

# Learning for the 22<sup>nd</sup> century while Teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

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“21<sup>st</sup>-century skills” is a catchphrase across the academic world. A global benchmark in the academics, the curriculum documents, the summaries, and reports. Every school policy and government reform in education strives for achieving the targets set for 2030 decided by all the member countries during the UNESCO World Declaration under “Sustainable Development Goals” in 2015 Incheon.

The four-fold skills i.e., critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity are lexical around which all dialogues across subjects from schooling to higher education are mostly organized. Out of the box thinking, teamwork, people skills, & strong critical and analytical skills can be considered as the basic matrix of successful education.

## **a. The knock-on effect:**

However, the dialogue in the last five years has been progressively shifting from 21st to the 22nd



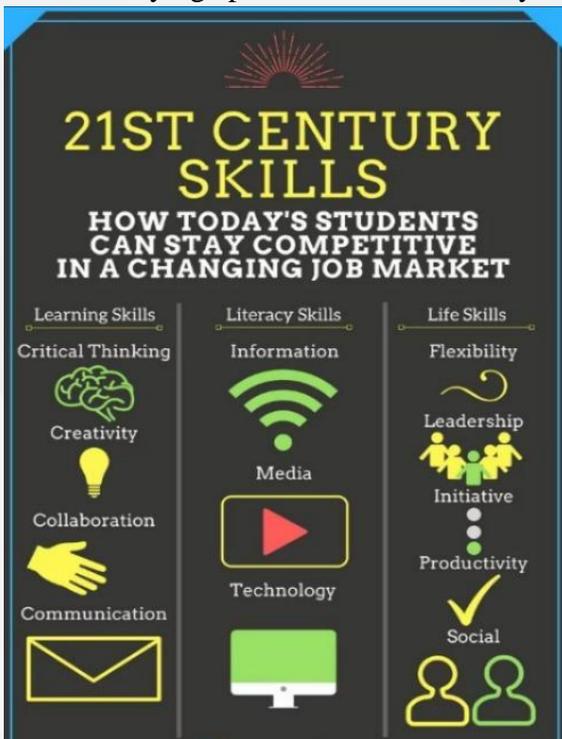
Smart Skills for a Smart Generation

century because the three C’s are considered just as traits and not skills. Innovation, exploration, civic engagement and global citizenship are progressive futuristic skills that need to be inculcated in our children. For nurturing these skills among students, the teachers themselves need to be the innovators, mentors, entrepreneurs, catalysts and illuminators.

Shift in our Education Policy, the approach is apparent and sturdy. The latest shift to MHRD’s initiated MOOCs in higher education and NCERT’s E-Path Shala for schools are flagbearers of digital India in the education sector. The Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE), though it no longer exists, was a robust experiment. No Detention Policy, SMART classrooms, Intensive and Rigorous Teacher Training, Managing the Drop out ratios of schools, curriculum, etc. The work done in the direction of sustainable education has been tremendous and indeed catching up with the 21st-century aspirations.

## **b. 21st-century skills for generation Z:**

The underlying spirit of the 21st-century skills is the changing paradigm of education. It is about educating young minds for future market conditions. The idea is to prepare teachers belonging to the past to nurture the students belonging to the future. Equipping them with the skills they need when they foresee the future of our children.

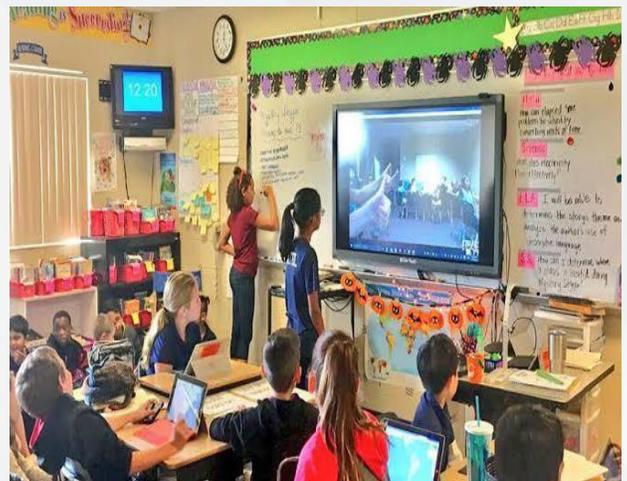


Do you think educating the children with books and theories and syllabus specific knowledge is enough? Are we improving the future of our children? Are we making them a future-ready generation? Do we introspect and reflect upon our concept of education? Is education limited to classrooms, exam halls and progress charts stuck in school premises? Does it only reside in the science laboratories, the libraries and scholar houses? These are the questions that we need to answer to think ahead while preparing ourselves for generations to cover.

