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IMPROVING STUDENTS' ICT SKILLS BY PARTNERSHIP LEARNING APPROACH

AMÉLIORATION DES COMPÉTENCES DES ÉTUDIANTS EN TIC PAR L'APPROCHE DE L'APPRENTISSAGE EN PARTENARIAT

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Abstract: *Nowadays, students are in the centre of all learning process and almost all the pedagogical recommendations opt for students' centred method and limit teachers' roles to some specific pedagogical functions. In the light of these theories and in order to grasp the advantages of both teachers' and students' centred methods during ICT tasks, partnership learning is fully recommended in ICT approach. This paper aims to focus on the efficiency of partnership centred method in ICT classrooms where both teachers and students are important actors and each side is a precious complement to the other. A comparative study was* undertaken covering *Students' pre-acquired skills and students' final outcomes in addition to analytic questionnaires that proved the efficiency of partnership centred method in ICT approach.*

Keywords: *teaching/learning,* ICT skills, partnership centred method, new teachers' roles, students' roles

Résumé *: De nos jours, les étudiants sont au centre de tout processus d'apprentissage et presque toutes les recommandations pédagogiques optent pour une méthode centrée sur les étudiants et limitent les rôles des enseignants à certaines fonctions pédagogiques spécifiques. Dans ce contexte, et afin de saisir les avantages des méthodes centrées à la fois sur les enseignants et les étudiants lors des travaux sur les TIC, l'apprentissage en partenariat est pleinement recommandé dans l'approche TIC. Cet article vise à se élucider l'efficacité de la méthode centrée sur le partenariat dans les classes de TIC où les enseignants et les étudiants sont des acteurs importants et où chaque partie est un complément précieux à l'autre. Une étude comparative a été entreprise couvrant les compétences pré-acquises des étudiants et les résultats finaux des étudiants en plus des questionnaires analytiques qui ont prouvé l'efficacité de la méthode centrée sur le partenariat dans l'approche TIC.*

Mots clés *: Enseignement/apprentissage, compétences en TIC, approche centrée sur le partenariat, nouveaux rôles des enseignants, rôles des étudiants.*

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The partnership centred method is an efficient way that could be applied in the teaching of many specialities and disciplines. Yet, the most successful method is the one which is applied in ICT based approach where all the students are involved in the learning process. The efficiency of the partnership centred method in ICT classrooms resides in the fact that both teachers and students collaboration and participation are taken into account in order to reach the predetermined pedagogical objectives of the lesson/chapter. During this investigation, classroom observations and comparative studies were done to examine Students' pre-acquired skills and students' final outcomes in addition to analytic questionnaires that allowed collecting relevant data proving the efficiency of the partnership centred method in ICT approach.

1. What is Partnership Centred Method?

Partnership centred method combines between the advantages of both teachers' centred method and students' centred method. It is used to avoid the negative sides of teachers' centred method where teachers are considered as dominators and the exclusive managers of the classroom. The kernel of partnership learning resides in the way the acquired knowledge is shared and how it enables each learner to get free access to its source without any restrictions.

From another parameter, Garbacz et al. (2008: 314) suggest that:

> *The framework for a partnership-centered approach promotes strengths and skill building within families and school personnel by identifying and accessing resources for both parties. As such, intervention models that infuse and promote a partnership orientation may influence outcomes experienced as a function of that intervention.*

Partnership-centered learning gives more opportunities to students as active actors and full responsible of what they learn and how they learn. *"Learners are members of a community. Learning is not viewed as an individual accomplishment, but something that is achieved collaboratively. Learners are responsible for their own learning and must develop independence, autonomy and responsibility".* **(**Harmer, 111:2001).

The partnership centred method is also used to extend the positive sides of students' centred method. It has several common things with collaborative learning which focuses mainly on the classroom management and students' group work. Students will learn better from each other and from their peers. The exclusivity of partnership Centred method resides in sharing knowledge. Partnership learning is double-edged as it encompasses between the advantages of both teachers' centred method and the advantages of students' centred method.

