

Unit 1: 21st Century Classroom: Trends and Issues

By the end of this unit, you will have:

- A deeper understanding of evolving trends in English education pedagogy, including multilingualism, EMI, and other contemporary approaches.
- Insight into key differences between traditional and modern classroom practices.
- Knowledge of innovative teaching strategies, including flipped classrooms and blended learning approaches.

Learn Task 1

This unit begins with a video providing a general introduction to key concepts that will be explored in more detail in the next unit. Take accurate notes to answer these questions:

1. What is pedagogy?
2. How has the meaning of "pedagogy" evolved over time?
3. What are the core ideas of behaviourism, liberationism, social constructivism, and connectivism?

Please follow the link and play the video from the very beginning:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcpwEoW1uY8&t=388s>

Important Note: Before you move into Task 2, it is important to disclaim that the comparison between 20th and 21st-century classrooms below highlights the evolution of pedagogy. This material aims to support educators in integrating new ideas while valuing traditional practices and existing expertise. This unit acknowledges the strengths of the 20th-century classroom and the valuable knowledge teachers bring. The goal is to encourage experimentation with innovative methods. By blending proven techniques with 21st-century advancements, this unit can help create dynamic learning environments that prepare students for the modern world.

Task 2

- A. Based on your understanding of your context and the theories discussed in the video, consider the changes needed to create a more effective classroom.

First, cover the right-hand column before reading on. Then, examine the 20th Century Classroom column (which largely stereotypes and lumps together many kinds of classrooms) in the provided table. Before viewing the 21st Century Classroom column, try to predict the modern equivalents for each row. Focus on areas such as technology use, student engagement, learning styles, assessment methods, and collaboration. Once you've completed the 21st Century Classroom column, compare your ideas with the provided answers. Can you think of any additional points not listed in the table?



20th Century Classroom	21st Century Classroom
Time-based (organised around a fixed amount of time where students progressed through the curriculum based on time rather than mastery, assessments, and advancement of skills)	Outcome-based (focuses on what students can demonstrate by the end of the learning process rather than how much time they spend in class. This approach emphasises clear learning objectives, skills, and competencies, ensuring students achieve specific outcomes before progressing)
Focus: memorisation of discrete facts	Focus: education prioritises deep understanding, critical thinking, and personal development over rote memorisation
Passive learning	Active learning
Learners work in isolation	Learners work collaboratively
Teacher-centred: the teacher is the centre of attention and provider of information	Student-centred: the teacher is a facilitator/coach
Little to no student freedom	Freedom (students have flexibility in how they learn, explore, and demonstrate their understanding while working towards educational objectives)
Fragmented curriculum (subjects taught separately, with little connection between them divided into distinct disciplines (e.g., maths, science, history) without integration)	Integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum (connects different subjects, allowing students to see relationships between concepts and apply knowledge across disciplines)
Grades (numerical or letter) averaged over all work (performance was measured by calculating the average of all their scores over a period of time)	Grades based on what was learned (assessment focuses on students' mastery of skills and understanding of concepts)
Typically one chance for assessment per task	May allow for resubmission; repeatable tasks
The teacher is the judge; no one else sees/assesses the student's work	Self, peer, and other assessments; public audience; authentic assessments
Literacy is the 3 R's – reading, writing, and math	Multiple literacies (includes traditional reading and writing literacy alongside digital, media, technological, financial, and cultural literacy,



	preparing students for a complex, interconnected world)
Driven by standardised testing	Driven by exploration, creativity, and 21st-century skills

B. We are going to take a closer look at behaviourism and social constructivism in Unit 2, but you may want to watch more videos about the following theories (which may be new to you):

Connectivism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvhY70C6Drk>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRAfYcmBG_8

Liberationism (aka Critical Pedagogy)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyZEJHcY6q8>

