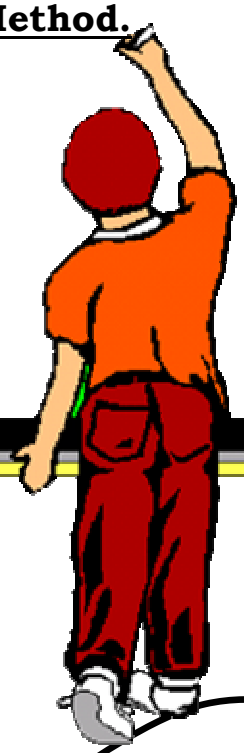
Lecture Notes on Methodology.

Unit IV. Assignment Method.



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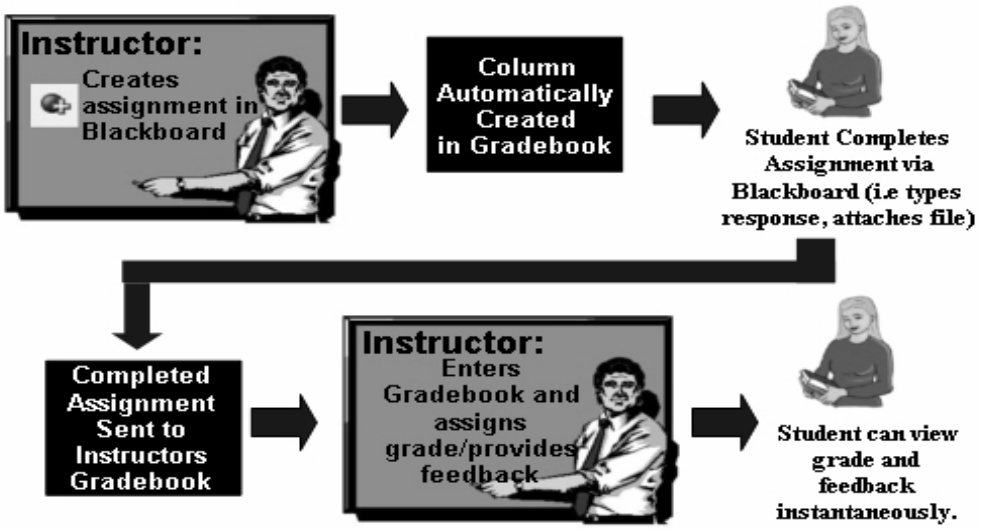
The **Assignment method** is the most common method of teaching especially in teaching of Science. It is a technique which can be usually used in teaching and learning process. It is an instructional technique comprises the guided information, self learning, writing skills and report preparation among the learners. The Assignment method is an important step in teaching and learning process (Douglas).

Assignment	**Objectives of this Unit** (*Assignment Method*)
Objectives **Steps in Assignment Method** **Features of a Good Assignment** **Types of Assignments** - Home assignments - School Assignments **Fundamental Elements of Assignments** **Role of Teacher** **Advantages** **Limitations** ~~Practice oriented Assignment – An example.~~ ~~Text book based Assignment – An example~~ **Progress Sheet.**	By this method a student teacher has to acquire the following objectives: To Know the Aims & Objectives of Assignments To acquire the research attitude To acquire attitude of self learning To retrieve the information from various resources To understand the steps / stages of assignment method To List out the features of Assignment method To explain the types of Assignments To know the role and functions of teacher To list out the merits of assignment method. To list out the limitations of assignment method



Objectives of Assignment Method:

Bates defined that the Assignment given in the lesson concerned to the student must train them in self learning and to acquire the presentation skills of the learners. The assignment method inculcates the learning experiences and information retrieval and report writing skills. The following objectives can be derived from the Assignment method.

The diverse and multiple learning experiences must be coordinated with a common method is an important objective in Teaching of Science. The assignment method can integrate and coordinate the different learning experiences of a learner from different approaches.

