

ROLE OF TEACHERS IN 21ST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION :

There have been a great number of changes in education systems worldwide recently. Schools used to be the source of knowledge, a place where children were educated more or less without parental control. Schools used to prepare learners for exams (both final exams in secondary education and entrance exams for university admissions). Thus, teaching was mostly exam preparation or exam training, especially in the final years of the secondary schools.

Schools in the 21st century are laced with a curriculum for life aimed at engaging students in addressing real-world problems, issues important to humanity, and questions that matter. In the 21st Century classroom, teachers need to be facilitators of student learning and creators of productive classroom environments.

The focus of the 21st Century classroom is on students experiencing the environment and challenges they will face when they enter the global world market as workers. The present curriculum used in this classroom aims to develop their higher order thinking skills, effective communication skills, and knowledge of technology that students will need in their workplace. This in turn sets the challenge for the teachers to embrace new teaching strategies. It is said that teaching as a profession makes other profession. Teachers play a unique role of preparing students to become worthy members of all professions of the world. They therefore shoulder a responsibility and opportunity to mould future generations.

REQUIREMENT OF CHANGE IN TRADITIONAL TEACHING METHOD :

Globalization and advent of new technology plays an important role in teaching methods. Globalization proved as a space time shrinkage means shrinkage in both space and time bringing nations, communities, economies together. New technology breakthrough and more importantly internet brings new sources of information at every doorstep.

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.

Students across the achievement and socioeconomic spectrum need and deserve motivating, supportive instructional environments, engaging content, and the opportunity to learn in settings that support collaboration with peers, teachers, and the larger world community. Students today live digitally every day. They use the Internet, text messaging, social networking, and multimedia fluidly in their lives outside of school and they expect a parallel level of technology opportunity in their academic lives. There is a disconnect between the way students live and the way they learn, and student engagement ultimately suffers. Closing this gap is a challenge for our current school systems.

In fact, this same report notes that teachers are the single most important factor in student achievement. Lower achieving students are most likely to benefit from improvements in teacher effectiveness. In addition, good teachers can make a difference of one grade-level equivalent in annual achievement gains. Teacher quality continues to rank as the most reliable predictor of student achievement.

We can summarize various traits for 21st century teacher :

1] Driven to Learn - teachers must be driven to learn in order to teach effectively in the 21st Century. It is no longer acceptable to teach only from a textbook, to rely on the same worksheets and methods year after year without *at least* questioning them and researching why they are the best resource available. There is simply too much new information, too many new strategies, and new learning available to us to ignore the implications it may have for students in our classes.

2] A Media Creation Expert - Whether posted online or simply used in the classroom, our materials must be highly engaging and effective. PowerPoint and Word are becoming antiquated as newer and more powerful presentation and editing suites become available to teachers. It is our responsibility to compete (where necessary) with the quality of video games and media construction in order to hook students into great learning. As media conscious teachers, we can win student attention by working with them, not against them, for their learning

3] An Empathetic Mentor – “One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings.”Gone are the days when teachers

dole out assignments and send students on their merry way. A modern educator realizes the plethora of factors impacting students in our current world, and strives to tailor learning where possible toward individualized needs and interests. This student-centered focus also creates learning opportunities for the teacher to learn with students, developing their teaching and collaborative skills.

4] Reflective teachers - with the ability to comprehend the applied nature of education, and utilize the knowledge gained.

5] Encourage students' curiosity and intrinsic motivation to learn- The teacher helps students become independent, creative, and critical thinkers by providing experiences that develop his/her students' independent, critical and creative thinking and problem solving skills. Students are actively involved in their own learning within a climate that respects their unique developmental needs and fosters positive expectations and mutual respect.

6] Effective communication skills- We need teachers who has agility and adaptability, effective oral and written communication. We need teachers who can use language to foster self-expression, identity development, and learning in her students.

7] Recognize and respect the individual differences- In schools, a teacher has to perform multifarious tasks for all round development of the children. Besides the normal day to day activities, it is their responsibility to handle children with special needs effectively in classroom as well as outside the classroom. These children may act and behave differently.

They exhibit some special characteristics, which may be different from their normal counterparts. Therefore, the successful inclusion of children with special needs into the regular school setting is largely dependent on the attitudes of teachers and their recognition of the child's right to participation.

NEW MODELS AND POSSIBILITIES :

Co-operative teaching :

Just as the classroom is changing, so must the teacher adapt their roles and responsibilities? Teachers are no longer teaching in isolation. They now co-teach, team teach, and collaborate with other department members. The revised Blooms Taxonomy wants teachers to be creators of knowledge and thinking professionals (earlier the continuum of thinking skill would start from knowledge and ends at evaluation; but as per the changing times, the revised version starts from remembering and ends at creating). With globalization we see an emerging 'global society' driven by technology and communication developments.

This 'global society' is shaping the students as 'global citizens' and intelligent persons with multi-skills and knowledge to apply to the competitive and information-based society. Teachers today find themselves in an education system in which they are no longer the sole 'fountain of information' but the facilitators and pointers towards information. In view of these changing facts, we need teachers who can survive moreover excel in the present times.

Use of information technology :

As many of the student now use internet services, they have more than one source of knowledge. And compared to traditional teaching method, student find other this new method much better as it includes multimedia support like video documentaries, audio lectures and data visualization techniques often including interactive features. So, it is quite useful if we bring that experience into classrooms and use these tools along with students. By this not only students will get more interested in learning but also, will have the whole set of knowledge which may not be possible in traditional method because of curriculum limitations. It will also help in better understanding of subjects rather than just text-book teaching for subjects such as biology, science and even social science. For language education and mathematics it will prove as supplementary tool.

Educator communities of practice :

This includes site-based approach for professionalism and information source for teachers. This model includes building a shared platform amongst various related schools may be in the same geographical area or goals online. On this platform, teachers can share their views and also some information. For example, one teacher has successfully implemented a new teaching strategy in his/her class then he/she can share it with other teachers to help them improve their methods. They can also share information about their subjects and discuss on some topic

Online courses :

As a yet new trend, online teaching is getting more and more response. With online video lectures and notes and even exams for students can be quite useful. Teachers can easily assess students work. This approach is also helpful in many developing or under-developed countries which lack basic infrastructure and so, students can learn online from their teachers and also appear for exams. This can help to great extent in fulfilling dream of millions for education. Teachers' responsibility so becomes that they should be able and motivated to use these new modes of education.

CONCLUSION :

The need of a generation of teachers who aim to develop learners instead of teaching them, who help their pupils to become independent (learning to learn), who provide students with motivation and interest for life-long learning and urge them to become autonomous learners, is essential in the education of the future

For centuries, schools have been structured and perceived as places for teaching. The challenge in 21st century is restructuring schools as learning places... Technology's role and so teachers' responsibility in the transformation is critical and valuable in creating learning environments that support teaching efficacy and productivity.

In the present times, goals of teachers can be shortlisted as:

- Create strategic readers.
- Create strategic writers.
- Create independent thinkers.
- Create problem solvers.
- Give students the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to become independent learners.
- Induce Critical Thinking and Problem Solving attitude

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