

The Changing Role of the Teacher in the Current Education System: From Knowledge Provider to Facilitator of Learning

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Abstract:

The role of the teacher is changing rapidly as education systems respond to digital technology, artificial intelligence, competency-based curricula, learner diversity, changing labour markets, and a stronger emphasis on student agency and well-being. The traditional image of the teacher as the main source and transmitter of knowledge is no longer sufficient for classrooms in which information is widely available and students are expected to inquire, collaborate, solve problems, think critically, and learn throughout life. This article examines the changing professional role of the teacher, with special attention to the movement from knowledge provider to facilitator of learning. It is a conceptual and evidence-informed research article based on recent policy frameworks and established educational literature rather than a fabricated field dataset. The discussion shows that facilitation does not reduce the importance of teachers or subject knowledge. Instead, it expands professional responsibility. The contemporary teacher must design meaningful learning experiences, activate prior knowledge, ask productive questions, organize collaboration, provide formative feedback, support inclusion, guide responsible use of digital and AI tools, protect human relationships, and help learners become increasingly self-directed. OECD's current Teaching Compass describes teachers as agents of curriculum change, adaptive experts, co-designers of learning, and lifelong learners, while UNESCO continues to emphasize that teachers remain central to quality, inclusive and human-centred education. The article proposes a practical facilitation cycle and discusses challenges including digital inequality, workload, assessment pressures, teacher preparation, and the risk of using technology without pedagogical purpose. It concludes that the teacher of the present education system is neither merely a lecturer nor a passive observer, but an expert professional who creates conditions in which students can learn actively, responsibly, collaboratively, and meaningfully.

Keywords: teacher role; facilitator of learning; learner-centred education; teacher agency; student agency; active learning; formative assessment; digital education; artificial intelligence; teacher education

1. Introduction

Teaching has always been changed with society. What is different today is the speed and range of change. Students can obtain facts, explanations, videos, simulations, and automated responses

within seconds. Schools and universities are also expected to develop more than content knowledge. Learners need critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration, ethical judgement, digital literacy, adaptability, and the ability to continue learning in unfamiliar situations. These expectations have altered the meaning of effective teaching.

In a traditional transmission model, the teacher was commonly viewed as the principal holder of knowledge. The teacher explained the lesson, students listened and recorded information, and assessment often checked how accurately students could reproduce what had been taught. This model can still be useful when a clear explanation, demonstration, or structured introduction is required. The problem arises when transmission becomes the only method. Students may remember information without learning how to question it, apply it, connect it with experience, or use it to solve new problems.

The contemporary idea of facilitation places learning, rather than teacher talk, at the centre of classroom planning. A facilitator does not withdraw from teaching. The facilitator makes more deliberate professional decisions: what students should learn, what they already know, what misconceptions they hold, which task can produce useful thinking, when direct instruction is necessary, when students should explore, what evidence will show progress, and what support different learners require.

This shift is visible in international frameworks. The OECD Learning Compass emphasizes student agency and the capacity to set goals, reflect, and act responsibly. The OECD Teaching Compass, published in 2025, correspondingly emphasizes teacher agency, professional competencies, and well-being and describes teachers as co-designers, adaptive experts, and agents of curriculum change. UNESCO similarly places teachers at the centre of educational transformation and stresses collaboration, participatory pedagogy, inclusion, research engagement, and responsible use of technology.

The purpose of this article is to explain this changing role in simple academic language, identify its major dimensions, present an evidence-informed conceptual framework, and discuss implications for classroom practice and teacher education.