- It provides good training for information seeking and retrieval behaviour.
- It inculcates the self learning attitude among the students.
- It provides information analysis and research attitude to the learners.
- It develops the learning experiences from various sources.

Steps / Stages in Assignment

In order to achieve the desired objectives from the Assignments, the teacher should mind the following steps / stages before assigning the work to the students.

- The assignment must be Lesson concerned and related with the text books and curriculum.
- The topic / unit of the assignment must be explained with the availability of resources.
- The core of the subject or unit must be clarified.
- The hard and difficult portions of the assignment need to be explained well.
- The topics / units irrelevant to the assignments must be defined very well.
- The questions and answers for the assignment provided to the learners must comprise the following:
    - The questions must investigate the learners / students attitude.
    - The questions need to express whether the students have gone through the entire questions and assignment instructions.
    - The answers must be simple and smaller in nature.
    - The questions must allocate space for diagrammatic illustrations by the students
    - The questions can provide experimental work and tools for the students.
    - The references and bibliography must be annexed by the students.

Qualities / Features of a Good Assignment:

The significance of the Assignment has not been felt by the students because they were given by the individual without having proper understanding of the objectives of assignment method.(Tram) Assignments given with ambiguous instruction and lesser time to complete the task are also results in to sub-standard work by the students.

So that the teachers should identify the selected units / topics as the assignment work. A good assignment has the following best features and provides a good learning experience.

Assignment must be relevant to the subject taught to the student.

This should reflect the affinities with the subject contents in the text book concerned.

Assignment must be simple and enable the students to complete it within the stipulated time.

Assignment must avoid ambiguous, complex information and instructional structure.

Objectives of the assignments must be clear and definite.

Assignment must be given with other methods of teaching enable the good learning experiences.

Assignment should be given ensuring the level of the students' age, attitude, skills and availability of resources for the topic / unit.

Assignment must develop the creativity and capable of individual learning by doing.

Assignments given to the students may challenge their thinking and analysis power.

The group assignments may encourage the coordinated learning among the students.

The difficult task can be handled by fast learners and normal and easier task can be shared by slow learners facilitates students to complete and achieve the objectives of the group assignment. Generally the selection of the topics / units for the Group assignment must be done by the group of students themselves.

Types of Assignments:

Generally, the assignments are classified in to two types:

viz. Home assignments and School Assignments

Home assignments:

The assignments given by the teacher is completed by the students in their home with the help of reference books and instructions / information provided by the teacher. The Completed assignments were evaluated by the teacher.

School assignments:

Prior to the experiments to be done or any difficult tasks, the teacher interrogates some questions regarding the experiment or tasks. The students have to find the answer with the help of text books and library books and report it in written form. The teacher observes the information collected by the students for the assignments. If the information collected is relevant and sufficient, the students will be allowed to proceed further towards the experiment or tasks. Other wise they are again instructed with further information and clarification to resubmit the assignments. Such assignments are termed and known as School assignments.

Busing has classified the school assignments in to nine types under the following headings.

- 1. **Page or Paragraph Assignment:** This assignment deal with the frequently used topic / unit in Text books. Usually assignment confines with a page or few paragraphs only. It is the method of instant answering or reporting in learning activities.

- 2. **Chapter Assignment:** This is somewhat broader than the page or paragraph assignment. Its scope confines with a chapter in the text book or a specific topic / unit to be described in the Text books. Generally this assignment based on the contents of the chapter of a lesson hence it is called as chapter assignment.

- 3. **Topical Assignment**: Such assignments are based on a chapter or more or a topic interrelated with the text book units. There may be ample opportunities the topical assignments may cross the boundaries of text books and its chapters. This assignment will be helpful in teaching and learning, the every day problems can be correlated with science teaching and learning by the students.

- 4. **Problem Assignment**: In order to solve a problem through scientific method this type of assignments were given to the students. The problem solving is its primary objective. The students are trained to learn the problem solving process through this assignment method. This type of assignment is considered as exclusive one.

