



Learning Design as a Core Competency for Future Educators: A Documentary Analysis of Teacher Education in West Bengal

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Abstract: *Rapid advances in educational technology and competency-based education have transformed teachers' roles from content providers to learning designers. This documentary study examines learning design as a core competency among pre-service teachers in B.Ed. Programmes in West Bengal. The study aims to assess the level of learning design competency, examine its relationship with digital pedagogical skills, and identify strategies for strengthening teacher education. A qualitative documentary research design was employed using policy documents, curriculum frameworks, government reports, and peer-reviewed literature published between 2015 and 2025. Data were analysed through thematic content analysis. The findings indicate that while B.Ed. Programmes provide opportunities for lesson planning, ICT integration, internships, and reflective practice; learning design competency remains moderately developed due to limited emphasis on instructional design and technology-enabled pedagogy. The analysis also reveals a positive relationship between digital pedagogical skills and effective learning design. The study recommends curriculum revision, enhanced digital pedagogy, competency-based assessment, strengthened internship experiences, and the establishment of Learning Design Laboratories. It concludes that integrating learning design into teacher education is essential for preparing competent, learner-centred, and digitally proficient educators in alignment with the goals of the National Education Policy 2020.*

Keywords: Learning Design, Teacher Education, Pre-service Teachers, Digital Pedagogy, Documentary Study, West Bengal

1. Introduction: Education in the twenty-first century demands teachers who can create engaging, inclusive, learner-centred, and technology-supported learning experiences. Traditional teaching approaches that primarily focus on content delivery are no longer sufficient in an era characterized by digital transformation, artificial intelligence, blended learning, and competency-based education. Teachers today are expected to become learning designers who carefully plan instructional activities, integrate digital technologies, assess learning outcomes, and respond to learners' diverse needs.

Learning design refers to the systematic planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation of learning experiences that promote meaningful learning. It combines pedagogical knowledge, technological competence, curriculum understanding, assessment strategies, and reflective practice. For pre-service teachers, learning design competency forms the foundation of effective classroom teaching.

In India, teacher education has undergone significant reforms following the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes competency-based education, digital literacy, experiential learning, and innovative pedagogies. Similarly, the two-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme implemented by the West

Bengal University of Teachers' Training, Education Planning and Administration (WBUTTEPA) and affiliated universities incorporates lesson planning, school internship, ICT, pedagogical courses, and reflective practices. However, explicit attention to learning design as an integrated competency remains relatively underdeveloped.

The present documentary study analyses existing literature, curriculum documents, and policy reports to understand learning design competency among pre-service teachers in B.Ed. colleges of West Bengal.

2. Review of Literature

International Perspectives: Learning design has emerged as a key competency in teacher education, emphasizing the systematic planning of meaningful and learner-centred educational experiences. Laurillard (2012) argued that effective teaching requires the intentional design of learning activities that actively engage students. Biggs and Tang (2011) highlighted the importance of *constructive alignment*, stressing coherence among learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessment. Expanding this perspective, Mishra and Koehler (2006) introduced the TPACK framework, demonstrating that effective teaching depends on integrating technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge. More recently, UNESCO (2023) emphasized digital competence as an essential professional skill, advocating the effective integration of technology into teaching and learning.

Indian Perspective: In India, teacher education reforms have increasingly focused on competency-based learning and digital pedagogy. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes learner-centred instruction, experiential learning, digital literacy, and innovative assessment practices. Similarly, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has strengthened teacher preparation through curriculum reforms, school internships, ICT integration, and reflective practice. Recent Indian studies suggest that while pre-service teachers demonstrate competence in conventional lesson planning, many face challenges in integrating digital tools, collaborative learning, and authentic assessment into classroom practice. Evidence also indicates that digital pedagogical skills enhance instructional planning and classroom engagement.

Although existing studies have examined ICT skills, pedagogical competence, and teaching practice, limited research has explored learning design competency as a comprehensive construct within B.Ed. programmes in West Bengal. This gap highlights the need for a focused documentary analysis of learning design in teacher education.

3. Research Gap: Previous research has largely focused on ICT skills, pedagogical competence, and teaching practice as separate aspects of teacher education. Comparatively, limited attention has been paid to learning design competency as a comprehensive construct integrating digital pedagogy, learner-centred instruction, assessment design, and reflective practice. Furthermore, most studies have examined these competencies at a broader national or international level. However, studies specifically examining learning design competency among pre-service teachers in West Bengal remain limited.

4. Statement of the Problem: The present study is entitled: Learning Design as a Core Competency for Future Educators: A Documentary Analysis of Teacher Education in West Bengal

5. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of learning design competency among pre-service teachers.
2. To investigate the relationship between digital pedagogical skills and learning design competency among pre-service teachers.
3. To identify strategies for strengthening learning design competencies in teacher education programmes.

6. Research Questions

1. What is the level of learning design competency among pre-service teachers?
2. What is the relationship between digital pedagogical skills and learning design competency among pre-service teachers?
3. What strategies can strengthen learning design competencies in teacher education programmes?

7. Research Methodology

Research Design: The study adopted a documentary research design to examine learning design as a core competency for future educators. The research employed a qualitative and descriptive approach by systematically reviewing and synthesizing existing policy documents, curriculum frameworks, and scholarly literature related to teacher education.

