

## LEARNING WHILE MOBILE: LEARNER AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY

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### **Abstract**

*The contemporary education system is plagued by several notable shortcomings, encompassing obsolescence, limited student engagement, and disparities in access and opportunities. The phenomenon of obsolescence arises due to the inadequacy of contemporary education in fully equipping pupils to adapt to a swiftly evolving milieu. The primary objective of the NEP 202 Policy is to cultivate a sense of national pride within the Indian population, encompassing not only their thoughts, spirit, intellect, and actions, but also their acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values that foster a conscientious dedication to human rights, sustainable development, and the overall welfare of the global community. The ultimate objective is to embody the characteristics of a genuinely global citizen. This study explores the problems and opportunities arising from the recent surge in technological breakthroughs, and asserts the necessity for education to reassess the information, skills, and competences it aims to foster. This article presents a novel educational framework that prioritizes the holistic growth of the kid as a strategy to maximize human capabilities and address the challenges arising from technology advancements. The system integrates two novel functionalities that enable students to delve into their personal interests and capabilities, with the ultimate aim of engaging in altruistic endeavors and contributing to global betterment. The ideal future education system would involve a paradigm shift where children have a proactive role, while adults assume the role of facilitators, and learning can occur in many global settings.*

*Keywords: Education system, Information and Communication Technology, Autonomy, Product-Oriented Learning, Paradigm Shift.*

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**Introduction**

In the contemporary era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the utilization of e-learning and the digitalization of education are anticipated to yield advantages that enhance knowledge acquisition and optimize the efficacy of the instructional and learning procedures within higher education establishments. In recent years, educational institutions and higher education settings have included e-learning and, more recently, m-learning into their educational practices. This integration has brought about notable transformations in educational practices compared to previous years. Stephen Downes introduced the term "e-Learning 2.0" in 2000 to delineate the integration of Web 2.0 technology into educational environments (Downes, 2000). Consequently, an innovative approach to actively involving students in their educational experiences has been developed. The integration of the internet and information and communication technology (ICT) in the field of education has brought about a significant transformation in higher education. This revolution is characterized by the widespread adoption and utilization of E-learning platforms, which have gained popularity owing to their numerous advantages. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have gained significant traction in higher education institutions globally, with the Indian government implementing many initiatives in this domain (Varghese et al., 2018). The Indian government has implemented many e-learning platforms with the aim of providing education to its population. One such initiative is the National e-Governance Plan, which was introduced in 2006 to facilitate the accessibility of government services to the general public at a local level. Insufficient internet connectivity and bandwidth, inadequate digital infrastructure, financial implications, limited training and development opportunities, and an unsuitable learning environment collectively impede access to digital education. The examination of the contemporary educational system is necessitated by the sociocultural revolution. The intricacies inherent in educational systems provide significant challenges when attempting to make credible forecasts about the future.

The development of new educational institutions, such as schools, is primarily motivated by the goal of providing educational opportunities. Therefore, discussions concerning the future of education should be initiated by engaging in dialogues that focus on this topic (Alexander et al., 2018). Education is a timeless pursuit that remains relevant, yet the methods of imparting knowledge may evolve over time in the course of human history. It is conceivable that in the proximate future, the necessity for educational institutions may diminish, or alternatively, the

schools of the foreseeable future may undergo substantial transformations compared to their present-day counterparts. In the foreseeable future, it is plausible that educational institutions may have experienced such extensive transformations that they may no longer be commonly designated as "schools" (Yu et al., 2019). This future will manifest itself if technological advancement persists without interruption. Given the aforementioned circumstances, the forthcoming discourse will comprehensively examine the prospects of education. The potential consequences and impacts of education are diverse, and the anticipated educational trajectory is not necessarily guaranteed.

