

Innovative Strategies for Leveraging Student-Centred Educational Resources

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Abstract

In the context of transformations driven by digitalisation, globalisation, and rapid changes in the labour market, education systems are required to reconsider their objectives and pedagogical practices. This paper examines the transition from a traditional, teacher-centred educational model toward an approach that places the learner at the centre of the learning process, in line with the theoretical foundations of student-centred education and contemporary pedagogical perspectives.

The study defines student-centred educational resources as learning materials and tools designed to adapt to learners' individual interests, learning styles, and learning pace, and analyses their core characteristics – accessibility, interactivity, and contextual relevance. It further discusses the benefits of these resources for enhancing learner motivation, increasing flexibility in the learning process, supporting the development of 21st-century competencies, and promoting educational inclusion.

Within this framework, the paper analyses five innovative pedagogical strategies for effectively leveraging student-centred educational resources: personalised learning, project- and problem-based learning (PBL), gamification, augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), and collaborative learning. In addition, the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning is examined, along with key challenges related to digital competencies, educational infrastructure, and equitable access to resources. The conclusions emphasise that the coherent integration of student-centred educational resources and innovative strategies represents a key direction for the modernisation of education and the improvement of educational quality.

Keywords: student-centred educational resources; innovative pedagogical strategies; digitalisation in education; 21st-century skills; personalised learning; educational inclusion.

Introduction

Currently, education, as a pillar of social development, is influenced by profound changes driven by global trends such as rapid technological progress, digitalisation, and intensified globalisation (UNESCO, 2015; EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2020). The pace of social and economic change is leading to a reconfiguration of educational objectives, which are no longer limited to the transmission of knowledge but extend toward the development of complex, transferable, adaptable, and sustainable competencies.

While the traditional educational model focused primarily on uniform instruction and the teacher as the primary authority, the emphasis is now shifting toward *the student as an active participant in learning*. This paradigm shift is grounded in both classical educational theories – from Dewey, who advocated „learning through experience”, to Vygotsky, who emphasised the importance of social interaction – as well as recent contributions from digital pedagogy and research on personalised learning (Dewey, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978).

The transformations brought about by digitalisation have expanded access to information and profoundly changed the ways in which students interact with knowledge. In a context where information is abundant, the essential competence is no longer memorisation, but the ability to select, critically analyse, *and creatively apply information*. Consequently, educational resources must function not only as contextual means of transmission but also as *tools for exploration, interaction, and reflection*.

Furthermore, globalisation and labour mobility require education systems to prepare graduates who can integrate into multicultural contexts, collaborate within international teams, and adapt to emerging professions. In developing contemporary educational strategies, a central role is played by the cultivation of 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, creativity, effective collaboration, complex problem-solving abilities, and digital competence (UNESCO, 2015; EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2017).

In addition, recent social changes have highlighted *the growing need for inclusion and equity in education*. Digital transformation carries the risk of widening the gap between students with access to technology and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, innovative educational strategies must be designed not only to enhance performance but also to reduce inequalities by ensuring universal access to high-quality educational resources (UNESCO, 2019).

Understanding the concept of *student-centred educational resources* involves more than identifying new types of learning materials; it requires a shift in perspective regarding the role of learners in the educational process. Student-centred educational resources refer to learning materials and tools designed to adapt to learners' individual interests, learning styles, and learning pace. Unlike traditional resources, which were primarily developed for the uniform transmission of knowledge, contemporary resources emphasise flexibility and learner agency.

In this regard, three defining characteristics distinguish student-centred educational resources from traditional instructional materials:

- ✓ *Personalisation* – the adaptation of learning content, pace, and level of difficulty to the individual needs, abilities, and learning styles of students;
- ✓ *Interactivity* – the stimulation of active learner participation through engagement, feedback, and problem-solving activities;
- ✓ *Contextual relevance* – the connection of learning content to real-life situations, students' interests, and authentic social or professional contexts.