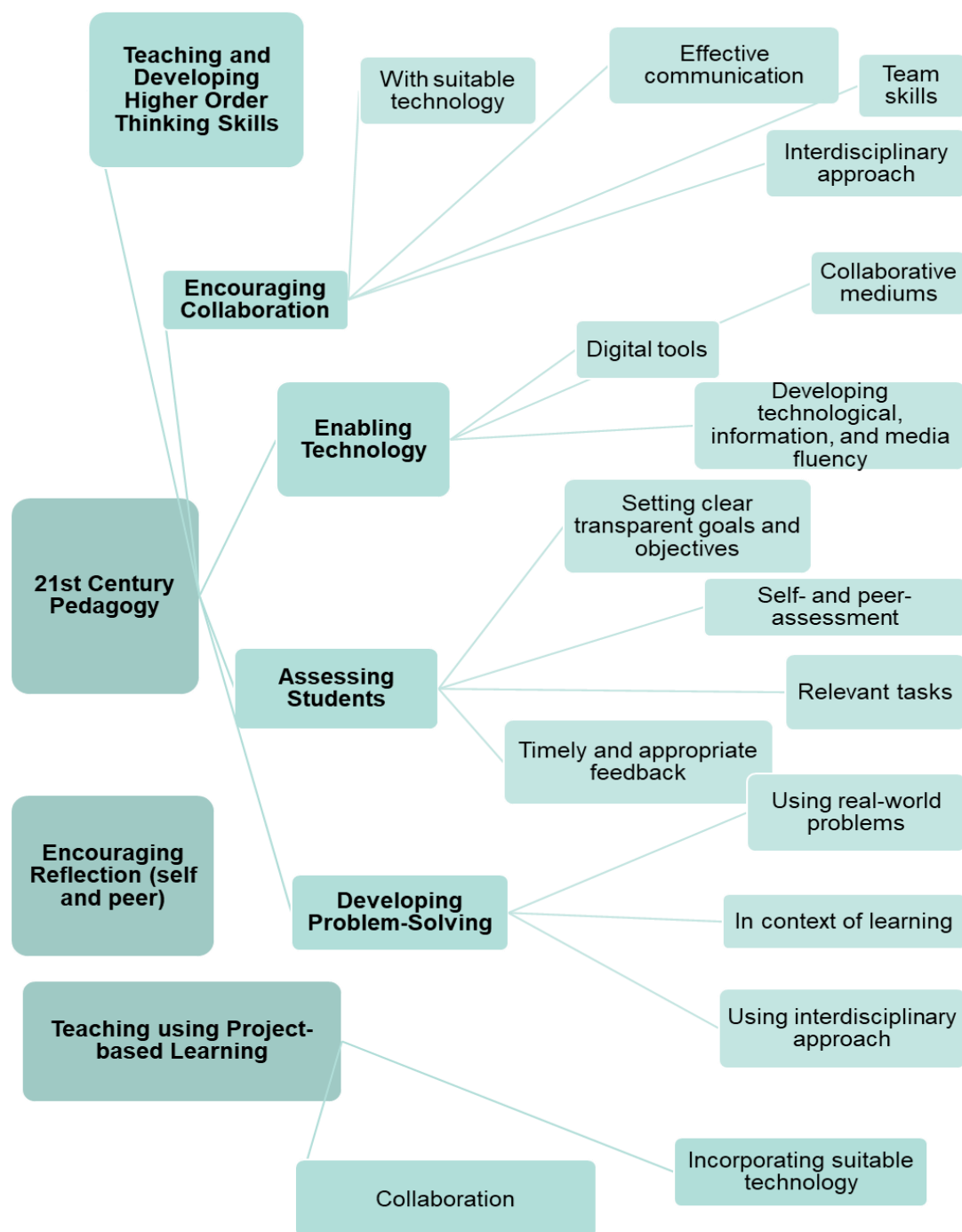
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXUv7plveMA>

Apply

Activity 1

- A. Take your time to carefully study the diagram below, paying close attention to the key elements listed. You'll notice that 21st-century pedagogy is represented as an interplay of various concepts. Do you understand all these concepts? If not, don't hesitate to explore and research them further to deepen your understanding.