### **The Conceptualization of the Future: A Comparison between Forecasting and Designing**

The cognitive processes of prediction and design play key roles while engaged in preparations or strategizing for the future. Non-interventionism is making predictions about future occurrences based on available facts and a theoretical framework of causality, without taking any measures to alter the course of such change. The interventionist approach prioritizes the conceptualization of the desired future state over the prediction of the actual future outcome. The term "futurist" refers to an individual who exhibits a forward-thinking perspective and actively participates in endeavors related to design, architecture, and innovation. It is crucial to acknowledge that a futurist does not operate as an impartial predictor, but rather has a pronounced leaning towards a certain future scenario, giving it precedence over alternative prospective futures. According to Ben-Peretz et al. (2004), it is imperative for both approaches to demonstrate respect for the facts and maintain consistency with logical conceptions.

The act of envisioning the future should not be conflated with actively shaping it. Instead, it involves fostering a positive outlook and possessing a forward-thinking perspective. This represents the idealized conception of education and its potential, although its realization necessitates concerted efforts and proactive measures. Prior to commencing this activity, it is crucial to make a deliberate determination regarding the duration of time that will be designated for contemplation of future prospects. The term "future" encompasses all forthcoming occurrences subsequent to the present moment, encompassing the immediate day, month, year, century, and millennium. The future encompasses occurrences that are anticipated to occur prior to the present moment (ibid).

### **The Role of Digital Technology in Creating Tomorrow's Classrooms**

Technology encompasses the pragmatic utilization of scientific knowledge. There are two primary effects of this phenomenon on the field of education: firstly, it prompts a reassessment

of the importance placed on individual abilities and knowledge; and secondly, it exerts an influence on the methods, implementation, and management of educational practices. The potential of technology lies in its ability to radically redefine the results of education, specifically the purpose of education, through its redefinition of the value of knowledge and skills. Additionally, it exerts an influence on the manner in which education ought to be delivered, executed, and managed, given that information and communication are two fundamental components of the educational procedure. The disruption of the educational procedure has an impact on both the administration and structure of the educational system (Achievement & UNESCO, 2022).

The principal aim of technological advancement is to augment human capabilities; nevertheless, it simultaneously diminishes certain abilities while elevating the significance of others. The primary objective of education is to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills essential for achieving success in various aspects of life. Numerous endeavors have been undertaken to redefine the information, skills, and abilities that are considered useful, with the aim of preparing individuals to effectively confront the difficulties and capitalize on the opportunities arising from the prevailing wave of technological advancements. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, established in 2002, has garnered significant attention and widespread recognition (Trilling & Fadel, 2012). The eight core competencies encompass communication in the native language, proficiency in one or multiple foreign languages, mathematical aptitude, fundamental knowledge in science and technology, digital literacy, capacity for learning, social and civic skills, entrepreneurial mindset, and cultural awareness and expression. To effectively prepare individuals to navigate the complexities and capitalize on the potential benefits of the contemporary surge in technological advancements, the field of education must reassess the specific knowledge, skills, and competences it seeks to foster (Beacco et al., 2016).

### **Education must swiftly adapt to the challenges posed by change**

The basic objective of education is to enhance the preparedness of upcoming generations to make meaningful contributions towards a more optimistic and successful future for humanity as a whole. In order to effectively meet the problems posed by these developments, it is imperative for the field of education to swiftly adapt and evolve. Prior to delving into an analysis of the forthcoming educational milieu, it is important to furnish a meticulous explication of the concept of education. Due to its widespread utilization, the term "education"

has garnered diverse connotations contingent upon the specific setting, the individual under discussion, and the relevant cultural milieu. Education is a multifaceted construct including a process, an institution, a system, and a cultural phenomena, all of which converge with the overarching objective of equipping forthcoming cohorts with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively contribute to and participate in societal structures. As per the definition provided by the Oxford Dictionary, education may be defined as a systematic process that involves the imparting of knowledge, training, and learning, mostly inside educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities. The primary objective of education is to enhance one's knowledge and foster the development of various skills and abilities. The field of education has undergone a process of institutionalization in contemporary societies, wherein several educational institutions have emerged to fulfill the role of imparting knowledge and skills. Education has emerged as a cultural phenomenon and instrumental tool in the majority of contemporary societies, owing to its widespread presence and enduring nature. Education is a multifaceted construct including a process, an institution, a system, and a cultural phenomena, all of which converge towards the overarching goal of equipping forthcoming cohorts with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively contribute to and participate in society. The field of education is subject to a multitude of elements, the majority of which exert an influence on its future trajectory (Marco, 2017). Internal factors encompass a range of characteristics that are inherent to the education system and institutions itself. These variables include policies that are in effect, the curriculum that is being implemented, and the staff who are employed within these institutions. External factors encompass a diverse range of actors, including politicians, parents, business proprietors, and the general public. In order to formulate a feasible and sustainable vision for the future of education, it is important to possess a comprehensive understanding of the external and internal factors that exert impact on the educational landscape. The comprehension should be based on the latest information and data available, and should adhere to a coherent and logical structure (OECD, 2016).