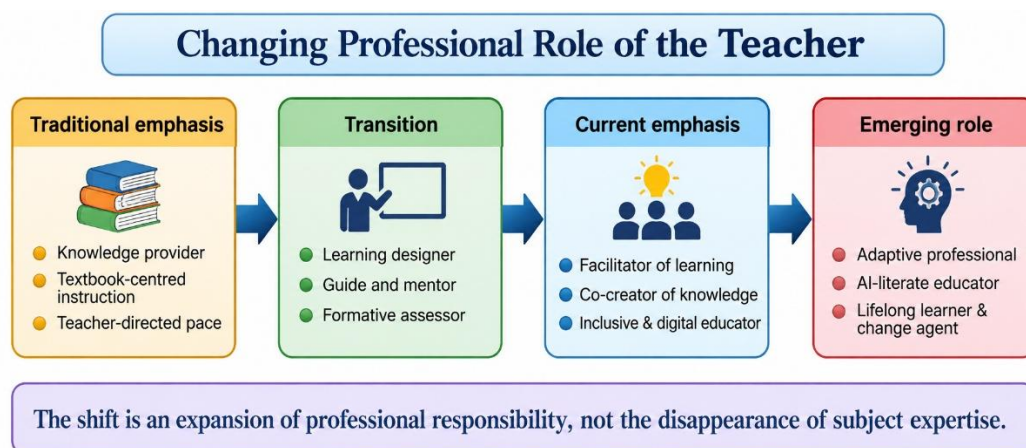


Figure 1. Changing professional role of the teacher. The figure represents an expansion of roles rather than a simple replacement of one role by another.

2. Objectives of the Article

- To explain the movement from teacher-centred knowledge transmission toward facilitation of learning.
- To identify the major professional roles expected from teachers in the current education system.
- To examine how student agency, active learning, assessment, inclusion, digital technology, and artificial intelligence are changing classroom practice.
- To discuss the skills and dispositions required for teachers to function effectively as facilitators.
- To identify practical challenges and implications for teacher education and continuous professional development.

3. Method and Nature of the Article

This is a conceptual and evidence-informed research article. It synthesizes ideas from educational theory and authoritative policy and research sources, especially UNESCO and OECD publications. No original survey or experimental dataset has been created for this article; therefore, no invented means, percentages, correlations, or significance values are presented. Current factual statements are based on traceable sources. This approach is appropriate because the central purpose is to analyse a professional transformation, explain its dimensions, and develop a practical framework for teaching rather than to report a new field experiment.

4. From Knowledge Provider to Facilitator: What Has Changed?

The phrase 'from knowledge provider to facilitator' should not be misunderstood as meaning that teachers no longer teach knowledge. Strong subject knowledge remains essential. Students cannot think critically about a subject they do not understand. The change concerns the way knowledge is organized, accessed, discussed, applied, and extended. The teacher is no longer the only route through which students can reach information, but remains crucial in helping them distinguish reliable knowledge from misinformation, connect facts with concepts, and transform information into understanding.

The traditional model usually gives the teacher greater control over questions, pace, resources, and answers. In a facilitated classroom, responsibility is more deliberately shared. Students may investigate questions, compare evidence, explain their reasoning, collaborate on tasks, make choices within clear boundaries, and reflect on their progress. The teacher establishes intellectual direction and standards while allowing learners meaningful participation.

This movement also changes the nature of authority. Professional authority is increasingly based not simply on possession of information but on expertise in subject matter, pedagogy, assessment, relationships, inclusion, and learning design. A teacher may know when to explain directly, when to model a process, when to ask a probing question, and when to remain silent so that students can struggle productively with a problem.

5. Why the Teacher's Role Is Changing

5.1 Easy Access to Information: Digital networks have made information abundant. The educational challenge is increasingly to select, verify, interpret, connect, and apply information. Teachers therefore need to develop students' information literacy and judgement, not only provide notes.

5.2 Competency-Oriented Education

Contemporary curricula increasingly emphasize the use of knowledge in authentic situations. Competencies involve combinations of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. Such outcomes require discussion, inquiry, projects, problem solving, practice, feedback, and reflection.

5.3 Student Agency

Student agency means that learners are active participants who can set goals, reflect, make responsible choices, and influence their learning. Agency does not mean complete freedom without structure. It develops through guided opportunities and co-agency among students, teachers, families, and communities.

5.4 Diversity and Inclusion

Classrooms include learners with different languages, abilities, prior experiences, socioeconomic conditions, interests, and learning needs. One uniform explanation cannot serve every learner equally. Facilitation requires flexible grouping, multiple representations, differentiated support, respectful participation, and attention to barriers.

5.5 Digital Technology and Artificial Intelligence

Technology can provide simulations, multimedia, adaptive practice, translation, feedback, and access to information. Generative AI can support brainstorming and explanation but can also produce errors, bias, overdependence, and academic-integrity problems. Teachers must therefore guide verification, ethical use, privacy awareness, attribution, and purposeful integration.