2. What is ICT Based Approach?

ICT[2] is an acronym for Information and Communication Technology that refers to all information and communication tools used in education (ICTE) or other domains such as business, sports… These sophisticated tools can send, receive, process, input, output and

[2] *Didactics* (2013)**:** ICT Based Approach Pages 50-57 (2013). 2602-6015 Volume 3, Numéro 2, (2013)

store data in electronic forms. ICT includes almost all the tools using internet or any wireless technology such as: Computers, tablets, I pads, lap-tops, smart-phones and many other devises using applications and managing systems of websites (social networking Face book, Twitter, Instant Messaging, chatting, texting).

ICT based approach is any pedagogical way using technology, it is an approach that is compatible with many methods mainly those that can improve and promote learners' motivation and enhance their autonomy. In ICT based approach the main objectives are about the ways data is retrieved and selected and how the results are analysed.

The most suitable methodology to ICT is the task based learning[3] which consists of three distinctive parts:

- Pre-task:
- Task:
- Post-task

The principles of ICT based approach move forward more autonomy to students so it lessens teachers' interventions from 95% (pre-task) to just 10% (post-task) in and promote learners' interventions from 5%(pre-task) to 90% (post-task) therefore the objectives of partnership centred method are set to lessen and diminish the gaps and the large disparities between teachers and students' interventions. The mathematical discard is equal to 90% in the pre-task phase and 60% in the task-phase and 80% in the post-task phase. This fact could be inacceptable in the way that teachers' roles are more and more limited. The partnership learning tries to shrink this disparity between two important actors in the learning process (teachers and learners) and where technology remains just a tool that should be exploited by both partners.

The new tech skills[4] make learners able to network and search data in web sites, they can then select and filter information from technology resources, record information, download the necessary files, edit, share, comment information, analyse and synthesise information. ICT is believed to be an educational tool of a paramount importance. In this context, Ghavifekr & Athirah (2015: 176) suggest that: *students will benefit from ICT integration where they are not bounded to the limited curriculum and resources, instead hands-on activities in a technology-based course is designed to help them to stimulate their understanding about the subject.*

3. Assessing Students' Required Technological Skills

In order to master all these types of technology, some skills and abilities should be definitively be mastered in order to reach the ICT pedagogical Skills. Two tests [5]were done to the students[6] in order to measure their ICT skills and capacities[7]. The first one was

[3]J. Willis (1996:53). A Framework for task-based learning. Longman London
[4] ICT as a Booster to Reinforce Learners' Motivation and Autonomy. Revue Langue et Lettres Francaise N°9 (pp55-71:2021)
[5] before and after the project
[6] One group of twenty students
[7] ICT as a Booster to Reinforce Learners' Motivation and Autonomy. Revue Langue et Lettres Francaise N°9 (pp55-71:2021)

before starting the project; the second was done at the end of the project. The main aims were to measure and evaluate the pre-acquired skills of the students in order to be compared with the acquired/developed skills at the end of the project.

- Searching and browsing in the web
- Word processing
- Downloading text files and software from educational websites
- Installing software and applications in computers /smart phones
- Sharing information in social Media
- Publishing in the web

