

# Modern Approaches and Their Importance in the Teaching-Learning Process of Geography

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## Abstract

The main goal of teaching geography is to form a multifaceted personality. One of the most important missions of teaching geography is to study the problem of the relationship between nature and society, to raise ecological awareness for each member of society and to create a caring attitude and personal responsibility towards nature. The mentioned direction contributes to the formation of students' economic thinking, which helps them understand and solve the socioeconomic problems of their own country. Additionally, geography has a communicative role to some extent, which involves obtaining, perceiving, and analysing different types of information. Therefore, the high involvement of students in the learning process is very important, as well as the use of modern approaches and strategies. In connection with the mentioned issues, research was conducted among students at the basic and secondary levels of Buckswood International School. The purpose of the research is to outline the effective methods of the teaching-learning process of geography, which will make it easier for students to study the subject and will help to apply the acquired knowledge in practice. Additionally, it will help to plan the educational curriculum correctly, interestingly, and effectively. The survey was conducted online using the Google Forms platform. Then, the resulting composition was analysed, and the highlights were created in diagrams. Additionally, the article presents information about the educational field activities already carried out by the students participating in the research and illustrative photo material. Approximately one hundred students participated in the survey. During the research, interesting trends were revealed, including which form of teaching they prefer, when learning is pleasant and effective for them, how they analyse the theoretical knowledge, and how they can use this experience. This is presented in detail in the article. In conclusion, to obtain quality and practical education and to form a full-fledged citizen, research on the abovementioned issues is important. It is necessary to change teaching-learning approaches with time and adapt to students. The learning process should be fun for them. This research will help the teachers of schools and higher education institutions plan and conduct the educational process correctly and interestingly.

**Keywords:** Geography, Education, Modern Approaches to Teaching, Buckswood International School

## Introduction

The teaching of geography in schools and universities forms the main framework that gives students an idea of the world. They have the opportunity to use the acquired knowledge in practical life. Therefore, geography teachers have a great mission. It is important to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process of geography, which will contribute to the education of a good person and citizen.

The national curriculum is the main tool for achieving the goals of education reform. The document defines mandatory requirements for the school community in three directions: 1. orientation of the teaching-learning process on the student's personal development; 2. Basing the educational process on constructivist educational principles; 3. Establishing a school culture focused on care and support [1].

Learning processes are complex. Many factors determine their successful implementation and perfection. A teacher should always consider the interests and abilities of each student. He should clearly determine which learning forms will help to achieve the goals so that students can easily absorb, understand, and remember new information. The educational process planned by the teacher should be consistent and serve information assimilation, processing and storage, and practical use. While planning the sequence of the learning process, important aspects (ideal learning conditions) should be taken into account [2].

The teacher should be able to arouse interest in the subject in students with constructivist teaching approaches, helping them to perceive the problem and solve it. Additionally, the teacher should provide the students with practical skills that will help them use the acquired knowledge. It is essential to guide aspects of student-centered learning and to select teaching methods that are focused on students' needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles. For a fun, interesting learning process, the teacher should use various teaching strategies and constructivist approaches [3, 4]. According to constructivism, the

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student is an active participant in the learning process and not a passive recipient of information. The constructivist teaching methodology is based on the principle according to which the acquisition of any kind of knowledge implies the construction of this knowledge. The methods should be adapted to the interests of students as much as possible; students should be encouraged to analyse and interpret facts, events, and concepts. Open questions are often used in this process; the learning process should be based and built on students' previous knowledge and experience [5].

The teacher should not provide the material to the student in a ready-to-use form but only help them build knowledge, contribute to their knowledge construction, create motivation for studying, explain the purpose of learning, work on household-type tasks related to reality, create a favourable environment for learning and diverse resources and encourage them deservedly so that they do not lose the incentive. According to earlier educational experiences, the students were completely subordinated to the teacher [6], but today, the teacher expects from them active action, independent thinking, doubting recognized opinions, expressing assumptions, calling for ideas, and creativity.

In the teaching-learning process, it is necessary to provide and analyse world events and processes, lead a discussion, and focus on problems. Therefore, it is important to use a variety of strategies in teaching geography that will help teachers conduct interactive lessons, arouse students' interest, motivate them, and develop critical and creative thinking. These strategies will help teachers to create interesting and complex tasks and help students complete them with interest. Such kinds of strategies are discussion, debate, problem-based learning (PBL), cooperative learning (cooperative), case study, brainstorming, role-playing and situational games, mini-lectures, demonstration methods, and others.

Discussion is one of the frequently used methods of interactive teaching, the purpose of which is to discuss different approaches, ideas, or problems in a group. If during the lecture the teacher provides ready-made information to the students, during the discussion, on the contrary, the students become active and the teacher receives information from them. The more intense the discussion, the more effective it is. During the discussion, students develop various skills, such as argumentative reasoning, active listening, respect for different opinions, and others. Discussion can be a good motivator for students. They will try to independently find information on certain topics so that they can have appropriate arguments during the discussion.

