



## Social Science and Activity Based Learning

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### Abstract:

*Pedagogy is the art and science of teaching and learning. In the process, a pedagogue progresses upon the objectives of teaching and simultaneously develops knowledge, skills and attitude towards the process of teaching. In due process, pedagogues encounter different aspects of teaching learning. Since a recent past, teaching learning has observed a significant difference in their approach from teacher centric approaches to activity-based learning. Teaching through activity-based learning means a combined process of cognitive, affective and psychomotor development. Learning by doing is a learning through experiencing different aspect of education. Learning through such approaches i.e., participatory approach or activity-based approach shall enable for the learners and observant to enhance their curiosity for learning. In the present educational scenario, where philosophies are focusing upon automation in learning, the process of education or learning must enable teacher to use participatory or activity-based approach towards contribution for autonomous learning by learners.*

*Education is a fundamental right and the rightful education shall provide them with a magnitude of exposure and develop their capabilities and competences through activity-based learning. The present research paper focuses on the conceptual framework of Social Science Education through activity-based Learning. The paper also discusses in detail the activities including Map Making and Puppet and how to develop their knowledge, skills and attitude.*

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**Keywords:** Activity Based Learning, Social Science, Participation, Map Making, Puppet

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### 1. Introduction

Schools and classrooms are in itself is a society for the learning community. Here the education takes place with a view to understand the process of social change and develop with the changing demands of the society.

The present scenario of Education is now shifted from actual teaching-learning to virtual teaching learning. It is to say that education is now supplied with the effective use of technology. Education has utilized various audio-visual aids and technological means to make teaching learning more productive and long-lasting for the learners. One can witness a shift from teacher centered approaches to student centered approaches and subsequently, the process of teaching is now more learning centered.

The manner in which education is imparted is also witnessing a shift of focus from non-participatory activities to participatory approaches wherein the learners are more involved and engaged in the process of learning the subject. The teachers are found to supply various educational activities to increase their participation. Moreover, students have their hands on activities so there are maximum chances of learning and receiving satisfaction in the process of learning.

Till now education in Indian scenario was found to be more oriented towards knowledge development of learners but since a recent past, it has said to evolve from the one-way learning process to two way

learning process. Here the interaction takes place between Teacher to Taught, Taught to Taught, Taught – Teacher in a dynamic manner.

## 2. Education of Social Science

Our education system is mechanical and stereotype, leading the learner towards materialism. It is treating the students as products. The all-round development of the child is unobserved. Faith in human capacity defined in terms of ability to assess a problem situation and find solutions, capacity for convergent and divergent thinking, effective interpersonal skills, ability to communicate effectively, has been undervalued. Social science is basically the systematic study of society and different aspects of the society. Social science is not a subject to be remembered rather it is a science to be practiced in life that touch the citizen of a country, society for lifetime.

According to encyclopedia – **Unlike other sciences, social science, as a subject, is concerned with the study of society and human nature. The word social science in common relates the prosodic areas of the study including anthropology, archaeology, criminology, economics, law, communication studies, history, political science, sociology, human geography, psychiatry, and psychology.**

During ancient times, education was given through the tradition of Guru-Shishya. Gurus taught ethics, values and skills and thereby they tend to build up the potential human beings. Here education utilized Veda, Upanishads and real-life stories to educate the learners. It was more focused on activity-based learning and teaching. After the Vedic Period, education witnessed positive change which brought knowledge was given priority. This resulted into establishment of universities across the Indian Territory considering the place and time. The focus of education was on the development and enhancement of knowledge. But after the British rule, the education system in India witnessed a shift of focus from the tradition of Guru-Shishya to classroom education. Due to educational technology, the information is now available to the students and therefore education must focus on the notion of “learning without stress” every individual from the educationist to the parents.

The social science curriculum over the past years has changed drastically both in content and methodology. It has often been noticed that there is an increasing gap between the promises made in the curriculum and what is happening at the level of the child’s perception. Therefore, selection and organization of resources to enable students to develop a critical understanding of society, is a challenging task. Teaching should be seen as an opportunity for teacher and students to learn together. Education must enumerate skills, potentials of the students in real life which is the duty of a teacher and for the same reason teaching of social science as a subject must take place through various participatory approach and activities that enable students to develop skills.