These characteristics are strongly supported by educational theory. Dewey emphasised the importance of experiential learning, arguing that knowledge is constructed through active engagement with meaningful experiences (Dewey, 1997). Similarly, Vygotsky highlighted the role of the social environment and the zone of proximal development in the construction of knowledge, stressing that learning occurs most effectively through interaction and guided participation (Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, student-centred educational resources should not be understood as supplementary teaching aids, but as instruments that support *exploration, reflection, and the active construction of meaning*.

Defining student-centred educational resources and anchoring them in solid theoretical foundations represents only the first step toward understanding their educational potential. To fully grasp their distinctive value and their transformative role in learning, it is essential to examine the fundamental characteristics that enable these resources to reshape students' learning experiences.

Accessibility. Modern educational resources enable learning to occur anytime, anywhere through online platforms, digital libraries, and open educational resources (OER). In the Republic of Moldova, initiatives such as *Pro Didactica* and *CEEFF* platforms promote open access to high-quality educational content (PRO DIDACTICA, 2017; UNESCO, 2019).

Interactivity. Unlike traditional textbooks, digital resources offer simulations, dynamic exercises, immediate feedback, and problem-solving scenarios. As a result, students are no longer passive recipients of information, but active participants in the learning process.

Contextual relevance. Learning content is closely connected to students' real-life experiences and to labour market needs. In vocational and technical education, this is reflected in digital manuals for specific trades, technical simulators, and project-based activities inspired by local industries.

These characteristics – accessibility, interactivity, and contextual relevance – define the innovative nature of student-centred educational resources. However, they do not operate in isolation. Their educational value becomes fully visible only when these resources are strategically integrated into pedagogical practices that actively engage learners and support competency development.

The diversity of student-centred educational resources illustrates the multiple ways in which learning can be supported and adapted to learners' needs. These resources can be grouped into several main categories, each contributing differently to the learning process.

Digital resources include e-learning platforms, technical simulators, and augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR) applications that recreate virtual laboratories or industrial environments. Such resources enable experiential learning, allow repeated practice in safe conditions, and facilitate access to complex processes that would otherwise be difficult or costly to reproduce in real settings.

Physical resources comprise educational games, hands-on tools, and practical instruments adapted to specific trades or disciplines. In vocational and technical education, these resources support skill development through direct manipulation, experimentation, and applied learning tasks.

Open educational resources (OER) provide freely accessible learning materials that can be reused, adapted, and shared. OER play a crucial role in promoting equity and access to education, particularly in contexts where financial or infrastructural constraints limit the availability of traditional learning materials.

The existence of these diverse resource types highlights the flexibility of student-centred approaches and their capacity to address varied educational contexts. However, beyond classification, a key question remains: what added value do these resources bring compared to traditional instructional tools?

Student-centred educational resources generate significant benefits for both learners and education systems. Among the most important advantages are:

- ✓ *Development of 21st-century competencies*, including critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital skills;
- ✓ *Flexibility in learning*, allowing students to progress at their own pace and according to their individual learning needs;
- ✓ *Increased learner motivation*, fostered through interactivity, autonomy, and relevance to real-life contexts;
- ✓ *Practical preparation*, particularly in vocational and technical education, where simulations and applied projects create direct links with labour market requirements;
- ✓ *Educational inclusion*, as open and digital resources, can reduce access gaps between students from different social and geographical backgrounds (UNESCO, 2015; EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2020).

These benefits are well-documented in educational research and confirm the transformative potential of student-centred educational resources. Nevertheless, their effectiveness depends largely on the context in which they are implemented.

In the Republic of Moldova, the relevance of student-centred educational resources is particularly pronounced, as they offer concrete responses to several systemic challenges:

- *limited facilities in many schools, which can be partially compensated through digital simulations and AR/VR technologies that substitute costly physical infrastructure;*
- *urban–rural disparities*, which can be mitigated through OER and online learning platforms that provide equitable access to quality resources;
- *teacher migration, where digital resources support remaining teachers by offering modern instructional tools and ready-to-use learning materials;*
- *the need for stronger links with the labour market*, addressed through applied learning experiences that reflect authentic industrial and professional contexts.

