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Challenges for 21st Century Education

Development of speech is one of the greatest revolutions in the evolution of human race. Speech goaded humans to develop language by inventing script. This unleashed the spread of knowledge which took mythical proportions due to printing and the spread will never cease. Teacher is the principal vehicle in increasing the width and depth of knowledge. If we broadly term this ‘**education**’ it is the mother of leadership and it is also the transmitter of civilization. In order to have effective leadership to transmit civilization we must have effective teacher. This paper attempts to define ‘who is an effective teacher?’ and identify the characteristics which make a teacher effective.



“Who is an effective person?” An effective person is he who pursues a worthy goal and achieves substantial success in not only achieving the goal he set for himself but also the achievement outlasts him. In other words his success will be bequeathed and he would become a role model for succeeding generations. By extension it is argued that a successful teacher is he who pursues a goal of teaching set by him or by others. It is not only possible in the modern era to have an individual goal independent of the organization for which a teacher works or the government which makes the policies of education. However a teacher can have a goal of implementing the policies in unique style and even lay a new path of instruction, Montessori as for instance.

The quality of teaching is most critical school-based factor contributing to student learning. Almost all the countries have developed highly sophisticated (effective) evaluation standards to assess the learning of students and effectiveness of teachers. It is not possible to understand, let alone appreciate, the effectiveness of a teacher without such a measuring stick.

How to identify the effective teacher in the absence of agreed criteria is a ticklish issue but what the research in other countries has been revealing can give us valuable guidance. Analyzing the findings vis-à-vis our traditional 'guru-sishya-parampara' will certainly enable us to develop a meaningful system of evaluation (call it state of the art if you like) which may be improvised as the time go by.

There is no agreed standard of teacher evaluation need not deter us from identifying the characteristics of an effective teacher. The factors in assessing the effectiveness of a teacher include verbal abilities. Content knowledge, continued professional development, teaching experience and teacher certification as mentioned above IT revolution added a dimension, the ramifications of which on education as are still to be grassed

We made an earnest attempt in juxtaposing the analysis and the Indian Guru-Sishya-Parampara the western thought closest to our tradition we found ids the aphorism of Kahlil Gibran when he said: That the teacher who is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind.”

The government and the people of India, since independence, have instantly been trying to bring out the best education possible to the country. This is the spirit we found from the article 45 of directive principles to the recent CCE and the Right to education. But we are from the firm opinion that all these attempts will be bear fruit only when teacher effectiveness is properly and rationally assessed. It is also humbly submitted that attempts to find out effectiveness to teacher without first identifying the criteria to assess teacher is like trying to find out in a dark room a black cat which is not there.

In system of teaching and learning the teacher and the taught cannot be independent entities. There have been phenomenal changes in pedagogies and pedagogical techniques over the years. It revolution adding a dimension the ramification of which on educational are still to be grasped. Nevertheless, the tools of IT are used in teaching in ways hither to unthought-of. Shouldn't we make use of the IT boon to reinvent the chemistry of student-teacher-relationship so that the alchemy of knowledge will be immortal!

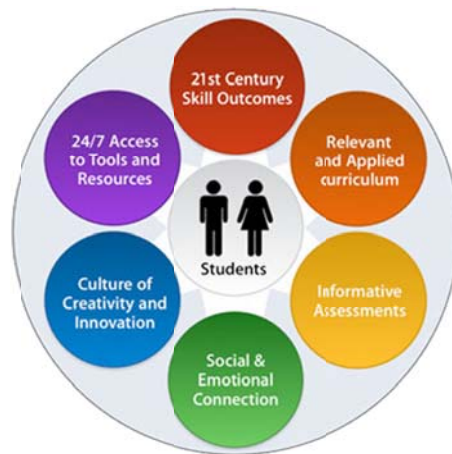
While proposing that we must have a standard to assess teacher our humble appeal to the august ought to be an essential part of our education system as the system of student assessment is. Or else the word of Alexander the great “ I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well,” will continue to remain in books without having much practice value.

We conclude the call with the sloka from Taittiriya Upanishad because the book considers that student and teachers as one and they make every move in their learning in unison:

**Āj Iguqoorq] IguĀ Hkuqd~rq] Igohj~;e djokofgA
rstl~ofu onfreLrq ek ofnof"kofgAA
Āj 'kkafr 'kkafr 'kkafr**

In other words, knowledge is within us and the guru is only a guide to lead the student into the realm of knowledge which is nothing but bliss!

The term **21st century skills** refers 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, particularly in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces. Generally speaking, 21st century skills can be applied in all academic subject areas, and in all educational, career, and civic settings throughout a student’s life.



While the specific skills deemed to be “21st century skills” may be defined, categorized, and determined differently from person to person, place to place, or school to school the term does reflect a general—if somewhat loose and shifting—consensus. The following list provides a brief illustrative overview of the knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits commonly associated with 21st century skills:

- Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information
- Creativity, artistry, curiosity, imagination, innovation, personal expression
- Perseverance, self-direction, planning, self-discipline, adaptability, initiative
- Oral and written communication, public speaking and presenting, listening
- Leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, virtual workspaces

- Information and communication technology (ITC) literacy, media and internet literacy, visual interpretation, data interpretation and analysis, computer programming
- Global awareness, multicultural literacy, humanitarianism
- Scientific literacy and reasoning, the scientific method
- Environmental and conservation literacy, ecosystems understanding
- Health and wellness literacy, including nutrition, diet, exercise, and public health and safety

While 21st century skills are relevant to all areas of schooling and academic study, and the skills may be taught in a wide variety of in-school and outside-of-school settings, there are a few primary ways in which 21st century skills intersect with efforts to improve schools:

- Teachers may be more intentional about teaching cross-disciplinary skills in subject-area courses. For example, in a science course students might be required to learn research methods that can also be applied in other disciplines; articulate technical scientific concepts in verbal, written, and graphic forms; present lab results to a panel of working scientists; or use sophisticated technologies, software programs, and multimedia applications as an extension of an assigned project.
- States, accrediting organizations, and schools may require 21st century skills to be taught and assessed in courses. For example, states can adopt learning standards that explicitly describe cross-disciplinary skills, and assessments may be designed or modified to evaluate whether students have acquired and mastered certain skills.
- Schools and teachers may use educational approaches that inherently encourage or facilitate the acquisition of cross-disciplinary skills. For example, educational strategies such as authentic learning, demonstrations of learning, or project-based learning tend to be cross-disciplinary in nature, and students—in the process of completing a research project, for example—may have to use a variety of applied skills, multiple technologies, and new ways of analyzing and processing information, while also taking initiative, thinking creatively, planning out the process, and working collaboratively in teams with other students.
- Schools may allow students to pursue alternative learning pathways in which students earn academic credit and satisfy graduation requirements by completing an internship, apprenticeship, or volunteer experience, for example. In this case, students might acquire a variety of practical, job-related skills and work habits, while also completing academic coursework and meeting the same learning standards required of students in more traditional academic courses.

The world we live in and that our students will inherit massive challenges and revolutionary changes in technology, communication, economy environment, social governance etc. For this world, the students need to have multifaceted knowledge to address the challenges they will face in life. So there is a necessity of maintaining harmonious correspondence between what they need and what they are being taught.

I CAN CONCLUDE BY SAYING EDUCATIONAL PROCESS SHOULD BE LEARNER CENTERED RATHER THAN TEACHER CENTERED.