Smart Class Method: An Advanced Approach to Soft Skills Learning.

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Abstract

The 21st century has been recognized as the "Science and Technology Age", and technology in education has become an "inevitable essential" for every child of the present world. Technology has played a major role in improving the modern education system at various levels of learning especially soft skills learning. The article explains the meanings of a smart class method, soft skills and how smart class technology becomes an advanced approach to develop soft skills among the students.

Keywords: Smart class method, soft skills, communication skill, leadership skill.

1. Introduction

Technology-based instruction in education has become an obvious part of the contemporary education system at various levels of the teaching-learning process. The dynamic approach of learners and techno culture of the society, prompt stakeholders of education to adopt a strategy which would boost focused learning among the students. It is believed that technology is often used in classrooms to facilitate learning and develop skills among the students. As a result, it could be said that technology is just entering its post-adolescence, maturing enough to serve as a tool for soft skills learning. Most of the institutions when focus on soft skills learning are more likely to use technology than those that place a low emphasis on it. This article describes how the smart class method as an advanced approach to developing soft skills learning among the students.

2. Concept of Smart Class Method

A smart class method is an advanced multimedia technology implementation that provides tools and content for teaching and learning. In the Smart class method, teachers use PowerPoint presentations, videos, animation, audio-video recordings, websites, blogs and other software programs to impart knowledge and skills to students. In the Smart Class Method, students are exposed to virtual learning that influences multisensory perceptions and skills. It executes through digital instructional techno-based software programs on various subjects. The smart class method provides virtual learning experiences during the teaching-learning process to make both teachers and students 'smart' in their respective roles. The smart class method enables students to access digital assets and interact with various sources of learning. It also provides the necessary learning guidance, hints, and supportive tools for learning in the right place, at the right time and in the right form. Lee et al. (2014) proposed that the features of smart learning include formal and informal learning, social and collaborative learning, personalized and situational learning and more focus on the application of content. Smart class method kindle interest and motivate them to interact in the learning process.

3   Merits of Smart Class Method

- A smart class method is learner-centered where the abilities and learning styles of students are focused.
- The interactive nature of the smart class method has a prospect to participate or contribute to the presentation and discussion in the teaching-learning process. It promotes communication skills.
- The smart class method promotes an environment for enjoyable learning in classroom.
- It endorses group learning activities including collaborative writing, group projects, joint problem solving, debates and more.
- The smart class method has a facility to upgrade constantly the resources of learning and developing skills.

4.　　Concept of Soft Skills

Soft Skills have become one of the most used buzz words of the 21st century. Wikipedia defines soft skills as the cluster of personality traits, social skills, communication, personal habits, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people. Mind Tools defines soft skills like work ethic, attitude, communication skills, emotional intelligence, and other personal attributes. Soft skills are interpersonal skills that are used to describe your approach to life, work, and relationships with other people. Soft skills consist of personal attributes, communication skills and abilities, and personality traits that differentiate people with similar hard skill-set from each other. Some examples of soft skills are communication skills, creative problem solving, time management, adaptability, team spirit, etc.

5.　　Importunate of Soft Skills

Man being a social animal needs a lot of interactions in society. Most of our communications require some level of skills to negotiate with people to achieve the desired goals in life. We use soft skills in day to day life to win more business and accelerate our career progression. By developing strong communication skills, teamwork, creativity, time management, can project and deliver results that please everyone and even positively influences our personal life. Soft skills were useful for both professional and personal lives. Studies show (iCIMS Hiring Insights 2017) that ninety-four percentage of recruiting professionals believe that an employee with stronger soft skills has a better chance of being promoted to the leadership position. Modern workplaces are considered to be more interpersonal that strong soft skills of persons ensure a productive and healthy work environment. The ability to communicate with the customers and convince them to buy a product needs a lot of organizational qualities. A study by 'Deloitte Access Economics' predicts that soft skills intensive occupations will account for two-thirds of all jobs by 2030. Most of the time these soft skills are to be taught using technology than the traditional methods. Techno based approaches in classroom teaching would give amble opportunities to experience and develop soft skills in the early stages of education. Smart class method of teaching focuses both academic achievement and the development of communicative skills, teamwork, critical thinking, creativity and adaptability in the teaching-learning process.

