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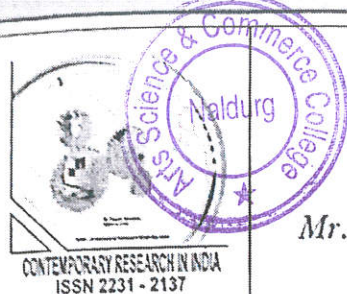
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PBL: AN EFFICIENT TOOL IN 21st CENTURY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract: Nowadays, ICT's are transforming schools and classrooms a new look by bringing in new curriculum based on real world problems, projects, providing tools for enhancing learning, providing teachers, students and parents to come together. In this 21st Century educational system believes in student oriented and self instructional methods of teaching and learning. It also gives immense importance to the use of Information Technology in higher education to meet the changing needs of the time. The important part of student's is schooling where the roots of a child's education begin to strengthen. To strengthen these roots we have to adopt the most adequate and recent method of learning is ICT. With the help ICT communications can take place instantaneously, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year across the globe. Messages can be sent to one or multiple recipients. Groups of users can access the same programs, applications and even hardware such as printers and faxes using networking and wireless technology. ICT will make our students able to face the competition worldwide and make them sellable. Therefore, innovative tools such as PBL is of great help to enhance the teaching-learning process and make it interesting as well as interactive. So, the present paper aims to highlight to make the teachers and students aware of the significance of Project Based Learning in higher educational environment.

Keywords: Project, Technology, Learning, Communication, Innovative.

Introduction:

Today's scenario of the classroom is changing. There is a lot of difference between traditional 'Chalk and Talk' method and ICT teaching method. The present generation is very happy to learn through this ICT. There is technical gap between the progress of the society and Instructional activities of the teacher in the classroom. When one thinks of using Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Higher Education Classroom (HEC), he cannot neglect one of the most significant and recent tools, that is, Project Based Learning (PBL). PBL utilizes ICT in such a way that it creates complimentary teaching environment in which both, students and teacher get to learn various things together. Therefore, it has become widespread in international academic community. According to David Moursund, an ICT assisted PBL lesson can be seen as an opportunity to the students as well as teachers. He has given the

following benefits of PBL as it provides an opportunity-

- To gain self reliance and personal accountability. (Moursund xi)
- To gain ICT knowledge and skills
- To learn about the topics on which the project focuses.
- To learn in, an authentic, challenging, multidisciplinary environment
- To learn how to design, carry out and evaluate a project that requires sustained efforts over a significant period of time.
- To learn to work with minimal external guidance, both individually and in groups.

The main focus of PBL is to solve the problems of interaction faced in teaching-learning process. It can be used for presentation and performance projects. It can be practiced with whatever ICT is available in classroom. It doesn't ask for latest, greatest and best ICT facilities. However, it

needs general type of hardware and software such as word processor, spreadsheet database, paint and drawing software. It also requires scanner, digital camera, video camera and video player. It is necessary to have internal connectivity, printer and projector. These requirements can easily be fulfilled nowadays. Students do not require through knowledge of computer before they could use PBL. They can begin with minimum knowledge about computer. So, it is very easy for students to use PBL. Though today's world is of computer and technology but PBL can be utilized without computer knowledge.

Another feature of PBL is that, it is learner centered activity. The importance is given to students. There is considerable focus on what students understand, what it is they are doing, and how it is important. It contributes to learner motivation and active engagement. Project based learning concerns helping students achievements, knowledge and skill as well as to learn solving challenging problems. One of the important aspects of PBL is authentic assessment. Students need to have a clear understanding of the goals, assessment and evaluation in a project. Sometimes project based learning is called problem based learning. In words of Moursund (5), it is common in medical and business education. For example, a project to save an endangered species of animal can be undertaken in group. However, PBL constitutes a broader category of instruction than problem based learning. It does not simply focus on learning about something but on doing something. It is more action oriented than any other traditional learning tool. For example, in a history class students can carry out a PBL project on historical newspaper by doing research, doing designs and doing presentations to the whole class.

Characteristics of PBL:

Student centered and motivation:

It proves that students get motivated in this type of PBL learning. Students have considerable choice in topic, nature and content of the project. According to the students they can fit these projects to fit their own interest and abilities. As this project

is student centered, they are involved into the project, without any compulsion, it creates a personal touch and difficulty, thus increases motivation.

Collaboration and Cooperative learning:

In this PBL an entire class or more than one class may be engaged on one and the same project at the same time. In this way, PBL encourages cooperation and collaborative learning. Every student gets an opportunity to learn from each other. They even learn to provide constructive feedback to themselves and their peers.

Constructivism:

Same project can be assigned to the students who do not share the same academic background and academic abilities. They construct new knowledge and skills using their current knowledge. They conduct research multiple sources of information like books web, video, personal interviews and experiments.

Actively engaged students:

Teachers function as "guide on the side" than "sage on the stage" (Moursund-13). Because of PBL the students get actively engaged in learning, in PBL class, therefore, average noise level is much higher than in traditional classroom. Students often work in groups rather than individual activities. They are engaged in conversation, movement, sharing and helping each other. Teacher interacts briefly with individuals and groups.

The Presentation and Performance:

The PBL involves design and development of a presentation or performance that others can use or view. A performance can be anything like a skill, play or a musical performance. Students may present the result of their project in classroom as report or poster.

Thus, the process of doing project allows and encourages students to experiment, to do discovery based learning to learn from their mistakes and to overcome unexpected mistakes and difficult challenges.

Goals of ICT assisted PBL:

In the opinion of Moursund (2009), there are various goals of PBL. Some of them are listed

below. The major goal of PBL is to increase knowledge and skill of students within discipline or an interdisciplinary area. Through the medium of PBL, students often get high level of expertise within specific area they are studying.

PBL supports to the students to be a project proposer, a problem solver and a "Creative, higher-order" thinker, working in learner-centered-environment.

Another goal is to improve research skills of the students. It requires certain research skills that are essential in area of PBL. Apart from improving research skills, it improves higher order thinking skills among students.

PBL makes students to learn how to make a project. It also helps to them to undertake challenging issues that require sustainable efforts. PBL makes students to transfer their learning over time, distance, and environment.

With the help of PBL student can use ICT. They are encouraged to use ICT while they work on a project. Moreover, they gain skill of assessing themselves and their peers. They learn to be accountable for their own work and performance.

To sum up, PBL is one of the most efficient and student friendly utensils of using ICT in higher education classroom. It is practicable at every classroom as it doesn't ask for any complicated ICT software and hardware. It can be practiced with the help of minimum resources available. So PBL plays a significant role in teaching-learning process because students get an opportunity to express themselves, as they are in the center. That is why PBL is one of the perfect and tools using ICT in higher education classroom, because students feel comfortable with these tools instead of 'Chalk and Talk' teaching method.

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