills which had been introduced time to time. Here is a list of the skills which are considered by many teachers, educators and educationist as “21st century skills...”

Learning and Innovation Skills:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication and Collaboration
- Visual Literacy
- Scientific and Numerical Literacy
- Cross-Disciplinary Thinking
- Basic Literacy

Information Media and Technology Skills:

- Information Literacy

- Media Literacy
- Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Literacy

Life and Career Skills:

- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Self-Direction
- Social and Cross-Cultural Skills
- Productivity and Accountability
- Leadership and Responsibility

21st Century Skills:

- Global Awareness
- Financial, Economic, Business, and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Civic Literacy
- Health Literacy
- Environmental Literacy
- Now to be a 21st century learner one must achieve these skills. The 21st century learners are:
 - Collaborative
 - Adaptive
 - Information, media and technology savvy
 - Communicators
 - Immediate and instant
 - Require instant fulfilment
 - Creators and adaptor

Positive and Negative Arguments of 21st Century Skills:

There is a debate about 21st century skills—from what skills are most important to how such skills should be taught to their suitable role in education. Given that there is no clear accord on what skills specifically constitute “21st century skills,” the concept tends to be interpreted and applied in different ways from state to state or school to school, which can lead to vagueness, uncertainty, and discrepancy. But the following list provides a few examples of representative arguments of teaching 21st century skills:

- Information and knowledge are increasing at such an enormous rate in today’s world that no one can learn everything about every matter, what may appear true today could be proven to
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be false tomorrow. Therefore, students need to be taught how to process, parse, and use information, and they need adaptable and flexible skills which they can apply in all areas of life. Teaching them information and facts, without teaching them how to use them in real-life settings, is no longer enough.

□ Schools need to adapt and develop new ways of teaching and learning that reflect a changing world. The purpose of school should be all rounding development of students and therefore schools need to prioritize the knowledge and skills that will be in the greatest demand for bringing prosperity in every aspect of a student life.

□ Given the extensive accessibility of information today, educators should use in-school time to teach students how to uncover, understand, and utilize that information, rather than using most or all of the time to present information.

□ But if the situation becomes “content vs. skills” then “21st century skills” somewhat can cause mystification and imprecision.

□ Focusing too much on those skills could water-down academic courses, and students may not get the basics properly. Students need a broad knowledge base, which they won’t receive if teachers focus too much on skill-related instruction or “learning how to learn.”

□ These skills are extremely difficult to assess reliably and persistently. There are no formal tests for 21st century skills. With these new skills and these new changes the roles of teacher is also shifting. When we think of the classroom teacher role and responsibilities, most likely planning instruction, delivering instruction, assessing student learning, and managing the classroom environment come to mind (Stronge, 2007). These are typical ways we know how to think about what a teacher does in and outside of the classroom. Teachers have been prepared in very traditional ways to address these specific domains (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In this second decade of the 21st century, is it not time to reconsider these domains and propose new description of the roles of teachers.

In this 21st century's new perspectives on teaching and learning, it is now necessary to open a new window for thinking about how 21st century skills and standards impact these traditional teaching roles. The goal is to make these roles relevant for today's evolving learning needs. Thus, we visualize the aim of 21st century teaching as the development of knowledge, higher-order skills (such as the 4Cs of creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration), and character, as well as the establishment of lifelong learning habits and an ability to learn how-

to-learn with technology as the central roles in the new picture of teacher effectiveness. The roles of teachers are changing with the challenges of 21st century's problems.

Roles of Teacher:

Education and Training of the upcoming generation to cope up with the change has become a challenge not only for the learner but also for the teacher. Teaching is one of the noble professions of the world. Histories are the evidence of the significance and sanctity of the teacher and teaching process. The goals of teaching in a complex society are diverse and it has been an important topic of the educationists for over the past several decades. In the narrow vision teacher is a predestined part of the social system, called school, who teach the students. In the wide sense, a teacher can be defined as someone who influences another and make a change in his intellectual, moral or physical level. The personality, character, and attitudes of an ideal teacher can influence and inspire the young people. In constructing the future of a child, the teacher has remarkable responsibility. People ranging from layman to philosopher praise the teacher as a mason who builds the fabric of society, the students being the bricks and mortar of the future. Education is a lifelong process and without the help of a teacher it will be incomplete. According to the National Policy of Education in India (1986), "no society can raise above the standard above of its teachers". But now in 21st century every aspect of our life is changing and so does the educational approaches. As students have access to any information possible, there certainly is no need to give just the information in the class. As students have different personalities, goals, and needs, offering personalized instructions is not just possible but also desirable. When students are allowed to make their own choices, they decide their learning, increase intrinsic motivation, and put in more efforts- an ideal recipe for better learning outcomes. In this whole process the roles of teacher should be of a guide. The classrooms are becoming learner centric and the instructions are personalised.

