

A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON EDUCATION, PEDAGOGY, AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING: TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The rapid evolution of education systems and pedagogical practices has necessitated a comprehensive examination of multidisciplinary learning, pedagogical theories, and the integration of technology in diverse educational contexts. This systematic literature review aims to synthesize existing research on education, pedagogy, and multidisciplinary learning, identifying key trends, challenges, and future directions. We analyze the interplay between multidisciplinary education across various learning stages, pedagogical approaches, and the transformative role of technology, while also considering the implications of teacher education, learning environments, and policy reforms. The review adopts a rigorous methodology to systematically identify, evaluate, and integrate relevant studies, ensuring a holistic understanding of the field. Our findings reveal a growing emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative pedagogies, yet significant challenges persist, such as disparities in teacher preparedness and the equitable implementation of technology. The impact of policy reforms on educational outcomes is also critically examined, highlighting the need for context-sensitive strategies. Special education and inclusive practices emerge as pivotal areas requiring further attention, particularly in fostering accessible learning environments. Ultimately, this review underscores the importance of adaptive pedagogical frameworks and multidisciplinary integration to address contemporary educational demands. We propose future research directions to bridge existing gaps and enhance the synergy between theory and practice in education.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Learning environment, Multidisciplinary learning, Interdisciplinary Learning

INTRODUCTION

Education is vital for societal growth, shaping cognitive, social, and emotional development. Pedagogy, curriculum, and learning environments have evolved with technology, globalization, and societal change (Türkkahraman, 2012). Multidisciplinary learning promotes critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, which are necessary for addressing real-world challenges (Mishra & Aithal, 2023; Self et al., 2019). The history of education shows a shift from rigid, teacher-centered models to more flexible, student-centered approaches. Early theories like behaviorism and constructivism laid the foundation for modern practices, emphasizing interaction, experience, and reflection (Richardson, 2003). The 21st century faces new complexities, including digital transformation, cultural diversity, and lifelong learning (Malik, 2018). These developments urge educators and policymakers to adopt inclusive, adaptable pedagogies (Hand et al., 2016). Despite research on

multidisciplinary education and innovation, gaps remain. Implementation varies by stage, with limited evidence on long-term effects in early childhood and tertiary education (Polloni et al., 2020). Technology's integration often lacks coherence, causing disparities (Christensen, 2002). Teacher preparation to handle tech-rich, multidisciplinary classrooms is underexplored (Verma & Shankar, 2023). Policy reforms and classroom practices need further investigation, especially where systemic barriers exist (Tiongson, 2005). This review aims to synthesize knowledge and offer insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, highlighting how education can meet contemporary demands. Its goal is to inform curriculum design, teacher training, and policy, fostering inclusive, future-ready education. The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 describes the review methodology, Section 3 presents key themes, Section 4 discusses implications, and Section 5 summarizes and suggests future directions inquiry.

METHODOLOGY

Review Protocol

This review follows PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021) for rigor and transparency. We searched key academic databases like Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, ACM Digital Library, arXiv, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar for comprehensive coverage. Search strings targeted core concepts such as “education,” “pedagogy,” “multidisciplinary learning,” and “interdisciplinary learning,” with exclusions for non-empirical studies. We limited publications to 2015-2025 to focus on recent developments relevance.

Research Dimensions and Analytical Framework

The review covers seven research areas in modern education, including multidisciplinary approaches across all levels, examining developmental appropriateness and curriculum integration. It explores traditional and emerging pedagogy models, from constructivism to connectivism, assessing their relevance. The impact of new technologies, such as digital tools, AI, and immersive environments, is considered with a focus on pedagogical fit and equity. Teacher education addresses professional development, skills, and technological challenges. Learning environments and outcomes evaluate physical and virtual spaces, socio-emotional factors, and academic and non-academic results. Special education and inclusive pedagogy focus on accessibility, differentiated instruction, and policies for learners with disabilities. Education policy and reform analyze systemic interventions, governance, and effects.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they met the following criteria: (1) empirical research or theoretical frameworks published in peer-reviewed journals or conference proceedings; (2) explicit focus on at least one of the seven research dimensions; (3) publication in English between 2015 and 2025; and (4) availability of full text. Exclusion criteria eliminated studies lacking methodological clarity, those outside the specified timeframe, and non-peer-reviewed commentaries or editorials. Works with insufficient data to evaluate their contribution to the research dimensions were also excluded.