In this regard, the use of modern educational resources is not merely an optional innovation, but a strategic necessity for educational modernisation and for aligning national education with European integration objectives.

Defining and classifying student-centred educational resources represents only an initial step. Their real educational value emerges when these resources are integrated into effective pedagogical strategies that stimulate learner engagement and support competency development. Consequently, the next stage of analysis focuses on the main innovative directions in which student-centred educational resources can be strategically leveraged: personalised learning, project- and problem-based learning, gamification, augmented and virtual reality, and collaborative learning.

Student-centred educational resources reach their full educational potential only when they are integrated into innovative pedagogical strategies that foster learner engagement, autonomy, and the development of meaningful competencies. Accordingly, this section examines five key strategic directions for modernising education: personalised *learning*,

project-based learning (PBL), gamification, the use of augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), and collaborative learning.

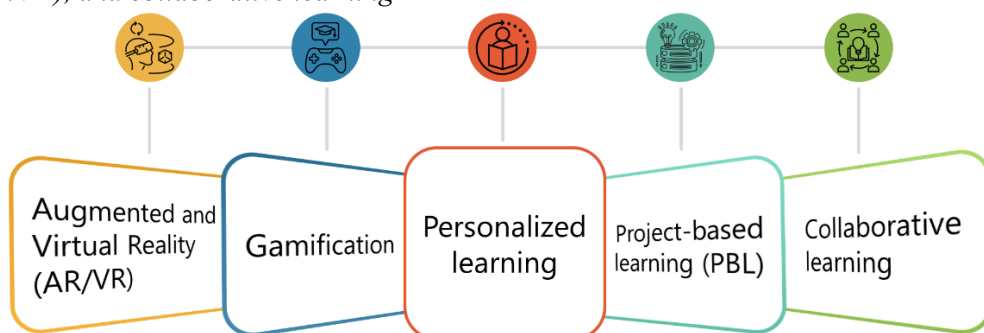


Figure 1. Innovative pedagogical strategies for leveraging student-centred educational resources

Figure 1 illustrates the main innovative pedagogical strategies through which student-centred educational resources can be effectively leveraged to support personalised, applied, and collaborative learning. The visual representation highlights the complementary nature of these strategies and their role in creating flexible, learner-centred educational environments.

The strategies presented in Figure 1 do not function in isolation; rather, they are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Together, they contribute to transforming teaching and learning processes by enabling the adaptive use of educational resources in response to learners' needs, learning contexts, and competency-based objectives.

Personalising learning involves adapting learning content, instructional pace, and teaching methods to learners' individual characteristics. In contrast to traditional, standardised approaches, personalised learning recognises and values diversity in learners' prior knowledge, interests, motivations, and learning styles.

Recent research highlights the effectiveness of personalised learning environments in improving learning outcomes and reducing the risk of academic disengagement. Walkington demonstrates that adaptive learning technologies, which tailor tasks to students' interests and contexts, can significantly enhance performance and learning outcomes (Walkington 2013, 932–945). Similarly, studies on adaptive learning systems indicate that personalisation supports learner autonomy and sustained engagement by aligning educational resources with individual needs (Divanji, 2025).

In practice, personalised learning is facilitated through a wide range of student-centred educational resources. Digital learning platforms and learning management systems enable the creation of individualised learning pathways, while digital portfolios provide spaces for reflection, self-monitoring, and formative assessment. Learning analytics tools further support personalisation by allowing teachers to identify learning difficulties at an early stage and to intervene with targeted support.

By enabling learners to progress at their own pace and to engage with resources that reflect their interests and abilities, personalised learning transforms educational resources from

static content repositories into dynamic tools for competency development. However, personalisation does not imply isolated learning; rather, it serves as a foundation on which other innovative strategies – such as project-based and collaborative learning – can be effectively built.

Project-based learning (PBL) places learners in the position of actively addressing complex, interdisciplinary tasks inspired by real-life situations or by authentic professional and economic contexts (Thomas, 2000; Hmelo-Silver, 2004). This approach stimulates critical thinking, collaboration, and responsibility. Concrete examples include projects to develop technical prototypes, solve problems proposed by companies, or present solutions to economic partners.