- 5. **Experience Assignment:** This is a traditional assignment method. This type of assignment is usually used in mathematical lessons. Also this assignments will be helpful in problem solving and for other subjects too. This assignment is given along with other assignments.

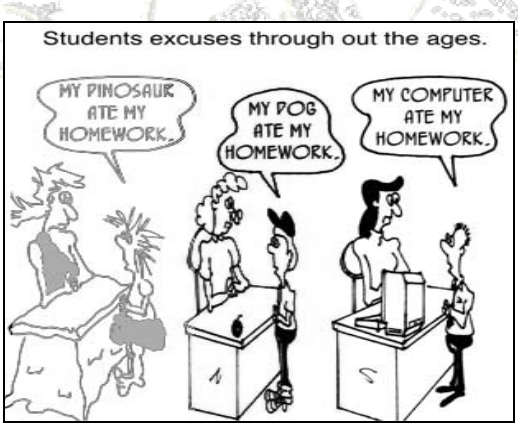
- 6. **Individual or Group report Assignment:** This assignment has given to bring out the actual capabilities of a student or a group of students. It helps to promote the

cooperative learning and information seeking behaviour among the students. It is considered as one of the special methods to develop and promote the individual's learning experiences.

- 7. **Unit Assignment**: This assignment confines with a particular unit of the text book. It helps to avoid the ambiguous and repetitive information from the units of Group discussion. The central idea / core theme of the text can be supported by this unit assignment. Duplicate and unauthentic ideas and information are filtered in this unit assignment.

- 8. **Experiment Assignment**: This assignment has the best features from the problem assignment and project method. Basically this assignment evolved from the laboratory experiments and its reports. But this assignment could not be used as a representative for testing hypothesis. This is a best tool for the learning and teaching process.

- 9. **Practice Assignment:** This type of assignment is usually given in mathematics. This is given to the students to reinforce their memory skills and retention of the concepts. The repeated exercises can be given through this assignment. Memorizing poems, tables, theorem etc., can be done through this method.



Fundamental Elements of Assignments:

i. Assignments must be clear and well defined.
ii. It should be precise as well as having sufficient information enable to complete the task by all students.
iii. The Teacher should clear the obstacle of the assignment proposed.
iv. Newer topics for the assignments must be proposed with the earlier learning experiences.
v. Students must have a proper understanding about the assignments.
vi. Students need to understand the importance of assignments.
vii. Assignments proposed must be interesting enable to complete within the stipulated time by the students.

viii. Assignments must balance the skills and interests of the students as well as with their age and attitude.

ix. Assignment must enhance the interest in learning experiences of the students.

x. Appropriateness in assignment is accepted. There should not be credits or debits for best and worst assignments respectively.

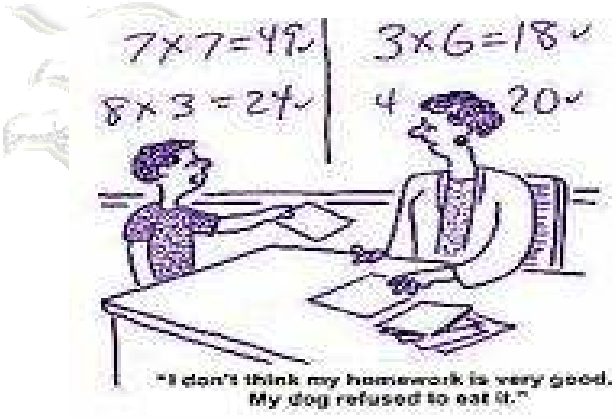
xi. Assignments must direct the students towards the appropriate learning methods for the lesson in the text books.

xii. Assignments proposed must consider the individual differences of the students and their time management skills.

xiii. Library and laboratory facilities are mandatory for completion of assignments.