### **The Framework for Education**

The principal aim of educational organization should be to cultivate methodologies that enhance the dissemination of knowledge. Throughout history, the transmission of information has occurred between individuals possessing a higher level of knowledge and experience, commonly referred to as teachers, and others with a comparatively lower level of knowledge,

sometimes referred to as students. According to Hallden (2012), a widely used approach in education involves assigning a singular teacher to a cohort of pupils, so constituting a class, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the instructional process. Nonetheless, the influence of information and communication technology can be substantial, given that students possess widespread access to specialists in certain fields and a wealth of knowledge that surpasses the limitations of their immediate educational environments. Moreover, a considerable amount of educational content, aligning with established curricula and delivered by proficient educators, is currently accessible at minimal or no expense. There is a lack of statistically significant disparity shown in the academic learning results between face-to-face instruction and online instruction. Additionally, children possess the ability to independently structure their learning experiences, even in the absence of direct adult supervision. Furthermore, scholarly investigations suggest that youngsters exhibit enhanced learning outcomes when instructional methods do not rely on explicit or vocal guidance. Instead, they demonstrate a greater capacity for information acquisition through both social interactions and individual inquiry, as well as through engaging in experimental activities. Consequently, this phenomenon engenders the expansion of knowledge, the empirical validation of hypotheses, and the formation of novel concepts. The potential for reorganizing the educational process and activities is boundless.

### **Rethinking the Goals of Education**

The conceptualization of humanity as a heterogeneous assemblage of separate and idiosyncratic individuals can contribute to a reevaluation of educational objectives. The primary inquiry revolves around the decision of whether to leverage individuals' strengths or focus on mitigating their flaws. The current educational system has a notable obstacle in addressing individuality, as it primarily emphasizes the transmission of a uniform set of skills and information to all students, with the aim of preparing them for the demands of the Industrial Age. Irrespective of the unique abilities and constraints of each student, their academic performance is evaluated based on their proficiency in the mandated information and skills as outlined by the established standards. The significance is in the prescribed curriculum rather than the individual achievements of each student (Council et al., 2001).

The conceptualization of humankind as a heterogeneous group of individuals with diverse characteristics and identities can contribute to a reevaluation of educational objectives. The

primary inquiry revolves around the strategic choice between leveraging an individual's strengths or mitigating their deficiencies. The concept of individuality poses a notable obstacle and impediment within the contemporary educational system, which prioritizes the dissemination of a uniform set of abilities and information to every student, with the intention of preparing them for the demands of the Industrial Age. According to Schleicher et al. (1999), students' evaluation is determined by their level of proficiency in the required knowledge and skills, without taking into account their unique strengths and shortcomings.

### **The Conventional Model of Education: An Examination of its Challenges**

The contemporary education system is characterized by several significant shortcomings, including obsolescence, insufficient student engagement, and inequity. One of the challenges is in the issue of obsolescence, which arises from the observation that education is no longer adequate in equipping students with the necessary skills to effectively navigate a perpetually evolving and dynamic global landscape. The swift progression of technology has already led to the elimination of numerous work positions once occupied by individuals, leading to a pervasive state of joblessness and inadequate employment opportunities, particularly among the youth demographic. The role of education in equipping young individuals for gainful employment has always been well acknowledged. Nevertheless, recent developments suggest that education is no longer fulfilling this responsibility (David & Amey, 2020).