Debate is a form of discussion and is based on preplanned speeches of the participants. The presenters are chosen from the group. The debate begins with the speech of one representative of each of the two opposing sides. After that, the tribune is given to other participants from each side for questions and comments. The teacher should set a certain time for each speaker.

Problem-based learning (PBL) – a learning method that uses a problem as the initial stage of the process of acquiring and integrating new knowledge.

Cooperative learning (cooperative) – According to this teaching strategy, each member of the group is obliged not only to learn by himself but also to help his teammate learn the subject better. Each member of the group works on the problem until all of them have studied the issue.

Case study – The teacher discusses specific cases with the students in the lesson and together with them studies the issue in every way and thoroughly. For example, the essence of natural events in physical geography, the causes of their occurrence, the risks of spreading, and the ways to avoid them. From a geopolitical point of view, in the geography of conflicts, it can be an analysis of a specific conflict, etc.

Case analysis has several definitions: a case is a description of a real situation, a snapshot of reality, or a photograph of existence. In addition, it is a unified information complex that allows us to get to know the situation. A real case is that we can transform the status of a 'life situation' into a task and solve it with reflection and using the resources necessary for a solution. The method case study is a tool that allows us to apply theoretical knowledge to practical tasks. Thanks to this method, students have the opportunity to reveal and develop analytical and evaluation skills, learn group work, and find rational ways to solve problems.

Brainstorming – This method involves the formation and expression of as many radically different opinions and ideas about a specific issue/problem as possible within a specific topic. This method helps to develop a creative approach to the problem.

Role-playing and situational games – Scenario-based role-playing allows students to look at an issue from different perspectives, helping them to develop an alternative point of view. Like discussion, role-

playing also develops the ability of students to express their position independently and defend it in an argument.

A mini-lecture is a small lecture, the purpose of which is to convey certain information to the audience. By means of a mini-lecture, important and necessary information will be given to students in a short period of time. During the mini-lecture, the teacher is more active, while the students are relatively passive. The teacher should prepare theoretical and visual materials, graphs, and photographs in advance to make the lecture interesting, especially for those students who have better-developed visual memory.

In the process of teaching and learning, it is important to check knowledge in different ways. The teacher should offer variety to the students. Summary works can be complex assignments, presentations, projects, etc., within the framework of which students have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, both academic skills and critical thinking or creativity.

Demonstration method – This method involves a visual representation of information. It is effective in terms of achieving results. In many cases, it is better to provide the material to the students simultaneously in audio and visual form. The material to be studied can be demonstrated by both the teacher and the student. This method helps teachers to make visible the different stages of learning material perception. It should be specified what the students will have to do independently. At the same time, this strategy visualizes the essence of the issue/problem. Demonstration may be simple or complex, such as conducting a multistep science experiment [7, 8].

In addition to the given teaching strategies, there are other strategies that the teacher can choose depending on the specific learning task. During teaching and learning, it is necessary to use different forms of work, for example, collaborative, individual, and pair work [9-11].

Objective assessment is important for students' motivation. Student assessment is one of the main and important activities of a teacher. According to researchers, one-third of a teacher's time is spent on evaluation [12]. Student assessment allows us to understand how students have mastered the learning material and what their strengths and weaknesses are. By means of evaluation, it is possible to plan the learning process correctly and to draw up learning activities taking into account the progress or regression of the students.

Today, two types of assessment are used in general education schools – determinative and formative. Formative assessment determines a student's level of achievement in relation to subject-specific curriculum outcomes. The student is evaluated using a ten-point system. Formative assessment determines the dynamics of each student's development and is aimed at improving the quality of learning. To promote the improvement of the quality of learning, priority should be given to formative assessment, which evaluates the student in relation to his previous results, measures his individual progress, and allows him to gradually construct knowledge. It is important that the student himself is involved in the formative assessment. Assessment of the learning process will develop the student's independent learning skills, will help in mastering learning strategies, and will allow him/her to consciously contribute to his own progress and success. The main purpose of inclusion in assessment is to familiarize the student with learning processes, which will teach him/her to manage these processes intelligently and independently [7, 9, 11].

## **Methods and Materials**

In connection with the mentioned issues, a study was conducted among the students of the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th grades of the basic and secondary levels of Buckswood International School. More than 100 students participated in the survey. The survey was conducted online using the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire included ten questions. The obtained results were analysed, and visualizations were created in the diagrams.

In addition, various studies were developed around the studied issue, which were analysed and presented in the introductory part of the article.