## 3. Activity based Learning

- **Learning is an active process.**
- **Learning is engaging**
- **Learning is a social activity**
- **Learning occurs contextually**
- **Learning builds on previous knowledge**
- **Learning takes time**

Activity-based learning (ABL) theory is a cognitive-learning theory which is considered a “constructivist” learning theory. Essentially, a learner constructs microcosms of knowledge from past knowledge and/or current experiences and interacting with data. The facilitator engages learners in outlining real-world problems in the first place instead of starting with a

classification of problem-solving methods. Integrating ABL elements is thus a promising way to enhance students’ learning experiences. Vital learning principles include Activity based education refers to learning where students physically and mentally explore subject by simulation of the work environment, manipulation of tools and materials associated with the world of work, or performance of

a real work task. It ensures that each and every child participates fully in each activity. The gap between the students and the teacher is lessened and hence the teacher gets an opportunity to act as a facilitator, rather than a task master in the classroom. Teacher can spend more time with the slow learner.

Each student has the potential to learn through individual actions and experience and build up their ideas about world. Activity based learning helps them to construct their knowledge. The interactivity among the students is the key agent for successful learning. Interactive resources or environment are helpful to learners because these resources can be accessed at any time and as many times as the learner chooses. Likewise, activity-based learning is an important method that teaches students to think in original ways against their own problems, makes it easier for them to find practical solutions to the problems of life. It also provides self-esteem for students in their development period to learn.

In a 'traditional' class, a teacher may find students who memorize and excel in their examination with good grades. It was important, therefore, at the beginning of the course, in the introductory lecture, to stress that participants do not need to repeat things learned word-for-word. Rather express their vision that students evolve into "investigators", starting an independent inquiry into a topic of interest in a self-directed manner. Consequently, facilitating, motivating, enabling and coaching are the key skill-set of the instructor (facilitator) rather than just didactic lectures. This reminds me of a quote by Confucius, it reads...

**"Tell Me and I Forget; Teach Me and I May Remember; Involve Me and I Learn"**

**-Confucius**

Activity tends to enhance the skill level of learning content and material. It has been widely accepted that any learning that engages learners to participate in some sort of activity, the comprehension of the content and the development of skill is simultaneous process. This is to suggest that in activity based learning the teacher and students must be given some sort of activity that result into fruitful and meaningful manner.

#### **4. Key Features of Activity based learning**

- To use of child-friendly educational aids to foster self-learning
- To study according to his/her aptitude and skill.
- Designed study cards for Social Science upon finishing a group of cards.
- Activities in each milestone include various activities like games, puzzle, drawing, and dramatize to teach and understand a concept.
- The learner takes up an Exam Card after completing all the milestones in a subject.
- This is a child-friendly way to evaluate and reinforce learning. Activity-based learning is closely related to Experiential Learning.

#### **5. Philosophy**

- Any learning begins from the surroundings of a learner
- Learning must motivate the learners to participate and learn from a given situation.
- It requires conducive environment and freedom to express oneself.
- Students shall express and embrace their curiosity and initiate autonomy in learning.

#### **6. Role of Teacher**

**The Organizer:** Perhaps the most difficult and important role the teacher has to play. The success of many activities depends on good organization and on the students knowing exactly what they are to do next. Giving instructions is vital in this role as well as setting up activities. The organizer can also serve as a demonstrator, this role also allows a teacher to get involved and engaged with learners. The teacher also serves to open and neatly close activities and also give content feedback.

**The Participant:** This role improves the atmosphere in the class when the teacher takes part in an activity. However, the teacher takes a risk of dominating the activity when performing it. Here the teacher can enliven a class; if a teacher is able to stand back and not become the centre of attention, it can be a great way to interact with learners without being too overpowering.

**The Tutor:** The teacher acts as a coach when students are involved in project work or self-study. The teacher provides advice and guidance and helps students clarify ideas and limit tasks. This role can be a great way to pay individual attention to a student. It can also allow a teacher to tailor make a course to fit specific student needs. However, it can also lead to a student becoming too dependent or even too comfortable with one teacher and one method or style of teaching.

