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INNOVATIVE LEARNING PEDAGOGY IN BUSINESS SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

To meet the demand supply gap of efficient managers, effective management education is need of the hour. Innovative learning pedagogies in Business Schools aim at equipping the budding/ prospective managers with the required skills. There is no prescribed scientific or theoretical framework for the purpose. However, the process of teaching and learning can be more effective, if it can ensure greater engagement of the students. Again, if the element of enjoyment is embedded in the process of learning, it may lead to greater student involvement. The paper attempts to highlight the importance of innovative learning pedagogical tools with special focus on i.e. Project Based Learning, Immersion Oriented Learning and Co-operative Learning in Business Schools. The conceptual framework have been developed taking the aid of the existing literature.

JEL CODE

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KEYWORDS

Project Based Learning, Immersion Oriented Learning and Co-operative Learning.

1) INTRODUCTION

he changing times and dynamism of the present business world has reflected a need for a class of managers who are ready to embrace the challenges and deliver the best outcomes with limited resources utilizing their optimization skills. Innovative learning pedagogies in Business (B) - Schools aims at equipping the budding/ prospective managers with the required skills like time management, initiative, resource utilization, dependability, team work, communication skill, application of mind and handling uncertainty etc.

2) ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Although there is no prescribed scientific or theoretical framework that embraces all the activities involved in Learning. Traditional academic learning emphasized on cramming ability whereas progressive approaches to learning asserts that one must be active and learn by doing. Learning must be reflective i.e. there should be cognitive or affective change in the behavior of the student (Brockbank and McGill I, 2007).

Henry Mintzberg (Mintzberg, 2009) opines management as a practice that has to blend a good deal of craft (experience) with a certain amount of art (insight) and some science (analysis). To overcome the drudgery of boring lectures or yet another case it is important to give a taste of the real world to the students. Google has revolutionized the teaching as well as learning process. Web is packed full of powerful tools and technologies, many of which provide platforms for our students to share/exchange information about themselves (social networking), searching and bookmarking information, as well as providing numerous vents for self-expression; such as MySpace, Bebo, Flickr, Wikis, blogs, podcasts, Wikipedia, Delicious, YouTube and Facebook. Everything is to hand, easy to search and filter via internet borrowers such as Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Apple's Safari or Firefox (Ashraf, 2009). Students learn the trivial things on their own through their 'mobile Google'. 'Lecture & question' may be considered as the easiest mode to teach. This so called chalk and talk where the teacher presumes that student must understand what the teacher speaks can never be validated for effective learning.

Management as a branch of education originally developed and established in the USA was adopted in Europe in the 1960s and achieved global acceptability aftermath. Globally, huge numbers of management schools are operating and competing for students (Debnath & Shankar, 2009). Many of the mushrooming MBA institutes do not educate the prospective managers but only award them the fancy tag of 'MBA'. The purpose of education should be to provide a non-judgmental and unbiased environment that is conducive to disseminating knowledge and developing student's analytical and problem solving abilities. Students should be trained to free themselves from dogma, preconception and ideology. They should be enabled to be cautious of their opinions and judgments, reflective of their actions and they should be aware of their place in social and natural world. Each student should be encouraged to emerge as an independent thinker from the herd of MBA graduates. The purpose of management education should not be restricted to just making the students industry ready, it should endeavor to provide an environment that fosters the exploration of new ideas. The institutes should strive to help the students grow into individuals, and with broad horizons acquire the skills to think from different perspectives (Parikh, 2013).

The all India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) statistics reveals that there are 312 institutions conducting technical programmes without AICTE approval as on 17th April 2013 (www.aicte-india.org). Most of them are management institutes. So, in the era when management institutes are mushrooming, it has become a crucial matter to deliver quality education to students. As per Yashpal Committee report the higher education in India is too theoretical and is devoid of practical experiences. It advises that the curricular structure should treat knowledge in holistic manner. The architecture of learning should be designed in such a way that students acquire the skills they need to work in a real world environment and overcome the drawbacks such as lack of ability to analyze or solve problems, relate problems to different contexts, communicate clearly and have an understanding of different branches of knowledge (Yashpal, 2008). The education sector has undergone a sea change and literature recognizes that, in order to improve the quality of student learning, there is a need to develop a better understanding of student learning approaches (Jackling, 2005). However, all students might not like these innovative learning modes.

