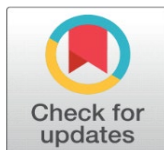
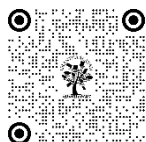


# THE NEED FOR INNOVATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: BEST PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN CREATING INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

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## ABSTRACT

Innovative teaching programs are necessary in the twenty-first century due to globalization, the quick development of technology, and the diversity of learner needs. This study looks at the pressing need to alter traditional teaching methods to educate educators for inclusive classrooms that value diversity and foster fair learning opportunities. It examines best practices such as the using digital resources, collaborative teaching methods, and differentiated instruction approaches that are essential for addressing the unique challenges of diverse learners. The research also lists resistance to change, a lack of resources, and a scarcity of teacher preparation as barriers to implementing innovative tactics. By addressing these concerns, teaching programs can equip teachers with the skills and mindset necessary to create inclusive, adaptable, and student-centered classrooms.

**Keywords:** Education, Inclusive Education, Best Practices in Teaching, 21st-Century Skills, Innovative and Creative Skills, Innovative Demand

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Education:

People who have received an education are simple to drive but difficult to lead. The former President, Shri Sarvpalli Radha Krishnan, famously remarked that no nation can be improved beyond the status of the teacher.

### 1.2 Inclusive Education:

No matter whom they are, what they can achieve, or what they need, all students should be encouraged to pursue education, according to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). This means making certain that education, the curriculum, school infrastructure.

All students of all skill levels can use the toilets, play areas, and transportation.

Since all students attend the same schools, they all obtain an inclusive education.

The Ministry of Education promotes inclusive, high-quality education for students with special needs through clarity projects and programs.

NCERT has worked hard to promote students' learning through initiatives like the ePathshala site (<https://epathshala.nic.in/>) and the mobile app platform, which gives students, instructors, and parents free access to NCERT books and e-content. There is an audio version of NCERT textbooks accessible at <https://ciet.nic.in/pages.php?id=audiobook&ln=en&ln=en>. NCERT has also created additional reading materials.

A learner's ability to reach their full potential and access learning opportunities is impacted by disabilities. Therefore, creating an adaptable educational system that meets each CWSN's unique requirements and skills is essential. A fair, inclusive, and high-quality education seeks to identify and remove obstacles, fosters a feeling of community, and establishes the groundwork for all students' success and improved learning outcomes.

### 1.3 21st century skills:

#### 1.3.1 10 essential skills of the 21st-Century

Which skills are necessary for all students in the twenty-first century? The following list of the top 10 skills that students will learn in the classroom in the twenty-first century will help them succeed in the classroom, wonder, and have a contented, joyful future.

- 1. Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Students learn by solving problems together. One of the best ways to learn is to tackle problems as a cohesive, cooperation-focused team. Cooperation towards a common goal is one of the traits of human society. A Stanford study found that people who were more prone to collaborate finished a task 64% faster than those who worked alone. A modern curriculum for the twenty-first century strongly focuses on collaborative projects that harness individual talents to tackle challenges as a group. This method showcases the power of collective intelligence while exposing students to new ideas and varied perspectives.
- 2. Innovation:** With a 21st-century education, learners can express their creativity beyond the confines of traditional art classes. They are constantly devising novel solutions to problems and projects, whether they are addressing an age-old issue or finding a new interpretation for a familiar occurrence. No matter what the future brings, creativity remains an essential skill for inspiring young individuals to think outside conventional boundaries and across different fields. Research indicates that 78% of college-educated employees view innovation as vital to their professional success.
- 3. Hands-On Learning:** In a classroom that emphasizes 21st-century skills, students eagerly engage in practical activities. They thrive when educators connect theoretical knowledge to real-life scenarios and encourage innovation, creativity, and learning through experimentation and trial and error. Experiential learning extends beyond just science labs and art rooms within a modern curriculum. For instance, middle school English students create sock puppets to enact the short story. In a European History course, students design T-shirts featuring artwork that narrates the story of the French Revolution. Active, project-based learning weaves education into present-day experiences through practical involvement.
- 4. Cultural Awareness:** In addition to cultivating an understanding of diverse cultures, classrooms focused on 21st-century skills must prioritize teaching cultural competency, reflecting our diverse and ever-evolving global society. According to projections from the U.S. Census, by 2044, the United States will become a majority-minority nation, with the minority population anticipated to exceed 50%. Students in a 21st-century skills classroom have opportunities to engage in culturally immersive experiences and connect with classmates from various backgrounds. These competencies will be crucial as students contribute to future global success.
- 5. Proficient Written and Oral Communication:** Students learn how to present information, engage in respectful discussions, facilitate and steer conversations, and listen actively. Effective communication is not assumed to be automatic. Through exercises that challenge them to express themselves clearly in both writing and speaking, students are encouraged to move beyond their instinctual feelings or biases regarding a subject or situation. The ability to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively is vital for success. Research shows that more than 73% of employers seek candidates with strong communication abilities.
- 6. Ethical Decision-Making:** Daily, individuals make over 35,000 choices, ranging from simple to complex. A 21st-

