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# Enhancing Self-Confidence Among Secondary School Students Through Innovative Pedagogical Practices: A Perspective from Nep 2020

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**ABSTRACT**

In secondary education, students' active classroom participation is a crucial factor in determining academic achievement, critical thinking, and holistic development. In the context of rapid changes in the education system in India, the New Education Policy 2020 places special emphasis on learner-centered teaching, experiential learning, competency-based assessment, and technology integration to strengthen student engagement. Based on an analysis of secondary sources—such as research publications, policy documents, academic reports, and previous empirical studies—this article examines how technology-enabled teaching methods can strengthen student engagement in secondary school classrooms. The literature review reveals that technology-enabled tools such as digital classrooms, interactive multimedia content, learning management systems, virtual simulations, and collaborative online platforms strengthen students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement. In line with the vision of the New Education Policy 2020, these digital tools encourage active learning, curiosity, peer interaction, and personalized learning experiences, thereby transforming the classroom environment from a teacher-centered model to a student-centered learning culture. The policy's emphasis on blended learning, digital literacy, and creative teaching methods further strengthens the role of technology in creating an inclusive and inspiring learning environment. This study presents the concept of "interactive learning pods" as an innovative approach at the secondary level. This model integrates technology with project-based learning and peer collaboration, where students, in small groups, use digital resources to find solutions to real-life problems related to the curriculum. This process not only increases student engagement but also encourages collaboration, creativity, and the development of problem-solving skills. Ultimately, the study concludes that effective integration of technology-oriented teaching, along with appropriate infrastructure, teacher training, and pedagogical preparation, can significantly increase student engagement in secondary classrooms. Teaching methods developed in accordance with the principles of the New Education Policy 2020 can play an important role in making education more meaningful, interesting and future-oriented.

**KEYPOINTS** - Innovative Teaching Strategies, Best Practices, Classroom Participation, Secondary Level and New Education Policy 2020

## INTRODUCTION

Innovative teaching methods aren't limited to simply adopting new teaching methods or constantly following the latest educational trends—they involve a unique approach to the teaching and learning

process. These modern teaching methods prioritize students, emphasizing engagement and interaction in the classroom. Innovative strategies encourage active participation and collaboration between students and teachers. Although they require more effort from students, they are designed to better meet their individual needs, leading to faster growth. Unlike traditional teaching methods, which measure success primarily by the amount of knowledge students acquire, innovative teaching methods focus on understanding and retaining the nuances of the material. It's not just about what is taught, but about how effectively students understand and apply the knowledge imparted during lectures. To create a dynamic and successful learning environment, innovative teaching techniques play a vital role in empowering both teachers and students. They help teachers adopt creative approaches to teaching and foster independent learning skills in students. Through varied teaching strategies and materials, teachers can improve both student participation and achievement in the classroom.

- Student-centered focus
- Active learning
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Technology integration
- Collaborative learning
- Emphasis on problem-solving
- Continuous assessment
- Encouragement of creativity
- Personalized learning pathways
- Real-world relevance
- Feedback-oriented approach
- Development of soft skills

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Student active participation in secondary classrooms is a key factor influencing learning quality, academic achievement, critical thinking, and socio-emotional development. Despite this, the teaching process in school classrooms remains largely teacher-centered, lecture-based, and exam-oriented, resulting in relatively low levels of student engagement, curiosity, and participation. As a result, learning remains superficial and the development of higher-order thinking skills is hindered. The New Education Policy 2020 emphasizes making the teaching-learning process learner-centered, experiential, competency-based, and technology-enabled to ensure active student engagement. Although the potential for the use of digital tools, blended learning, collaborative learning, and innovative teaching strategies has increased, their effective and well-planned integration at the secondary level has not been widespread. Challenges such as lack of teacher training, infrastructural limitations, traditional assessment methods, and limited use of technological resources hinder the achievement of desired levels of student engagement.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the current nature and importance of student engagement in secondary classrooms.
2. To study the role of learner-centered and experiential teaching strategies in enhancing student engagement.
3. To examine the impact of technology-enabled learning in the context of the New Education Policy

2020.