3) OBJECTIVE

The objective of the paper is to highlight the importance of innovative learning pedagogical tools with special focus on i.e. Project Based, Immersion oriented and Co-operative learning in B- Schools.

4) METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework has been developed taking the aid of the existing literature.

5) DISCUSSION: INNOVATIVE LEARNING PEDAGOGIES IN B - SCHOOLS

In recent times Project/ Assignment based learning has been proved as an invaluable tool for achieving greater learning and teaching outcomes. It is advocated that level of effectiveness in teaching can be improved only with enhanced student engagement i.e. action learning. Modern innovative learning pedagogies demands involvement, participation, collaborative and co-creation and it provides platform to prospective managers to make mistakes without severely detrimental consequences. Under experimental method of learning data are generated during the exercise. Students learn under this method not by written introduction but by their experience in the exercise itself. The biggest advantage of this method is that students are completely immersed in the learning

situation. Hence, we may also call it as immersion based learning. A sort of cheerful environment is also created in experimental methods as these exercises are mostly done in groups and also provides a break in traditional routine of lecture and case method courses. The fun, mystery, innovative, flexibility, ability to teach leadership and management are the elements in action learning projects that help in keeping students engaged (Clawson and Haskins, 2011).

Some of the recent pedagogical practices adopted world-wide in management schools in addition to the traditional classroom learning and apart from case based learning includes:

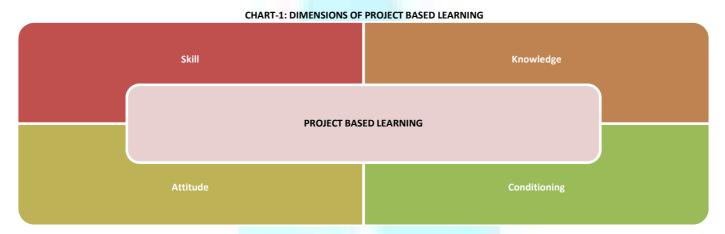
- 1. Project based learning
- 2. Immersion Learning
- 3. Cooperative learning

The paper focuses on conceptual framework of all these practices in enhancing management education

i. PROJECT BASED LEARNING

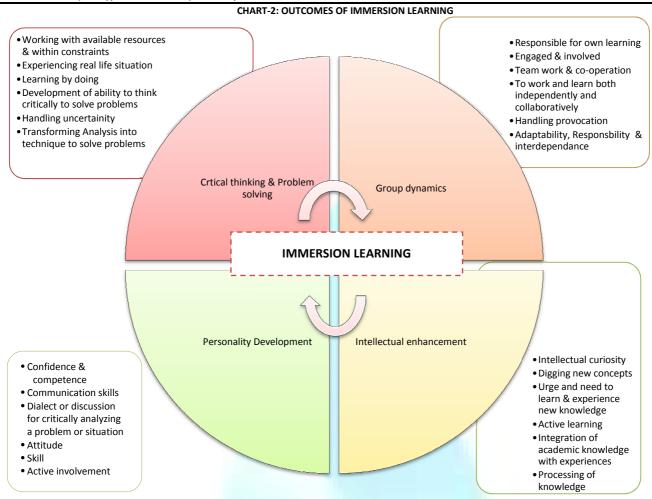
Project based learning has several dimensions. It helps in expanding the knowledge base of the students which is critical for problem solving and situation handling. With some degree of student "voice and choice," rigorous projects are carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help students learn key academic content, practice 21st Century Skills (such as collaboration, communication & critical thinking), and create high-quality, authentic products & presentations. It helps them in recognizing their skills as well as of their peers. It instills an attitude of co-operation, respect, adaptability while working in groups. It also conditions them to work with limited resources and time. It is an exercise towards application of mind for filtering the theoretical knowledge to solve the practical problems. The learners go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge in Project Based Learning (http://www.bie.org).

Mintzberg also supports project based learning if done carefully, deeply, experience by experience, team by team, with the help and great deal of time under the supervision of a skilled faculty (Mintzberg, 2009). It helps them to develop insights for understanding the problem and then augment recommendations. To have the best outcomes, the project should be manageable as well as challenging. In addition, the instructor should provide ongoing coaching and support and frequent feedback, but not overt direction (Clawson and Haskins, 2011). It has been suggested as an appropriate pedagogy to prepare students in information systems for the realities of the business world. It is a pedagogy that uses project work to drive learning. Students must self-direct and self-regulate their learning to successfully complete the project (Guthrie, 2010).



