

## Adapting the Education System to the 21st Century: Cooperative Learning Initiatives

**Ronit Nehemia**

National Inspector for ICT in Education, Administration for Science and Technology  
Ministry of Education, ronitne at education.gov.il

Since the 2010-2011 school year the Ministry of Education is running an innovative program to adapt the education system to the 21st century.

**The goal of the program to adapt the education system to the 21st century is to lead to the existence of innovative pedagogy in the schools, while integrating information and communication technologies (ICT). Innovative pedagogy is a method of teaching and learning, in which the content and knowledge learned are relevant for the dynamic reality.**

In addition to the knowledge, the students gain relevant skills for optimum functioning in the 21st century (21st century skills); teaching is adapted to the diversity of the students, breaks down barriers between the school and the outside world, while making maximum, yet enlightened, use of technology to promote the teaching processes, both at the pedagogical level and at the pedagogical management level.

**According to the educational worldview of the Ministry of Education, a balanced approach is called for in the integration of computers and information technologies in teaching and learning where it has added value.**

The proper incorporation of information technology in the teaching environment can improve quality, lead to improved teacher skills, adapt teaching to the diversity of students, improve how the school works and is managed, provide feedback on students in real time, which will allow problems to be addressed earlier, improve the attentiveness and interest of students, lead to a continuum of learning in the classroom and at home, and improve communication between all the partners (teachers, students and parents).

Beyond these improvements, when integrating information technology, we can impart 21st century skills, which include literacy, information and communication; thinking and problem resolution, interpersonal relations, collective learning and development of independent learners.

**The main goals are, thus, to improve teaching and management, improve the communication and impart 21st century skills to students through 21st century technology.**

Proper integration of information technology in teaching also means an integrated approach which the following diagram express.



The focus is on schools throughout the country, about 1400 schools, operators of advanced e-learning environments that integrate information technologies, including the use of advanced pedagogical processes. One of the expected outputs integrated in the schools' programs is collaborative learning.

The Ministry has stressed the importance promoting cooperative learning frameworks that are also best practice implementation of advanced ICT grounded innovative pedagogies. Several such frameworks are being promoted among them the iTEC project lead by the EUN, European Schoolnet, which is seeking to design the future classroom. About 100 classrooms from Israel are part of the largest experiment ever held on this matter and are cooperating with their colleagues from another 900 classrooms in Europe.