4. To analyze the impact of the use of digital tools (such as LMS, interactive multimedia, virtual simulations, etc.) on students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement.
5. To study the utility of innovative models such as "interactive learning pods" at the secondary level.
6. To identify effective teaching behaviour and best practices for enhancing student engagement.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the key factors influencing student engagement in secondary classrooms?
2. How do learner-centered and experiential teaching strategies influence students' active participation?
3. How effective is technology-supported instruction in enhancing student engagement?
4. How do digital learning tools strengthen students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement?
5. Do collaborative and project-based models, such as "interactive learning pods," help enhance student engagement and collaborative skills?
6. What are the challenges and opportunities in developing a student-centered and technology-integrated learning environment in accordance with the provisions of the New Education Policy 2020?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Student engagement is considered a key determinant of learning quality. Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, dividing student engagement into cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, explained that active participation enhances learning depth and academic achievement. Similarly, Finn & Zimmer concluded that active participation in class is directly linked to students' consistent attendance, motivation, and achievement. In the context of the new education policy, the National Education Policy 2020, released by the Ministry of Education, emphasizes making teaching learner-centered, experiential, and skill-based. The policy clearly states that active learning, collaborative activities, and the use of digital technology are helpful in increasing student engagement. Studies on technology-enabled learning indicate that digital resources enhance student engagement. Reports from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development state that meaningful use of digital tools makes learning more interactive and student-centered. Similarly, UNESCO has described technology-enabled education as an effective means for inclusive and accessible learning. Regarding experiential learning, David Kolb's experiential learning theory suggests that students learn more effectively through direct experience, reflection, and application. Johnson & Johnson's study on collaborative learning demonstrates that group-based learning enhances student engagement, social skills, and academic achievement. Research on the use of digital learning tools such as learning management systems, virtual simulations, and multimedia content demonstrates that these tools foster student curiosity, interaction, and self-directed learning. Graham, on the blended learning model, states that combining online and face-to-face learning makes learning more flexible and participatory. The above literature clearly demonstrates that learner-centered learning, experiential activities, collaborative learning, and technology integration are effective tools for increasing student engagement at the secondary level. However, there is still limited research on the systematic integration of these innovative strategies in Indian secondary schools, highlighting the need for this study.

In the rapidly changing educational landscape of the 21st century, innovative teaching strategies have become essential to enhance the quality, utility, and effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Traditional teacher-centered methods, based on rote memorization and passive learning, are being replaced by learner-centered, technology-enabled, and experiential teaching approaches. These strategies

aim to increase students' active participation, develop critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, and prepare them for the needs of a knowledge-based and digital society. Innovation in education is not limited to the use of technology; it also includes restructuring teaching methods, assessment processes, and learning environments to meet diverse learner needs. Project-based learning, blended learning, flipped classrooms, experiential and collaborative learning, and the use of digital tools have become widely accepted as effective practices in modern education. These strategies, based on active participation, practical application of knowledge, and continuous feedback, strengthen student motivation and academic achievement. International research also supports the effectiveness of these strategies. According to John Hattie (2009), student-centered learning, innovative assessment, and effective feedback have a significant impact on learning outcomes. Scott Freeman et al. (2014) found that active learning strategies significantly improve student performance compared to traditional lecture methods. According to UNESCO (2021), digital technology-enabled learning makes education more accessible, inclusive, and quality by addressing diverse learning styles. In the Indian context, the National Education Policy 2020 places special emphasis on experiential learning, competency-based education, critical thinking, and technology integration at all levels of education. Studies by NCERT (2021) and the University Grants Commission (2022) show that innovative teaching methods enhance students' learning interest, conceptual understanding, and overall development, especially when teachers receive adequate training and institutional support. Additionally, according to Michael Fullan (2016), teachers' reflective practice and ongoing professional development enable them to adopt innovative teaching approaches to changing classroom environments. Thus, innovative teaching strategies also strengthen inclusive education by engaging students from diverse linguistic, socioeconomic, and cognitive backgrounds through flexible and differentiated teaching approaches.