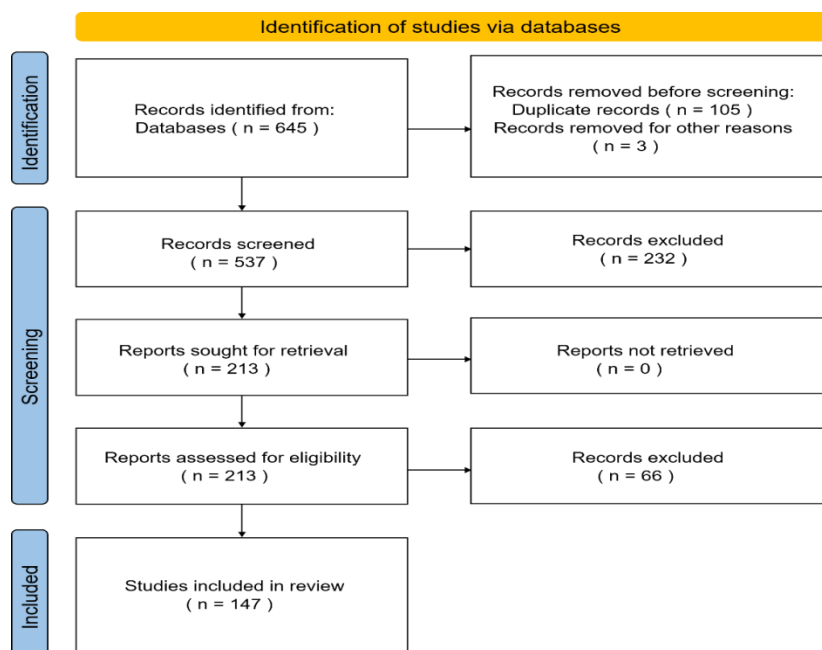
Study Selection Process

The selection process involved four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. Initial database searches yielded 645 records, with 105 duplicates removed automatically. After excluding three records for non-compliance with basic criteria (e.g., non-English texts), 537 records underwent title and abstract screening. This phase excluded 232

studies for irrelevance to the research dimensions. Full-text retrieval was attempted for the remaining 213 studies, all of which were successfully accessed. A rigorous eligibility assessment excluded 66 studies due to inadequate alignment with the research dimensions or methodological flaws. The final review incorporated 147 studies.

As shown in Figure 1, the PRISMA flowchart illustrates this process, detailing attrition reasons at each stage. Potential biases include database selection bias, as certain platforms may overrepresent specific disciplines, and publication bias favoring positive outcomes. To mitigate these, we cross-verified findings across multiple sources and included studies with null or negative results where applicable.

FIGURE 1
PRISMA Flowchart of the Study Selection Process

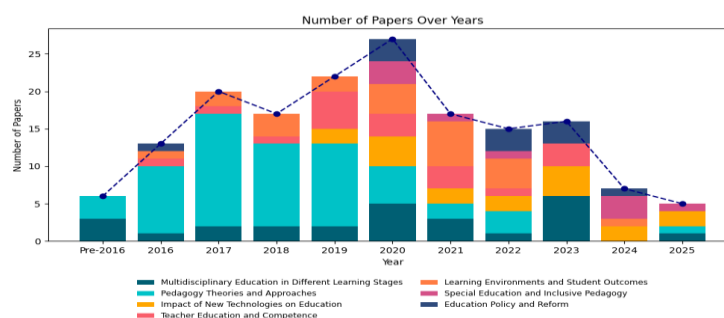


RESULTS

RESEARCH TRENDS

FIGURE 2

Research trends in the Domain of Education, Pedagogy and Multidisciplinary Learning



The analysis of publication patterns shows a decade of evolving research focus. From 2016 to 2020, scholarly output increased, peaking at 22 publications in 2020, then declined. This suggests rising interest in the mid-to-late 2010s, influenced by educational reforms and tech

advances. The decline may indicate market saturation or shifting research priorities. Early research was dominated by pedagogy theories, with 15 publications in 2017, reflecting efforts to reassess learning theories for 21st-century challenges. Interest waned after 2020, perhaps due to theoretical maturity or focus on applied research. Recent years saw renewed attention to multidisciplinary education, with six publications in 2023, the highest for this area, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary skills. Technologies became a focus after 2019, driven by digital tool integration in education, especially during remote learning caused by the pandemic. Teacher education research showed peaks in 2019, 2020, and 2023, indicating periodic reviews of professional development. Special education and inclusive pedagogy peaked between 2020 and 2025, reflecting recent policies on equity and accessibility. Learning environments and student outcomes received steady attention, showing ongoing interest in physical and psychological learning spaces. Education policy and reform were sporadic but impactful, mainly during election years and legislative changes.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION ACROSS LEARNING STAGES

Multidisciplinary education varies across learning stages, each with unique opportunities and challenges. In primary education, research highlights developing foundational skills through innovative models, like Finnish case-based learning that integrates subjects (Mård & Hilli, 2022; Mård, 2021), fostering holistic understanding and skills like collaboration and critical thinking. Student experiences show improved social interaction and fewer conflicts (Niemi & Kiilakoski, 2020). Secondary education faces challenges in rigid systems, with studies on science and math integration in Finnish schools showing both potential and difficulties (Braskén et al., 2020). Teachers struggle balancing depth and interdisciplinary links, while students can experience cognitive overload. Successful cases improve engagement and problem-solving through meaningful connections.

Higher education features diverse multidisciplinary approaches due to complex environments. Faculty are enthusiastic but face barriers like departmental silos and assessment issues, with innovative methods such as flipped classrooms and experiential learning addressing these challenges (Mishra & Aithal, 2020; Robbins et al., 2025). Technology, especially AR and AI, enables new interdisciplinary methods but needs pedagogical care to be effective (Delello et al., 2015; Nikolic et al., 2023). Engineering education exemplifies successful collaboration via project-based learning that links theory and practice (Pulimood et al., 2016).

Table 1 categorizes studies by educational level, focus, and context, showing primary education emphasizes models and student experiences, while higher education explores institutional and technological aspects.