3.1. Pre-acquired Technological Skills before the ICT Project

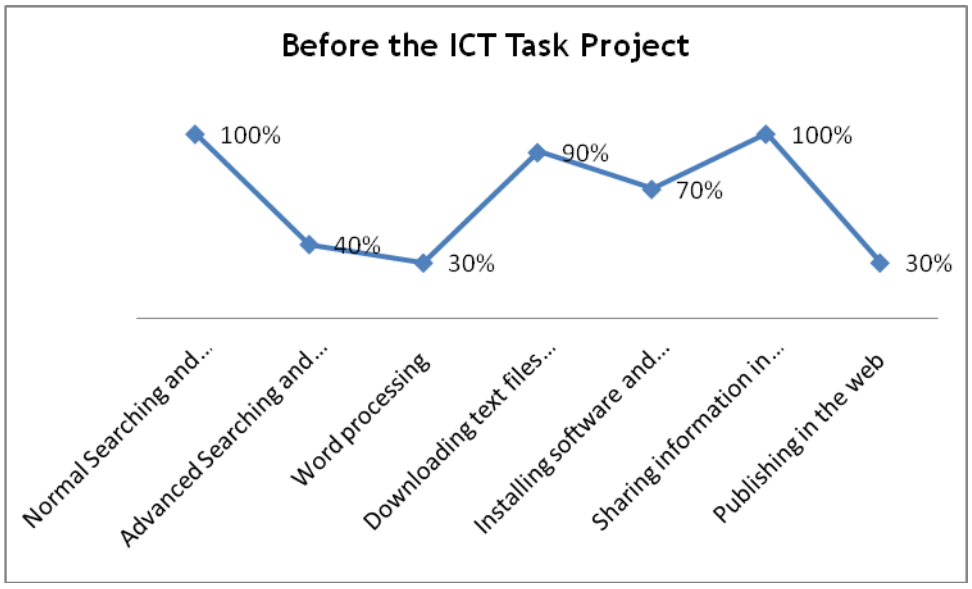

Figure 1: Pre-acquired Technological Skills before the ICT Project

During the first observation session and as the most evident remarks:

- All the students were able to undertake easily what follows :

  - Searching and browsing in the web (100%)
  - Downloading text files and software from educational websites (90%)
  - Sharing information in social Media (100%)

- The majority of the students can install software and applications in computers and/ or smart phones (70%)
- A low rate of the observed students can undertake easily what follows:

  - Word processing (40%)
  - Advanced Searching and browsing in the web (30%)
  - Publishing in the web (30%)

3.2. The Acquired Technological Skills after the ICT Project

As far as the post- ICT project phase is concerned, the second observational practice revealed the following points:

- All the students were able to undertake easily what follows:

  - Normal Searching and browsing in the web (100%)
  - Downloading text files and software from educational websites (100%)
  - Sharing information in social Media (100%)

- The majority of the students can undertake easily what follows:

  - Advanced Searching and browsing in the web (60%)
  - Word processing (70%)
  - Installing software and applications in computers /smart phones (70%)
  - Publishing in the web (70%)