The Early Roles of Teachers:

In ancient times, a school was meant to be a place of leisure where the natural divinity and talents of the child was nurtured, leading to the emergence of a fully integrated individual. This was done not only by imparting material knowledge but also by fostering a spirit of self-enquiry. This meant that a person was to come upon knowledge not only of the outer but also of the inner self, a state of self-knowledge. And the person who was the main architect of this was no doubt a teacher. A teacher was never looked upon as a professional member of the society. He was always an Acharya. An Acharya means one who sets up standards -standards

of conduct, standards of living. And he had a very high standard in his personal life to follow. The teacher with the help of his knowledge removes the darkness of ignorance. He was considered as the great devotee of mankind. He had the power of intellectual, spiritual and moral worth. He was eminent in knowledge, possessed a holy character, free from the evil practices and greed for wealth and had self-control. In ancient period, one of an important role of teacher was advisor. Even the kings and rulers not only paid respect to the teacher but also often approached their teachers for guidance and advice, since they were the true benefactors of society and trustees of common welfare. There are many examples in history for the decision taken by the rulers according to the advice of teachers.

In the ancient period teacher was known as the creator who creates the ideas and ideals; the preserver, who preserves the truth and justice; the ancient society gives very high place to the teachers because of the voluntary poverty, selfless service, high scholarship and pure moral and spiritual conduct of the teachers. At that time religious and spiritual factors were predominant in the choice of teaching careers.

Roles of teacher in 21st century:

Together with the changes, new expectations appeared towards our schools. Nowadays schools need to teach their learners how to gain information and how to select and use them. This happens so quickly that students learn how to use the internet together with their teachers. Parents are involved in decision-making so they take part in the life of the school. Parents have to have a view of what is happening in the educational institution. The changes that took place in schools have changed the roles of teachers, too. In the past teachers used to be the major source of knowledge, the leader and educator of their students' school life. Teachers would organise after-school activities. They used to be the authority in the class and often took over the role of parents. Nowadays, teachers provide information and show their students how to tackle them. Although they are still considered to be a kind of leader in the class, they can be thought of as facilitators in the learning process. They are supporters rather than educators and also advisors towards parents. Here are some roles of teacher worth mentioning...

The Facilitator:

In the new approach of education, teachers have to function as a facilitator of learning. The teacher has to motivate the students and encourage discussing and debating. The teacher has to interact with them but the interaction has to follow the children as a whole. Techniques and methods like laboratory work, field trips, discussions, seminars etc should be developed among

students with the purpose of producing good interaction among them. As a facilitator of learning teacher has to maintain control in the classroom and has to create a positive environment in classroom. Teacher should enable the students to maximize the potential of their formal and informal learning. He had to make him familiar with the great diversity of space, resources, technology etc.

The Adaptor:

The 21st Century teacher is an adaptor. As the world continuously moves forward, if one stands still, it's possible that he might fall behind. 21st Century teacher must be able to adapt the curriculum and the requirements to teach to the curriculum in imaginative ways. They must also be able to the new technologies, strategies, method and behavioural changes. They must also be able to familiarize with the dynamic teaching experience.

The Visionary:

The good teacher is a special person: the visionary teacher is a unique one. Imagination, a crucial component of the teacher of today and tomorrow. They must see the potential in the emerging technologies and web-based applications and systems, grasp these and manipulate them to serve their requirements and purpose. The visionary teacher can look at others' ideas and envisage how they would use these in the Education. The visionary also looks across the disciplines and through the curriculum. They can make links that reinforce and value learning in other areas, and leverage other fields to reinforce their own teaching and the learning of their students.

The 21st century Learner:

To be an effective 21st -century teacher, a teacher must first possess the very same 21st century skills that their students are expected to have. And, in addition to those skills, they must be able to help all of their students obtain and develop 21st -century skills. If it is expected that our students to be lifelong learners than teacher must continue to absorb experiences and knowledge. We must venture to stay up to date. Teacher must be resourceful, flexible and willing to accept challenges in the field of teaching.

The Communicator:

21st century is all about communication. To stay ahead of this a teacher of 21st century must play a role of communicator. They must fluent in tools and technologies that enable communication and collaboration. They go beyond learning just how to do it, they also know how to facilitate it, stimulate and control it, moderate and manage it. We need teachers who

has agility and adaptability, effective oral and written communication. We need teachers who can use language to foster self-expression and identity development.

The Role-Model:

This is the most important role of teacher. A role model is a person whose behaviour is imitated by others. So, a teacher must model the behaviours that he expects from the students. Teachers in this 21st century are the most consistent part of our student life and there is a thirst of youth for positive role models. The Role of a teacher as a role model is not easy. He has to devote himself in positive choice making, rationalising, and discipline. Honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, responsibility are some factors, together with a concrete knowledge base and a beautiful heart transform a teacher to the role model.