Adapted from Zermani (2017)



- B. To help structure your understanding, answer the following questions while considering the interplaying roles these key concepts play in the modern classroom:

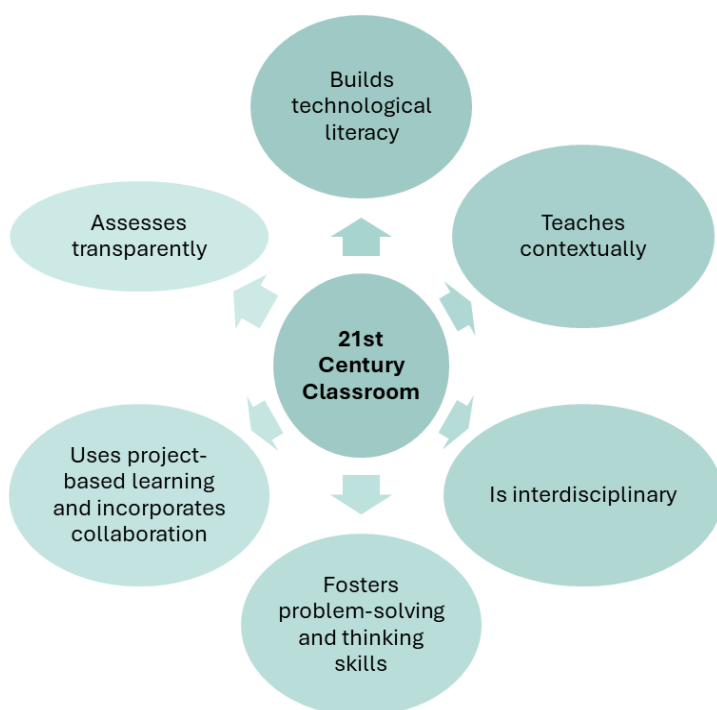
Key Elements	Response
Thinking Skills What strategies from the diagram can you use to develop higher-order thinking skills in your students? How do you develop students' thinking skills?	
Collaboration How does the diagram suggest encouraging collaboration among students? Provide two specific methods. How do you encourage collaboration in your classroom, department, and/or institution?	
Technology Integration What role do digital tools and suitable technologies play in enabling 21st-century pedagogy?	
Problem-Solving According to the diagram, what approaches can be used to teach problem-solving in real-world contexts? Can you give some examples from your own teaching practice?	



Assessment List two types of assessments mentioned in the diagram and explain how they contribute to student learning.	
Project-Based Learning Why would you design a project-based learning activity to engage students in solving real-world problems?	
Reflection How can encouraging reflection (e.g., self and peer review) enhance student learning?	

Important note: To summarise the video, the diagram, and the table above, remember, that “How we teach should reflect how our students learn”. The diagram below will help you visualise the key strands. In the 21st-century classroom, this means embracing flexibility in our approaches, incorporating technology, and encouraging collaboration. All these key concepts are revisited and discussed in this resource pack and you will explore them in detail in the following modules and units. By aligning our teaching with how students learn today, we help them develop the skills they need for the future. This pack encourages you to build on this diagram and add more aspects to it as you study the content.



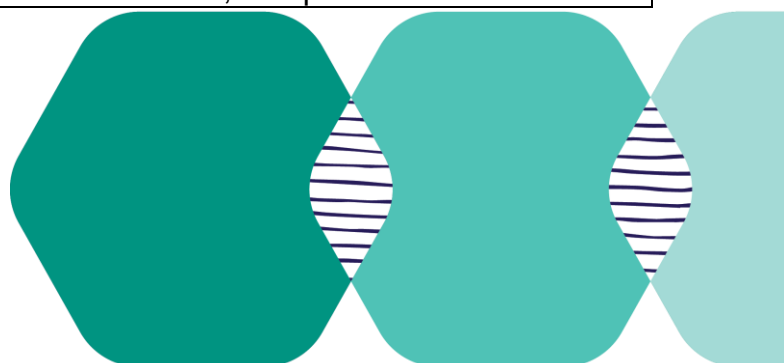


Adapted from Nithyanantham (2019)

Learn Task 3

- A. Study the following table of two relatively recent instructional approaches that integrate technology and student-centred learning strategies. This is only a brief overview and you are encouraged to check the references with the suggested additional resources and read more about these concepts. Further details and references are available in Module 3 for a deeper exploration of technology use in the classroom.