Table 1
Taxonomy of Multidisciplinary Education across Learning Stages

Learning Stage	Pedagogical Focus	Specific Context/Approach	Sources
Primary Education	Multidisciplinary Teaching Models	Case-based learning in Finnish schools	(Mård & Hilli, 2022), (Mård, 2021)
	Student Experiences	Participation in learning modules	(Niemi & Kiilakoski, 2020)
Secondary Education	Curriculum Implementation	Science and mathematics integration	(Braskén et al., 2020)
Higher Education	Faculty Perspectives	Challenges and	(Mishra & Aithal,

Learning Stage	Pedagogical Focus	Specific Context/Approach	Sources
		opportunities	(2023), (Walker, 2015), (Singh, 2023), (Feng et al., 2023)
	Innovative Pedagogies	Flipped classrooms, blended learning	(Robbins et al., 2020), (Boulougouris et al., 2019), (Symeou et al., 2025)
	Experiential Learning	Project-based, fieldwork, AR integration	(Hero & Lindfors, 2019), (Munge et al., 2018), (Delello et al., 2015), (Noy et al., 2017), (Camba et al., 2017)
	Technology Integration	AI, immersive visualization	(Nikolic et al., 2023), (Camba et al., 2017)
Engineering Education	Multidisciplinary Collaboration	Curriculum design, computational thinking	(Pulimood et al., 2016), (Chen et al., 2020), (Sedaghat, 2018)
Teacher Education	Professional Development	Redefining teacher roles	(Verma & Shankar, 2023), (Salis & Rhodes, 2021)
Special Contexts	Inclusive Education	Trauma-informed care, disability	(Salis & Rhodes, 2021)
	Maritime Education	Cross-European collaboration	(Boulougouris et al., 2019)
Miscellaneous	Anatomy Education	Active learning approaches	(Diaz & Woolley, 2015)
	Sustainability Learning	Interdisciplinary case study	(Noy et al., 2017)
	Generative AI Guidelines	Consensus-based approaches	(Symeou et al., 2025)

Several studies beyond Table 1 offer insights into multidisciplinary education. Beemt et al. (2023) provide a framework for challenge-based learning in higher education, while Kauppi et al. (2020) explore digital collaboration paradoxes. Colorado et al. (2021) show innovative ways to engage diverse age groups in multidisciplinary learning by combining arts, biology, and engineering. These highlight the importance of context-specific strategies across educational levels. Implementation varies by stage due to developmental, institutional, and societal factors. Primary education leverages children’s curiosity, secondary education navigates standardized testing, and higher education experiments with radical structures. Success requires aligning pedagogical, curricular, and assessment methods for coherent learning experiences.

PEDAGOGY THEORIES AND APPROACHES: EVOLVING FRAMEWORKS FOR CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

The analysis of pedagogical theories shows a landscape where traditional and innovative methods intersect to address modern education complexities. Foundational studies emphasize the theoretical basis of teaching, with (Žogla, 2019) and (Shah & Campus, 2021) exploring pedagogy as both science and culture, shaped by social, political, and historical influences, challenging universalist ideas about effectiveness. Transformative pedagogy is notable, especially in higher education, with (Khedkar & Nair, 2016) and (Beasley et al., 2016) showing its potential to foster critical consciousness and challenge dominant epistemologies through dialogue and reflexivity. Critical pedagogy constitutes a major research strand, with studies like (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016), (Mason et al., 2019), and (Nicotera, 2019) examining its application across diverse educational settings. These works reveal tensions between emancipatory ideals and institutional constraints, particularly in language education, where Kim & Pollar (2017) document the challenges of implementing critical approaches within standardized EFL curricula. The intersection of critical pedagogy with digital environments is explored in (Masood & Haque, 2021), which proposes a model for critical digital pedagogy that maintains focus on social justice while leveraging technological affordances. Place-based critical approaches are further developed in Ajaps & Mbah (2022), connecting environmental conservation education with social justice via participatory action research. Interdisciplinary pedagogies demonstrate innovation, especially through transdisciplinary frameworks. (Soublis, 2017) presents a competency-based model for collaborative problem-solving, while (Psycharis et al., 2020) advances computational STEAM pedagogy by integrating epistemology with practical applications. The STEM/STEAM literature, including (Sutaphan & Yuenyong, 2019) and (Milara & Orduña, 2024), debates disciplinary integration, with some emphasizing content connections and others, meta-disciplinary skills. Place-based learning approaches, like (Lehtonen et al., 2018) and (Goodlad & Leonard, 2018), show how local, context-rich pedagogies enhance understanding and community engagement. Technology-enhanced pedagogies evolve rapidly, with (Shum & Luckin, 2019) and (Ching & Roberts, 2020) analyzing how analytics and AI reshape teaching. Digital literacy frameworks expand in (Dooly & Darwin, 2022), combining critical digital pedagogy with inquiry-based intercultural competence. Design thinking, a major pedagogical innovation, is discussed in (Çeviker-Çınar et al., 2017) for business education and (Tepavčević, 2017) for architecture. Studio-based learning, examined in (Vorvoreanu et al., 2017), demonstrates how environments foster collaborative problem-solving.

TABLE 2
Taxonomy of Pedagogical Theories and Approaches

Pedagogical Category	Specific Approach	Key Characteristics	Representative Studies
Foundational Pedagogy	Theoretical Frameworks	Definitions, historical development, cultural influences	(Žogla, 2019), (Shah & Campus, 2021)
Transformative Pedagogy	Critical Consciousness	Dialogic learning, epistemological challenges	(Khedkar & Nair, 2016), (Beasley et al., 2016)
Critical Pedagogy	Social Justice Education	Equity-focused, emancipatory aims	(Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016), (Mason et al., 2019), (Nicotera, 2019)
	Critical Digital Pedagogy	Technology and social justice integration	(Masood & Haque, 2021)
	Place-Based Critical	Environmental and	(Ajaps & Mbah, 2022)