## KEY INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES

- Interactive lessons
- Using virtual reality technology
- Using AI in education
- Blended learning
- 3D printing
- Design-thinking process
- Project-based learning (PBL)
- Inquiry-based learning
- Cloud computing learning
- Flipped classroom
- Peer learning
- Crossover learning
- Personalized learning
- Active learning
- Gamification
- Problem-based learning
- Mistake-led learning
- Collaborative learning

## THE ROLE OF INNOVATIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES AND BEST PRACTICES IN INCREASING STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE CLASSROOM

The role of innovative teaching strategies and best practices at the secondary level is as follows:

- **Emphasis on learning by doing** – At the secondary level, classroom teaching should be tailored to students so that they can feel a greater connection with the teacher. Emphasis should be placed on learning by doing. This will enable not only students but also teachers to improve their learning and gain knowledge in the technical field.
- **Immediate feedback and evaluation** – Innovative teaching methods make learning simple and easy not only for teachers but also for students, allowing them to share their ideas with teachers in a simple manner and get answers to their questions. Teachers receive immediate feedback on their teaching if they need it.
- **Development of creative skills and reasoning skills** – Innovative teaching methods create a positive classroom environment and develop students' thinking abilities, which accelerates the development of creative skills and reasoning skills, enabling them to learn better.
- **Confidence and verbal participation** – When a teacher teaches innovatively and employs best practices in the classroom, students feel valued, which improves their confidence and verbal participation. It also fosters two-way communication in the classroom, preparing them for new challenges.
- **Development of problem-solving skills** – Innovative teaching develops problem-solving skills in students. Learning methods should also change with the times, which will enhance their problem-solving skills.
- **Preparation for the present and technological knowledge** – Classroom teaching should be current, so that students are prepared not only for the present but also for the future and can acquire the best technological knowledge.
- **Inclusive teaching and learning** – Innovative teaching promotes inclusive learning in the classroom, which also provides students with inclusive learning.
- **Student-centered learning** – According to the new education policy 2020, teaching and learning in the classroom should be student-centered so that the needs of the students can be fulfilled through learning and teaching as per their needs.

The role of creative teaching methods and best educational practices in increasing students' active participation in the classroom is widely supported by national and international educational policies and research studies. In India, the National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes transforming traditional teacher-centered classrooms into interactive and learner-centered learning environments. The policy promotes competency-based, inquiry-based, experiential, and discussion-oriented teaching methods that actively engage students in the learning process. Furthermore, the use of technology, formative assessment, and continuous feedback are highlighted as essential elements to strengthen student engagement. The policy also emphasizes continuous professional development for teachers to enable them to create dynamic and participatory learning environments. Globally, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4) advocates for ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education and emphasizes learning experiences that enhance students' active participation and engagement. In this vein, UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action considers interactive learning, student-centered pedagogy, and the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) as important tools for improving learning outcomes. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's

Education 2030 Framework places special emphasis on developing 21st-century skills—such as collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication. Collaborative, interactive, and inquiry-based classrooms have been found to enhance student motivation and engagement. Empirical research also supports this view. Scott Freeman et al. (2014) demonstrated that active learning techniques significantly improve student performance and engagement compared to traditional lecture methods. John Hattie's (2009) meta-analysis identified classroom discussion, feedback, and interactive learning as factors with high impact. According to Peggy A. Ertmer and Anne Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010), teachers' pedagogy and meaningful use of technology strengthen student engagement, especially when teachers integrate innovative digital tools into teaching strategies. From a European perspective, the DigCompEdu framework developed by the European Commission emphasizes that teachers' digital competence is crucial in creating a participatory and inclusive classroom environment. In the Indian context, publications by NCERT and the University Grants Commission highlight that technology-enabled, collaborative, and activity-based learning enhance students' engagement and conceptual understanding in the classroom. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate innovative and participatory teaching methods into teacher education programs to make classrooms more active, inclusive, and learning-oriented.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, innovative teaching strategies and best practices play a vital role in transforming education systems worldwide. By integrating evidence-based pedagogy, utilizing technology, and aligning with policy frameworks like the NEP 2020, teachers can create meaningful learning experiences that empower students and improve educational outcomes. Therefore, understanding and implementing these approaches is crucial to achieving excellence, equity, and quality. Overall, research studies and educational policies consistently emphasize the importance of creative teaching methods and best practices to increase student engagement in the classroom. These strategies improve learning outcomes and align with national and international educational reform objectives by promoting active learning, teamwork, and meaningful participation.

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