century curriculum teaches students to make decisions independently while considering ethical principles such as empathy, equality, justice, and respect. Students explore how even seemingly minor daily decisions can have significant impacts on others. Character development serves as the foundation of a classroom focused on 21st-century skills.

7. **Media and Information Literacy:** In an information-rich world, students learn to assess the credibility of online content and critically analyze data and statistics within a 21st-century classroom. Research from the Stanford Graduate School of Education indicates that many middle school, high school, and college students struggle to critically evaluate digital media, particularly when it comes to identifying misinformation. To effectively study various subjects, students must possess interdisciplinary media and information literacy skills.
8. **Leadership:** In today's world, strong leadership is essential. A primary focus of a classroom dedicated to 21st-century skills is to develop leadership capabilities in areas such as organization, active listening, achieving consensus, and motivating a group to take action. Abilities school, high school, and college students struggle to critically evaluate digital media, particularly when it comes to identifying misinformation. To effectively study various subjects, students must possess interdisciplinary media and information literacy skills.
9. **Analytical Thinking:** To foster analytical thinking, inquiry, and reasoning, the modern classroom of the 21st century strongly prioritizes questioning. Learners engage in analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting concepts to address challenges and complete tasks across all subjects. Educators frequently encourage their students to enhance their analytical and reasoning skills. It is expected that ideas are thoroughly developed and that issues are tackled from multiple viewpoints. Students are not merely recalling facts and figures; they are also questioning and evaluating information, which is an increasingly vital skill.
10. **Personal Responsibility and Initiative:** In a 21st-century classroom, learners are anticipated to take responsibility for their education and dive into self-directed projects. Achieving success necessitates the ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. Students are instructed to demonstrate humility and respond positively and constructively to setbacks in their work and activities. The ability to adapt to change will always be of great importance in our fast-moving world.

#### 1.4 The Demand for Innovation:

1. **Incorporation of Technology:** With the rise of digital tools and resources, teacher training programs must evolve to equip educators with the ability to effectively incorporate technology into their teaching methods. This includes instruction on utilizing educational software, online platforms, and interactive resources to enrich student learning experiences.
2. **Teaching Methodologies:** Innovative teaching methodologies are crucial to accommodate various learning preferences and nurture critical thinking skills among students. Teacher training programs should integrate strategies such as inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, and flipped classrooms to engage learners and encourage deeper comprehension.
3. **Cultural Awareness:** In today's diverse society, educators must possess the knowledge and skills needed to teach varied student populations effectively. Forward-thinking teaching programs should prioritize cultural awareness training, providing educators with the resources to create inclusive learning environments where every student feels valued and respected.
4. **Cooperative Learning:** Collaboration is essential for success in the 21st century, and teaching programs should cultivate a spirit of cooperation among educators. This includes opportunities for peer learning, joint lesson planning, and professional learning communities where educators can exchange best practices and support each other's development.
5. **Continuous Learning:** In an age of rapid transformation, educators must be dedicated to lifelong learning and

