

Framework to Organize Community-Led Project-Based Learning at a Massive Scale of 900 Indian Villages

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Abstract : Project-based learning (PBL) activities are typically implemented in technology-enabled schools by highly trained teachers. In rural India, students have limited access to technology and quality education. Implementing typical PBL activities is challenging. This study details how Pratham Education Foundation's Hybrid Learning model was used to implement two PBL activities related to music in 900 remote Indian villages with 46,000 students aged 10-14. The activities were completed by 69% of groups that submitted a total of 15,000 videos (completed projects). Pratham's H-Learning model reaches 100,000 students aged 3-14 in 900 Indian villages. The community-driven model engages students in 20,000 self-organized groups outside of school. The students are guided by 6,000 youth volunteers and 100 facilitators. The students partake in learning activities across subjects with the support of community stakeholders and offline digital content on shared Android tablets. A training and implementation toolkit for PBL activities is designed by subject experts. This toolkit is essential in ensuring efficient implementation of activities as facilitators aren't highly skilled and have limited access to training resources. The toolkit details the activity at three levels of student engagement - enrollment, participation, and completion. The subject experts train project leaders and facilitators who train youth volunteers. Volunteers need to be trained on how to execute the activity and guide students. The training is focused on building the volunteers' capacity to enable students to solve problems, rather than developing the volunteers' subject-related knowledge. This structure ensures that continuous intervention of subject matter experts isn't required, and the onus of judging creativity skills is put on community members. 46,000 students in the H-Learning program were engaged in two PBL activities related to Music from April-June 2019. For one activity, students had to conduct a "musical survey" in their village by designing a survey and shooting and editing a video. This activity aimed to develop students' information retrieval, data gathering, teamwork, communication, project management, and creativity skills. It also aimed to identify talent and document local folk music. The second activity, "Pratham Idol", was a singing competition. Students participated in performing, producing, and editing videos. This activity aimed to develop students' teamwork and creative skills and give students a creative outlet. Students showcased their completed projects at village fairs wherein a panel of community members evaluated the videos. The shortlisted videos from all villages were further evaluated by experts who identified students and adults to participate in advanced music workshops. The H-Learning framework enables students in low resource settings to engage in PBL and develop relevant skills by leveraging community support and using video creation as a tool. In rural India, students do not have access to high-quality education or infrastructure. Therefore designing activities that can be implemented by community members after limited training is essential. The subject experts have minimal intervention once the activity is initiated, which significantly reduces the cost of implementation and allows the activity to be implemented at a massive scale.

Keywords : community supported learning, project-based learning, self-organized learning, education technology

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