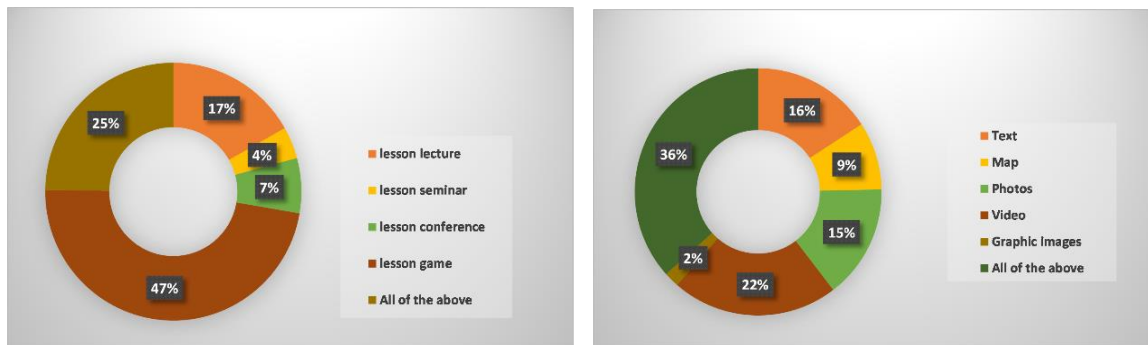
In addition, both international and local research was considered the issue under study. There is international experience in researching the mentioned issues [4, 5], which was analysed and presented in the introductory part of the article.

## **Results**

To determine the effective methods of the teaching-learning process of geography, interesting and necessary trends were identified in the mentioned research. This will contribute to the correct planning of the educational curriculum and will make it easier for the students to study the subject. In addition, students will be able to apply the acquired knowledge in practice.

A total of 52.5% of the participants in the survey were female, and 47.5% were male. Among them, 34.7% were 11-13 years old, 60.4% were 14-16 years old, and 5% were over 16 years old.

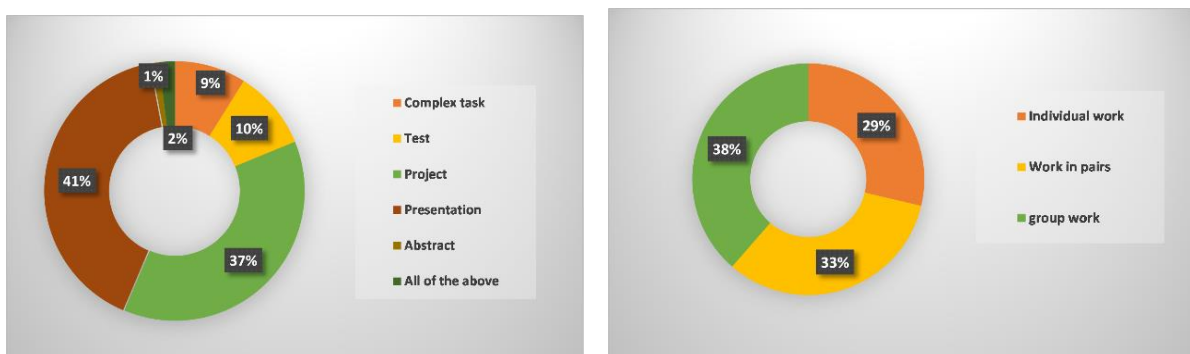
As a result of the research, the majority of students prefer various approaches and methods in the teaching-learning process. The survey results are presented in the pie charts. Forty-seven percent of students believe that they learn new material more cheerfully and easily when studying geography with a lesson game. However, they are also helped by lessons, seminars, and conferences to learn new material. Twenty-five percent of respondents believe that all of the listed approaches are important in the teaching-learning process, depending on the need to study the topic (Fig. 1a).



*Figure 1.a- Forms of Teaching Geography; b- Materials for Teaching Geography (Students' Choices (%))*

Since all students are individuals and have different abilities and perceptual abilities, it is important for teachers to use different types of resources. Research confirms this. Thirty-six percent of students preferred different types of visual material, including text, map, photo, video, graphics, and others. Visual resources help to analyse and understand the issue (Figure 1b). Summarizing the studied material is important because it allows the student to analyse and present the acquired knowledge in the form of various products (complex tasks, tests, projects, presentations, abstracts).

The majority of students (41%) preferred the presentation. It seems that when working on a presentation, students have an opportunity to better demonstrate their acquired knowledge and creative skills. In addition, 2% of respondents believe that summative work can be performed as a complex assignment, as well as in the form of a report, project, or test (Figure 2a).