5.6 Social and Emotional Needs

Learning is affected by belonging, confidence, motivation, anxiety, peer relationships, and the quality of teacher-student interaction. A facilitator creates a safe environment in which students can ask questions, make mistakes, receive feedback, and participate without humiliation.

6. Major Roles of the Contemporary Teacher

6.1 Learning Designer

The teacher begins with learning outcomes and then designs tasks that can produce the desired thinking. Instead of asking only, 'What will I teach today?', the teacher also asks, 'What will students do with this idea, and what evidence will show that they have understood it?' Learning design includes sequencing, examples, questions, resources, practice, collaboration, and assessment.

6.2 Facilitator of Inquiry

Good facilitation uses questions that invite explanation, comparison, prediction, justification, and reflection. The teacher helps students move from curiosity to disciplined inquiry. When learners reach an unproductive path, the teacher provides hints, examples, counter-questions, or mini-lessons rather than simply supplying every answer.

6.3 Mentor and Guide

Students need academic and personal guidance as they develop independence. Mentoring includes goal setting, constructive encouragement, helping students interpret feedback, and guiding them toward appropriate support. It is especially important during transitions, failure, uncertainty, and career planning.

6.4 Formative Assessor

Assessment is not only the final examination. In a learner-centred classroom, teachers continuously gather evidence through questioning, observation, short tasks, peer explanation, exit tickets, drafts, and discussion. They use this evidence to modify teaching and give feedback that tells learners what is working and what to improve.

6.5 Inclusive Educator

The facilitator notices who is participating and who is being left behind. Inclusive teaching may require alternative examples, accessible materials, extra scaffolding, flexible grouping, culturally responsive contexts, and different ways for students to demonstrate learning.

6.6 Curator and Evaluator of Knowledge

Because information is abundant, teachers increasingly act as curators. They select credible resources, model source evaluation, distinguish evidence from assertion, and help students recognize misinformation. This role becomes more important when AI-generated content can appear fluent even when it is inaccurate.

6.7 Technology and AI Guide

A teacher should choose technology because it improves learning, not because it is fashionable. The professional question is whether a tool helps students understand, practise, create, collaborate, receive useful feedback, or gain access. Teachers also need to teach students when not to use technology and when independent thinking is essential.

6.8 Collaborator and Co-Learner

Modern teaching is increasingly collaborative. Teachers learn from colleagues, students, families, research, and professional networks. Being a co-learner does not erase professional expertise; it demonstrates intellectual openness and models lifelong learning.

6.9 Reflective Practitioner and Research User

Facilitation improves when teachers examine evidence from their own classrooms. They can ask why a group is struggling, compare strategies, review student work, conduct small action-research activities, and use research findings to refine practice.

6.10 Builder of Learning Relationships

The human relationship remains central. UNESCO's recent work on AI and teaching emphasizes that human connection, ethical reasoning, emotional intelligence, and social belonging cannot simply be coded into a machine. Teachers create trust, challenge, encouragement, and a sense that learning matters.



Figure 2. The teacher as facilitator within a contemporary learning ecosystem.**7. The Facilitation Cycle in Classroom Practice**

Facilitation can be understood as a cycle rather than a single teaching technique. It begins with knowledge of learners and clear outcomes, moves through active learning and formative assessment, and ends with reflection that informs the next cycle.

Facilitation Cycle in a Learner-Centred Classroom

Figure 3. A practical facilitation cycle for learner-centred teaching.

First, the teacher studies learners' readiness, interests, language needs, prior knowledge, and misconceptions. Second, clear outcomes are established so that activities have direction. Third, the teacher designs tasks that require learners to think and participate rather than merely copy information.

During learning, the teacher circulates, listens, questions, provides scaffolds, and notices patterns of understanding. Formative assessment is embedded within this process. Feedback is specific and actionable. Students are also encouraged to assess their own progress and explain the strategies they used.

The final stage is adaptation. The teacher reviews evidence: Which students understood? Where did misconceptions remain? Did the task produce the intended thinking? What should be retaught, extended, or redesigned? This makes facilitation a disciplined professional practice rather than an informal style.

