Learning and Learner of the 21st Century

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
Research Paper	All human beings learn fundamentally, and it is through this concentration that we develop into full human beings. We are required to create an educational system that successfully adapts to the modern times from within the classroom, school structures as well as procedures meant to meet the needs of societies. Every aspect of human life is changing quickly in the 21st century and as a result, learners at various educational stages face both new opportunities and challenges. The term "21st-century learner" was coined to describe a particular category of learner—one who demonstrates a wide range of contemporary 21st-century skills related to internet technology, online collaboration, and ideas of adaptable ways to learning. The student of the twenty-first century has become, in many ways, an advocate for the changes in education that are necessary to fulfil the requirements of an increasingly globalized and knowledge-based society. The 21st century has given birth to the array of new terms like, "digital immigrants", "digital natives", "digital divide", and the topic "learning and learner of the 21st century". This study will give a brief description of learning and learners of the 21st century globally and with special reference to the Indian context.
Keywords: *Learning, 21st Century learner, Learning Skills, Technological Advancement, Digital Society.*	

Introduction

"If we teach today's students, as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow"

John Dewey

India, which ranks as one of the best places to learn in the planet in accordance to the international educational market. Education is viewed as a way of acquiring knowledge and information. The sharing of expertise and abilities from a particular individual to another is an essential component of the process of education. A great deal of what we do has been transformed by recent developments in technology, involving how we interact, work together, acquire knowledge, and as well teach. These events have triggered the widening of our lexicon and the introduction of fresh expressions that include "digital natives", "digital immigrants", "digital divide", and the topic*, "learning and learner of the 21st century".* By the beginning of the millennium, the phrase "21st century learner" emerged in reference to a specific category of learner, who displays an array of modern 21st century modern skills that are related to use internet technology, collaboration and communication via the internet, and thoughts of versatile ways to knowledge. In many respects, the 21st century learner has transformed into an ambassador for the educational changes that are demanded in order to keep up with the requirements of a rapidly developing internationalized and online society. In the educational setting of the 21st century, learners proactively create and participate in their learning experience. The student of the 21st century is moulded by an array of components, and the incorporation of technology has provided learning an entirely novel significance.

Conditions under which 21st Century Learning Emerged

Since the late 1980s, there have been numerous significant adjustments to educational policy reforms. The setting in which policy is formed has undergone a substantial transition, moving from national to post-national areas (Rizwi & Lingard, 2009). Another is a change in the way that education is perceived and the ways that it may support the creation of human capital and economic efficiency. Together, these important developments had a profound impact on society and education and have fundamentally changed how policies are thought out globally. The particular circumstances that have given rise to the learner of the twenty-first century:

Globalisation: The fast-growing pace of technological development has intensified the creation of border free economies by removing the communication barriers and leading to establishment of trade contacts between different dispersed geographical areas (Lauder et al., 2012). This Worldwide Integration has influenced all spheres of life that is why we see change in attitudes about where people would like to reside, how they interact and how many nations aim to achieve higher rates of economic growth in the future and especially we witnessed large number of changes in all spheres of education due to globalisation.

Knowledge Economy: The general aim of education in every country is impacted by the worldwide change brought about by the advent of the knowledge economy, which makes countries more competitive. Economic efficiency has now replaced educational equity as the main objective. It was recognized that increases in educational efficiency were necessary to generate better human capital—that is, "the knowledge, information, ideas, skills, and health of individuals" (Becker, 2006, p. 292) capable of generating greater economic growth.

Features of Learning and Learner of 21st Century

To learn how to teach in the 21st century, students are encouraged to move away from the paradigm of expecting a single, convergent solution and towards deeper meaning-making (Peters, 2010). According to our analysis of the research, 21st-century learning and learners need to have the following characteristics:

Knowledge Construction: Instead of copying or absorbing information, students who engage in knowledge construction produce new knowledge on their own (Prettyman et al., 2012; Shear et al., 2010). Students develop a greater comprehension of the material when they engage in knowledge construction as opposed to replication. In addition to encouraging self-regulated and self-directed learners, learning environments built for knowledge production also help students develop resilience (Carpenter & Pease, 2013).