Pedagogical Category	Specific Approach	Key Characteristics	Representative Studies
	Approaches	social justice connections	
Interdisciplinary Pedagogy	Transdisciplinary Learning	Competency-based, problem-focused	(Soublis, 2017), (Psycharis et al., 2020)
	STEM/STEAM Integration	Content and skill integration debates	(Sutaphan & Yuenyong, 2019), (Milara & Orduña, 2024)
	Place-Based Learning	Localized, contextualized approaches	(Lehtonen et al., 2018), (Goodlad & Leonard, 2018)
Technology-Enhanced Pedagogy	Learning Analytics & AI	Data-driven teaching adaptations	(Shum & Luckin, 2019), (Ching & Roberts, 2020)
	Digital Literacy Frameworks	Critical digital pedagogy models	(Dooly & Darwin, 2022)
	Design Thinking	Creative problem-solving approaches	(Çeviker-Çınar et al., 2017), (Tepavčević, 2017)
	Studio-Based Learning	Collaborative, multidisciplinary environments	(Vorvoreanu et al., 2017)
Language Pedagogy	Translanguaging	Multilingual, multimodal approaches	(Donley, 2022)
	Postmethod Pedagogy	Adaptive, context-sensitive methods	(Mothlaka, 2015)
Social-Emotional Pedagogy	Pedagogy of Care	Relational, affective dimensions	(Clingan, 2015)
	Hopeful Pedagogy	Agency and future-oriented learning	(Nicholas & Raider-Roth, 2016)
Assessment Pedagogy	Competency-Based	Skill-focused evaluation	(Soublis, 2017), (Rooney & Boud, 2019)

Several studies not in Table 2 offer insights into specialized pedagogical domains. (Chini et al., 2016) explores physics pedagogy via classroom simulators, showing virtual environments can boost teacher prep. (An, 2017) investigates interdisciplinary math-science pedagogy in teacher education, highlighting content integration issues. (Billingsley, 2017) creates frameworks for teaching epistemic insight, while (Davis, 2017) reimagines classroom management as dynamic pedagogy. These works show pedagogical innovation blurring lines between theory and practice, discipline and interdiscipline, and analog and digital.

The evolution of pedagogical theories mirrors societal shifts toward complexity-aware education, preparing learners for uncertain futures. While foundational theories remain essential, the rise of context-specific approaches acknowledges education's situated nature. The tension between standardization and customization is central, with studies like (Veliz & Veliz-Campos, 2019) and (Zhao, 2019) illustrating how global trends interact with local cultures. Future development will require both principled frameworks and adaptive strategies.

TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES ON EDUCATIONAL PARADIGMS

The integration of new technologies in education has led to shifts in pedagogical approaches, learning environments, and institutional structures. AI is a key theme, shown to reshape curriculum design, personalized learning, and assessment. Research by (George, 2023) discusses AI's role in rethinking curricula for an automated world, while (Singh, 2023) notes AI platforms' capacity for adaptive learning. (Lubbe et al., 2025) explores AI's intersection with critical thinking using a triad framework of AI, Bloom's taxonomy, and assessment design.

AI also democratizes education through pluralized approaches. (Kucirkova & Gray, 2023) analyze how AI incorporates democratic principles via Bernstein's theories, creating spaces for multidisciplinary exchange. Conversational AI, like ChatGPT4, fosters interactive pedagogy, as shown by (Matthew et al., 2023). (Cooper & Tang, 2024) examine generative AI's role in shaping science imagery and stereotypes.

Digital pedagogy has grown via technological integration, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Supriyatno & Kurniawan, 2020) document rapid online learning adoption in Islamic higher education, noting challenges and opportunities. (Nanjundaswamy et al., 2021) emphasize technology enabling access to experts and knowledge exchange. Mobile pedagogy adapts language instruction in digital ecosystems, as shown by (Jie et al., 2020).

The effective use of technology in education requires pedagogical alignment, as discussed in (Ching & Roberts, 2020). Learning analytics offer opportunities and challenges; (Shum & Luckin, 2019) explore data-driven education's political and pedagogical implications. (Lynch et al., 2021) highlight learner autonomy in ICT assessment, emphasizing heutagogical approaches.

TABLE 3

Taxonomy of Emerging Educational Technologies and Their Pedagogical Applications

Technology Category	Pedagogical Application	Key Characteristics	Representative Studies
Artificial Intelligence	Curriculum Redesign	Preparing for AI-driven workforce needs	(George, 2023)
	Personalized Learning	Adaptive algorithms for customized pathways	(Singh, 2023), (Tapalova & Zhiyenbayeva, 2022)
	Critical Thinking Development	Integration with Bloom's taxonomy	(Lubbe et al., 2025)
	Democratic Learning	Bernstein-inspired pluralized approaches	(Kucirkova & Gray, 2023)
	Conversational AI	Interactive pedagogy through chatbots	(Matthew et al., 2023)
	Generative AI	Visual content creation and analysis	(Cooper & Tang, 2024)

Technology Category	Pedagogical Application	Key Characteristics	Representative Studies
	Institutional Guidelines	Multidisciplinary consensus frameworks	(Symeou et al., 2025)
Digital Pedagogy	Pandemic Adaptation	Online learning system development	(Supriyatno & Kurniawan, 2020)
	Sustainable Learning	Multidisciplinary knowledge exchange	(Nanjundaswamy et al., 2021)
	Social Constructivism	Mobile language teaching approaches	(Jie et al., 2020)
Educational Technology	Integration Frameworks	Pedagogical alignment evaluation	(Ching & Roberts, 2020)
	EdTech Innovation	Digital pedagogy enhancements	(Cowling et al., 2022)
Learning Analytics	Political-Pedagogical Dynamics	Data-driven system implications	(Shum & Luckin, 2019)
Heutagogical Approaches	ICT Assignment Design	Self-determined learning models	(Lynch et al., 2021)
Transformative Pedagogy	Higher Education Impact	AI's role in student learning	(Capinding & Dumayas, 2024)
Information Technology	Innovation Creation	SECI model integration	(Songkram & Chootongchai, 2020)
Teacher Technology Training	TPACK Development	Evolving knowledge domains	(Valtonen et al., 2019)