The prevailing educational framework is the segregation of pupils into distinct physical classrooms situated within a school facility, wherein each student is instructed by a sole adult typically employed by the school. Learning in the contemporary era is characterized by a shift towards a more globalized context, wherein educational institutions are interconnected with the rest of the world through technology advancements. Students receive education from professors and other resources situated within and beyond the educational institution, while also engaging in learning experiences alongside persons representing diverse geographical backgrounds. This adjustment is required in order to accommodate the following factors: In order to thrive as creative and enterprising persons in a globalized society, it is imperative to perceive one's endeavors as integral to the interconnected global economic and political framework. It is crucial to recognize that one's actions have repercussions on individuals



residing in different geographical contexts, while also acknowledging that these actions can, in turn, exert impact on others. Engaging in cross-cultural activities and engaging with individuals from diverse geographical backgrounds is widely regarded as the most efficacious approach to cultivating a global viewpoint.

In an increasingly globalized world, inventors and entrepreneurs want the support of individuals who can provide them novel concepts, various perspectives, indigenous expertise, and a range of resources. In order to achieve success in international settings, it is important to possess a specific level of global competence, encompassing proficiency in foreign languages as well as a heightened degree of cultural intelligence. In order to effectively fulfill their objective of cultivating globally aware and capable citizens, educational institutions must ensure that students are afforded the chance to acquire foreign language skills and cultivate cultural intelligence.

The persistent concern pertains to the emotional well-being of pupils and their lack of engagement in academic pursuits. In light of the rising incidence of mental health concerns among adolescents, it is imperative for educational institutions to establish designated areas that prioritize the emotional well-being of pupils. According to a study published in *The Lancet*, the COVID-19 epidemic has had a detrimental effect on the mental well-being of individuals in India. The study found that a mere 41% of the population felt compelled to seek assistance for their mental health concerns. Furthermore, it is worth noting that there exists a significant scarcity of well-trained experts in this field, as evidenced by the fact that there are only 0.75 psychiatrists available per one million patients, as reported by Sagar et al. (2020). In educational systems worldwide, the presence of inequity or other equity-related challenges is a substantial barrier. It is well acknowledged that there exists significant variation in the quality of education obtained by students across different countries and institutions within the same country. In conjunction with overt bias, the variations among pupils can also serve as contributing factors to educational disparities. There exists a specific group of pupils, often characterized by their strong academic performance and willingness to adhere to the prevailing educational framework, who are not provided with the necessary educational resources to foster their abilities and passions.

The lack of equity or other challenges related to equity is consistently identified as a prominent concern in nearly all educational systems globally. The variability in the quality of education



received by students across different countries and institutions within a given country is widely acknowledged. In conjunction with overt bias, disparities in education can also arise through variations among pupils. According to Cantor and Osher (2021), there exists a specific group of kids who demonstrate academic proficiency and a willingness to adhere to the established educational framework, although they are not provided with the essential educational resources and opportunities to foster their abilities and passions.

### **The Future of Education: A Paradigm Shift**

The prevailing educational framework prioritizes equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge to secure employment opportunities within the existing economic landscape, as well as facilitating their smooth integration into the prevailing social fabric. The major aim of this initiative was to provide individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge required for work in the emerging mass-production economy that emerged as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. Nevertheless, in the present era, mass manufacturing is not a defining characteristic of the contemporary world, and there is a lack of appreciation for persons who possess uniformity or possess foundational abilities and knowledge. The existing framework is employed for the purpose of candidate selection within a system commonly referred to as a meritocracy, when resources and opportunities are distributed according to a pre-established notion of "merit," specifically pertaining to a student's academic achievements. According to Kamaljeet (2021), students who demonstrate aptitude in academic subjects and exhibit a strong commitment to fulfilling their schools' requirements receive commendation and are presented with various opportunities. Conversely, individuals who possess talent in non-academic domains and exhibit a keen interest in those areas are often perceived as lacking and in need of additional support, consequently being excluded from certain opportunities. This phenomenon serves as a primary cause of disengagement among individuals and also forms the basis for discriminatory practices based on talent.

