Usability of Multimedia Learning Package for Postgraduate Level

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Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to assess the usability of multimedia learning package at postgraduate level. And also to evaluate the traditional methods of teaching like lecture method, simultaneously discussing the importance of multimedia learning package that can be utilized in imparting knowledge to the students at postgraduate level. Use of multimedia learning package not only promote the teacher with a more effective way to impart knowledge and information, but also enables them to teach in a more productive way. The ability to incorporate various teaching methodologies and strategies will modify and enhance the traditional instructional approaches. This will inevitably change the way teachers teach and students learn. This theoretical article discusses about the use of multimedia learning package, different types of teaching strategies, "philosophy of education" as a paper of study at postgraduate level, research in this field and further suggestions are made.

Introduction:

In this face of rapid advancement, the use of traditional methods of teaching like lecture methods should be substituted or at least be accompanied with some new methods of teaching and learning. It can positively contribute towards students understanding of the topic, thus improving their performance and motivation. Success in teaching is related to the extent to which you are prepared to conceptualize your teaching as a process of helping students to change their understanding of the subject matter you teach them. Higher education faculty strives to become more effective teachers so that students can learn better and many explore methods to improve their teaching practice. Depending on the nature of subject matter, individual differences and the facilities available, there are different methods teachers are using in the class room.

As such the subject matter of "philosophy of education" is somewhat difficult to understand. Many of the topics in this paper are vague and abstract. Hence in order to achieve maximum feedback from the students, the philosophy teacher should try to use some interesting and novel methods of teaching and learning. This can be done in the form of many instructional media such as

(i)   Use of transparencies

(ii)   Use of programme learning material

(iii)   Giving library works to students

(iv)   Writing assignments by referring various resources

(v)   Presenting seminars

(vi)   Conducting debates followed by discussions

(vii)   Preparing biographies of philosophers

(viii)   Preparation of PowerPoint presentations.

(ix)   Writing of Essays and so on.

Using variety of teaching methods to enhance our classroom teaching may allow us to conduct novel activities that would be impossible without it. Effective use of multimedia can motivate students, make our class more dynamic and interesting, and renew teacher enthusiasm as they learn new skills and techniques. Even though teachers may have mastered the traditional pedagogies in teaching their students, the rapid changing world dictates that these are no longer sufficient. The teachers must acquire new knowledge and skills themselves before they can prepare their students to meet the demands and challenges of present century. Education plays an important and critical role globally in developing a skilled workforce. For many decades, the use of textbooks has been the traditional method of instruction; however, the emergence and implementation of teaching effectiveness assessment techniques has revealed that most students do not absorb the course content up to the expected level. As a result, many researchers have focused on advancing and improving the existing learning methods, as well as introducing and experimenting with new teaching styles.

Multimedia learning package:

Multimedia refers to many or multiple and media is a tool, vehicle or agent to present or convey something. Hence in the present study multimedia refers to communicating in several ways, i.e., teaching by adopting various teaching strategies. Education plays an important and critical role globally for all round development of personality.. For many decades, the use of textbooks has been the traditional method of instruction; however, the emergence and implementation of teaching effectiveness assessment techniques has revealed that most students do not absorb the course content up to the expected level. As a result, many researchers have focused on advancing and improving the existing learning methods, as well as introducing and experimenting with new teaching styles. Challenge is to build scenario that integrate various media based on the belief that learning is maximized when media meets. Various classroom teaching methods have been termed lesson formats (Dunkin and Biddle1974) and more simply teaching methods (Berliner and Gage1976). The latter define teaching methods as recurrent instructional processes applicable to various subject matters. Two commonly used teaching methods at higher education are lecture method and discussion method. Although teachers use a variety of methods in their classes they have received little help from theorists or researchers as to which method or methods best facilitates learning. The criteria of effective teaching in a changing higher education context suggest that teaching in higher education settings requires a good grasp of subject matter and knowing how to present it to students, thus emphasizing knowledge and presentation.