Several studies not included in Table 3 provide complementary perspectives on technology's educational impact. The research on transformative pedagogy in the digital age (Capinding & Dumayas, 2024) examines AI's multifaceted effects on higher education students, while (Songkram & Chootongchai, 2020) explores how pedagogy and IT utilization combine to drive innovation creation through the SECI model. Teacher preparedness for technological integration emerges as a critical factor in (Valtonen et al., 2019), which tracks pre-service teachers' evolving technological pedagogical content knowledge.

The implementation of emerging technologies in education presents both transformative potential and significant challenges. While AI enables unprecedented personalization and access, concerns persist regarding algorithmic bias, data privacy, and the potential erosion of humanistic educational values. Digital pedagogy's expansion during the pandemic demonstrated technology's capacity to maintain educational continuity, yet also revealed stark digital divides. The successful integration of these technologies ultimately depends on developing robust pedagogical frameworks that leverage technological affordances while preserving education's fundamental human and social dimensions. Future research must address these tensions through multidisciplinary collaboration between educators, technologists, and policymakers.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND COMPETENCE IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONTEXTS

The transformation of teacher education to meet multidisciplinary learning demands is a key area of research. Studies on teacher competence show a complex link between subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, and interdisciplinary facilitation. The NEP 2020 reforms in India exemplify this shift, with analyses showing a move towards multidisciplinary colleges, strong practicum components, and emphasis on content and pedagogy. This aligns with global trends to broaden the teacher expertise beyond single disciplines.

TABLE 4
Taxonomy of Teacher Education and Competence Studies

Dimension	Focus Area	Specific Topic	Sources
Teacher Education Reforms	Multidisciplinary Approaches	General Reforms	(Verma & Shankar, 2023), (Maseeh, 2023), (Smitha, 2020), (Kumari, 2020), (Panditrao & Panditrao, 2020)
		National Education Policy (NEP) 2020	(Maseeh, 2023), (Smitha, 2020), (Kumari, 2020), (Panditrao & Panditrao, 2020)
Pedagogical Competence	Technology Integration	TPACK & Professional Development	(Uerz et al., 2018), (Agustini et al., 2019), (Valtonen et al., 2019)
		LMS & Digital Pedagogy	(Prasetya, 2021)
	Collaborative Teaching	Team Teaching & Communities of Practice	(Camarao & Din, 2023), (Coenders & Verhoef, 2019), (Vesikivi et al., 2019), (Haapaniemi et al., 2021)
Teacher Professional Development	Inclusive & Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	Social-Emotional Learning & Diversity	(Michalec & Wilson, 2022), (Sorkos & Hajisoteriou, 2021), (Vidwans & Faez, 2019), (Gale et al., 2017)
	Student-Centered Learning	Curriculum Design & Implementation	(Aithal, 2016)
Teacher Professional Development	Experiential Learning	Lesson Study & Practicum	(Coenders & Verhoef, 2019), (Smitha, 2020), (Kumari, 2020)
	Self-Efficacy & Autonomy	Teacher Beliefs & Perceptions	(Haapaniemi et al., 2021), (Vidwans & Faez, 2019)

Several studies outside Table 4 offer insights into teacher competence development. (Sorkos & Hajisoteriou, 2021) examines sustainable intercultural and inclusive education, showing how teachers blend paradigms to meet schools' multidisciplinary goals. The Finnish curriculum approach in (Haapaniemi et al., 2021) highlights teacher autonomy and

collaboration as vital for integrated teaching, with modules requiring coordinated planning. (Michalec & Wilson, 2022) finds social-emotional learning in Title I schools helps novice teachers navigate diverse classrooms.

Key challenges in developing teacher competence for multidisciplinary education include balancing disciplinary depth with interdisciplinary breadth, misaligned assessment practices, institutional and scheduling barriers to collaboration, and the need for continuous tech training. Effective teacher education should integrate content knowledge, pedagogical strategies, tech skills, and teamwork. Ongoing professional development through communities and collaborative models is crucial as systems prioritize multidisciplinary learning, making teacher preparation and support vital for future success priority.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION

The relationship between learning environments and student outcomes in multidisciplinary education is complex, involving pedagogical design, space, and engagement. Project-based learning (PBL) is prominent, significantly boosting innovation and problem-solving. For instance, Hero & Lindfors (2019) show how higher education fosters collaboration through structured projects with diverse roles, mirroring professional processes. Belwal et al. (2021) highlight how PBL connects academic and professional settings, improving skills and teamwork.

Technology-enhanced learning has transformed, especially during COVID-19. Sadiq (2021) discusses communities of practice that adapted online learning across institutions during crises. Jimola & Ofodu (2021) explore strategies for flexible pedagogy amid educational upheavals. Nair (2022) finds gamification boosts engagement and motivation, aiding knowledge retention in tourism education.

Studio-based pedagogy is vital in design. Oguamanam et al. (2020) note the cultural clash between traditional HCI and studio methods affects learning, calling for reconciling these through environment design. Online learning offers opportunities and challenges, as Greenhow et al. (2022) and Abante et al. (2021) emphasize, stressing pedagogy, tech, and training for success environments.