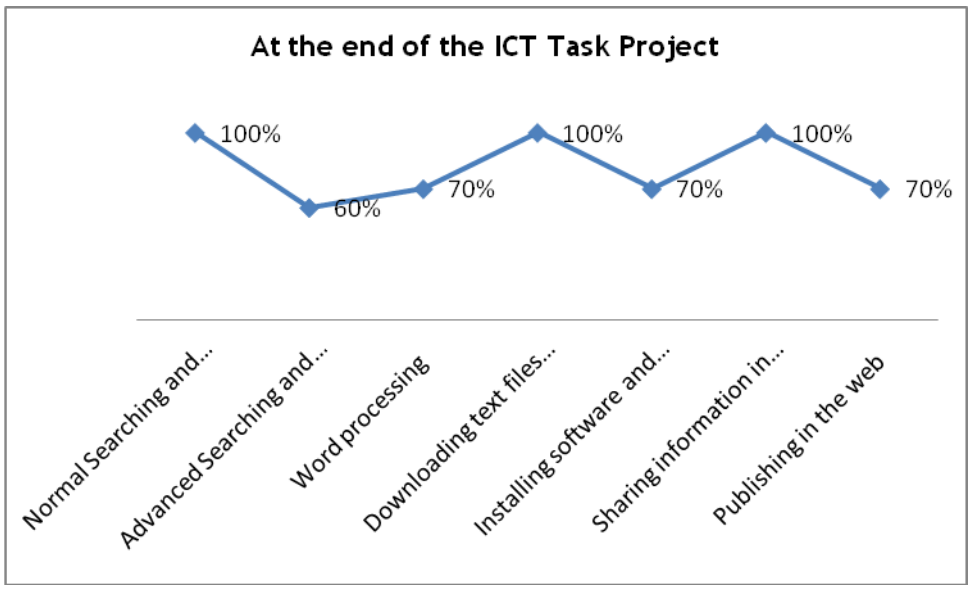

Figure 2: The Acquired Technological Skills after the ICT Project

3.3. Comparative Study

As we can notice from the figure below, some students encountered some hindrances and exhibited some deficiencies in tech-skills. The first problem was in the advanced searching in the web which moved from 40% to 60%, which means that all the students have the full ability to make normal searching and browsing but not the ability to make advanced searching and browsing in the web. The second problem was about word processing, but among the advantages of the partnership project the result moved from 30% to 70%. The third handicap consists in installing software and applications in computers /smart phones. Yet, thanks to the partnership project the result moved from 30% to 70%.

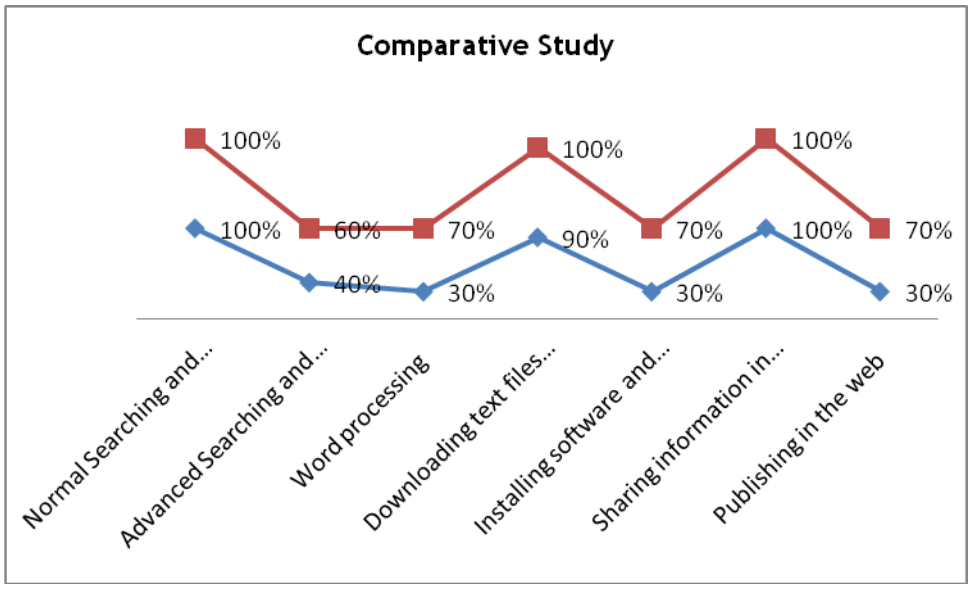

Figure 3: Comparative Study Results

4. Experimental Study

This study was conducted with the participation[8] the same group of students (twenty students) selected randomly to answer the questionnaire and to be observed during the experiment:

The methodology used in this experimental study was mainly based on observational sessions during the initial and the final situations of each phase (90 minutes). Students were invited to answer the questionnaires and to mention their initial and final situations according to educational objectives of the target course. The method aimed to divide the course tasks into several parts, and each group of students[9] , chose a part to be prepared at home and presented/exposed it in the classroom.

The classroom was divided into many groups and each group of students presented their tasks. The evaluation of students' performances in the experiment took the following criteria into consideration:

- Preparation of the task
- Organisation of the task
- Content quality
- Presentation of the task
- Explanation of the task.

[8] 1st year LMD students
[9] No more than four students

4.1. Students' Initial Situation

The students were invited to answer the questionnaire and to mention their initial situation concerning the new experience as learning partnership centred method.

