PROJECT AND PERFORMANCE-BASED LEARNING: MODERN TEACHING TECHNIQUES FOR EDUCATION

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Long past is the times when we teach content just in case a student might need it. A great teacher will devise a way to give the students an urgent reason to learn skills or knowledge and then let them show they have learned it by what they can do. With this strategy, teachers are allowing the students to learn and become educated in a self-directed way, from the teachers to the student’s actual experience of learning things. This is called project-based learning.

Project-based learning will keep the students wanting to come to school just to see what interesting things they will explore and discover each day. We call this inquiry. Millennial students are the curious personalities. They like to explore on things and find the value and learning experiences out of the activities given to them.

The philosophy that supports such a great teacher and the simple strategy is simple. Students learn best when they are in control of their learning. Students must perform the tasks of learning and nothing the teacher can say or do will change that. Real learning requires doing, not listening, or observing only. Yet what do we find in every public school and university? Teachers talking, talking and talking while students listen, daydream and doze. We call this lecture.

While lecture and classroom discussions are effective to a certain extent, teachers in the modern times must also acknowledge that student involvement, students in action and hands-on learning are what interests the students the most. A good combination of principles, theories, and concepts with the actual way of doing things will greatly help the students in their quest for learning, not to mention the help it can give to the academic institution employing such technique. For example, while a physical education is telling the students that exercise and movements will have a good impact on their health and
stamina, it can be helpful to launch a challenge to every student to engage in school activities that will promote physical enhancement learned from physical education lecture (e.g. sports activities, school clubs etc).

The word "teacher" implies the flow of knowledge and skills from one person to another. Whether it be a lecture or a power point, it involves talking to the students. While that is commonly viewed as the quickest and easiest way to impart knowledge and skills, teachers must realize that it can further be enhanced to ensure effective learning. Socrates had it right when he only answered a question with more questions and look what he produced -- some of the greatest minds that ever lived. We call this the Socratic Method.

Direct instruction is sometimes needed but to enhance even more the knowledge or skill an efficient teacher thinks and applies teaching strategies that would lead to the best learning experiences of the students. Then the lesson on arm and leg strokes become relevant. To learn, the students must do something. We call this performance-based learning.

As teachers, we must continue to search for the best possible ways to enhance and facilitate learning for the students, after all, the concepts will remain concepts unless transformed to life by the teachers and embraced by the students.