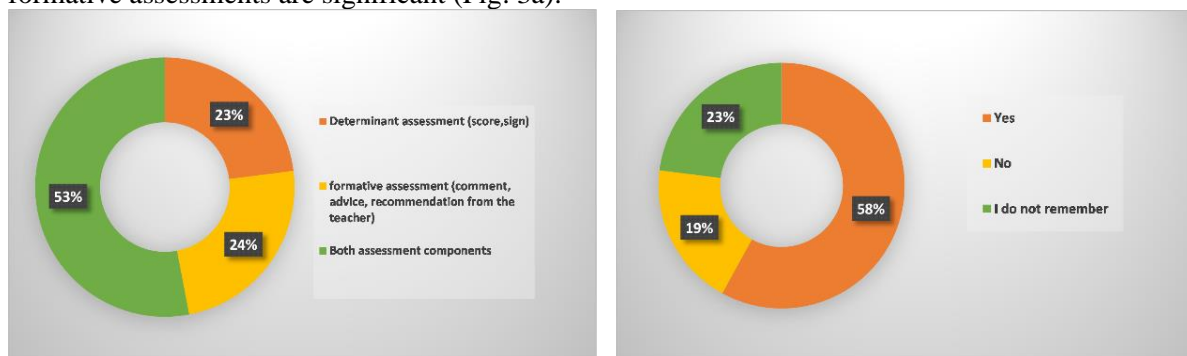


*Figure 2a-. Forms of the Task Performance; b- Forms of the Task Performance (Students' Choice (%))*

Thirty-eight percent of students believe that group work makes their learning process easier. During group work, everyone demonstrates their abilities, and they cope with common work better. Additionally, the research showed that 29% of respondents preferred to work individually, and 33% preferred to work in pairs. For some students to improve/develop their communication skills, it is important to involve them in group work (Figure 2b).

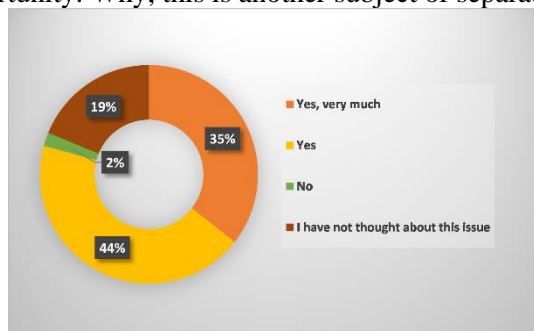
For students to analyse what they did well or what they failed to do in the learning process, both determinative (23%) and formative (24%) assessments are important. Formative assessment helps

students reflect. As a result of the research, according to 58% of students, both determinative and formative assessments are significant (Fig. 3a).



*Figure 3a- Forms of Assessment Students' Choice (%); b-Participation in Extracurricular Activities Number of Students in Percentages*

Nonformal education is important in the teaching-learning process of geography. During nonformal activities, students are given the opportunity to better understand and perceive the practicality of theoretical issues. This requires many outdoor activities and the active involvement of students in these activities. Fifty-eight percent of students participate in extracurricular activities provided by the school. Nineteen percent of respondents did not participate in such an activity, and 23% did not remember whether they were involved in an outdoor activity or not (Fig. 3b). Unfortunately, some students do not take advantage of this opportunity. Why, this is another subject of separate research.



*Figure 4. How does the graphic organizer (charts) help the students perceive and understand the issue?*

Forty-four percent of students believe that a graphic organizer (charts) helps in understanding the issue, so it is important for the teacher to use visuals when explaining the lesson because some students have a visual memory. Nineteen percent of respondents never thought about this issue (Fig. 4).

## **Discussion**

Research has shown that it is important to consider the interests and abilities of students when planning the curriculum.

Since all students are individuals and have different abilities and perceptual skills, it is important for teachers to use different types of resources. To achieve effective results, the teaching-learning process should be guided by student-oriented approaches. Use a variety of resources, for example, text, maps, photos, videos, graphics, etc.

During summative work, students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate the acquired knowledge in various forms, be it a presentation, a project, a complex task, a test, or something else. To develop communication skills, it is important to involve students in group work.

For the student to understand how he mastered the study material, where he made mistakes, and what the strengths and weaknesses of his completed task were, he/she should be assessed as both formative and deterministic. Formative assessment helps students reflect.

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## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, to obtain quality and practical education and to form a full-fledged citizen, research on the abovementioned issues is important. It is necessary to change teaching-learning approaches with time and adapt to students. The learning process should be fun for them.

Research has shown that it is important to consider the interests and abilities of students when planning the curriculum. To achieve effective results, the teaching and learning process should be conducted with student-oriented approaches, and a variety of resources should be used. Students should have an opportunity to create different products during the summary assignment. They should be assessed as both formative and determinative assignments. Participation in outdoor activities is extremely significant.

This research will help the teachers of schools and higher education institutions plan and conduct the educational process correctly and interestingly.

## **Competing interests**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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