8. Teacher-Centred and Facilitated Learning: A Balanced Comparison

Dimension	Mainly Transmission-Oriented	Facilitation-Oriented
Teacher role	Primary source and explainer	Designer, explainer, guide, questioner, assessor and mentor
Student role	Listener and responder	Active participant, inquirer, collaborator and reflective learner
Knowledge	Mostly presented as finished content	Explored, connected, applied and evaluated

Questions	Often seek expected answers	Also seek reasoning, evidence, alternatives and reflection
Assessment	Mainly after instruction	Also used during learning to guide next steps
Technology	Presentation or information delivery	Creation, inquiry, collaboration, access and feedback
Classroom control	Teacher makes most decisions	Structured sharing of responsibility and learner agency
Error	Something mainly to correct	Evidence that can guide feedback and further learning

Table 1. The comparison presents tendencies, not rigid categories. Effective teachers move between direct instruction and facilitation according to the learning purpose.

9. Direct Teaching Still Has an Important Place

Learner-centred education is sometimes wrongly interpreted as a rejection of teacher explanation. This is not necessary or desirable. Novices often benefit from clear modelling, worked examples, demonstrations, vocabulary instruction, and carefully sequenced explanations. The key issue is balance. Direct teaching can establish essential knowledge; facilitation then gives students opportunities to use, question, practise, connect, and transfer that knowledge.

An expert facilitator therefore has a larger repertoire, not a smaller one. The teacher can lecture briefly when explanation is efficient, organize discussion when multiple perspectives are valuable, use cooperative learning when interdependence supports the goal, assign individual practice when fluency is needed, and use projects when integration and authentic application are important.

10. Role of Assessment in the New Teaching Approach

Formative assessment is one of the strongest bridges between teaching and facilitation. The teacher continuously seeks evidence of learning and uses it to decide what should happen next. This makes assessment a learning process rather than only a judgement at the end.

Useful feedback is timely, understandable, and connected to criteria. Comments such as 'good' or 'weak' provide little direction. More useful feedback identifies a successful feature, a gap, and a manageable next step. Students can gradually learn to use rubrics, exemplars, self-questioning, and peer feedback so that they become less dependent on the teacher for every judgement.

Assessment also helps maintain academic standards in learner-centred classrooms. Student choice does not mean that every response is equally valid. Teachers remain responsible for disciplinary accuracy, transparent criteria, fairness, and reliable judgement.

11. Digital Technology, AI, and the Human Teacher

Digital transformation has strengthened the need for facilitation because access to information no longer guarantees understanding. Search engines and generative AI can quickly produce explanations, summaries, examples, and drafts. Students therefore need teachers who can help them ask better questions, verify claims, compare sources, detect weak reasoning, and understand the limits of automated systems.

AI literacy should include practical and ethical dimensions. Learners need to know that generated content may contain false references, hidden bias, oversimplification, or confident errors. They should understand privacy, intellectual ownership, academic integrity, and the importance of disclosing AI assistance where required.

The teacher's human role becomes more, not less, important when technology expands. Machines can support practice and information access, but teachers interpret classroom context, understand relationships, notice hesitation, motivate learners, mediate conflict, exercise professional judgement, and connect learning with values and social responsibility.

12. Challenges in Becoming a Facilitator of Learning

12.1 Large and diverse classes

Active learning and individualized feedback are harder when one teacher is responsible for many students. Structured group work, peer support, clear routines, and efficient formative checks can help but do not remove the need for adequate staffing and resources.

12.2 Examination pressure

When high-stakes examinations reward recall, teachers may feel compelled to prioritize coverage. Reform is more sustainable when curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment expectations are aligned.

12.3 Teacher preparation

Facilitation requires skills in questioning, assessment, differentiation, classroom management, technology, and learning design. Teachers need repeated practice and coaching, not one-time orientation programmes.

12.4 Digital inequality

Students and institutions have unequal access to devices, connectivity, assistive technology, and technical support. Digital pedagogy must therefore remain inclusive and offer workable alternatives.

12.5 Workload and well-being

Planning rich learning, providing feedback, adapting materials, and learning new technologies require time. OECD's Teaching Compass explicitly connects teacher agency and competencies with teacher well-being, showing that transformation cannot depend on individual effort alone.