Real-World Problem Solving: Real-world problem solving, also known as project- Based Learning (Warin, Talbi, Kolski, & Hoogstoel, 2016), is typified by students attempting to address issues for which there isn't a current answer and in which they can put their own strategy into practice (Shear et al., 2010). Students attempt to identify the issue, suggest a solution for a particular customer, test the solution, and present their findings when addressing real-world problems (Prettyman et al., 2012; Warin et al., 2016). Students are encouraged to be innovative and learn from their mistakes through the process' design component (Carroll, 2015).

Self-Regulation and Collaboration: Essential 21st-century ability for self-directed learners is self-regulation. Self-regulated students organize how they solve problems, track their development, and consider their work after receiving criticism (Shear et al., 2010; Zimmerman, 2000). Pupils who have mastered self-regulated learning are capable of taking the initiative to solve problems and gain knowledge.

Skilled Communication: "Even the most brilliant scientific discovery has little value if it is not accurately and widely communicated" (McNutt, 2013, p. 13). The capacity to link a product to the demands of a particular audience or client is a crucial component of effective communication (Warin et al., 2016). In order to make their communication appropriate for the audience, students must consider both the media they are utilizing and the concepts they are conveying (Claro et al., 2012; van et al., 2017).

Objective:

To provide over all vision of learning and learners of 21st century with special reference to Indian context.

Methodology:

As the objective of the study was to reflect upon the global characteristics of learning and learners of 21st century with special reference to Indian context, therefore the different types of secondary sources of data used in the various local, national and international journal articles, websites, e-books, reports of various organization and commission and articles published in different disciplines.

Overall vision of learning and learners of 21st century

The concept of "21st-century skills" typically encompasses vital abilities like collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving, which proponents argue schools must impart to enable students to excel in contemporary society. However, the broader notion of how learning in the 21st century should be structured is subject to varying interpretations and contentious debate. *By Elizabeth Rich — October 11, 2010*

Universal Design for Learning

"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn". Ignacio Estrada

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Revolutionising curriculum design, prioritising student diversity, and developing adaptive, responsive curricula customised to individual learners' needs is a game-changing paradigm shift (Strangeman et al, 2020). Classrooms in today's educational setting are rich tapestries of diversity that include students from varied backgrounds, ethnicities, socioeconomic positions, and disabilities. However, many traditional curricula continue to focus primarily on the needs of a perceived 'normal' or 'average' student, putting pupils who do not fit these norms at a significant disadvantage. This established attitude creates strong barriers that impede access and achievement for those children.

21st-Century Students as Consumers of Information: According to Carol Ann Tomlinson, educational institutions in the twenty-first century are tasked with equipping students with the ability to critically assess information and effectively generate knowledge with confidence. These institutions must adapt to the diverse spectrum of cultures, languages, experiences, economic backgrounds, and interests among their student body to ensure equitable access to enriching learning experiences for all students. As recent studies have shown, learners, knowledge, assessment, instruction, and community dynamics should all be given top priority in a 21st-century classroom (National Research Council, 2000).

Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Literacy: ICT literacy encompasses the capacity to effortlessly access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and innovate with information using digital communication and technologies (ETS, 2007). It revolves around employing increasingly advanced cognitive abilities to comprehend and utilize information, media, and technologies within one's environment.

Home Schooling: For parents and students seeking personalized education tailored to individual needs, homeschooling emerges as a prominent alternative choice (*Home School Reading Time, Button*, 2020). Rooted in cultural traditions and spanning throughout history, home-based education has significantly shaped Western civilization (Gordon & Gordon). In contemporary times, homeschooling involves parents taking the lead in educating their children rather than sending them to public schools (Ray, 2000). During the American Colonial era, home education predominantly centered on teaching children using the Bible for reading, while fathers typically handled instruction in writing, math, and vocational skills (Ray, 2017).

Global Competence: Individuals that are globally well-judged have a wide range of skills; they see themselves as global citizens rather than being limited to national or local identities. Such individuals demonstrate conscientiousness by acknowledging past approaches and diverse viewpoints, engaging in ethical and

collaborative endeavors, creatively contributing to local, regional, or global progress (Mansilla and Jackson, 2011).