Unlike traditional instructional approaches that focus on fragmented content delivery, PBL emphasises learning through inquiry, problem-solving, collaboration, and the creation of concrete products or solutions.

Through project-based learning, student-centred educational resources are leveraged as tools that support investigation, experimentation, and application. Digital platforms, case studies, simulations, and open educational resources enable students to access relevant information, analyse real-world problems, and propose viable solutions. In this way, educational resources move beyond their informational function and become instruments for applied learning and competency development.

Research in the field highlights the educational value of PBL in fostering higher-order thinking skills. Hmelo-Silver emphasises that problem- and project-based learning environments promote critical thinking, self-directed learning, and the ability to transfer knowledge to new situations (Hmelo-Silver, 2004). Similarly, Thomas underlines that PBL supports deeper learning by engaging students in sustained inquiry and meaningful tasks that mirror professional practice (Thomas, 2000).

In vocational and technical education, the relevance of project-based learning is particularly evident. Projects may involve designing technical prototypes, analysing production processes, or resolving challenges posed by local companies or industry partners. Such activities create direct links between educational resources and labor market requirements, helping students develop practical skills, teamwork abilities, and professional responsibility. Moreover, PBL contributes to learner motivation by offering meaningful contexts and a sense of ownership over the learning process. Students are encouraged to collaborate, negotiate roles, and present their solutions to authentic audiences, which enhances communication skills and confidence. In this context, the teacher assumes the role of facilitator and mentor, guiding learners in the effective use of educational resources and supporting reflection throughout the project lifecycle.

By integrating student-centred educational resources into project-based learning environments, PBL transforms education into an active, contextualised, and socially relevant process. As such, it represents a powerful strategy for leveraging educational resources to prepare learners for the complex challenges of contemporary society.

Gamification is the integration of game-based elements – such as levels, points, badges, challenges, and leaderboards – into educational contexts in order to enhance learner

motivation, engagement, and persistence (Cavus 2023, 57-78). Rather than transforming learning into a game in itself, gamification strategically leverages educational resources by embedding motivational mechanisms that encourage active participation and sustained effort.

Within gamified learning environments, student-centred educational resources are used to create interactive and goal-oriented learning experiences. Digital platforms, educational applications, simulations, and online assessment tools allow learners to engage with content through progressive challenges, immediate feedback, and visible indicators of achievement. In this way, resources are transformed from static instructional materials into dynamic tools that support continuous learning and skill development.

Research highlights the positive impact of gamification on learner engagement and motivation. Cavus et al. demonstrate that gamified approaches can increase participation, improve task completion rates, and foster intrinsic motivation when game elements are meaningfully aligned with learning objectives (Cavus 2023, 57-78). By providing clear goals and frequent feedback, gamification supports self-regulation and helps learners monitor their own progress.

In technical and vocational education, gamification can be effectively applied through industrial process simulations, scenario-based challenges, or competitive problem-solving tasks. For example, learners may be required to complete successive levels by meeting quality standards, optimising processes, or solving technical faults. Digital badges can be used to recognise the acquisition of micro-competencies, making learning outcomes more visible and transferable.

Beyond motivation, gamification also supports the development of transversal competencies such as problem-solving, collaboration, and decision-making. When combined with other student-centred strategies – such as personalised learning or project-based learning – gamification enhances the educational value of resources by making learning experiences more engaging, relevant, and learner-driven.

By strategically integrating game-based elements into educational resources, gamification helps create motivating, interactive learning environments. As such, it represents an effective strategy for leveraging student-centred educational resources in contemporary education systems.

Augmented reality (AR) and *virtual reality (VR)* technologies offer significant opportunities for enhancing educational processes, particularly in technical, scientific, and vocational fields (Radianti, 2020; Vascan, 2023). By enabling immersive and interactive learning experiences, AR and VR extend the educational value of student-centred resources beyond traditional instructional formats.