The Leader:

Teachers who are committed to their profession have similar qualities to leaders in other areas. They are not just thinking about themselves, but how their efforts will produce successes for all of those who are a part of their profession. The 21st Century Educator is a leader. Teacher leaders assume a wide range of roles to support school and student success. Whether these roles are assigned formally or shared informally, they build the entire school's capacity to improve. Because teachers can lead in a variety of ways, many teachers can serve as leaders among their peers. The teacher leader understands how someone acquire and apply knowledge and uses this information to promote a culture of shared accountability for school outcomes that maximizes teacher effectiveness, promotes collaboration, enlists colleagues to be part of a leadership team, and drives continuous improvement in instruction and student learning.

The Storyteller:

Lecture is not enough for the 21st century students. They have all the information they need. The evolution in technology and science brings all the information in our hand. For a meaningful change, we have to make a connection to the heart before we make a connection to the mind. Simply sharing information is not a way to create this connection. Telling stories helps people to create their own connections and meaning. In a world that is information rich, teachers are trying for the attention of the students. Therefore, teacher needs to look at not simply sharing ideas, but helping share information in different ways that are memorable and compelling. The story and stories matter, and will resonate long after the time with the students.

The Designer:

In this 21st century's environment teacher has to carry out the role of a designer. The learning environment is very important. The notion of the "designer" is not only in how teacher creates the spaces, but the experiences that are created for learning as well. The point of this is to think about learning from the viewpoint of the students. Teachers have to understand what possibilities exist in our world today, and be extremely thoughtful in how to design learning experiences to maximize space, resources, and access for all learners.

The Artist:

In this era teaching is more than a job, it's an art. The teachers help to shape the beautiful minds of the students in an artistic way. Small details of the students matter more to the teacher. We need to embrace this thinking and empower teachers to perfect their ability and allow them the resources and space to do what's best for the learners in their classrooms.

Reflective Thinker:

In this century a teacher must be a reflective thinker. Information is coming our way faster than ever. If anything, we need to slow down and critically analyse it, not simply accept everything that we hear. Reflective thinking becomes essential in this process. This is essential that we embed time in our days and the days of our students to not only reflect, but make their own connections to learning.

The Environmental Educator:

In this 21st century's environment a teacher must act the role of an environmental educator. The modern era is in a threat of the degradation of environmental quality. The level of air pollution, water pollution etc. increased and disturbs the ecological balance. In this context we have to create environmental awareness to protect, preserve and conserve our environment. This is possible with the help of a teacher as environment protector. Teacher should provide the lessons related to the fundamental duties related to the environment.

Role in Inclusion of Pupils with Learning Differences:

Inclusion of pupils with learning differences is a stepping stone to achieve the goal of 'universal education'. But after passing the 1st decade of this century still there are lot of challenges in this process. Inclusion assumes that all children are part of the regular school system. It demands high level of teaching competence and organizational changes. It will become realized only if teachers are aware of the nature of the situation and ready to commit for it. Inclusion requires a large vision and specific competencies for all teachers. Now the teachers need to

know that diversity is present in the classroom, and that they should attend to learners with a range of diverse needs. The knowledge, skills and attitudes for all inclusion teachers must emphasize that the purpose of all teacher interventions is the students' learning. They also need to have high expectations for all, develop inclusive projects including diverse teaching strategies and support systems and participate in a collective work.

Conclusion

It is not that these roles are only hold true for the 21st Century Educator. If we evaluated and looked into the lives and philosophical makeup of the great educators that some of these roles were always present. This is an inclusive list that shows the traits of the effective educators of the past and present because the main focus was to create a learning situation around the students. Students were the main focus point. Those roles of teacher ensured the overall development of a student. But, this is not enough. Because teaching in the 21st century has to require an emphasis on understanding how to use information technologies. Teachers need to instruct students on computer usage, legitimate methods of Internet research, and how identify useful information. Additionally, this focus on technology can open up a world of new resources to support conventional teaching methods, such as the integration of software programs in the classroom. The traditional goals of education remain the same. Teachers want to transform their students into effective critical thinkers and life-long learners with a strong sense of their social errands. While information technology can sometimes seem like a deterrent rather than an ally in reaching these goals, they can also be effectively employed to facilitate rather than disrupt the learning process; e.g. students can accumulate the opinions of others using social networking to arrive at a decision, or they can research through internet to be acquainted with the information about certain area of interest. Teachers in the 21st century have access to a host of cutting-edge research about how students learn. They should be well informed and willing to apply such research to their classroom. They should understand different learning styles and be able to identify the learning styles of their students. Teachers in the 21st century confront the challenges opened up by globalisation. Teachers should introduce students to their world, and moreover infuse in them a sense of their own power to bring change in the world. Only the transmission of knowledge to students is not sufficient. A 21st century teacher should plant in the students a sense of responsibility towards their planet, towards their nation, towards their identity and urge them to take active participation in the activities of this ever-changing world.

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