- 30% of the students found some serious confusions and difficulties during the preparation of their tasks
- 40% of the students found some confusions and difficulties during the preparation of their tasks but they solved some of them with the help of their parents/peers.
- 20% of the students had almost no problems during the preparation of their tasks except minor confusion.
- 10% of the students had no problems at all and undertook their tasks easily

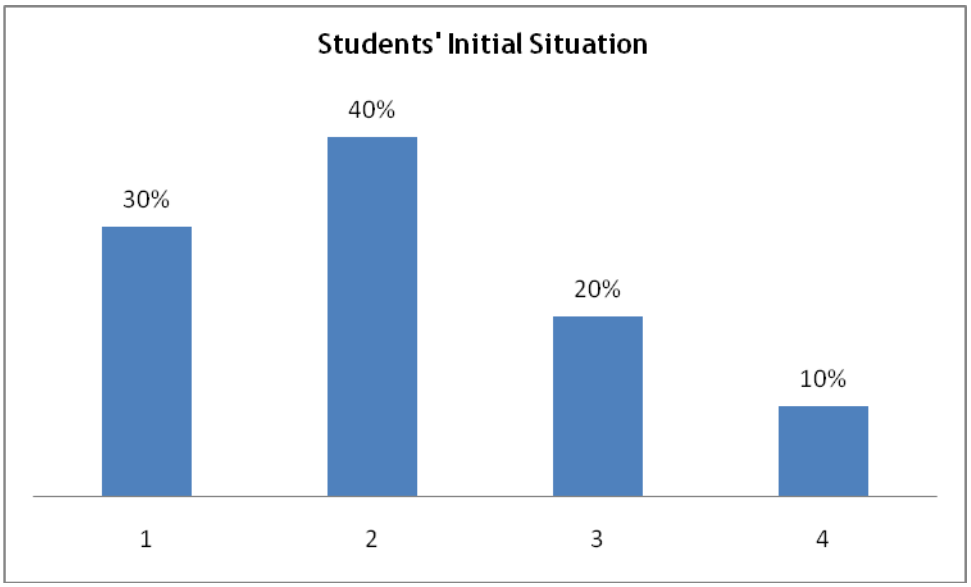

Figure 4: Students' Initial Situation

According to the statistics obtained from the students' questionnaire and the remarks made during the classrooms observations, only (10%) of the students mastered what they had prepared and were really motivated to share it and explain it to their peers. 20% of them had almost no problems during the preparation of their tasks except minor confusion. 40% of the students found some confusions and difficulties during the preparation of their tasks but they solved some of them with the help and the assistance of their parents/peers. 30% of the students found some serious confusions and difficulties during the preparation of their tasks.

4.2. Students' Final Situation

At the end of the experiment, students were asked to complete the second part of the questionnaire in order to measure and evaluate their final intake in PCM. The results were as follows:

- Organisation of the task (80%)
- Content quality (70%)

- Presentation of the task (100%)
- Explanation of the task. (60%)

