Teaching in the twenty-first century is certainly a more ‘modern’ way to teach compared to the last few centuries. As opposed to specific subject knowledge, twenty-first century skills consist of ways of thinking, living, and ways of working (education.gov.au). Examples of these are creativity and innovation, studying to learn, problem solving and decision making, communication and collaboration (education.gov.au). The Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA), have created a list that reflect twenty-first century learning skills;

* Literacy
* Numeracy
* Information and Communication Technology, or ICT
* Critical and creative thinking
* Personal and social capability
* Ethical understanding
* Intercultural understanding

The intentions for these capabilities are to be able to apply them in our school curriculum, workplaces, and our everyday life (ACARA).

The twenty-first century learning curriculum type is quite a recent development in the curriculum, and is one of two curriculum design types (the other being powerful knowledge. The latter term, 21st century learning, is used rather than the word ‘future’ to differentiate from other literature that uses “in the future terminology” (e.g., Young and Muller 2010).

Getting students, especially adolescents, to engage in learning is most certainly not an easy task, particularly in an age that consists of so many distractions such as modern technology (iPads, tablets, mobile phones etc). Some may argue that some of the habits that have been picked up by our adolescent learners have been influenced by the use of emerging technologies and social media usage have negatively impacted the capabilities of our students (educatorstechnology), but there is also some positives when it comes to using these technologies to engage our students with their learning. With having access to studies and information online, adolescent students will be more inclined to use the internet for their research. Search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and DuckDuckGo are easier to navigate, online libraries and much more user friendly as students can search key words rather than walking around a library, and students can do their work in their time compared to the short amount of time they would have on campus, so all of these different approaches to twenty-first century teaching would encourage adolescents to engage more in their learning.

The differences between learning styles (individual learning and group work), learning techniques (visual, interpersonal and aural), and ability to learn is possible when coordinating technically upgraded activities into the educational setting (Tomlinson, 2001’ Anderson, 2007). However, research shows that effective integration into a classroom setting for both teaching and learning is not extensive (Bracewell, Sicilia, Park, & Tung 2007; Cuban, Kirkpatrick, & Peck, 2001; Ertmer, 2005; Karsenti, Brodeur, Deaudelin, Larose, & Tardif, 2002).

According to a recent study done by Jaipal and Figg (2009), there are three main aspects of digital planning and implementation that more often than not, have a very high success rate when teaching adolescents. These three aspects are;

* Activity choices (using the internet for studying purposes)
* Differentiation techniques (different skills being introduced in the classroom)
* Sequencing of activities (using techniques and activities students are already familiar with)

The results from the study conducted by Jaipal and Figg (2007), indicated that differentiated teaching should be represented in the manner in which the technology would be used in the outside world (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993). The study also focused on teachers who selected tasks that slowly introduced a few technical skills. That study showed that the teachers who chose to teach *with* the computer based tools found that their techniques were extremely successful in positively impacting student understanding compared to the teachers that chose to teach *the*tool such as kidspix and PowerPoint, which used a lot of valuable classroom time rather than teaching the curriculum.

A big influence to twenty-first century learners known as ‘Pedagogy”. Pedagogy is a term associated with what a teacher does to influence and how they influence their students to learn. Both the practise and theory of pedagogy vary as they reflect all different kinds of social, political and cultural contexts (childaustralia). Nowadays, students and teachers communicate through online forums, emails, and any other kind of ICT. There are many online platforms that both teachers and students can access to gather information and research. During this current pandemic, communications through a school has been done by online classrooms and meetings, this is the now the new way of ‘Teaching in the twenty-first Century’. The new and improved “cyber world” is the future of our education, and therefore it is a critical concern for the quality and future of our adolescent learners. With the assistance of modern technological advances, the educational departments have the ability to understand and analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the ever growing and transformation of our current and future learning programs.

In conclusion, we have discovered that there are many different approaches a teacher can take to encourage adolescent students to engage in twenty-first century learning, it’s just a matter of every teacher having the time, effort and patience to find out which approaches work better for themselves and their students. Every student learns in their own way and every teacher has their way of teaching. It is important to understand the needs and capabilities of every individual, both students and teachers, as technology is always advancing and new ways of teaching and learning are always coming to light. We are all constantly trying to adjust to technological advances, and unfortunately as we all know, nothing stays the same forever. In centuries to come, we will discover and experience new methods of teaching, and “twenty-first century teaching and learning” will eventually become a thing of the past.

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