A teaching method is characterized by a set of principles, procedures and strategies to be implemented by teachers to achieve desired learning in students (Liu and Shi2007). These principles and procedures are determined partly by the nature of the subject matter to be taught and partly by our beliefs or theories about how students learn. Attention should be given to suitability of certain teaching methods for presenting certain types of subject matter and for achieving certain objectives. Post graduate teachers should have professional knowledge that provides criteria for when a particular method is appropriate for given content or subject matter with students at a defined level of development.

Philosophy of Education:

"Philosophy of education" as an independent study has its own scope and function. The scope of the philosophy of education includes the critical evaluation of aims, ideas and education, analysis of human nature, educational values, the theory of knowledge and the relationship of education and social progress. In the present study the contents from "philosophy of education" are selected to prepare multimedia learning package. "Philosophy of education" is an important component of education curriculum. From decades, even centuries books have been the primary medium to propagate knowledge in philosophy and many excellent text books exists. As such the subject matter of "philosophy of education" is somewhat difficult to understand. Many of the topics in this paper are vague and abstract. Hence in order to achieve maximum feedback from the students, the philosophy teacher should try to use some interesting and novel methods of teaching and learning i.e., use of multimedia learning package.

"Philosophy of education" can refer to either the academic filed of applied philosophy or to one of any educational philosophies that promotes a specific type of education. As an academic filed "philosophy of education" is the philosophical study of education and its problems. Its central subject matter is education and its methods are those of philosophy. As a subject matter philosophy is too hard for students. Multimedia learning package will find its best use if used especially to teach the abstract concepts appearing in philosophy of education subject. Because many of the concepts are difficult to understand and more over students comes from different backgrounds with vivid entry behaviors. A student sees philosophy as a paper only to be studied for the sake of examination and has no real use outside the classroom setting. So we have to show how philosophy is used and why it matters … for example philosophy is used in legal matters in interactions among people and in matters of religion and to demonstrate the application of philosophy to life.

Research in this field:

Very fewer or no studies have been made on the usability of multimedia for teaching subjects like philosophy of education. Research in this field is in its infancy stage. However one can find numerous studies made in the field of using multimedia to teach subjects like science, mathematics and even to teach languages. Instructors for various

university courses often find that there are many different types of support material for their subjects like sociology, psychology, etc., but this is not the case with philosophy subject. In the field of higher education research is carried out but not in this direction i.e., preparation of multimedia learning package, especially for post graduate level. Effective teaching in higher education is linked to technological changes. Advances in this area have significant impact on teaching and learning in recent years (Hannan and Silver 2000), which in turn have both assisted teachers to reach larger number of students as well as manage diversity and added to the complexity of the teaching learning environment (Devlin 2007a).

Conclusions:

Multimedia learning package may hold great potential for individual as well as group learning if properly and systematically used in accordance with the needs of the learners. There is a need to use multimedia by educators for teaching in institutions of higher education. Multimedia cannot replace a teacher but it can only be used as a supplement tool in teaching learning process, thereby enhancing learning environment. Even though teachers may have mastery over the traditional strategies of teaching, these are no longer sufficient. The teachers especially philosophy teachers should acquire new knowledge before they face their students. One of the keys to the success of instructional technology may be the change in pedagogy from students being passive recipients of knowledge to becoming active participants in the instructional process. This can be achieved by efficient use of multimedia learning package. In other words the development of multimedia learning package improves teaching efficiency enabling teachers to present the subject matter in an impressive way. Problems in learning can be fixed by adopting the right teaching strategy.

In order to teach the concepts of philosophy of education efficiently and make teaching learning process meaningful, exciting and interesting, multimedia learning package must be used in the classroom. Teachers must continuously learn new skills and familiarize themselves with new ways of interacting and communicating with students and be capable of teaching in blended environment employing technologies and pedagogies suited to the content and student abilities (Benson and Samarawickrema 2009). It is capable of overcoming the barriers due to its importance and use in the field of education. Through effective utilization of multimedia learning package in classroom, teachers can try to bring the change in nature of classroom instructions.

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