AR and VR-based educational resources enable the simulation of complex processes, the creation of virtual laboratories, and the modelling of professional environments that would otherwise be inaccessible due to cost, safety, or logistical constraints. Through these technologies, learners can explore three-dimensional representations, manipulate virtual objects, and engage in experiential learning scenarios that closely resemble real-world

situations. As a result, educational resources become tools for active experimentation and applied learning rather than passive information delivery.

Research indicates that immersive learning environments supported by VR can enhance understanding, retention, and skill acquisition. Radianti et al. highlight that virtual reality applications in education promote experiential learning and enable students to practice tasks repeatedly in controlled, safe environments (Radianti, 2020). Similarly, studies emphasise the potential of AR to support contextualised learning by overlaying digital information onto real-world settings, thereby enhancing comprehension and engagement (Vascan, 2023).

In vocational and technical education, the relevance of AR and VR is particularly pronounced. These technologies can compensate for the lack of costly equipment in schools by providing virtual access to industrial machinery, production lines, or laboratory instruments. Students can learn to operate complex systems, test procedures, and make decisions without the risks associated with real-life practice. In this way, AR and VR help reduce disparities between urban and rural institutions and improve equity in access to high-quality training opportunities.

Beyond technical skill development, AR and VR also support the cultivation of transversal competencies such as problem-solving, spatial reasoning, and autonomous learning. When integrated into pedagogical strategies alongside other student-centred approaches, immersive technologies enhance the effectiveness of educational resources and strengthen the connection between learning and professional practice.

By transforming abstract concepts into concrete experiences, augmented and virtual reality technologies offer a powerful means of leveraging student-centred educational resources. Their strategic integration into educational practice supports deeper learning, the development of practical competence, and the modernisation of education systems.

Collaborative learning is based on the premise that learners construct knowledge more effectively through interaction, cooperation, and shared problem-solving experiences. This approach emphasises learning as a social process in which students actively exchange ideas, negotiate meaning, and build understanding together.

Within collaborative learning environments, student-centred educational resources play a crucial role in facilitating communication, coordination, and collective knowledge construction. Digital platforms, online forums, shared documents, collaborative workspaces, and communities of practice enable learners to work together synchronously or asynchronously, regardless of physical location. These resources support peer interaction, feedback exchange, and joint responsibility for learning outcomes.

Collaborative learning contributes significantly to the development of key transversal competencies, including communication skills, teamwork, social responsibility, and conflict resolution. By engaging in group tasks and shared projects, students learn to articulate their ideas, listen to alternative perspectives, and co-construct solutions. Educational resources thus become mediators of social interaction rather than mere repositories of information.

In vocational and technical education, collaborative learning is particularly valuable, as it mirrors real workplace practices where teamwork and coordination are essential. Group-

based projects, collaborative problem-solving activities, and peer-supported learning tasks help students develop professional behaviours and collaborative competencies that are directly transferable to the labour market.

Moreover, collaborative learning enhances learner motivation and engagement by fostering a sense of belonging and shared purpose. When combined with other innovative strategies – such as personalised learning, project-based learning, gamification, and AR/VR – collaborative learning enhances the effectiveness of student-centred educational resources and fosters inclusive, dynamic learning environments.

Taken together, the innovative strategies discussed – personalised learning, project-based learning, gamification, augmented and virtual reality, and collaborative learning – demonstrate that the educational value of student-centred resources is maximised when they are strategically integrated into pedagogical practices that promote active participation, autonomy, and meaningful learning.

Regardless of how advanced educational resources and pedagogical strategies may be, their effectiveness fundamentally depends on the teacher. The teacher plays a central role in selecting, adapting, and integrating student-centred educational resources in ways that align with learners' needs, curricular objectives, and contextual constraints.

In traditional educational paradigms, the teacher was primarily perceived as a transmitter of information, responsible for delivering content and assessing students' knowledge acquisition. In contemporary education, however, this role has shifted significantly. The teacher is increasingly viewed as a facilitator of learning, a guide who supports students in exploring available resources, constructing knowledge, and developing individualised learning pathways.