professional growth. Innovative teaching programs should offer avenues for ongoing learning and development, allowing educators to stay informed about emerging trends and effective practices in education. Teacher Education Programs play a crucial role in raising awareness and awakening teachers to their new roles and responsibilities. Teacher training needs to strengthen and emphasize the core attributes of a profession, such as systematic theory, rigorous training over a designated time, authority, community endorsement, ethical standards, and the cultivation of knowledge through research and specialization. It is recognized that continuous formal professional training is essential for becoming an effective teacher, as it contributes to personal development and the refinement of communication skills.

## 1.5 Best Practices

### 1.5.1 The Best Methods for Creating an Inclusive Classroom:

**Differentiated Instruction:** Adapting teaching methods to meet the needs of various student populations. Even in situations where general educators are accepting of students with moderate impairments (like learning difficulties) and actively encourage their development, there is evidence to suggest that instruction is not regularly varied to meet the needs of every student. (A research review can be found in Schumm & Vaughn, 1995).

**Collaborative Teaching:** Methods for group instruction and co-teaching frameworks.

**Positive Classroom Environment:** Establishing a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Using tools and technology to help a variety of learners is known as assistive technology use. Professional Development: Teachers receive ongoing education and training.

**Student-Centered Approaches:** Encouraging student independence and participation in the learning process.

**Strategy Instruction:** When working with students who have disabilities, this article defines strategy instruction as an alternative format that minimizes tutorial-style, simplified instructional formats. And maximizes more strategy-based forms. In essence, a strategic format moves the emphasis of teachers from helping students meet the daily demands of subject learning to teach them the skills necessary to meet those demands independently. Students with learning disabilities, for example, performed better in exams in a range of subject areas when they practiced a test-taking strategy, which decreased the need for an adult tutor to assist them with each test (Hughes & Schumaker, 1991).

## 1.6 Group education

### 1.6.1 Teaching that is sensitive to cultural differences Constant training for teachers

**Diversity in Education:** Social identities and cultural diversity in the classroom refer to a range of social identities. Age, race, socioeconomic status, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, handicap, and country of origin are all components of an individual's social identity. Our identities are intersectional and overlap in many ways as they change over time.

Examples of diversity that can occur in the classroom include the following:

- Differences in students' cognitive, physical, and learning capacities are referred to as ability variety.
- **Age diversity:** This refers to the students' range of ages.
- Differences in students' gender identity and expression are referred to as gender diversity.
- Ethnic diversity includes differences in national origin, ethnicity, color, and native languages.
- **Religious diversity:** This describes differences in a person's sense of identity and affiliation with particular religious or sectarian practices and beliefs.
- **Socioeconomic diversity:** This refers to differences in income, level of education, occupations, and stability and security of the home for students or their families.
- **Experience diversity:** This describes the range of life experiences that the students have, such as foster care, adoption, immigration, and military service.
- **Sexual orientation diversity:** This includes differences in students' sexual orientations.

## CONCLUSION

In the 21st century, teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' lives and careers. India's teacher education has seen

significant developments, with best-practice education resources evolving with millennial demographics. Technology can significantly improve the learning environment, but digital literacy is essential for effective teaching practices. The most effective teachers in the 21st century are proficient in digital technology and computer skills.

Inclusive classrooms promote fairness and diversity in the educational system. Best practices include differentiated education, collaborative teaching, assistive technology use, and professional development for educators. Despite obstacles like lack of resources, teacher readiness, curriculum rigidities, administrative hurdles, and attitudes, a collaborative effort between educators, legislators, and the community is needed to successfully adopt and maintain inclusive education, enhancing educational outcomes and fostering a more fair society.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

None.

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None.

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