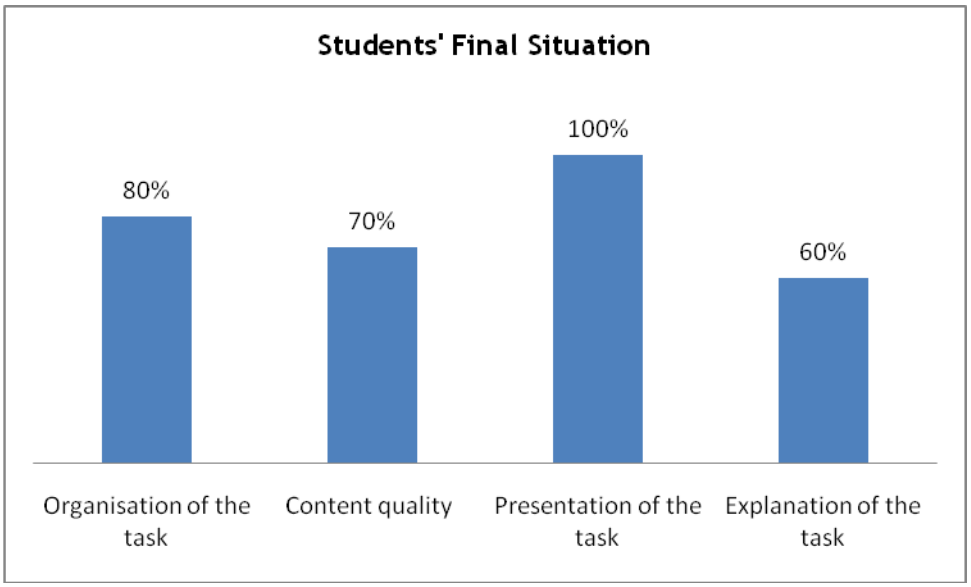

Figure 5: Students' Final Situation Result

As shown in the figure above, an important part of the students moved from passive observers to transactional participants or full members in this partnership learning. The students' intake differences in relation to the different tasks and their corresponding skills are not important at all, and each category can reach the core group either by the teacher's assistance or peers' assistance. During this experiment the rate of sharing knowledge reached an important level as it moved from 30% (preparation phase) to 80% (organisation and presentation phases). The students' participation exceeded (60%) however the teacher's interventions were limited to just 20%

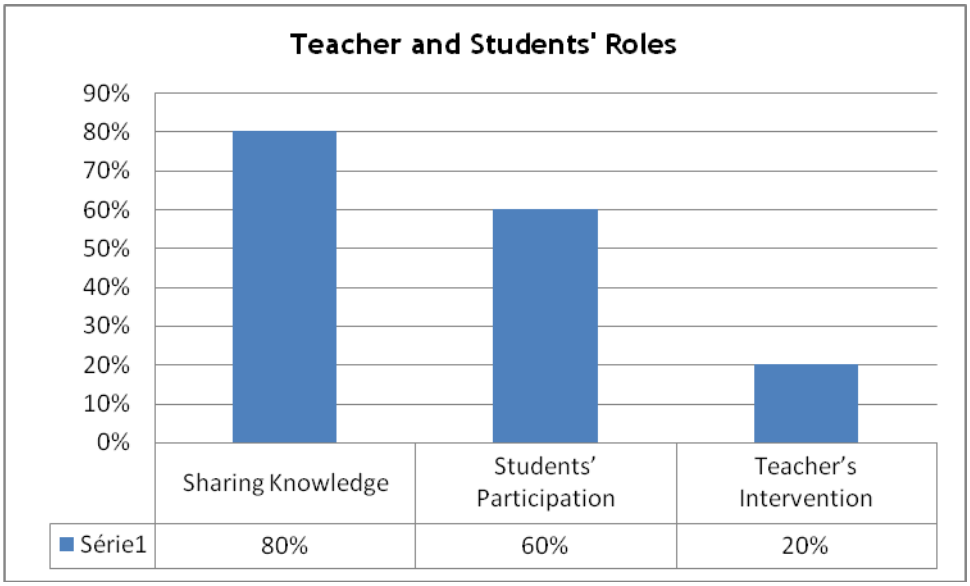

Figure 6: Teacher and Students' Roles

As noted from the above experiment in question, the partnership centred method diminished the distance and the gaps between students and teachers' roles. So it was possible for 60% of the students to be active and assist their peers, so they moved from passive learners to active learners by the method (learn and share), During this experiment the rate of sharing knowledge reached an important level, it moved from 30% (preparation phase) to 80% (organisation and presentation phases). The students' participation exceeded (60%) however the teacher's interventions were limited to just 20%.

Conclusion

To sum up, and in the light of this experimental study, neither teachers nor students could be replaced by technology, but both of them are urged to tame this huge invasion of technology and exploit it positively in the teaching/ learning process. As usual and in almost all the methods used in classical classrooms[10], teachers are largely dominating the learning process in 80% of classroom situations; in contrast, it is rarely that they become partners with their students in many learning situations. However, in partnership learning, teachers participate, debate, manage and guide their students to reach the predetermined pedagogical objectives. In ICT classrooms, teachers' interventions are limited to just 20% and students' participations increased to more than 60%; thus knowledge is shared in almost (80%) of classrooms situations. During this investigation, partnership learning could be an efficient method in ICT approach. The principle of "learn and share" minimises the learning differences between students and restricts the teachers' domination.

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