

Classroom Processes and Learning Activities of Social Studies

Enquiry Based Learning

The enquiry-based learning asks questions from students to assess their knowledge and understanding level. On the other hand, empirical evidence is a term related to experience'. Enquiry-Based Learning is a learning that is driven by a process of enquiry -

- Engagement with a complex issue that allows for a variety of responses. Students take responsibility for selecting the lines of enquiry and the methods employed
- Requires students to draw on existing knowledge and identify their required learning needs.

Objectives of Enquiry

The objectives of enquiry can be discussed as, the justification for this method of learning is because it

- increases content knowledge significantly
- impacts on skills that are applicable in diverse situations.
- teaches problem-solving
- improves critical thinking skills. Promotes the transfer of concepts to new problem situations. Teaches students how to learn and builds self-directed learning skills.
- develops student ownership of their enquiry and enhances student interest in the subject matter.

Features of Enquiry

- In enquiry-based learning, the learners are engaged by scientifically oriented questions.
- They give priority to evidence which allows them to develop and evaluate explanations that address scientifically oriented questions.
- They formulate explanations from evidence.
- They evaluate their explanations in the light of alternative explanations, especially those reflecting scientific understanding.

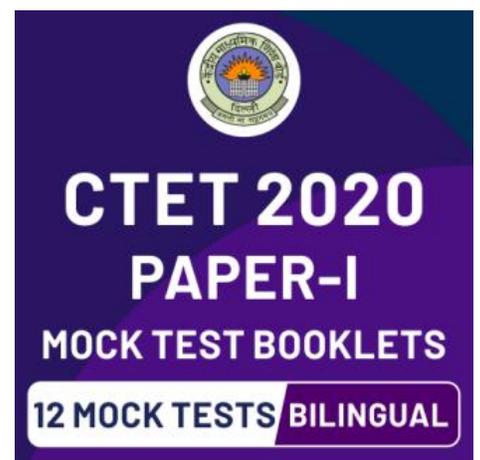
Key Components of the Enquiry Process

1. Review Prior knowledge

- The teacher will do this by engaging students in discussing what they already know.
- By bringing the students' own background and experiences to the learning table, students will find ways to connect to the topic and will develop a basis for creating meaning with
- Their personal connection to learning increases students' motivation to explore, read and struggle with difficulties as they arise.

2. Provide Background Information

- Students need to know something about the topic to be able to perceive and formulate meaningful enquiries.
- The teacher can refer the students to items like Articles and books, Museum exhibits, Photographs, Audio and video recordings, Other primary source material and Websites.



Establish and Communicate to the Students the Enquiry Presentation Framework

- Develop proposition (this can be debated).
- Support proposition with facts, statistics, examples, expert authority, logic and reasoning, propose solutions and action ideas.
- Refer students back to expected outcomes and enquiry framework to create alignment between their presentations and intended outcomes.
- Ask students questions to help them refine their thinking and guide their research
- Provide support technology (power point, website) and art design product creation.
- Empower students to coach and train one another within their teams.

Empirical Evidence

Empirical evidence in the social sciences varies a lot. It is produced by following methods

- The collection of physical artefacts in archaeology.
- Conducting censuses in demography.
- Mathematical modelling in economics.
- Thought experimentation in history.
- Expert judgement in political science,
- Laboratory experimentation in psychology

Induction and Deduction Method

The concept of evidence is related to the concepts of confirmation and induction. Since, hypothesis are confirmed by evidences, induction refers to the mode of reasoning or inference from evidence to hypothesis.

Inference to the Best Explanation

The proponents of inference to the best explanation infer the truth of a hypothesis from two considerations, which are as follow

- The hypothesis explains-explaining the evidence; and
- Among the evidence-explaining alternative hypotheses, it is the one that scores the best on explanatory merit.

Inference can be divided into two types. They are as follow

A. Descriptive Inference

- This type of inference and the associated methods are very important in Social Science.
- In order to establish facts, even purely descriptive facts about a society, the investigator has to make inferences on the basis of new immediate observations and already established facts. - background knowledge.

B. Explanatory Inference

- Accurate descriptive inference is an important goal of Social Science in its own right. It also plays a preparatory role for further inferences regarding the explanation of social phenomena.
- There are numerous models of explanatory inference in the Social Sciences, but the causal model is currently the one most agreed upon
- In this model, any cause is followed by its effect only if certain enabling conditions are present and disturbing factors absent.