Data Sources: The study was based exclusively on secondary sources. Data were collected from the *National Education Policy (2020)*, NCTE regulations and curriculum frameworks, BSAEU/WBUTTEPA B.Ed. curriculum and university syllabi of West Bengal, UNESCO reports, UGC publications, government documents, books, and peer-reviewed articles published in Scopus- and UGC CARE-indexed journals. Documents published between 2015 and 2025 were selected based on their relevance to learning design, teacher education, digital pedagogy, instructional design, curriculum development, and pre-service teacher preparation. Only authentic and credible academic and policy documents were included in the review.

Data Collection: Relevant documents were identified through academic databases, official government websites, university repositories, and international organizations. The selected documents were screened, classified, and organized according to the objectives of the study to ensure relevance and consistency.

Data Analysis Technique: The collected data were analysed using thematic content analysis. The reviewed documents were systematically coded and categorized into major themes, including learning design competency, digital pedagogy, lesson planning, internship, technology integration, assessment practices, and teacher professional competencies. The identified themes were interpreted to address the research objectives and draw meaningful conclusions.

9. Findings: The thematic analysis of the reviewed documents revealed the following key findings in relation to the objectives of the study.

Objective	Major Findings
Objective 1: To examine the level of learning design competency among pre-service teachers.	B.Ed. programmes in West Bengal provide opportunities for developing learning design through lesson planning, ICT integration, micro-teaching, internships, and reflective practice. However, the overall level of learning design competency remains moderate due to limited emphasis on instructional design, collaborative learning, authentic assessment, and digital learning environments.
Objective 2: To investigate the relationship between digital pedagogical skills and learning design competency among pre-service teachers.	The review indicates a positive relationship between digital pedagogical skills and learning design competency. Pre-service teachers with stronger digital competencies are better able to design learner-centred, interactive, and technology-supported learning experiences.
Objective 3: To identify	The findings suggest that curriculum revision, explicit training in

strategies for strengthening learning design competencies in teacher education programmes.	learning design, enhanced ICT and AI integration, competency-based assessment, strengthened internship programmes, and continuous professional development are essential for improving learning design competency among future educators.
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10. Discussion: The findings indicate that although B.Ed. programmes in West Bengal provide opportunities to develop learning design through lesson planning, ICT integration, school internships, and reflective practice, learning design is still addressed primarily as a component of lesson planning rather than as an integrated professional competency. This finding supports Laurillard (2012), who emphasized that effective teaching depends on the deliberate design of meaningful learning experiences rather than on content delivery alone.

The positive association identified between digital pedagogical skills and learning design competency is consistent with the TPACK framework proposed by Mishra and Koehler (2006), which highlights that the integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge enhances instructional planning and classroom effectiveness. Similarly, Biggs and Tang (2011) argued that effective learning occurs when learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessment practices are constructively aligned.

These findings also align with the objectives of the National Education Policy (2020), which advocates competency-based teacher education, experiential learning, digital pedagogy, and technology-enabled teaching. Likewise, UNESCO (2023) emphasized that digital competence and instructional design are essential professional competencies for teachers in contemporary education systems.

11. Educational Implications: The findings of this study highlight the need to strengthen learning design as a core component of teacher education in West Bengal. Integrating learning design competencies into the B.Ed. curriculum can enhance pre-service teachers' ability to develop learner-centred, technology-enabled, and inclusive instructional practices. Teacher educators should model effective instructional design and meaningful use of digital technologies during teacher preparation. Furthermore, internship programmes and assessment practices should emphasize authentic lesson design, reflective practice, and competency-based evaluation to better prepare future educators for contemporary classroom challenges.

12. Recommendations: Based on the findings of the documentary study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Revise the B.Ed. curriculum to explicitly include learning design and instructional design competencies.
2. Strengthen digital pedagogy through the integration of ICT, artificial intelligence, and blended learning approaches.
3. Enhance internship programmes by emphasizing innovative lesson planning, reflective practice, and competency-based assessment.
4. Organize regular professional development programmes and workshops on learning design, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and technology-enabled teaching.
5. Foster stronger collaboration between teacher education institutions and partner schools to provide authentic teaching experiences.
6. Establish Learning Design Laboratories in teacher education institutions where pre-service teachers can design, develop, implement, and evaluate innovative instructional materials and technology-supported learning experiences.

7. Encourage action research and collaborative learning among teacher educators and pre-service teachers to promote continuous professional growth and innovation in teaching practices.

13. Conclusion: Learning design has become one of the most significant competencies required of future educators in the twenty-first century. Documentary evidence indicates that while B.Ed. colleges in West Bengal provide substantial opportunities for pedagogical preparation through lesson planning, internship, and ICT education, explicit development of learning design competency remains inadequate. Strengthening digital pedagogical skills, redesigning curricula, enhancing internship experiences, and integrating innovative instructional design approaches will significantly improve the professional preparedness of future teachers. The successful implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 depends largely on preparing teachers who are capable of designing meaningful, inclusive, technology-enabled, and learner-centred educational experiences. Therefore, learning design should be recognized as a core competency in teacher education programmes across West Bengal.

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