

PROJECT METHOD

(C) Project Method

Introduction

The project method is that method by which all subjects can be taught. This method is comparatively more useful for the teaching of practical and experimental subjects as biological sciences. The father of this method is Sir William Kilpatrick, the pupil of famous educationist Dewey. He was influenced by the pragmatism of Dewey and unified all parts of education to make a meaningful effort towards making teaching useful for life and interesting.

In fact, all those activities which are done for the achievement of an objective, filled with natural circumstances, are considered a part of the project method.

This method is based on the principle that the students often learn by relationship, cooperation and activity. Under this method, the facts are compiled keeping in view a central objective.

Definitions

Kilpatrick defined the project method as follows : "A project is a whole-hearted purposeful activity, proceeding in a social environment."

Stevenson also expressed the same sentiments in the following words : "A project is a problematic act carried to completion in its natural setting."

Thus, a project is a voluntary task by which positive results can be obtained from creative thinking or effort. It is a type of feeling for life, which is produced due to the strong desire in the students. 'Learning by doing' is the essence of this method.

Nature of Project Method

The focal point of study in the project method is the project itself. The students use a suitable project for the solution of a problem and work according to a plan to complete the task. The type of knowledge they need for the project, they acquire it with whatever it might be related to. Thus, study in this method is performed in an incidental manner. The education of biological sciences is also imparted in an incidental manner. The facts, principles and practical knowledge that is required while working on science projects, are provided to the students. This is the real form of teaching by the project method.

In this method, the student is free to work. All his activities are guided towards the fulfilment of an objective which is related to his life. He takes interest in his work and feels contentment on the completion of the work.

Significance of the Project Method

The following are the achievements by the use of the project method :

1. It enhances interest in science.
2. It pacifies scientific curiosity.

3. It develops problem-solving technique.
4. It inculcates the habit of free thinking and reasoning.
5. It enhances self-confidence and inherent experience.
6. It utilizes the free time well.
7. It enhances self-confidence.

Types of Projects

Different types of projects can be worked upon in schools, some of which are mentioned as follows :

1. To arrange for the garden in the school.
2. To individually arrange for the use of tools for science projects.
3. To beautify the school.
4. To construct museum.
5. To gather animals, insects, birds and plants.
6. To organize science exhibition.

Psychological Basis of Project Method

The project method is based on the following learning principles :

1. Law of Exercise : The basis of this method is self-exercise, in which the students learn by exercise.

2. Law of Readiness : The students are readied for learning by producing interest in them, by creating a purposeful atmosphere, and through lively circumstances.

3. Law of Effect : The permanence of learning depends on failure or success. Under this method, the student evaluates the success of his own. Thus, the knowledge is cemented in his mind permanently.

Fundamental Principles of Project Method

The fundamental principles of the project method are as follows :

1. Principle of Reality : Under this method, whatever task the students do is real, because it is done in the real circumstances by which mutual relationship between life and its functions can be firmly established.

2. Principle of Experience : The students earn experiences by work. They also have to cooperate with one another. It develops the spirit of sociality and their character develops as a democratic personality.

3. Principle of Freedom : Under this method, the students are given freedom to select their activities. As a result, they work with interest and zeal.

4. Principle of Correlation : The working under this method does not depend on the inherent knowledge of one subject alone. Thus, it becomes desirable to take help from different subjects. Thus, the students acquire the whole form of knowledge.

5. Principle of Activity : Under this method, more emphasis is laid on activity than theory. So the students remain mentally and physically active at all times.

6. Principle of Purpose : Because the students have clear objectives for giving direction to their activities under this method, so they are not misguided and their faculty is not misused.

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7. Principle of Utility : The students do the project with more interest of which they feel is useful in their present or future life. This is the chief principle of the project method.

Working Process of Project Method

In order to run the project method in a proper manner, it can be divided into the following steps or stages :

1. Providing a Situation : Keeping in view the age, desires, interests and abilities of the students, the teacher should present before them a situation in which they become interested and they guide their attention towards its problem. The situation should be such in which the students face a problem. The students can face a problem while performing useful activities, studying in school, debate or other co-curricular activities, touring, etc.; for the resolution of which the students might feel interested to undertake a suitable project.

2. Selection and Objectives of Project : Suitable selection of a project is essential for its success. The teacher should indirectly guide the students in the selection of a suitable project. The project should be selected in view of the students' needs, only then it would prove to be useful. After this, the related objectives should be made clear to the students so that he is able to transfer his faculties in a desirable manner. A discussion may be held in the class as to which project should be taken up. In the discussion, a suitable project is selected under the guidance of the teacher. The objective for which the project has been taken up is made clear to the students.

3. Planning : The success or failure of the project depends on this step. The teacher should take the help of discussion to plan the project well. The responsibilities should be distributed to the students accordingly. A discussion is held in the class at a later time for planning. The plan is made keeping in view the possible difficulties, different tasks to be performed and available means. The plan should be such in which all students are able to participate.

4. Execution : Each student should be given responsibility according to his interest and capability so that he is able to contribute in the completion of the project. In that situation, all students execute their responsibility according to their ability and capability. While completing the project, they feel the need to acquire new knowledge besides the teacher helps them suitably. The teacher should pay attention to each question of the project indirectly and should guide if needed.

5. Evaluation : The discussion is held from time to time for evaluation of the project. The students are also motivated to criticize the job done by them. The direction in which the project is being guided, can be changed about its utility or futility after suitable discussion of its functioning. After the project has been completed, it is seen how far it has been successful. If there has been an error or shortcoming in the project, effort should be made to look for it. The students should criticize themselves and evaluate their own achievements and failures.

6. Recording : The students maintain the record from the selection of project to its completion inclusive of all activities undertaken. They write in the registers about their tasks. Besides, they also note down the following things :

(a) The difficulties that they faced,

- (b) The shortcomings or errors that their project suffered with,
- (c) The new knowledge that they acquired.

The teacher inspects and tries to know how far the student is carrying out his responsibility. Record for the whole project is maintained.