Flipped Classroom	Blended Learning
The model inverts traditional teaching methods by delivering instructional content (e.g., videos, readings) outside of class, and using classroom time for engaging in discussions, problem-solving, or collaborative work.	The model combines traditional face-to-face instruction with digital/online learning resources by providing flexibility for students to learn at their own pace.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve teaching and learning, with instructors highlighting the importance of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively develops language skills, enhances the English learning environment, and promotes student



<p>peer assistance for successful implementation (Long et al., 2016).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can foster personalised learning by adapting learning to students' needs, interests, and mutual expectations through online and face-to-face learning (Cevikbas & Kaiser, 2022). • may improve student motivation and manage cognitive load (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015). 	<p>motivation, but more research is needed to address challenges faced by teachers (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is well-implemented and positively perceived by students, maintaining essential behavioural, cognitive, and emotional aspects in English learning (Maulina, 2022). • in English courses in higher education can enhance teaching and learning, but its effectiveness depends on various factors and technologies (Yajie & Jumaat, 2023).
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B. Watch the following videos on Blended Learning and Flipped Classroom to understand these two approaches better (do not forget to take notes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paQCE58334M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCIxikOq73Q>

Important note: In addition to the information in the diagrams and the table above, several more areas directly impact the way 21st-century classrooms look today: EMI, Multilingualism, and Translanguaging, which will all be discussed in the following units.

Task 4

Please read the following carefully. You may want to read more on these three points in the sources provided.

A big question: How do we work with all these trends in mind?

Answer: We, educators, need to focus on linking attainment of educational objectives, learning modes, and means

Another big question: How can we link it all?

Answer:

1. Research!

“Highly successful pedagogies develop when teachers make outstanding use of their understanding of research and knowledge-base for teaching in order to support high-quality planning and practice. The very best teaching arises when



this research base is supplemented by a personal passion for what is to be taught and for the aspirations of learners” (Palali et al., 2018).

2. Listen to Students’ Voice!

According to Sellman (2009), students’ voice plays a crucial role in education by enhancing academic and communication skills while fostering a greater sense of agency, motivation, and engagement with school affairs. It also provides valuable insights for teachers, leading to improved teaching practices and stronger relationships between students and educators. Additionally, student feedback is essential for schools to refine teaching and learning strategies. However, it is equally important for teachers to pay closer attention to voices that are less heard, ensuring that all students have an opportunity to contribute and be acknowledged.

3. Develop Effective Materials! (more in Unit 4)

According to Bell and Gower (2011), the expectations of teachers, students, and institutions cannot be fully met by teaching materials alone. To accommodate diverse needs, materials often need to be adapted or "compromised" to align with various expectations. Additionally, teaching and classroom dynamics are complex and multifaceted, with numerous challenges and demands that may not always be feasible to address entirely.

Do you agree with the points? Can you add to this list?

Apply Activity 2

A) Please read the report titled **"What Makes Great Pedagogy? Nine Claims from Research"**, published by the National College for School Leadership (Husbands & Pearce, 2012) (the reference with the link is in the suggested reading list). This report outlines nine key characteristics of effective pedagogies, which include:

1. give serious consideration to the pupil’s voice
2. depend on behaviour (what teachers do), knowledge and understanding (what teachers know) and beliefs (why teachers act as they do)
3. involve clear thinking about long-term learning outcomes as well as short-term goals
4. build on pupils’ prior learning and experience
5. involve scaffolding pupil learning
6. involve a range of techniques, including whole-class and structured group work, guided learning and individual activity
7. focus on developing higher-order thinking and metacognition and make good use of dialogue and questioning to do so
8. embed assessment for learning
9. are inclusive and take the diverse needs of a range of learners, as well as matters of student equity, into account



B) Critically analyse a classroom case study below and evaluate the presence, absence, or effectiveness of the **nine pedagogical principles** in the teacher's approach. You need to answer the following questions:

- What of the nine principles are present in the lesson? Provide specific examples.
- Which principles are weakly applied or missing?
- How does this teaching method impact student engagement, motivation, and long-term learning?
- What specific adjustments could be made to ensure all nine pedagogical principles are effectively applied?