6.　　Smart Class Method and Soft Skills Learning

In contemporary society, everyone is part of mainstream technology. In the 21st century's technical revolution in education by digitalizing classrooms as the real substitute for traditional classrooms. The same way development of the soft skills of a person is a necessity in the modern education system. The studies on smart class and soft skills show that the smart class method enhances the development of soft skills in individuals. Communication skill is one of the important soft skills to be developed by the students to have greater achievement in life. Language is the basis of all communication and it has made possible all the advancements in the world. In language, important skills like listening, speaking, reading requires a lot of efforts and it is important from the academic point of view too. But these skills must be practiced from the primary level. It is commonly experienced that if the child doesn't learn to read by third grade, then he can't read to learn. Many kinds of research in the field of linguistics reveal that nearly 8% of children suffer from reading difficulties who remain under-achievers. A smart classroom is good to overcome this problem. Through proper audio-visual presentations in teaching learning process, students get maximum sensory experience. According to Lincoln (1992) without the images to create meaning in the words, children will not read. Glasser's (2001) opinion that children only understand 10% of what is read but 90% of what is experienced. Becker (2005) describes that the active learning process is necessary to master principles and concepts and when it is implemented in a technology-rich environment, students have a rich array of information to work and communicate The technology-based tools such as databases, analytic software and composition software help them to extract understanding from given information.

The use of technology in the teaching-learning process enhances leadership skills among the students. It trains them to develop communication skills and organizational abilities. The smart class method promotes teamwork and collaborative learning in the teaching-learning process. The smart class method uses interactive software programs to impart knowledge and acquire skills. Time management one of the important soft skills that can be acquired using the smart class method of teaching and learning. Computer-assisted instruction provides feedback immediately which leads to reductions in learning time (Koedinger, 1997). This is very likely to be a key element in making students feel more confident as well as leading to better attitudes towards learning. Such feedback reduces student frustration and provides

a sense of accomplishment (Koedinger, 1997). The feedback and self-pacing aspect of computer-assisted instruction are not only beneficial to students but teachers also profit in terms of time management.

Critical thinking is the pinnacle of the accumulation of knowledge and experience. Critical thinking is developed by the learners as they use technology in daily life. The smart class method which provides an atmosphere of freedom to learn subjects enhances students to develop critical thinking and creative approach to the solutions. When the smart class method encourages project-based learning students to get a chance to design, define, describe and discover. This 4Ds approach helps students to develop critical thinking on various subjects. One of the important features of the smart class method is adaptive learning. Every classroom has students of different types of learning abilities that teachers have a difficult task to make sure that all of them understand the concepts. The modern approach of techno-based learning assists the teachers and students to develop adaptive learning which in turn helps them to develop the skills of social life. Collaborative learning is one of the most effective forms of learning and when smart class method employed team spirit skills are developed among the students. There are several team activities like collaborative writing, group projects, joint problem solving, debates are promoted when teachers adopt in the smart class method. According to the Gallup survey, after introducing smart technology in schools & colleges, students' engagement rate has improved by 55%. Thus, the use of technology-based software programs like the smart class method helps students to develop soft skills to have great achievements in life.

7.　　Conclusions

In short, technology has the potential to improve quantitative assessment performance in core subjects, there is also mounting evidence that technology also leads to qualitative improvements; resulting in higher-quality skills among the students. The smart class method in education is neither a novelty nor is it a fad. It is a part of the modern world and is becoming more and more universal in our lives every year. It is also a proven method for improving soft skill learning. There is strong evidence pointing towards technology leading to better results on standardized tests; but the real emphasis should be on how it benefits student learning; how it enables those who are not able to perform well in traditional classrooms; how it motivates students to learn and gives them a more positive attitude towards education; and how it better prepares the youth of today with technical, communicative, interpersonal and creative skills.

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