

## PROJECT BASED LEARNING & CASE STUDY: AS AN INNOVATIVE METHODS OF TEACHING

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### Abstract

*Gone are the days when teachers used to teach only what is covered in a text books or reference books. Today, the need felt to introduce a unique and innovative methods of teaching which will help the students pursuing degree courses to understand the concepts better with knowledge of its practical applicability.*

*The solution can be in the form of case study method or project based learning (pbl) approach.*

*So many foreign universities and colleges are already using this technique to create interest and curiosity among students to learn the concepts of the syllabus in different ways. Some of the colleges in India have already started doing the same. PBL (Project based learning) approach is in use by VISHWA NIKETAN Engineering College, Khopoli. Case study method of teaching is already in use by so many universities offering MBA degree. The Research paper will highlight the concept of case study method or project based learning approach, how to implement the same for Indian educational institutions, challenges posed and possible success rate in the institutions where is in use.*

**Keywords:-** Case study, PBL(Project based learning), Applicability, Results, Advantages, Instructor

### Introduction For Pbl (project Based Learning) Method:-

Project-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered pedagogy that involves a dynamic classroom approach in which students acquire a deeper knowledge through active exploration of real-world challenges and problems. It is a method of teaching in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. Following are different steps to be followed for successful implementation of Project based learning (PBL) to any educational institutions:-

- 1) **Key Knowledge, Understanding, and Success Skills** - The project is focused on student learning goals, including standards-based content and skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, and self-management.
- 2) **Challenging Problem or Question** - The project is framed by a meaningful problem to solve or a question to answer, at the appropriate level of challenge.

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Page 44

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3) **Sustained Inquiry** - Students engage in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information.

4) **Authenticity** - The project features real-world context, tasks and tools, quality standards, or impact – or speaks to students' personal concerns, interests, and issues in their lives.

5) **Student Voice & Choice** - Students make some decisions about the project, including how they work and what they create.

6) **Reflection** - Students and teachers reflect on learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry and project activities, the quality of student work, obstacles and how to overcome them.

7) **Critique & Revision** - Students give, receive, and use feedback to improve their process and products.

8) **Public Product** - Students make their project work public by explaining, displaying and/or presenting it to people beyond the classroom.

#### Introduction for Case study method:

In Case Study Method, class room is more experiential. It emphasizes a lot on student participation, pre-session learning and preparation. The cumulative time that the student and the teacher spend on the case and the theme is roughly four times more than the lecture method. Role plays and stimulations are advanced forms of case studies.

Case Study Methods are particularly suited for

subjects like management, public policy, political science and other social sciences.

#### Why PBL is to be followed:-

Project Based Learning's time has come. The experience of thousands of teachers across all grade levels and subject areas, backed by research, confirms that PBL is an effective and enjoyable way to learn - and develop deeper learning competencies required for success in college, career, and civic life. Why are so many educators across the United States and around the world interested in this teaching method? The answer is a combination of timeless reasons and recent developments.

- **PBL makes school more engaging for students.** Today's students, more than ever, often find school to be boring and meaningless. In PBL, students are active, not passive; a project engages their hearts and minds, and provides real-world relevance for learning.

- **PBL improves learning.** After completing a project, students understand content more deeply, remember what they learn and retain it longer than is often the case with traditional instruction. Because of this, students who gain content knowledge with PBL are better able to apply what they know and can do to new situations.

- **PBL builds success skills for college, career, and life.** In the 21st century workplace and in college, success requires more than basic knowledge and skills. In a project, students learn how to take initiative and responsibility, build their confidence, solve problems, work in teams, communicate ideas, and manage themselves more effectively.



- **PBL helps address standards.** The Common Core and other present-day standards emphasize real-world application of knowledge and skills, and the development of success skills such as critical thinking/problem solving, collaboration, communication in a variety of media, and speaking and presentation skills. PBL is an effective way to meet these goals

- **PBL provides opportunities for students to use technology.** Students are familiar with and enjoy using a variety of tech tools that are a perfect fit with PBL. With technology, teachers and students can not only find resources and information and create products, but also collaborate more effectively, and connect with experts, partners, and audiences around the world.

- **PBL makes teaching more enjoyable and rewarding.** Projects allow teachers to work more closely with active, engaged students doing high-quality, meaningful work, and in many cases to rediscover the joy of learning alongside their students.

- **PBL connects students and schools with communities and the real world.** Projects provide students with empowering opportunities to make a difference, by solving real problems and addressing real issues. Students learn how to interact with adults and organizations, are exposed to workplaces and adult jobs, and can develop career interests. Parents and community members can be involved in projects.

#### **Applicability of PBL for Science/Engg./ Technical/Medical students:-**

In the typical science course learning is teacher directed. Students are presented with knowledge and concepts via textbooks and lecture and then given the opportunity to apply them. Project-based learning (PBL) creates a context and reason to learn information and concepts. In PBL learning is student is directed and teacher is facilitator. Students take ownership of their learning by finding, evaluating, and synthesizing information from a variety of resources and via interaction between students.