TABLE 5
Taxonomy of Learning Environments and Student Outcomes

Learning Environment Type	Pedagogical Approach	Key Characteristics	Student Outcomes	Sources
Project-Based Learning	Multidisciplinary Innovation	Real-world problem solving, role differentiation	Enhanced innovation competencies, professional skills	(Hero & Lindfors, 2019), (Belwal et al., 2021)
	External Consultancy	Industry-academic collaboration	Practical skill application, teamwork abilities	(Belwal et al., 2021)
Technology-Enhanced	Crisis Adaptation	Communities of practice, flexible pedagogy	Continuity of learning, resilience	(Sadiq, 2021), (Jimola & Ofodu, 2021)
	Gamification	Game-based learning activities	Engagement, motivation,	(Nair, 2022)

Learning Environment Type	Pedagogical Approach	Key Characteristics	Student Outcomes	Sources
			knowledge retention	
Studio-Based	Design Education	Cultural integration of traditions	Design thinking, collaborative skills	(Oguamanam et al., 2020)
Online Learning	Foundational Models	Pedagogical alignment challenges	Access vs. quality tradeoffs	(Greenhow et al., 2022)
	Comparative Modalities	Online vs. modular learning	Teacher training needs, equity considerations	(Abante et al., 2021)
Phenomenon-Based	Multiliteracy Development	Disciplinary integration	Critical thinking, multidisciplinary connections	(M. Kangas & Rasi, 2021)
Justice-Centered	Situated Learning	Social justice orientation	Critical consciousness, civic engagement	(Forsythe & Chan, 2021)
Sustainable Education	Immersive Learning	Built environment focus	Systems thinking, sustainability competencies	(Opoku & Guthrie, 2018)
Participatory	Early Childhood	Child-centered approaches	Agency, engagement	(J. Kangas, 2016)
Space-Enhanced	Faculty Self-Efficacy	Physical environment design	Teaching experiences, student engagement	(McDavid et al., 2018)
Peer Learning	Sustainability Education	Collaborative projects	Communication skills, multidisciplinary perspective	(Núñez-Andrés et al., 2022)
Service-Learning	Motivational Factors	Community engagement	Skill application, civic responsibility	(Lo et al., 2022)

Several studies not in Table 5 expand understanding of learning environments. Keinänen & Kairisto-Mertanen (2019) explore how different configurations influence student creativity, though details are limited. Hill (2017) shows experiential learning in nurse education, with clinical environments complementing classroom instruction. Lapuz & Fulgencio (2020) find problem-based learning enhances critical thinking in secondary students when well implemented.

Collectively, these studies identify key factors mediating the environment-student outcome relationship in multidisciplinary contexts: authenticity of tasks, balancing structure and

autonomy, spatial configurations, and alignment of design, pedagogy, and assessment. Disjointed the implementation undermines benefits.

Research also highlights tensions in designing these environments: justice-centered models (Forsythe & Chan, 2021) must navigate constraints; sustainability models (Opoku & Guthrie, 2018) balance multiple dimensions; peer learning (Núñez-Andrés et al., 2022) promotes horizontal exchange but needs scaffolding. As environments evolve with tech, social, and pedagogical changes, context-sensitive solutions are essential to address these tensions and improve student outcomes.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY: FRAMEWORKS FOR EQUITY AND ACCESS

Studies in special education highlight innovative, asset-based approaches like those by Coleman & Davis (2020), which boost engagement among marginalized students by leveraging cultural assets, contrasting with deficit models. Critical frameworks such as Podlucká (2020) advance anti-ableist pedagogy, challenging traditional paradigms and advocating for disability justice. Mendoza & Johnson (2024) propose a model disrupting cisnormative science pedagogy by analyzing transgender teachers' practices. Inclusive education must go beyond physical access to include epistemological and ideological barriers. In higher education, Cruz et al. (2025) identify strategies for fostering intercultural understanding, emphasizing faculty development to handle cultural complexities, aligned with Sorkos & Hajisoteriou (2021)'s integrated approach promoting learning through diversity, requiring curriculum and practice shifts.

TABLE 6
Taxonomy of Inclusive Pedagogical Approaches

Framework	Target Population	Key Principles	Implementation Strategies	Sources
Asset-Based Pedagogy	Black middle school boys	Cultural validation, strengths-focused	STEM curriculum integration	(Coleman & Davis, 2020)
Anti-Ableist Pedagogy	Disability communities	Disability justice, transformative education	Curriculum critique, universal design	(Podlucká, 2020)
Intercultural Pedagogy	Multicultural higher education	Power analysis, dialogue facilitation	Faculty development, reflective practice	(Cruz et al., 2025)
(TRANS)for mative Approach	Gender-diverse students	Cisnormativity disruption	Science teacher training	(Mendoza & Johnson, 2024)
Social Justice Leadership	Holistic education	Professional learning communities	Sustainability integration	(Zhang, 2024)
Critical Pedagogy of Place	Environmental education	Social justice, place-based learning	Participatory action research	(Ajaps & Mbah, 2022)
Combined Inclusive	Diverse student	Intercultural-inclusive	Paradigm-shifting curriculum	(Sorkos & Hajisoteriou,

Framework	Target Population	Key Principles	Implementation Strategies	Sources
Model	populations	synthesis		2021)
Universal Design for Learning	Higher education	Accessibility, flexibility	Multidisciplinary collaboration	(Fovet, 2020)
Elementary Inclusion	Early education	Equality foundations	Empowerment-focused practices	(Pradhan & Naik, 2024)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a crucial framework for inclusive higher education, reviewed by Fovet (2020), highlighting its overlap with critical pedagogy and suggesting practical strategies for future use. It emphasizes multidisciplinary teamwork to create accessible materials, viewing UDL as both technical and ideological. At the elementary level, Pradhan & Naik (2024) discuss how inclusive education promotes equality and empowerment, showcasing practices that foster belonging from early on.

