

Project Method

The project method occupies a high place among those methods of teaching which cultivate attitude and skill. Of all methods of teaching, the project method is the most controversial but prevalent method. It came into being as a result of the pragmatist ideology. The actual work of introducing it into the educational world was one by the chief pragmatist and educationist, **John Dewey**. Prior to him, such a concept prevailed in education, yet it was not in any specific form then.

Its form took a definite form in 1918. The same year, **W.H. Kilpatrick** of Columbia University defined this saying that it is a purposeful activity which is performed in the social setting with interest. In his words : **"A project is a wholehearted purposeful activity proceeding in a social environment or more briefly, in the unit element of such activity the heartily purposeful act."**

Presenting a clearer form of this definition, **J.A. Stevenson** said that it is a problematic activity which is performed in natural situations. In his word : **"A project is a problematic act carried to completion in its natural setting."**

After the form of project became clear, the project method came to be use in the educational field more frequently. A few days earlier, the project method was limited to only the activities performed in the classroom, but now this is being applied to all activities whether performed in or out of the classroom.

In the words of **Wesley and Wronski** : **"Project has been defined as that form of coordinated activity that is directed toward the learning of a significant skill or process."** It is now being applied extensively. In this method, the entire teaching work is undertaken in actual and experimentative system, because the problem is made quite practical and actual. It can include several types of problems, such as making a cycle stand, demand of goods by parcel, travel etc.

In the words of **Clark and Starr** : **"A project is a natural,**

lifelike activity involving the investigation and solving of problems.”

In the words of Yoakam and Simpson : “A project is a large unit of work of a natural and lifelike character carried on in a natural setting.”

Characteristics of a Good Project

Looking at above definition, the following characteristics of a good project are made out :

1. The problem chosen under a project should be such on which experiments can be undertaken successfully. A problem should not be completely theoretical in nature.
2. The project should give some new experiences and should be base on some prior experience.
3. As has been discussed in its definition, a project should be purposeful. If it is not purposeful, then it would not be able to realize its objectives.
4. It should be kept in view in a economically weak country like India that a project should be frugal.
5. A good project makes students active.
6. A good project is in keeping with the students' mental level.

Types of Projects

Dr. Kilpatrick has mentioned four types of projects :

1. Productive Projects : The projects in which student undertake some productive wok are called productive projects. In these projects are included activities like building a house, making a cycle stand, making an orchard etc.

2. Consumer Projects : Some projects are intended for students to get something, some experience, some knowledge or some entertainment. Such projects are called consumer projects. These include projects on excursion, feasting, drama etc.

3. Problem Projects : Some projects present problems before students, which they have to solve. Such problems are called problem projects.

4. Disciplinary Projects : In such projects, no new projects are undertaken, rather they are aimed at providing and firming up some knowledge which students have already got by any other means. These are aimed at to repeat the previously acquired knowledge.

Methods of
Yoakam and Simpson have mentioned the following three types of projects :

1. **Problem Project** : Where problem-solving is the main thing, it is called a problem project.
2. **Subject Project** : Where the subject is prominent, it is called subject project.
3. **Activity Project** : Where lifelike activity is dominant, it is called activity project.

Steps in Project

Completion of a project requires four steps :

1. Purposing.
2. Planning.
3. Execution.
4. Judging.

The following steps can be taken up by a teacher to complete these different steps :

1. To select a project replete with educational values.
2. To select a problem suitable for a specific group.
3. To make effort for engagement of students.
4. To make plan for completion of the project keeping the available resources in mind.
5. To link the project with its objectives.
6. To ask students to gather facts and data.
7. To observe and guide students.
8. To link outline of project with students' activities.
9. To evaluate students' activities.
10. To find out students' acquired values, interests, skills and aptitudes.

Some Examples of Project

In economics, the following projects can be undertaken : forests, production, collection, foreign industries, currency club, trade accounts, letter writing, school bank, repetition of road rules, population study, government aid, means of livelihood, means of production and distribution etc.

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Merits of Project Method

Following are the merits or advantages of the project method :

1. As the project method is based on the principles of activity, utility, purpose, reality and fm, so t is more psychological in nature.
2. All activities performed under it are purposeful, therefore, students are intricately engaged in them.
3. It provides students practical and experimental knowledge.
4. It is based on the principle of learning by doing.
5. It is based on the principle of individual differences; therefore, all students are given equal opportunities for cultivating themselves independently.
6. As physical and mental activities are coordinated and correlated in this method, so it is quite interesting and attractive.
7. This principle is based on **Thorndike's three laws of learning**. The first law of learning is the law of effect, which entails that learning should be followed by effect, leading to satisfaction and success. Physical work in the project method begets both satisfaction and success. Its second law is the law of readiness. Under it, students should be made ready to

learn. In other words, student already know what they are going to learn, so they come prepared for it. It is called the law of learning. The third law of learning is the law of exercise. Learning can be retained and effective only when the acquired knowledge is practiced sufficiently. The project method provides opportunities for exercise.

8. Working by the project method helps in cultivation of the spirits of cooperation, tolerance and mutual love among students. Such qualities are essential for a democratic system. Thus, we can say that this method teaches us a democratic way of life.
9. The project method acquaints students with the importance of dignity of labour.
10. The project method provides students with sufficient independence.

Demerits of Project Method

Following are the demerits of this method :

1. The project method is quite expensive. Also, the entire subject matter of economics cannot be taught through it.
2. The project method is quite complex and troublesome, and each student cannot undertake it successfully.
3. Most of the knowledge is imparted to students in an unsystematic and disorderly manner. So, there is need to systematize and sequence the knowledge.
4. The project method degrades the importance and place of a teacher.
5. Students' capabilities and reaches can be miscalculated so far as formulation of projects is concerned.
6. A project takes much time and labour.
7. Skilled and experienced teachers are needed to teach by the project method.
8. The condition of completing a project sometimes derail the entire project from its main aim.
9. It is not convenient to teach by the project method at all levels.

Suggestions for Improvement in Project Method

It is necessary for a economics teacher to keep the following points in view while teaching by this method :