Teacher's Role in assignment method:

In order to achieve the effective learning experience among the students through the Assignment method teacher has his / her own important role and functions in this method. The following role and functions are considered mandatory for every teacher when executing the assignment method.



- In teaching of Science subject the lesson is divided into easier and appropriate parts that should be enable to pursue as assignment topics.
- The assignments must be interrelated and develop from one to another gives good learning experiences.
- Teacher must have some targets in the learning experiences that to be acquired by the students from the assignments.
- Before giving the assignment works to the students' progress sheet should have been prepared by the teacher.
- Teacher should have the complete bibliography and references for the subject he assigned for the assignments to the students.

- The reference and required information must be given with guidelines to the students when they opt for assistance in their assignment as well as in other academic works.
- The teacher must have the list of the assignments and its feed back with the problem solving guidelines to reduce the gaps in learning process among the students.
- Active sheets must be prepared and kept under his custody for the experiments and laboratory work.

The planned and programmed assignment method yields a good learning experience and better results also facilitate the further follow up academic activities such as Laboratory work, experiments and projects. The planned and well defined assignments found simple and interesting to the students and enable them to complete the work effectively within a stipulated time.

Advantages / Merits of assignment method:

- Provides opportunity in self learning for the students
- Better learning experiences will be gained when combined with other science teaching methods.
- Assignment provides sufficient flexibility in learning pace of the students. The slow learners too adapt with this method.
- Teachers' interruption is very much reduced and the students' active participation is encouraged.
- Teacher acts as a role of guide only.
- The students received a better training in the learning by doing method in this method.
- The information seeking and retrieval behaviour is developed among the students.
- It gives better understanding in scientific method and projects.

- It can provide space for the individuals learning attitude and their speed in learning process.
- This provides better feed back and gives exact solution for the problems faced by the student in the learning process.
- The progress sheet shows each and every student achievement and records his strength and weakness of the students learning activities.
- The learning by doing aspect in this assignment method promotes the self confidence and self respect of each and every student engaged in assignment work.
- Additional bibliographic information and references provide a good in depth knowledge among the students in the subject they work.
- Teacher himself improves his awareness about the students' achievements.
- The student has his own responsibility in learning process.
- The experimental works can be done with ease and simple way.

- The difficult experiments are demonstrated by the teacher so that there is no risk.
- Individualized instruction and attention is possible in this method.

Limitations

There are some demerits and limitations in this assignment method for both teachers and students.

For the Teachers:

It is time consuming and burden process.

Teacher has to collect the information from various sources before assigning the work to the students.

Work burden extends in holidays too. There will be no encouragement for his work.

There are no source books and guide books are available in the market. Teacher has to prepare the same at his own risk of time and money.

There are divergent group of students in a class, it poses problems for teacher assigning a unique or uniform topic for assignment.

The success of the assignment method largely depends on library and laboratory facilities provided for the teacher as well as students.

The teacher has to examine the copy work and eliminate it.

The slow learners need much more attention from the teacher. Again it gives more burden for the teacher.

For the Students:

Time consuming. Need to spend more time in seeking information and its retrieval.

The time limit given threatens the students which makes the substandard work.

The slow learners stay behind. They tend to copy others works.

It is found hard for the students having little scientific attitude.

The report writing is little bit costly.

In general

It is not fit for all topics in science.

The teacher student ration must be less in number.

Need better orientation both for teacher and students.

Careful analysis and correction is necessary otherwise entire works go waste.

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Table – 1.

Progress Sheet.

Class: Lesson:

Section: Unit:

		Assignment No.1.			Assignment No.2.		
Cycle No.	Name	Assigned Date	Assignment date	Evaluation	Assigned Date	Assignment date	Evaluation
1							
2							
3							

Reference:

(Teaching of Science, First Year Source Book (D.T.Ed.) Tamil Nadu Textbook Society, Chennai-600006. p47-60.).

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