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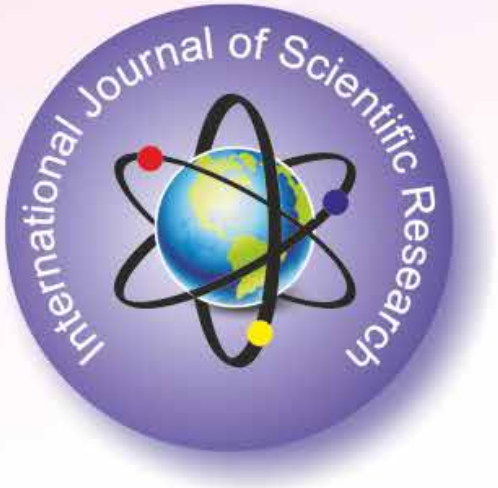

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Research Paper

Leveraging Technology For Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness

Education

KEYWORDS :Education, Leveraging Technology, E-Learning, Teaching Methods, Virtual Class Room

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ABSTRACT

Teaching is as old as mankind. Indian Puranas and Bhaghwat-Geeta were handed down the generations by word of mouth. Later education was imparted by "sand and stick" and on parched leaves. The present day class room lectures are largely "chalk and talk" based. This has obvious limitations in these modern times with exploding knowledge on all frontiers. Class room lectures though a proven method and time tested are monotonous with mostly one way communication. It is less effective as it does not leverage the available modern techniques. This research paper looks into the emerging trends in teaching methods in educational institutions using available technology so as to make education seamless and go beyond the corridors of class rooms enabling greater and wider reach.

1. Introduction

Schools, Colleges and Universities are established to educate students and assist in economic, social and cultural development of a country. Educational institutions are required to enrich the students enhancing their employability, undertake research relevant to local needs, and make their knowledge and resources available to community. They are accountable to all the stakeholders of this education system viz., society, students, their employers.. They must respond positively and on a continual basis to the overall national education and development plans to impart quality education. With the demand for education increasing by geometric proportions and with limited class room facilities, educational institutions will have to look beyond and leverage the available technology for wider reach.

2. Rationale of the Present Study

Dr. Abdul Kalam, Ex-President of India outlined the Mission of transforming India into a developed nation. This calls for concerted efforts in all spheres including education and industry. Is the teaching fraternity geared to meet the vision of our President as also the emerging challenges due to globalization and liberalization? To catapult the Country as a developed nation by 2020, the Academe can ill-afford to remain isolated, as hitherto, and would have to work in a collaborative manner. This study therefore looks at the emerging role of teachers in the globalized world vis-avis the teaching methods.

3. Objectives

The Objectives of the Study are:

- Need for developing new capabilities among students
- Change drivers of role dimensions of teachers
- Industry expectations from Education
- Need for new teaching techniques

4. Research Methodology

Data / information for the research study were gathered from secondary published sources viz., books, newspapers, marketing periodicals, web sites, etc.

5. Findings of the Study

5.1 Need for Developing New Capabilities Among Students

There is need to develop new capabilities and skills among the students for competitive success in the business world. Education system has to respond to the new growth drivers of the economy. It should foster research and development and backward and forward linkages for sustained growth. The required areas of competencies are the proficiency to work with ideas, with data, and with people. The teachers must, therefore, aim at developing talent to the point of excellence in any of the areas which students choose to pursue. The curriculum of study shall have to be designed specifically for the purpose. Besides, new approaches and expectations are opening up the Indian economy and education system should come forward and monitor the social changes and show their readiness to adopt new priorities and to reconstruct their structure.

5.2 Change Drivers of Role Dimensions of Teachers

The role dimensions of teachers have expanded due to several significant trends and developments. The chief drivers of change are

- opening up of the Indian economy
- advancing technologies particularly in communication and information technology
- intensifying competition
- emergence of youth as the new center of power in the society with radically different working ethos
- changing ethics / values
- rapidly changing needs of industry and business world
- increasing competition in academic world with the liberalisation of the education system with the entry of private players and entry of foreign educational institutions and the consequent shift in paradigm from earlier academic models to revenue based models
- growing criticality of human competence in creating and sustaining competitiveness of the organizations
- growing pressure from industry to make their fresh recruits productive from day one to reduce training costs; organizations today are looking for trained professionals and decision makers
- Need for formative training from business corporations, via collaborative internships with corporations to enhance learning opportunities to students
- Increasing interdependence between academia and industry for sustenance and innovation in their respective areas.

Education system therefore should respond to growing complexities of business environment today. Institutions of higher education can not only contribute skilled man-power to business, but also in many intangible ways. The mutually interdependent relationship and the intersecting needs of business and education require identifying means of strengthening academia-industry association.

5.3 Industry Expectations From Education

Today there is a growing feeling that the skills of graduates do not match the needs and expectation of the employment sector. In the developing countries unemployable graduates pose a greater problem than unemployment itself. What are these skills, which are expected by the employers of the graduate work force? What are the skills which describe "quality education" and which such an education is capable of fostering in its products? The important skills employers are looking for from the graduates are:

i) Time Management,
ii) Ability to work under pressure,
iii) Accuracy and attention to detail,
iv) Oral communication skills,
v) Multi-tasking.