12.6 Misunderstanding learner-centredness

If facilitation is interpreted as minimal teacher guidance, students may become confused and learning can become superficial. Effective facilitation combines freedom with structure, challenge with support, and activity with clear intellectual purpose.

13. Implications for Teacher Education

Pre-service teacher education should model the pedagogy it expects future teachers to use. Student teachers need experience with inquiry, cooperative learning, case analysis, microteaching, reflective journals, formative assessment, inclusive design, and responsible technology use. Merely lecturing about learner-centred education creates a gap between theory and practice.

Programmes should strengthen pedagogical content knowledge so that facilitation remains intellectually rigorous. A teacher must understand common misconceptions, useful examples,

representations, and disciplinary ways of thinking. Generic activity without subject depth is not enough.

School experience should include guided observation and mentoring focused on evidence of student learning. Student teachers can learn to ask: Who participated? What thinking was visible? Which question changed the discussion? Where was scaffolding necessary? How did the teacher know whether learning occurred?

Continuous professional development should be collaborative and connected with teachers' real problems of practice. Professional learning communities, lesson study, peer observation, action research, mentoring, and disciplined experimentation can support sustained change more effectively **than isolated workshops.**

14. Implications for Educational Institutions and Policy

Teachers cannot become effective facilitators through personal motivation alone. Institutions need timetables that permit planning and collaboration, access to appropriate learning resources, reasonable class sizes where possible, technical support, inclusive infrastructure, and leadership that treats teachers as professionals.

Curriculum documents should clearly identify essential learning rather than encourage superficial coverage of excessive content. Assessment systems should reward understanding, application, reasoning, and authentic performance if schools are expected to promote these outcomes.

Policy should also protect the professional agency of teachers. The OECD Teaching Compass emphasizes that teachers need agency to adapt curriculum responsibly and lead change. Professional autonomy, however, should operate with evidence, ethical standards, collaboration, and accountability for student learning.

15. Discussion

The movement from knowledge provider to facilitator represents a change in the centre of gravity of teaching. The teacher's success is judged less by how much content was spoken and more by what learners understood, could do, could explain, and could transfer. This does not reduce teaching to entertainment or activity. Facilitation is purposeful orchestration of learning.

The strongest contemporary frameworks also show that teacher and student agency are connected. Students become more capable of directing their learning when teachers themselves have the professional knowledge, autonomy, collaboration, and support needed to design responsive environments. In this sense, learner-centred education is not teacher-absent education; it requires highly capable teachers.

The current digital and AI environment adds urgency. When answers are easy to generate, education must give greater attention to questions, evidence, reasoning, judgement, originality, ethics, and human relationships. Teachers increasingly help students decide not only what to know, but how to know, why a source should be trusted, how to use tools responsibly, and how to remain intellectually independent.

At the same time, the facilitation model should not become a slogan. Its quality depends on subject expertise, careful planning, clear expectations, formative assessment, inclusion, and institutional

support. Poorly structured activity can be less effective than a good explanation. The professional task is therefore to select the right degree of guidance for the learner, the content, and the purpose.

16. Conclusion

The contemporary teacher is no longer adequately described as a transmitter of textbook knowledge. The role has expanded into that of learning designer, facilitator, mentor, formative assessor, inclusive educator, knowledge curator, technology guide, collaborator, reflective practitioner, and builder of human relationships. This expansion reflects a broader transformation in education from passive reception toward active, responsible, and meaningful learning.

The phrase 'from knowledge provider to facilitator of learning' should therefore be understood as a shift in emphasis rather than an abandonment of knowledge. Teachers still explain, demonstrate, correct, and provide expert guidance. What changes is that these actions are deliberately used to help students become active thinkers who can inquire, collaborate, apply knowledge, evaluate information, regulate their learning, and gradually exercise greater agency.

Future-ready education depends on future-ready teachers. Their effectiveness will require strong subject and pedagogical knowledge, assessment literacy, inclusive practice, digital and AI literacy, ethical judgement, continuous professional learning, and institutional conditions that support teacher agency and well-being. Technology can extend educational possibilities, but it cannot replace the professional and human work through which teachers make learning meaningful. The teacher remains central; the centre of the teacher's work, however, is increasingly the creation of conditions in which every learner can learn well.

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