In order to effectively address forthcoming difficulties and effectively tackle existing educational issues, it is imperative to adopt a novel paradigm. The approach does not make assumptions about the homogeneity of children, refrain from imposing arbitrary benchmarks or grade-level norms solely based on age, and avoid supposing that each child is a tabula rasa awaiting the acquisition of knowledge. Moreover, this assumption posits that children are not mere recipients of knowledge, but rather autonomous individuals who actively interact with their surrounding world. John Dewey, a renowned American educator and philosopher,

expounded upon the differentiations between the two paradigms in his seminal work titled "Education and Experience." The forthcoming educational paradigm will exhibit notable distinctions from the current model in three fundamental domains: the content of instruction, the methodologies employed in facilitating learning, and the physical settings in which learning occurs. The examination of the curriculum is essential since it is shaped by educational objectives and the underlying purposes of education. On the other hand, the concept of "how to learn" pertains to the instructional approach or educational setting that optimally supports students in acquiring knowledge. The term "where to learn" pertains to the specific physical or virtual setting where the process of acquiring knowledge and skills occurs (Dewey, 1997).

### **Learner Autonomy and Flexibility**

The concept of learner autonomy refers to the ability of learners to take control of their own learning process, making decisions and taking responsibility for their own learning outcomes. This includes the ability to set goals, select learning materials. The new paradigm provides students with as much autonomy and agency as feasible in determining what they wish to study. Instead of emphasising the improvement of students' shortcomings, the curriculum is designed to identify and foster their areas of interest. To produce the types of talents that will be required in the future, it is essential to provide students with support and encourage them to develop their individual inclinations and strengths through individualised education. Unique and Diverse Talents It is impossible for everyone to possess the same skills and compete for the same employment in a globalising world with more than seven billion people. A fixed set of standardised abilities and skills is not a wise wager for positions that have not yet been created in a world where change is constant and rapid (Fengchun et al., 2021). In this era of intelligent machines, the best that humans can do are unique tasks requiring entrepreneurial thought and creativity. It is immoral and economically destructive to limit diversity to a small number of skills, and that it is necessary to allow students to pursue their own education and provide them with support to do so (Isaias et al., 2020). Daniel Coyle's book "The Talent Code" suggests that excellence arises from extensive practise, which requires vigour, zeal, and commitment. Therefore, children can only be motivated sufficiently to accomplish greatness if they have the freedom to make their own choices (Coyle, 2020). This source of inspiration lies within the individual, as opposed to external influences.

Individuals who can create more jobs, better products, more logical legislation, more effective business models, and more meaningful human services are needed in the world. People that are

creative are naturally inquisitive and have the courage to think and act in unexpected ways. Creators should be free to investigate their environment without fear of being judged by others, a general standard, or an outside source. Education should be transformed into learning communities in which all members, including students, teachers, administrators, and other workers, engage on an equal footing. Students, like everyone else, should have the same right and opportunity to engage in school governance and the development of the physical, social, and cognitive environment. They should also have a significant say in the development of community regulations, the distribution of community resources, and the selection of educational activities (Alexander et al., 2018). Students should be able to explore their specific interests and design their own personalised educational experiences. Higher education institutions must offer a diverse range of curricular options so that students can do research, gain experience, and experiment in areas where they excel and are most interested. This is important because it allows students to study, experience, and experiment in areas in which they excel and are most interested. In the near future, a teacher's primary responsibilities will transition from instructing to mentoring and assisting students. Technology can and should be used to help individual students benefit more from online tutorials, artificially intelligent tutors, movies, simulations, and other forms of educational technology. Human educators are more effective than virtual ones at providing students with the emotional, social, and cognitive support they need to personalise their educational experiences. Mentoring and advising, two essential components of personalised learning, can guide, motivate, and support students' academic progress (Anderson, 2005).