**Role of Student:** A student in an ABL class is an active participant and problem solver wherein, a learner participates in the activities given by teacher. It is important that a learner participate at their willingness. As it will enable for them the doors of knowledge, skills and attitude acquisition for their betterment. The following four are the major role of the student in Activity Based Learning:

- To collaborate with the peers and complete a given task or activity.
- To communicate the task with peers and accomplish with a learning outcome. This may also include the communication of the students with the teacher and the class.
- To interact with peers as to understand the nature of the activity and the efforts required for accomplishment of a task or activity.
- To work with peers and adjust their behaviour with the rest of the class and cherish the values of group communication. These values include unity, persuasion, convincing, commitment, honesty etc.

## 7. Activities for Social Science Education

**Map-Making:** The studying, drawing and interpreting of maps are activities essential in the teaching of social science. Maps indicate economic and physical features, location of places, political boundaries cultural limitations, occupational zones etc. The teacher should, therefore, expose the students to the use of maps so that correct interpretations can be given to the maps. Map Making can be used as an activity to enhance their competency to develop and remember components of map.

## 8. Objectives

1. To enable students to remember directions, map and neighboring states.
2. To enable student to work together and complete the task.
3. To enable students to deal with each other in Democratic way.
4. To enable students to deal with the fears with the maps.

## 9. Procedure

1. The teacher will begin the session with orientation to activity of map making. Demonstrate several types of maps.
2. The students will listen to the teacher attentively and will pose questions if any.
3. The teacher will identify pair from the students and will supply activity material.
4. The teacher will ask students to list what information they can get from a map, such as directions, landmarks, and building projects.
5. Ask students to work together to determine which map would be best to find their way in the following scenarios:
  - Going from your house to a downtown library (city map)
  - Going from your house to a different elevation (topographic map)
  - Going from your house to a different country (world map)
  - Going from the school to the airport (road map)

## 10. Outcomes

- Students are able to experience, remember and understand the concept.
- Students are able to remember specific locations and directions.
- Students are able to tell the geographical aspects.
- Students are able to display the different aspect of life on the map.

**Puppet:** Puppets present a strong connection for young children who may have already connected with other puppets through television. Puppets used on television are developed within the context of providing education about numbers, words, and also social constructs such as family, friends, and degrees of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behavior. From this domain, puppets may already represent a high degree of trust for a child.

## 11. Objectives

- To prepare puppets relevant to the content of a chapter.
- To present a puppet show and understand the storyline through puppet show.
- To stimulate the imagination of the learners and enhance their emotions.
- To allow learners to learn etiquettes of social order

## 12. Procedure

- The teacher will narrate a story to the students with expression and will orient the learners to prepare a puppet show of the story.
- The teacher will ask students to prepare puppets considering their cloths and size.
- The students will prepare the puppets with the guidance of the teacher.
- The teacher will monitor the students’ preparation and will assist them.
- Once the instruments are ready to use, the teacher will ask students to practice the puppets and learn the storyline.
- The teacher will help the students learn the nuances of verbal presentation and might ask them to record the expressive speech for final presentation.
- The students will complete the task and will rehearse the same with instruments.
- The teacher will ask the students to perform the puppet show in front of the class.
- The teacher may derive and brief the students the important points from storyline.
- The students will participate actively and learn the story.

## 13. Outcomes

- The students are able to concentrate on the activity of puppet making.
- The students are able to enjoy the learning experience.
- The students are able to creatively prepare and present puppets and story.
- The students are able to remember the story and the moral of the story.

A teacher in the classroom can bring variety of activities that can bring about a positive change in the learner’s retention of the subject. In social science education, activity-based teaching can be enhanced through students’ participation in activities like Dramatization, Role-Play, Picture Story, Puzzle, Map-Reading, Project, Group Discussion, Exhibition and other similar activities.

## 14. Conclusion

To conclude, one can say that pedagogy of social science has evolved time to time, yet classroom education is still teacher centered. Using activity-based learning approach and various activities for teaching social can enhance the learners by triggering their area of interest and allow them to take interest for the various aspects of social sciences. Moreover, teaching learning of social science must happen through participatory approach where the learners are given some sort of activity, problems or cases to be solved using the consultation of the teacher and make learning a rewarding experience.

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