In PBL, the project is central rather than peripheral to the curriculum. It not just an activity that provides examples, additional practice or applications of the course content, but rather, the vehicle through which major concepts are discovered. The PBL process requires students to do revision and reflection encouraging them to think about what and how they are learning. Projects allow students to develop important life-work skills such as collaboration, communication and critical thinking within the discipline.

PBL allows teachers to incorporate 21st Century technology advances into their curriculum, not merely by layering technology in traditional teaching methods, but rather by allowing students to use technology as a tool to assist their learning.

#### **Applicability of Case study method for Commerce/Mgtt./Arts/Social Science students:-**

##### **• Teaching case**

There is no universal definition for a 'teaching case'.





According to the academia, 'case' is a subject that merits discussion by a group for about 2-3 hours and which consists of an average of 20 A-4 size pages of material. It can be defined as "actual or near actual situation usually involving a decision, a challenge, an opportunity, a problem, an issue or a controversy affecting a person or persons in an Organization". of the case will be a challenge.

#### • Case and Problem

Case is distinct from a problem. Case never has a perfect answer. For a problem to be qualified as a case which can be administered in the class room, there should be equal amount of competing views possible on the case so much so that the class can be divided into several groups who are contending for a particular position with equal amount of conviction. So, the problem becomes a case only when the nuances take our attention. The logical paths which a learner can take in a particular case have to be multiple. Also, cases can be easier solved in groups where as a problems are more solved alone.

#### • Stages of Preparation

Every case requires a lot of individual preparation by the learners and instructors. It is very important to take a composite view and understand the compulsions of the various stake holders involved at the individual stage.

A case can be initially discussed in small groups in a class. A small group discussion is very advantageous as it improves participation. However, many cases have to be discussed and closed in a plenary because you have to bring everybody into the page at the end of the case.

While discussing case studies, opinion polls can be used to understand popular opinion in the house and how the learners start appreciating the various nuances and therefore they reach one decision or other.

#### • Preparation

Teacher's should ideally circulate the case material at least 3 days before the discussion, but not before 7 days. However, there will at least be 15% of the students who will come without reading the material so it is important that they should be given time for quick reading before the discussion starts. Ideally, students should read it carefully at least 3 times before starting the discussion. Students are also expected to cross-refer the data given in the case and also do a bit of literature search on the subject. In a well written case, inferences will be interspersed with facts and hence it is very important to distinguish facts from inferences. Also, management cases mostly will have oversupply of data and hence identifying the crux of the case will be a challenge.

#### Processes adopted in the management of the case

For effective case study discussion, a learner is supposed to understand:

- a) the facts of the case and the variables being debated
- b) what is going right and what is going wrong
- c) the goals and objectives of the case

Further, students should analyse the data against the objectives and develop an action plan and finally undergo the task of optimizing.



### Role of an instructor

Instructor enjoys a very important position in this method of learning. An instructor should:

- Ensure participation from all or most of the participants
- Develop multiple alternatives
- Ensure that he/she does not take a view on the case
- Remain constructive and positive throughout the discussion
- Not challenge the facts given in the case
- Open the floor for discussion
- Focus on the core issues
- Ensure Continuous assessment
- Summarize the case discussion
- Deepen the debate

### Evaluation of Performance of the students in the case study analysis

For evaluating the performance of your students in the case study discussion, you can ask for the written analysis of the case after it is discussed. You can also ask them to make presentations on various sub-questions generated in the case. Also, participation of the students is continuously evaluated. This could include:

- a) Ask them for their analysis of the options available for various players in the case.
- b) Ask questions in exams about the issues which were dealt with in cases.
- c) Give them an opportunity to write their own case studies

### Advantages

- Students get an opportunity to learn by doing

- Encourage them to ask right questions
- Instructor can take students to non-classroom situations at very low cost
- Give students flexibility and confidence
- Help students to take informed decisions
- Enhances their employability in a global context

### Results

The results of case study discussion as a learning method include:

- Enhances students' grasping capacity on the theory
- Exposes students to actual working of the Organizations
- Reflect the ambiguity and uneven decisions required in Organizations even in an information age
- Understand divergent perspective and resolve misunderstanding
- Better communication and interpersonal skills
- Provide options for middle ground in conflict situations
- Provides a piece of real world learning

### Conclusion

- 1) PBL approach can be useful for students of technical/Engg./Medical/Science background.
- 2) Case study approach can be useful for the students of Commerce/Mgtt./Arts/Social Science background.
- 3) Both PBL and case study approach gives exposure to students to work problems based on real life situations.

4) The students get an opportunity to use the concepts of text book and reference book to solve the projects/cases which help them to understand the practical applicability of those concepts and their effectiveness.

5) Students also come to know the concepts which are not in the scope of the syllabus but useful to solve the particular project/case.

6) Both the approach if used effectively will create interest and curiosity among the students to solve the projects/cases and thereby will be helpful to teach them the concepts of the syllabus.

7) The students whose concepts are clear and understood the same perfectly will easily complete the project/case, thereby it will be useful to know whose concepts are not clear.

8) The assessment system as being followed nowadays can also be changed from writing answers to solving projects/cases.

9) The new teaching method will help to produce the graduates as suitable to face challenges in job market/industry.

10) The new system will reduce the load of carrying books/notebooks/reference. books while attending the lectures, instead only the file relevant for the project/case is required to carry in lecture hall.

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