The UNESCO document on "Thematic Debate- The requirements of the world of work" has added a few more to this list as:-

i) flexibility,
ii) innovativeness,

iii) creativity,
iv) entrepreneurship,
v) versatility,
vi) team work.

These skills today are the parameters by which the quality of education is assessed. Such education enables persons, societies and even nations acquire competencies required for living meaningfully in a competitive globalized world.

5.4 Need for New Teaching Techniques

The need for Innovative Methods in teaching is necessitated by the following factors:

- Knowledge explosion with more subjects and topics
- Increase in student population by geometric proportions
- Short duration lecture hours being a limiting factor there is a need for focused approach to teaching for better effectiveness
- Higher expectations from parents, teachers and society
- Peer level pressures of both the students and teachers to excel in competitive environment
- Better methods used by private coaching classes
- Making teaching less burdensome

5.5 New Teaching Methods

The new teaching methods available today are:

- Case Study representing situational analysis with multiple issues / problems
- Case-let for small class room sessions to discuss one or two issues / problems
- Seminars facilitating interaction with men of eminence to discuss current developments on the subject
- Group Discussions / Presentations enabling active participation of students developing group synergy, leadership skills, art of listening, confidence building, communication skills, etc.
- Workshops provide practical and hands-on experience enabling freedom of expression / thought, giving a sense of pride to the participants and is highly interactive
- Project Work entails problem definition, diagnosis, data collection and analysis, conclusion; it fuses theoretical knowledge with practical experience
- Field Study enables field work using questionnaires, research methods, and sampling techniques; it is an analytical approach and helps in conceptual clarity and understanding the practical difficulties / realities
- Quizzes / Surprise Tests for alertness and to hone and sharpen the skills
- Bulletin Board is an informal closed user group channel of communication facilitating information sharing and eliciting information
- Home Assignments / Role Play for greater participation and development of synergy
- Guest Speakers, inviting professionals and managers from industry for experience sharing and updates on the subject
- Case Writing / Case Teaching is a recent educative and analytical approach with focused real life cases for quicker assimilation

5.6 New Teaching Aids

The new teaching aids are:

- OHP using transparencies
- White Boards and Colour Marker pens
- Evaluation using quizzes / surprise tests
- Power Point Presentations (audio-visual)
- Counseling
- Hand outs with bullet points and reference materials

5.7 Future Teaching Methods

The future teaching aids would be leveraging technology and would include:

- Notes in CDs / DVDs and other electronic storage media
- E-learning using network of computers
- Learning on the go using 'Tablet'
- Seamless teaching with virtual class room – class room outside the portals of educational institutions (i.e. at home, lab, etc.)
- Internet based learning through web pages / sites
- Forming 'Google groups', for instance, of like minded students for focused learning
- Chat with teachers across the globe
- Video conferencing

6. Conclusion

The future is at once promising and challenging to the teaching fraternity and educational institutions. Teaching will be visually enriching, class room beyond the corridors of brick and mortar college ushering in "anywhere learning". The new teaching techniques leveraging technology and communication systems will ensure wider coverage and effectively compliment class room teaching. The new innovative methods would make teaching easy, effective and learning enriching and enjoyable. In the emerging scenario, teachers will be more of a guide as the learning materials will be available in a more presentable and a more understandable form to the students through various communication channels. They can "chat" with the teachers electronically any time making learning a continuous process.

Dr.Abdul Kalam, said, "The management of knowledge in the 21st century is beyond the capacity of a single individual. The amount of information that we have around us is overwhelming. The management of knowledge, therefore, must move out of the realm of the individual and shift into the realm of the networked groups. The students must learn how to manage knowledge collectively. When the information is networked, the power end utility, the information grows as squared as predicted by Metcalfe's Law. Information that is static does not grow. In the new digital economy information that is circulated creates innovation and contributes to national wealth."

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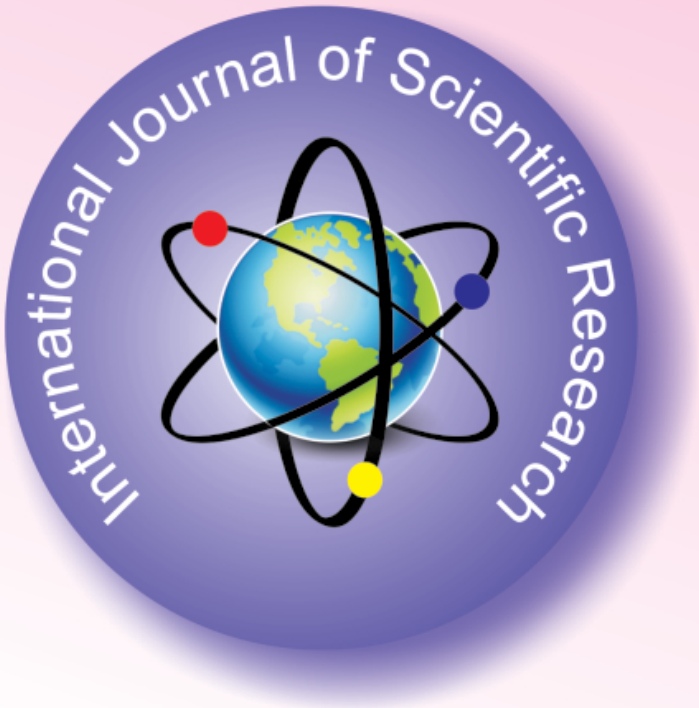

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