

# Effective Methods of Teaching Geography: An Educational Perspective

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## Abstract

Geography, as a dynamic and integrative discipline, requires effective teaching methods to make learning meaningful, interesting, and relevant to students' lives. In recent years, educational institutions have been recognized as crucial agencies of formal education, where the role of the teacher has become increasingly significant. This paper examines the importance of teaching methods in geography and discusses the long-standing debate between mastery of subject matter and proficiency in pedagogical methods. It emphasizes that effective geography teaching demands both thorough subject knowledge and a sound understanding of appropriate teaching methodologies. The study critically analyzes various methods of teaching geography such as the Project Method, Discussion Method, Observation Method, Regional Method, Laboratory Method, and Heuristic Method. Each method is examined in terms of its objectives, procedures, advantages, and educational value. The paper highlights how these methods encourage student participation, develop scientific attitude, promote learning by doing, and enhance critical thinking and observation skills. It concludes that the success of geography teaching largely depends on the teacher's ability to judiciously select and apply suitable methods, supported by proper teaching aids and resources, to make the subject lively, purposeful, and effective.

**Keywords:** Geography Teaching, Teaching Methods, Project Method, Observation Method, Regional Method, Laboratory Method, Heuristic Method, Student Participation, Learning by Doing

## Introduction

During recently years, the educational institutes have been used as an important agency of formal education. The teachers, educators, and others believe that the child receive right education through classroom instructions. There has been much discussion and debate among the teachers, educators, and others as to whether or not the mastery of subject- matter of geography by the teacher is more important than the understanding and command of various methods of teaching this subject. Some argue that the subject- matter is all important and teachers who are well trained in their subject will have no difficulty in devising means, methods and plans for teaching them. Other insist that methods of teaching must be duly mastered, since deficiencies in the knowledge of subject- matter can and must be overcome by independent study. If teaching is to reach highest degree of efficiency, it is evident that teachers of geography must possess a thorough knowledge of geography and also a broad understanding of the methods of teaching.

## Principles of good Methods

- The method should encourage the initiative of the students.

- The teacher should follow the method out of his classroom experiences.
- Student's activities and participation should be encouraged.
- Memorization and verbalism should be avoided and teaching through purposeful, realistic and concrete ways should be followed.
- Facts selected for presentation should be treated adequately.
- Attempts should be made to create interest among the students.

### **Different methods of teaching Geography**

Methods and techniques of teaching geography will vary according to the age of the students and the classroom situations. So a successful geography teacher should follow different methods like discussion method, project method, observation method, regional method etc. to make his teaching effective.

### **The Project Method**

The project method is quite a modern contribution to educational theory and practice. It was a reaction against dull, monotonous, purposeless and remote from life class room teaching. Much formal, verbal and uninteresting knowledge is thrust upon unwilling students who find no connection between what they are taught in the school or college and what they like and find purposeful in out school or college life. The project method owes its origin to the American philosopher belonging to the pragmatic school of philosophy.

The project method is not only a method of teaching, but it also across the institute curriculum for the students. The problem of method of teaching and the curriculum is to be viewed from the student's point of view, of purpose interest and usefulness. Thus the project method aims at "learning by living", i.e. things are learned through carrying out certain projects, as presented by real life.

### **Discussion Method**

It is said, "two heads are better than one", when a number of heads are combined together to solve a problem we can achieve wonderful results. This combination of minds is possible through discussion. Therefore discussion method as a teaching device has been accepted as one of the most scientific and up-to-date method of teaching. In teaching of geography this method is used to enable the students for free and natural participation in teaching process.

Usually discussion takes the form of a conference, a symposium or a seminar. At the time of such discussion, it is essential that neither the teacher nor the students should have pre-conceived notions, otherwise they won't change their attitude, even when essential, and discussion would be futile. In order to reap in order to reap the full advantages of this method it is the duty of the teacher to keep the needed materials (charts, maps, graphs, diagrams, and another audio-visual aids) ready if he wants that the students should get clear and thorough knowledge.

### **Advantages of Discussion Method**

The discussion method has the following advantages:-

- It provides knowledge.
- Collective Decision-making.
- There is scope of self-evaluation.
- It develops tolerance.

- There is scope for an intellectual team work.

The discussion on method of teaching Geography is accepted as an important device for teaching the junior and senior students. It stimulates mental activity, develops fluency and easy in expression, clarify of ideas in thinking and training in the presentation of the ideas and facts expressed by an individual. It helps the students to respects the opinions and ideas of others. Through the exchange of ideas and opinions students get a training of reflective thinking.

This method can be successfully used in the class-room only by an efficient geography teacher.

### **Observation Method**

The term observation has been derived from the Latin word “observare” which means “to keep open.” On the face of it, observation seems to be easy and simple. We simply keep eyes open and we see certain things but it is not quite so simple as it seems. Observation is much more than seeing something. We often see just what we look for and we look for what we have been trained to see or for what interest us. To observe all the facts in all the aspects of a concrete situation is impossible for they are almost infinite. Observation as a method of teaching is playing an important role in the teaching of geography. It brings the students close contacts with the facts of geography. When a thing is being observed by the students and a factor discovered by them through their efforts, that learning becomes permanent. Such learning is quite lasting and valuable them.