### **Creating Value and Product-Oriented Learning**

The subject of discourse concerns the notion of value creation and product-oriented learning. The existing educational paradigm is structured with the intention of imparting predetermined knowledge to students. Within the emerging paradigm, the primary objective of pedagogy is to impart to students the ability to generate value, or to engage in purposeful study that extends beyond the basic acquisition of knowledge. This novel approach is commonly known as POL, which stands for product-oriented learning. The perspective of the student undergoes a transformation, transitioning from that of a passive recipient and consumer to that of an active producer and contributor. Similarly, the function of the instructor has evolved from being the major source of information or authority in the respective subject to encompass that of a motivator, evaluator, facilitator, and organizer. According to Mentz et al. (2019), the

determination of which problems are worthy of attention, the completion of necessary tasks, and the pursuit of objectives are all matters that require human decision-making.

The primary aim of the Product-Oriented Learning (POL) curriculum is to cultivate in students the capacity to recognize significant problems that warrant attention and the ethical judgment necessary to evaluate whether a problem should be tackled. The initial phase of the POL (Project-Based Learning) curriculum necessitates students to engage in the process of identifying, refining, and justifying their chosen topic or subject matter. In the context of education, product-oriented learning necessitates the learner's cultivation of empathy and consideration for others, as this enables the creation of products and services that possess both significance and utility. This prompts the individual to cultivate a compassionate perspective towards fellow individuals and acquire the requisite abilities to comprehend the circumstances and requirements of others. Many individuals who excel in the field of business typically exhibit the characteristic of being highly attuned to potential opportunities, a quality that may be nurtured by developing a keen sensitivity to the needs and demands of others. The recognition and understanding of one's talents and shortcomings are crucial factors for achieving success. Individuals who are successful possess a conscious awareness of their personal strengths and limitations. According to Bansal (n.d.), product-oriented learning provides students with the chance to evaluate their interests and capabilities, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future pursuits and identify areas where they may require further assistance.

Product-oriented learning (POL) is an instructional methodology that fosters the cultivation of resilience and perseverance in students when confronted with setbacks, while also instilling an understanding of the need of discipline and commitment. In order to achieve success, it is imperative for POL to exhibit certain attributes, namely the presence of tangible goods, adherence to a consistent and rigorous methodology, and the adoption of a strengths-oriented perspective. Authenticity can be characterized as the extent to which a finalized product or service effectively fulfills a legitimate purpose, offers a genuine resolution to an actual problem, meets the authentic needs of others, or holds personal significance. To participate in the process of Peer-Reviewed Online Learning (POL), students must adhere to the mandatory practice of submitting their work for numerous iterations of scrutiny and revision. It is recommended that the POL institute the implementation of transparent criteria and protocols for the assessment and improvement of student assignments. Unique and localized The

implementation of Project-Based Online Learning (POL) transforms a traditional classroom, educational institution, or collaborative project group into a globally interconnected company. According to Neave (2006), students participating in this enterprise assume roles that align with their own interests and abilities.

In contrast to conventional collaborative learning or project-based learning approaches, the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (POL) ensures that students are not engaged in identical tasks, thereby enabling them to leverage their unique skill sets and competences. POL aims to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge pertaining to human connection and genuine collaboration. Additionally, it imparts upon students the ability to discern and value their own shortcomings, while recognizing and acknowledging the capabilities of others. In addition, the concept of POL serves to emphasize the distinct attributes exhibited by individual students, teachers, schools, and communities (Goodman, 2023).

### **Conclusion**

The adoption of a new paradigm in the educational system is not a recent or innovative idea. Child-centered education has been dominated by Montessori schools, Democratic schools, and programs based on the Reggio Emilia model since the mid-twentieth century. Nevertheless, conventional institutions have historically not provided project-based, child-centered education. This article introduces a novel educational framework that prioritizes the holistic growth of children as a strategy to optimize human capabilities and address the demands posed by advancements in technology. This initiative adds two novel components that afford students the chance to explore their inclinations and cultivate their aptitudes, with the ultimate objective of aiding others and effecting positive change in the world. The ideal future education system would involve a paradigm shift where children assume a proactive role, while adults assume the role of facilitators, and classes can be conducted anywhere in the world.

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