

Heuristic Method

Geography is a practical subject. It cannot be taught by mere talking. It should be based on observation of the geographical elements and is based on the principle of “learning by doing” for the community. The correct way to teach must ensure use of and development of senses of touch, sight and hearing. The methods used in most schools are using of hearing or sight. But the true spirit of geography lies in original discovery and investigation. The name of this method is derived from the Greek word ‘Heurisco’= I discover/I find Founder is Henry Edward Armstrong, Prof. of Chemistry, Imperial College, London. Real spirit of Heuristic method is placing the student in the position of original investigator. Herbert spencer-“Children should be told as little as possible and induced to discover as much as possible.”

Steps of Heuristic method:

Laboratory work is essential for every geography learner. A set of instructions concerning the problem is given to every pupil and s/he is expected to take observations or conduct experiments in accordance with the instruction. From the learning records taken by his/her observations he/she draws own conclusions or inferences.

The principles of Heuristic method are based on activity, logical thinking and proceeding from the known to the unknown, purposeful experience and self-thinking and self-study. The students individually or in groups in the classroom or in the laboratory or outside in the field of scientific interest, experiment, observe and make notes, draw diagrams and summarize their experiences.

Here, the teacher should have adequate subject knowledge to give references, possess curiosity, interest and a spirit of scientific investigation. The teacher should be competent in the art of questioning and should encourage the learners to ask questions and provide an atmosphere of freedom in the classroom for the learners’ development of spontaneity and self-expression. The teacher should device and plan problems according to the chronological and psychological age, inner ability and keen interest of the pupils and guide them accordingly through his appropriate instructional guidance.

Merits: It is based on the important principles of 'learning by doing' so the learners get a chance of direct knowledge and experience by performing experiments and demonstrations themselves. The students develop the power of observation, reasoning, habit of doing duties, drawing inferences and also to become research minded. This method prepares the student for life by imparting training in scientific method which ensures the pupil to become self-reliant and self-confident. Moreover, the teacher-student relationship gets strengthened in the process of interaction.

Demerits: It is a very long and tedious process and hence prescribed course cannot be completed within a specified period. The experts/teachers have to provide adequate instructions for each topic which needs expertise and not suitable for slow learners. It is very costly as it demands equipped laboratories in academic institutions. The teacher need to plan before-hand for the Geography class management as it includes both physical and cultural content matter. Without sufficient skill and training of the teacher this method cannot be successfully applied for particular theoretical and practical sections of Geography. It is not suitable among slow or differently-abled learners whose foundational knowledge may be limited.