### **Importance of the Observation Method**

Science begins with observation. Science geography is an observational science. We must have to enable he students to first observe and describe facts and then only proceed with scientific explanations. Observations help to gain knowledge directly. Therefore, to impart right knowledge of geography we should help the students to have direct personal observation method.

### **Advantages of Observation Method**

The Observation method has the following advantages:-

- Observation method provides direct experience.
- It satisfies the curiosity of the students.
- Students receive stable knowledge.
- There is scope for training in observation.

Observation under the careful guidance of a geography teacher can prove very effective in the process of learning.

### **Regional Method**

There was a time when geography was taught on the basis of political divisions. Each country was studied it separately with details of its people, industries, trade climate, mountains and rivers. Such method did not have connection with the neighboring countries. Dr. Herbertson realise this problem and introduce the regional method of teaching geography. He gave emphasis on this method dividing the whole world into regions that are naturally different from one another. Prior to the introduction of this method different countries with common physical features, climate, mineral, wealth, economic progress etc. at a time and study them together. But the regional method countries with common geographical features are studied together. Different regions have certain common features and certain contrasting

features. It is possible that a natural region may be different from political region. In Regional Method countries with common geographical features are treated as one unit.

### **Advantages of Regional Method**

The Regional method has the following chief advantages:-

- This method is scientific, orderly and systematic.
- It gives a better understanding of geography and economics on time and energy.
- It deals the students to pursue independent study of geography and proves very useful in individual method of teaching.
- This method correlates the physical natural, social, economic and other phases of man's life. It helps the student to understand the drama of man being played upon the stage of nature.
- It helps the students the environment, physical as well as nature and social. Therefore, it is uniformity with the modern conception of geography.
- This method is based on casual relations therefore it develops the facilities of observation, imagination and reasoning. It is educative in itself.

This method of teaching of geography was introduced by Herbertson and he divided the whole world into different regions. In this method each political division or country should be regarded as a separate unit and as such, it should be divided into natural regions and then studied, "As regard smaller regions or less important countries, these may be grouped together, wherever possible for purpose of geographical study; or the principle of "causes and effect."

### **Laboratory Method**

In laboratory method geography is taught just like science objects. In the geography laboratory the students listen to the instructions given by the teacher and observe carefully all experiments in their own hands. They narrate each step of the experiments in the laboratory and try to draw inference from their observations in the laboratory. In the laboratory method the students are required to make use of their hands and eyes, alongwith their hands. They learn by doing, by observation and investigation.

Thus laboratory method means individual works done by the students with their independent efforts. Practical geography work and map work are undertaken successfully with laboratory procedure whatever data is collected in the field or from the statical report are transformed into maps, charts and diagrams in the geography laboratory. Inside the laboratory the ideas collected act of observation are given a concrete shape.

### **Role of Teacher in Laboratory Method**

The teacher plays a very vital role in laboratory method. He plays the role of a guide of helper rather than a master. Before he shows experiments he himself tests the apparatus in the absence of the students. He also encourages the students to arrive at the result by making experiments themselves.

### **Advantages of Laboratory Method**

The Laboratory method has the following chief advantages:-

- In this method learning by doing is encourage. Students get an opportunity to perform experiments themselves.

- Laboratory methods encourage self- discipline. Here students work in an atmosphere of freedom and work according to their own interest.
- Laboratory method helps the students to find out results in natural way.
- Laboratory method develops develop whole- hearted devotion to perform different experiments.
- Laboratory method develops the power of reasoning and judgement among the students.

Students at the secondary education stage can get the profit of the laboratory method because of the development of their reasoning power. Laboratory method can also be helpful in preparing maps, charts and models of geographical importance.

### **Heuristic Method**

The Heuristic method aims at transforming the learning process wherein the students are not to be the possible recipient but active independent engineers and discoveries of knowledge. If knowledge as to acquire genuine meaning it is to be conserved and use is an appropriate manner, it must be gained by oneself. The students should not be a silent spectator in the process of getting knowledge but they should be up and doing in the cause of their own education.

The term ‘heuristic has it’s derivation in the Greek word ‘heuristic’ meaning ‘I find out’ and thus the spirit of the heuristic method lies in the fact that the students find out the knowledge for themselves and one left to their own resources and intelligence. In teaching of geography the heuristic method aims at a developing a scientific attitude in students. The main objectives of teaching by the heuristic method is not so much to teach of geography, but to teach how knowledge of geographical facts may be obtained, systematised and used.

### **Advantages of Heuristic Method**

The Heuristic method has the following chief advantages:-

- As the method aims at personal observation and experiments, therefore it develops a scientific attitude of mind and thereby arousing the spirit of enquiry and adventure.
- Habits of industry and hard work are instilled in the students as well as in the teacher. It enjoins upon them to read as widely as possible to get information.
- Self confidence, self reliance and self activity are encouraged through this process of self education.

### **Conclusion**

It is universally accepted that all of us appreciate palatable food. An efficient cook makes food palatable. To make the food of education palatable for the students and to prevent them from taking wrong food, we need efficient teacher. A teacher becomes efficient when he acquires a better mastery of teaching methods and deep knowledge of the subject-matter. To make the teaching of geography lively, interesting and vital, the teacher should use perfect teaching procedures, equipments and material, while teaching geography in classroom. Thereby, he can avoid soul-killing, soulless and dull ways of teaching Geography.

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