
Assimilation of Caselets-An Engaging Peer Learning Tool

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Introduction

The process of education is undergoing radical transformation and at every stage there is a need to understand the changes and adapt to the same with fervor to keep pace with the same. Educational institutes are becoming autonomous and given the academic flexibility to frame their curriculum and evaluation parameters. This offers lot of scope to the individual teachers to be innovative and creative and thus create more enjoyable and fruitful learning opportunities for their students. Autonomy should not be perceived as just changing the syllabus and making it more relevant but also focus on more engagement of the learner in the whole process to make it really effective.

The strength of the students in each classroom can be a challenge and thus there is a need for creativity on the part of the educator to make it more dynamic and participative. The use of technology cannot be overlooked and thus the need to integrate the same seamlessly in the learning paradigms is imperative. Autonomy can be successful in any institution if the educator and the learner both are involved in the process of making the whole learning experience more stimulating.

Case study is an important learning tool in the post graduation level of studies but the need was to understand if the same can be used effectively at an undergraduate class as well. Caselets are brief anecdotes of a particular topic or situation and in brief so it becomes easier for the learner to connect to the same. Case study method is often used but its scope is confined to the case circulated by the instructor. This experiment was conducted to understand the role of the learner in creation of content of the caselet .

Objectives of the Experiment

1. To understand the importance of caselets in UG level of education
2. To understand the impact of peer learning through caselets
3. To understand the role of students in content creation.

Methodology

The students were introduced to the concept of entrepreneurship for the theoretical framework. They were later introduced to few caselets of entrepreneurship taken up for discussion in the classrooms to understand the motivational level of these entrepreneurs. A questionnaire was administered after the exercise to take the feedback of their learning outcomes.

At the next stage, the students were asked to form teams and asked to conduct interviews of entrepreneurs {entrepreneurship understood here as self employed people} in the community. The structured questions to be asked were discussed in the classroom with student participation and then finalized. However they were asked to use these as only guidelines and were given the full autonomy to add more questions in the course of the interview.

The students were asked to then submit the same for an assignment for grades. After graduation the interviews in the form of caselets were then assimilated and circulated to the class for further reading on the Whatsapp group created specifically for educational usage. Students were then asked to read and to review the caselets prepared by the other students and answer a few general questions prepared for the same. A questionnaire was administered to the students after the whole exercise to understand their learning outcomes.

Observations from the experiment.

1. The students conducted the interviews with great diligence and motivation as was indicated in the assignments submitted.
2. Team learning was facilitated as it was a group activity and the students participated whole heartedly in the process of learning.
3. Different life skills were developed in the process like persuasion, working in teams, creativity etc
4. Learners were exposed to around 40 caselets prepared by their own peers.
5. The cases included micro, small and medium enterprises as well as franchises, small shops, startups and thus a lot of diversity was witnessed.

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6. Some students were engaged in small activities of their own or assisting their family business and this was appreciated by their peers.

7. The learning of motivation of self employment provided by these real life caselets were more informative than any theoretical book.

8. The first hand experience of the student's interactions with the entrepreneurs motivated few of the students to giving a thought to taking up entrepreneurship as a career option.

9. Effective and proactive use of the Whatsapp platform beyond the normal millennial use was an encouraging sign for the educator.

10. Learning from their peers experiences proved a more engaging learning tool for the students

11. Content which would otherwise get relegated to a simple assignment just for grades, became a permanent source of learning output for the student.

12. Community engagement helped in widening the learning horizon from classroom to the real world.

13. Dignity of labor and also understanding the diversity in society was also introduced in the most informal manner by the simple exercise as the respondents covered all strata of society.

14. Understanding the relevance of entrepreneurship and the government schemes like Make in India , Skill India through the narratives of the entrepreneurs was possible.

Conclusion

The distinguishing feature of this method from the previous methods was the fact that in the earlier years, students would simply submit the assignment in a question and answer format for evaluation. But in this method, the caselets prepared by the peers facilitated the whole process of learning into an experiential endeavor and better understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship. Autonomy coupled with teacher creativity can lead to more dynamic and engaging learning pedagogies and more learner centric environment.

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