The research highlights ongoing challenges in implementing inclusive pedagogy, such as institutional resistance, poor teacher prep, policy conflicts, misaligned assessments, and resource shortages, especially in underfunded schools. However, innovative pedagogies, professional development, leadership, and community engagement can transform these challenges into systemic opportunities.

Emerging research focuses on intersectional approaches that address overlapping systems of marginalization. For example, Podlucká (2020)'s anti-ableist framework combines critical race theory with disability studies. Environmental justice in education, like Ajaps & Mbah (2022)'s critical pedagogy of place, expands inclusion to ecological issues. As diversity increases and achievement gaps persist, these approaches will gain prominence.

Education policy and reform highlight multidisciplinary integration, exemplified by India's NEP 2020, shifting from siloed subjects to inquiry-based, holistic learning (Shukla et al., 2022). It aims to reform teacher education into multidisciplinary programs by 2030 (Maseeh, 2023; Smitha, 2020; Kumari, 2020), blending content with pedagogy and practical experiences.

NEP 2020 also advocates learner-centered approaches emphasizing critical thinking and understanding over rote memorization (Panditrao & Panditrao, 2020), requiring curriculum and assessment reforms that focus on interdisciplinary knowledge, blending Indian traditions with modern trends (Shukla et al., 2022).

Global comparative studies show similarities and differences, such as education for sustainable development (ESD) integrating multidisciplinary learning aligned with UNESCO's SDGs (Gericke & Torbjörnsson, 2022). Management education in India aims for curricula with cross-cultural and innovative pedagogies to prepare students for the global workforce (2023).

TABLE 7
Taxonomy of Education Policy Reforms and Multidisciplinary Implementation

Policy Context	Reform Focus	Key Features	Implementation Challenges	Sources
National Education Policy 2020 (India)	Teacher Education	Multidisciplinary institutions, integrated practicum	Institutional resistance, faculty preparedness	(Maseeh, 2023), (Smitha, 2020), (Kumari, 2020)
	Pedagogical Transformation	Holistic, inquiry-driven learning	Assessment system alignment	(Shukla et al., 2022), (Panditrao & Panditrao, 2020)
Education for Sustainable Development	School Reform	Multidisciplinary learning component	Vision development, trust-building	(Gericke & Torbjörnsson, 2022)
Management Education	Curriculum Innovation	Cross-cultural integration, pedagogy updates	Cost, quality assurance	(Bhurase, 2023)
Student-Centered Learning	Curriculum Design	Flexible pathways, effective pedagogy	Institutional constraints	(Aithal, 2016)
Postdigital Education	Philosophical Shifts	Convergence of digital/physical learning	Paradigm integration	(Jandrić & Knox, 2022)
21st Century Education	System Evolution	Technology integration, skills focus	Equity considerations	(Srivastava, 2023)

The shift to student-centric curriculum design offers opportunities and challenges in higher education reform. Research on business management and IT education shows the difficulty of creating flexible learning pathways while maintaining rigor and selecting effective pedagogies for multidisciplinary outcomes (Aithal, 2016). The post-digital education era, as analyzed in (Jandrić & Knox, 2022), complicates policy implementation by blurring physical and digital boundaries, demanding policymakers navigate this convergence while ensuring access and quality. Emerging research on 21st-century education stresses the need for policies that adapt to rapid technological change while preserving the humanistic aspects of learning (Srivastava, 2023). These insights suggest successful reform balances structural and pedagogical innovation, systemic vision and local flexibility, global trends and cultural context. The ongoing global transformation shows multidisciplinary learning has shifted from niche to core policy focus, though challenges remain in turning policies into classroom practice realities.

DISCUSSION

The synthesis of findings across the reviewed literature reveals several critical patterns that collectively reshape our understanding of contemporary education. Taken together, the studies consistently demonstrate that multidisciplinary learning approaches have transitioned from experimental pedagogies to central components of modern education systems (Mishra & Aithal, 2023), (Self et al., 2019). This shift emerges across studies as a response to the increasing complexity of real-world problems that demand integrated knowledge application rather than isolated subject mastery. However, the implementation of these approaches varies significantly across educational stages, with higher education exhibiting more mature interdisciplinary frameworks compared to primary and secondary levels (Polloni et al., 2020), (Braskén et al., 2020). The tension between disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary breadth persists as a recurring theme, particularly in contexts where standardized testing and rigid curricula dominate (Tiongson, 2005).

The pedagogical implications of these findings are profound. The consistent evidence supporting project-based and phenomenon-based learning suggests that experiential approaches effectively bridge disciplinary divides while fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Hero & Lindfors, 2019), (M. Kangas & Rasi, 2021). These methods appear particularly impactful when they incorporate authentic, real-world challenges that require students to synthesize knowledge from multiple domains. However, the research also reveals a crucial caveat: successful implementation depends heavily on teacher preparedness and institutional support (Verma & Shankar, 2023), (Haapaniemi et al., 2021). Without adequate professional development and collaborative planning time, even well-designed multidisciplinary curricula risk becoming superficial exercises in content juxtaposition rather than meaningful integration.

