

Student Centric Teaching Learning Approaches in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract:-

Indian education system is going through reforms and the student centric teaching learning approach is the important one. Student centric teaching- learning starts with the planning by keeping students at the center. Its sounds simple but in practice it is not that easy. It is a gradual shift from the classroom teaching to a participatory and experiential learning. Its is a shift in the role of students from being passive in the class to become active and creative. It is well understood and agreed by the experts in education that the classroom teaching or lecture method keeps a teacher active for the entire class- session but not engaging students mind for the entire session. It is also proven by the experiments that students can remember less than one tenth of the words they come across during the lecture. Better results are observed in participatory, experiential and problem-based learning. So, here is a discussion on some strategies to ensure a student centric education in HEIs.

Keywords:-

Participatory Learning, Experiential Learning, Problem Based Learning, Higher Education institutions (HEIs),

I. INTRODUCTION

As the world is witnessing a rapid change with the technology and traditions, it is a challenge before a nation to provide education of global competitiveness. We must eye on the future and must make necessary changes in the education system which will provide all necessary skill and wisdom to the students which will be helpful for them to face the future challenges. It is said that education is a continuous process, and we keep on learning for whole life. It will be even better if some quality education will be provided at the crucial years of learning.

Let us first discuss disadvantages of a classroom teaching one by one where a lecture method is adopted for teaching and learning.

Its is a passive method: In the lecture method, student mainly try to memorize what has been delivered by the teacher. Sometimes the lecture may become monotonous and may reduce student's attention in the class. The lecture can be made interactive by a question answer session but still may not be so effective. Though it is an important method of teaching and learning but it should not be all and end method.

It does not include other methods of learning: There are different students in the class who come from different background and have different intelligent quotient. Some students may be comfortable with lecture method and may not need any additional activities to understand a particular subject or topic. Some students may be comfortable in learning with some field work or doing with some practical work. Some may like to learn while playing games and other activities. Such kind of activities are missing in the classroom teaching.

It is not student centric: In lecture method students are at receiving end and are at secondary level while teachers are playing main role. Teacher plans the complete lecture session and sometimes may not contain a question answer session in between. Students may have difficulty but feel shy to ask question and miss an opportunity to learn. So, we will not consider this method as student centric.

This coin has only one side: The teacher may have his own opinion on a particular topic which he confidently expresses among the students. His opinion or thoughts are imposed on the class indeed rather than having a discussion where opinions of others are considered.

It does not suit to all subjects: Lecture method may not completely suit to all subjects. Some of the subjects needs field work, drama, play, workshops, onsite training, or practical sessions in laboratory for better understanding. Mathematics can not be taught like arts where series of lectures can do well. It requires problem-based learning for better understanding of any law or formula.

It requires a teaching staff with good soft and communication skills: Lecture method will be effective if a teacher is having good knowledge of the subject as well as a skill to express it among the students. A good soft skill and communication skill is very important for the lecture method. It is not possible for every teacher to acquire this skill. At village level and remote places teachers get less chances to enhance their skills.

It is less attentive: It is difficult for the students to maintain attention in the class for entire lecture. If the lecture is monotonous and if a teacher fails to create students' interest in the class, this method completely fails. Though it is possible to keep the class active by question- answer or JERK methods, but still this method may not attract full attention for the entire lecture.

There are many reasons why we must think of other methods for teaching though lecture method has its importance up to some extent. Let us discuss some strategies to keep student active while learning and achieving the student centric teaching- learning.

Story and roll play: Teachers can be advised to form a fictitious stories about the topic which can attract student's attention. A teacher can also play any short roll of any character which is relevant to the subject topics. For example, if a science teacher wishes to talk about some laws of a scientist then he may play a short roll which tells about important incident related to a particular invention. A story narrating a difficult time of a scientist and how he overcome from that can really motivate students towards learning.

Planning curriculum-based games: Activities such as dividing students in small groups and involving them in curriculum-based games can attract maximum attentions of students and makes them proactive. For example, if a teacher wishes to explain debit and credit system and accounting terminologies, he can simply demonstrate this by constructing a dummy business game and involve students. Such activities need some previous planning

Students presentations: Students can be asked to prepare presentations individually or by forming small teams. This activity motivates students to read and collect information related to the concern topics. If they are preparing in groups, they can have a good discussion among themselves. Student can play a role of guide here.

Wall magazine competition: Teacher can plan a wall magazine completion for the students where some the topics of curriculum can be considered. Teacher can guide about what to know, why to know and where to apply the acquired knowledge.

Arranging interactive sessions with subject expert: An interactive session arranged with subject expert can be very helpful and students can be motivated to ask all their difficulties. Now it is easy to connect with any known expert across the world through online mode.

Case study: This activity is helpful to study any complex topic by asking students to study and discuss on some problem or topic.

Experiments and Demonstrations in Laboratory: Teacher can plan small experiments in the laboratory or demonstration which will help students to understand things practically. Now simulation software is very helpful and has more advantages. For example, a student studying electronics science or engineering can do experiments on simulations such as Circuit maker, Tina or any other simulations which can help them to understand difficult concept easily.

Problem based or Project based learning: James D. Cheaney and Thomas Ingebritsen stated that Problem-based learning (PBL) is the use of a "real world" problem or situation as a context for learning. This is also an effective approach to actively engage students in the class. Teacher can prepare a question bank on a complex topic and students can work together to answer them all. Teacher can also ask students to complete a time bound, curriculum-based project. Working on the project in groups can provide them a good opportunity to learn through their experiences and discussions.

Use of mind maps: Tony Buzan developed mind maps in late 60s which uses words and images for explaining concepts. It gives complete idea of a subject briefly and can enhance the learning experience of students.

II. CONCLUSION

While concluding the discussion, a point is worth noting that there is always a scope of improvement by creating meaningful change. Problems stated in the traditional monotonous lecture method are worth notable and must be addressed. The strategic suggestions may not be sufficient, and we may need to take more efforts to raise awareness about the new teaching learning methods. The educators can make sure that more conversations take place about student-centered learning among all the stake holders. If doing so educators can cater better the needs of experiential and student centric learning. I am confident that we will get positive response from the students and there will be enhancement in their critical thinking, creative thinking, and self-reliance.

It is worth notice that there is a grate emphasis on SSS (Student's satisfaction survey) in NAAC SSR. This will motivate educators and teachers to mold themselves according to the new reforms. Being empathetic and humble with students will be a great effort indeed by the teacher.

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