Seek and Value Diversity: In today's world, students must engage in learning activities that foster the skills required for peaceful coexistence and cooperation in culturally diverse communities and professional settings. They must realise how important it is to actively seek out and assimilate the skills and perspectives of people from all backgrounds, as well as appreciate them (Barrett et al., 2014). As a result, educators must devise cooperative and real-world learning activities that will help students develop their understanding, skills, and morality.

Civic and Digital Citizenship: Civic literacy and digital literacy are intertwined, constituting vital proficiencies for twenty-first-century learners. Civic literacy entails the mastery of exercising rights and fulfilling duties at local, state, and national levels, fostering the drive, mindset, and competencies for active civic engagement, and comprehending the local and global implications of civic issues (P21, 2007a, 2013). Additionally, digital citizenship emerges as a critical skill set, encompassing the ability to engage constructively and responsibly in online environments (Shah et al., 2022). It is imperative to equip students with the capacity to participate intelligently and ethically as conscientious members of virtual communities (P21, 2013). This involves acquiring the skills to assess the credibility and validity of online information and utilizing acquired knowledge responsibly (Davies, Fidler, and Gorbis, 2011).

21st Century Learning in Indian Context

In the present scenario we are witnessing that there is a drastic change in the educational scenario of the country. The teacher dominated system of education is now replaced by more flexible and dynamic approach. The learners of the contemporary are not solely dependent on teacher rather they explore different ways of learning and can learn as per the pace and strategies which suits to them.

Dynamic Role of Teacher: Teacher preparation is the key to success when a school chooses to start teaching its students 21st century skills. Before teaching learner 21st century skills, teachers themselves should be proficient in them. For teachers to be successful there needs to be a well-organized strategy. Teaching in the twenty-first century involves more than just dispensing knowledge and grading homework; it also entails creating an environment where students feel involved and empowered.

Project Based Learning in 21st Century: Project-based learning (PBL) is the most efficient approach to teach students 21st century skills, such as assigning projects that require students to use a variety of avenues to present their work to others, think creatively, and solve problems. To accommodate such activities, teachers' training must undergo considerable changes, for example, teachers would direct the process of knowledge generation in a project-based learning classroom, which differs greatly from what they do in traditional classrooms.

Discussion and Conclusion

The utilization of various technologies to support education has increased significantly over time. Compared to previous methods, the 21st century technique is more student-centered, allowing students to fully immerse themselves in ICT, Numeracy, problem solving, and cooperation. The twenty-first century is distinguished by a number of characteristics shared by people who live in a technologically and media-infused environment, including: 1) quick access to a wealth of information, 2) rapid advancements in technology tools, and 3) the ability to collaborate and contribute at unprecedented levels. According to a report by Rosenberg & Foshay (2007), E-learning improves students' proficiency, knowledge, and competency, particularly in activities involving 21st-century skills. According to Ananga & Biney (2017), the integrated approach of 21st-century learning facilitates the convergence of traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with computer-mediated activities. Moreover, individuals from diverse perspectives benefit from the convenience and flexibility online platforms offer (Wani et al., 2022). This leads to a flow in e-learning engagement, profoundly influencing contemporary educational practices. In the area of 21st-century learning, students not only acquire subject matter knowledge but also engage in the production, synthesis, and evaluation of information across various disciplines and sources, while fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity. In addition to mastering the traditional "three Rs" of reading, writing, and arithmetic, students also develop proficiency in the "three Cs" of creativity, communication, and collaboration. According to Ma at al. (2019), Students can learn from others and have possibilities to cooperate, integrate, engage, use, produce, and share information in the twenty-first century through internet communications. Students in the twenty-first century can explore concepts, have discussions, use various learning techniques, ask questions, and give helpful criticism while using ICT for problem-solving and communication. Learning in the 21st century entails exploring the past to illuminate our path forward. Embracing a model of 21st-century learning necessitates considering the components that could catalyze such a transformation: cultivating learners who embrace intellectual risk-taking, nurturing learning dispositions, and fostering school communities where everyone is engaged as a learner. Moreover, there is a perceptible increase in the emphasis placed on fostering students' acquisition of 21st-century skills in current educational practices.

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