According to some statistics by 2025, one in four world workers would be Indian which means that by the end of 2050 most of our current students at the school will form a large chunk of the future global workforce.

## **c. The shift to 22<sup>nd</sup> century skills for generation Alpha:**

The image depicts the use of technology in Primary classrooms. This view is not so rare in the Indian scenario as well. The context and setting might differ, but the *culmination* of technology in classrooms is a standard worldwide.



Interactive classrooms with AV Aids

How can we prepare ourselves and our children for a world of unprecedented transformations and radical uncertainties? Everything is in flux, and everything is new. You are busy reinventing yourself. Whereas in the global scenario, STEM classrooms, customized and personalized online learning courses, integration of Artificial intelligence, AR AND VR, Cloud Technology and Robotics have made it imperative for the teachers to also think 20 years ahead. In the past 5 years, the digital universe has grown by 2000%.

Most of the teachers say their homework requires technology and many students require the use of technology to do homework.

The advent of technology has led to lesser time for socialization and integration of a child in society. Thus, the surge in Emotional and Social Learning, as well as Inclusive Global Citizenship teaching skills, have to be inculcated in our teachers to match up with the pragmatic shift from 21st to 22nd-century education. The teachers also must inculcate DIGITAL and technological skills as well as Socio-emotional and a gamut of meta-skills in our system in addition to the 4 Cs. A student entering kindergarten now will graduate from college in about 2047. Many of the jobs that students will have in the future, do not even exist right now. They will use technology that hasn't been invented yet to find solutions to problems that haven't emerged yet. The Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity of our rapidly changing present and meteorically approaching future has already generated the acronym VUCA into educational research.

#### **d. Making future-ready learners - Towards generation beta :**

Let us imagine a world after this century. The idea may seem to be Columbia pictures creation but at the same time very imaginable. The zoom out of the current situation can land us in our future



An artist's representation of Generation Beta

where we can see our distant future generations as superhuman breeds with a combination of traits, skills and capabilities unknown, unheard of and unimaginably vast.

This picture shows the mixed generation beta as described by a few studies and surveys conducted in Europe and the US. This generation will be multi-tasking, fast-paced, highly mechanized, and digitized generation which will use Meta skills to interact. They are intellectual, sci-fi, robotic, human well as alien-like superpowers and qualities far beyond the cognition of present generations. Imagine at what pace our skills need to be reshaped to cater to our future generations.

The teachers of the present will shape our future. Therefore, it is important to look forward to the most recent developments in learning. We need to dwell in the present but to fly towards the future in thoughts and ideas.

#### **e. The Future We Want!!**

The future is building itself through us slowly and gradually and it won't take much longer for it to be the other way around. The current high school student is no longer just a recipient but a creator and a synthesizer of knowledge. Such a generation of learners can only be created by teachers who

are already looking forward to the future while curating a new present everyday with the practices, experiments and an action which not only solves the challenge at hand but also paves the way for the entire teaching community to indulge in holistic ends.

So, before the time take us over, we must take control of it completely and bind it tight by a cross-linked amalgamation of the future into our present. That can happen only by living in the 21st century but planning for the 22nd. So far, we did not realize the power of planning. Now with this



Moving towards a Glocal World

golden realization, we can almost see our next ten years lucidly. This newly acquired skill of living with technology and futuristic thinking has given us a better grip to unlearn and relearn. The sheer rapidity of change around us has made us more adaptive, dexterous, and receptive to newer challenges. The latest technologies, disruptions, disasters, as well as unforeseen events, have now given us a greater belief in humankind and a larger global citizenship promise. We are no longer islands of routine life, instead we live in a highly connected, inter-linked and unified world

with which we respond in the same tone and tenor as it engages with you.

### About the Author



**Nudrat Saleem** is the faculty, English at ITEI with over 8 years of teaching experience in India and Saudi Arabia. She has an interest in literary as well as functional use of language with a focus on Communication and Soft skills. She has been actively making YouTube videos on this topic. She is curious about the technology of Blockchain and IoT and has co-authored articles on the same. She is also pursuing PhD. in Teacher Education and Communication skills in HEIs from Jamia Millia Islamia.

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