

The impact of computer supported Problem Based Learning on Sri Lankan undergraduates' approaches to learning

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Effective learning is an exclusive amalgamation of the learning environment and students' favored direction toward learning. In the literature, it is suggested that the learning environment affects students' approaches to learning. It is commonly believed that the practice of deep approach to learning is concomitant with higher quality learning outcomes and surface approach with lower quality learning outcomes, and the deep approach will contribute positively to learning outcomes. Therefore, it is important to encourage students to employ the deep approach.

Problem Based Learning (PBL) is one of the learning environments to foster a deep approach to learning. The objective of this study is to explore the impact of computer supported PBL on students' approaches to learning. The research was conducted as a pre-test and post-test. The experimental process of study has been carried out on 78 undergraduate students of the University of Colombo, University of Vocational Technology, and University of Greenwich. The sample comprised 41 females and 37 males studying Information Technology in their second semester. The group's age range was 21-27 years. The Scale of Approaches to Learning was used as the data collection tool, which was developed by the researcher. The accumulated data were evaluated by a paired simple t-test. Findings of this study demonstrate that a computer supported PBL environment has both a positive impact on employing deep approaches to learning by students and a negative impact on employing surface approach to learning.

Keywords: PBL, Approaches to Learning, Computer Supported Learning