Case:

The teacher works at a secondary school in a rural area of Turkmenistan. Their students, aged 15–17, come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, with some speaking Turkmen, Uzbek or Russian as their first language. Their exposure to English is mainly limited to the classroom, as they rarely use it outside school. Today, the teacher's lesson focuses on the past simple tense. The teachers begin by writing example sentences on the board: I went to the market yesterday. She visited her grandmother last weekend. They played football after school. The teacher explains the grammar rule and asks students to copy the sentences into their notebooks. Next, they give the students a worksheet with ten fill-in-the-blank exercises and instruct them to complete it individually. After fifteen minutes, the teacher checks the answers aloud, asking individual students to read their responses. Some students answer correctly, while others hesitate or remain silent. The teacher provides the correct answer but does not ask follow-up questions. At the end of the lesson, the teacher assigns ten more grammar exercises for homework. Before leaving, they remind students that there will be a quiz next week.

Suggested Reading:

Abeysekera, L., & Dawson, P. (2015). Motivation and cognitive load in the flipped classroom: Definition, rationale and a call for research. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2014.934336>

Albiladi, W., & Alshareef, K. (2019). Blended learning in English teaching and learning: A review of the current literature. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. <https://doi.org/10.17507/JLTR.1002.03>

Bell, J., & Gower, R. (2011). Writing course materials for the world: A great compromise. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Materials development in language teaching* (pp. 135–150). Cambridge University Press.

Cevikbas, M., & Kaiser, G. (2022). Promoting personalised learning in flipped classrooms: A systematic review study. *Sustainability*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su141811393>

Conteh, J., & Meier, G. (Eds.). (2014). *The multilingual turn in languages education*:



Opportunities and challenges. Multilingual Matters.

Green, L. S., Banas, J. R., & Perkins, R. A. (Eds.). (2017). *The flipped classroom: Practice and practices in higher education.* Springer.

Husbands, C., & Pearce, J. (2012). *What makes great pedagogy? Nine claims from research.* National College for School Leadership.

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e413c40f0b6230268a2a3/what-makes-great-pedagogy-nine-claims-from-research.pdf>

Long, T., Cummins, J., & Waugh, M. (2016). Use of the flipped classroom instructional model in higher education: Instructors' perspectives. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 29, 179–200. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-016-9119-8>

Maulina, M., Andriyani, A., Amin, S., Nasrullah, R., Asdar, A., & Hamsiah, A. (2022). Students' perception in learning English through blended learning. *Journal of Education and Teaching (JET)*. <https://doi.org/10.51454/jet.v3i1.138>

Nithyanantham, V. (2019). Self-perspective of 21st-century educators: A challenge in the globalised educational world. *Educational Research Review*, 4, 325–334. <https://doi.org/10.24331/ijere.573869>

Nithyanantham, V., Paulmony, R., & Hasan, S. R. (2019). Self-perspective of 21st-century educators: A challenge in the globalised educational world. *International Journal of Educational Research Review*, 4(3), 325–333. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/730423>

Palali, A., Elk, R., Bolhaar, J., & Rud, I. (2018). Are good researchers also good teachers? The relationship between research quality and teaching quality. *Economics of Education Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ECONEDUREV.2018.03.011>

Sellman, E. (2009). Lessons learned: Student voice at a school for pupils experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties*, 14(1), 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632750802655687>

Stryker, S. B., & Leaver, B. L. (1997). *Content-based instruction in foreign language education: Models and methods.* Georgetown University Press.

Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st-century skills: Learning for life in our times.* Jossey-Bass.

Yajie, C., & Jumaat, N. (2023). Blended learning design of English language course in higher education: A systematic review. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2023.13.2.1815>