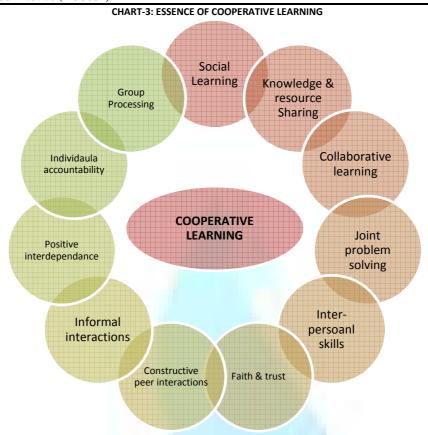
ii. IMMERSION LEARNING

Immersion learning is experiencing the real life situations by taking charge as a manger of the situation and working with the available resources and within the constraints. Immersion learning is practiced mostly for learning language (Linck etal, 2009 and Overall, 2012) through cultural immersion. Lerner College of Business and Economics, University of Delaware, offers projects as a 'course' in the department of Business Administration in 'Introduction to Business course' to the budding managers and business freshmen. Students are assigned to teams and asked to start their own businesses. Thus, students are completely immersed into the field of business immediately on entering college. The course and these kind of projects specifically contributes to general education goals some of which are - development of ability to think critically to solve problems; to work and learn both independently and collaboratively; developing intellectual curiosity, confidence, and engagement through active learning; assuming more responsibility for own education; and developing the ability to integrate academic knowledge with experiences that extend beyond the classroom (Antil and Kydd, 2008). The total immersion learning environment is one when the learners are completely immersed into a meeting or dialect or discussion and critically analyzing a problem or situation. Thus, immersion learning pertains to learning through experience by a high level of active involvement (Hoover, 1974). The diagram below summarizes the outcomes which are developed and nurtured in a student during the course of immersion based learning in four categories Critical thinking and problem solving, Group dynamics, Intellectual enhancement and Personality development.



iii. COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Knowledge sharing is the base of cooperative learning. As it is impossible for a human being to posses all the knowledge required to solve a practical problem, cooperative learning acts as a tool for knowledge sharing through the personal ties and informal interaction between group of people working together to solve problems at work. It is a form of collaborative learning and joint problem solving. The exercise should lead to social learning i.e. learning from each other for knowledge updating or knowledge creating and reduction and/ or correction of errors. Informal interactions outside the classroom among the students provide immense opportunities for learning and development the way informal interactions between employees provide immense opportunities for learning and Development in real world (Ghaznavi etal, 2011). The other element of cooperative learning is faith and trust and constructive peer interactions. As classrooms are more teacher-oriented and students are passive learners, vessels to be filled with information. According to Gaikwad five basic elements of cooperative learning includes positive interdependence, individual accountability, group processing, social skills and face-to-face interaction (Gaikwad, 1996). Even though the managers work in competitive environment, they have to work in collaboration with their bosses, colleagues and sub-ordinates to achieve the desired organization goals. Hence, cooperative learning can be regarded as a tool to enhance knowledge and interpersonal skills where a person learns through interaction and knowledge sharing. A study on the influence of cooperative learning on academic performance recommended a diverse educational program that incorporates cooperative learning (Eslamian etal, 2012). Cooperative learning model demands cooperation and interdependence in the work assigned and the reward structures. The assignment should be designed in such a way that students are bound to cooperate in order to achieve the learning objectives (www.indiana.edu).



6. CONCLUSION

According to Henry W Simon, effective teaching lies in making the class interesting because that is the strongest incentive for a student to learn (Simon, 1964). Learning and teaching pedagogies increasingly involve a blend of traditional approaches to classroom activities and the use of modern approach to case based and project based, immersion oriented and cooperative (group work) by teams of students (Sullivan, 2003). In today's scenario making teaching and learning effective has become a challenge. The continuous endeavor to make the process of learning enjoyable enhances student engagement and finally contributes in making it more effective in terms learning and teaching outcomes.

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