This transformation requires a profound redefinition of teachers' professional identity and competencies. To successfully leverage student-centred educational resources, teachers need to combine traditional pedagogical expertise with digital, methodological, and innovative skills. In this regard, the European framework for the digital competence of educators, DigCompEdu, identifies six key competence areas, ranging from managing digital resources and integrating technology into teaching to supporting personalised learning and fostering students' digital competencies (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2017). Similarly, the UNICEF ECARO framework outlines a convergent set of digital competencies tailored to the educational realities of Central and Eastern Europe (UNICEF ECARO, 2021).

Within this paradigm, teachers are not only users of educational resources but also designers of learning experiences. They are responsible for creating meaningful learning contexts, facilitating interaction, providing formative feedback, and encouraging reflection. By doing so, teachers ensure that student-centred resources are not used superficially but are strategically leveraged to support deep learning and competency development.

However, the transformation of education cannot happen without recognising and overcoming the obstacles that stand in the way. Teachers, students, and educational institutions face real difficulties, from unequal access to technology to teacher migration or

gaps between the curriculum and the labor market. For innovative strategies to be effective, these challenges must be discussed and accompanied by concrete solutions.

Despite the clear benefits associated with student-centred educational resources and innovative pedagogical strategies, their implementation is often accompanied by significant challenges. These challenges must be acknowledged and addressed in order to ensure sustainable educational transformation.

One major challenge relates to infrastructure and access to technology. Significant disparities persist between urban and rural schools, as well as between institutions equipped with modern laboratories and those relying on outdated equipment. Limited connectivity and insufficient technological infrastructure restrict students' access to digital resources and reduce opportunities for innovative learning. Addressing these issues requires sustained public and private investment, the development of regional resource centres, and the promotion of open educational resources accessible even under constrained conditions.

Another challenge concerns the quality and selection of digital resources. Although access to information has increased dramatically, not all educational materials meet quality standards. An abundance of resources can lead to confusion and demotivation if learners and teachers lack clear evaluation criteria. Effective solutions include institutional policies for resource validation, the use of international quality guidelines, and targeted professional development focused on media literacy and critical evaluation skills (Redecker, 2017).

Equity and inclusion represent additional challenges in the digital transformation of education. Even when high-quality resources are available, not all learners have equal access to them. Differences between urban and rural contexts, as well as between learners with and without special educational needs, raise concerns about digital inclusion. Adapting resources to the principles of universal accessibility, providing personalised support programmes, and aligning policies with the Digital Education Action Plan (2021–2027) are essential steps towards ensuring inclusive and equitable education.

By recognising these challenges and addressing them through coherent educational policies, institutional support, and stakeholder collaboration, education systems can create the conditions necessary for the effective integration of student-centred educational resources and innovative strategies.

This paper examined the role and potential of student-centred educational resources in the context of contemporary educational transformations driven by digitalisation, globalisation, and labour market dynamics. Moving beyond traditional models of instruction, the analysis highlights the importance of placing learners at the centre of the educational process and aligning teaching practices with the development of 21st-century competencies.

The study has defined student-centred educational resources and analysed their key characteristics – accessibility, interactivity, and contextual relevance – as well as their benefits for learner motivation, flexibility, inclusion, and practical skill development. Within this framework, five innovative pedagogical strategies were examined as essential mechanisms for leveraging these resources: personalised learning, project-based learning, gamification, augmented and virtual reality, and collaborative learning.

Furthermore, the paper emphasised the pivotal role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning and as a central actor in the effective integration of educational resources and pedagogical strategies. At the same time, it acknowledged the challenges associated with infrastructure, digital competencies, resource quality, and equity, underscoring the need for coherent policies and sustained institutional support.

In conclusion, the strategic integration of student-centred educational resources and innovative pedagogical approaches represents a key pathway for modernising education systems and enhancing educational quality. By fostering active participation, autonomy, and meaningful learning experiences, these approaches contribute to the creation of inclusive, flexible, and competence-oriented educational environments that can respond to contemporary societal challenges.

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