Technological advancements present both opportunities and challenges for multidisciplinary education. The literature consistently shows that digital tools can facilitate interdisciplinary connections through visualization, simulation, and collaborative platforms (Delello et al., 2015), (Camba et al., 2017). Artificial intelligence, in particular, emerges as a transformative force that could personalize learning pathways across disciplines while automating administrative tasks to free up teacher capacity (George, 2023), (Singh, 2023). Nevertheless, the studies collectively caution against technocentric approaches that prioritize tool adoption over pedagogical alignment (Christensen, 2002), (Ching & Roberts, 2020). The most effective implementations appear to be those where technology serves as an enabler rather than a driver of multidisciplinary learning, carefully integrated into broader pedagogical frameworks.

Theoretical contributions of this synthesis extend beyond practical applications. The reviewed literature collectively challenges traditional boundaries between pedagogical theories, suggesting the need for more integrative frameworks that account for the complexities of multidisciplinary learning (Richardson, 2003), (Žogla, 2019). Critical pedagogy and constructivist approaches, while still foundational, require adaptation to address the epistemological challenges posed by interdisciplinary knowledge integration (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016), (Beasley et al., 2016). Emerging theoretical models that combine elements of connectivism, complexity theory, and situated learning show promise in explaining how learners navigate and synthesize knowledge across disciplines (Soublis, 2017), (Psycharis et al., 2020). These developments point toward a new phase in educational theory that moves beyond traditional dichotomies to embrace more nuanced, context-sensitive frameworks.

Several limitations of this review must be acknowledged. The scope of included databases, while comprehensive, may have missed relevant studies in non-English languages or from regions with limited academic publishing infrastructure. The predominance of higher education studies in the sample potentially skews our understanding of multidisciplinary learning, as primary and secondary education contexts remain relatively underrepresented. Publication bias toward positive outcomes may also influence the overall picture, as unsuccessful implementations of multidisciplinary approaches are less likely to be documented in peer-reviewed literature. Additionally, the rapid evolution of educational technologies means that some findings about digital tools may become outdated quickly, particularly in the fast-moving field of AI applications.

Future research directions should address these gaps while building on the current findings. There is a pressing need for longitudinal studies that track the long-term impacts of multidisciplinary education across different learning stages, particularly in early childhood and primary settings where developmental considerations are crucial. Comparative research across diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts would help identify which aspects of multidisciplinary learning are universally applicable versus context-dependent. The understudied area of assessment in interdisciplinary contexts warrants focused investigation, as current evaluation methods often fail to capture the nuanced learning outcomes these approaches aim to cultivate (Soublis, 2017), (Rooney & Boud, 2019). Additionally, research exploring the intersection of multidisciplinary learning with emerging fields like neuroeducation could yield valuable insights into the cognitive processes underlying knowledge integration.

The practical implications for educators and policymakers are substantial. At the classroom level, the findings suggest that successful multidisciplinary teaching requires deliberate scaffolding to help students make meaningful connections between disciplines. Professional development programs should emphasize not only content knowledge across subjects but also pedagogical strategies for facilitating interdisciplinary thinking (Haapaniemi et al., 2021), (Agustini et al., 2019). Institutionally, scheduling and physical space configurations need rethinking to enable the collaborative planning and flexible learning environments that multidisciplinary approaches demand (Oguamanam et al., 2020), (McDavid et al., 2018). Policy reforms should focus on creating assessment systems that value integrated competencies alongside subject-specific knowledge, while ensuring equitable access to the technological and human resources required for effective implementation (Shukla et al., 2022), (Srivastava, 2023).

The most promising avenue for advancing multidisciplinary education lies in fostering deeper collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. The reviewed studies consistently highlight that isolated innovations, whether pedagogical or technological, have limited impact without systemic support. Future efforts should prioritize co-design approaches that bring these stakeholders together to develop context-sensitive solutions, bridging the gap between educational theory and practice. As society continues to grapple with increasingly complex challenges, the ability to think and learn across disciplines will only grow in importance, making the continued evolution of multidisciplinary education not just an academic concern but a societal imperative.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review has synthesized contemporary research on education, pedagogy, and multidisciplinary learning, revealing a dynamic field undergoing significant transformation. The findings collectively demonstrate that multidisciplinary approaches have

evolved from peripheral innovations to central components of modern education systems, driven by the need to address complex real-world problems. While the benefits of interdisciplinary learning are well-documented—particularly in fostering critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills—the implementation challenges persist across different educational stages. The review highlights the critical role of teacher education, pedagogical alignment, and institutional support in realizing the potential of these approaches.

The theoretical contributions of this synthesis extend beyond practical applications, challenging traditional boundaries between pedagogical theories and advocating for more integrative frameworks. The interplay between technology and education emerges as a double-edged sword: digital tools and AI offer unprecedented opportunities for personalized and interdisciplinary learning, yet their effective integration requires careful pedagogical consideration to avoid superficial implementation. The review also underscores persistent gaps in research, particularly regarding assessment methods for multidisciplinary learning and the long-term impacts across diverse educational contexts.

Looking ahead, future research should prioritize longitudinal studies and cross-cultural comparisons to deepen our understanding of how multidisciplinary education functions in varied settings. Policymakers and educators must collaborate to develop flexible curricula, robust teacher training programs, and equitable access to resources. As education continues to evolve in response to societal and technological changes, the insights from this review provide a foundation for reimagining pedagogical practices that prepare learners for the complexities of the 21st century. The journey toward truly integrated, multidisciplinary education remains ongoing, but the evidence points to its necessity in cultivating adaptable, critical thinkers capable of navigating an interconnected world.

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