

At IIT-GN, experiments first, theory later

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In a major shift in its pedagogy, the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IIT-GN) has ditched its traditional way of teaching and has adopted 'learn-by-doing' technique. Under the new approach, students will be given time to work on experiments and demonstrations first, which will then be followed by theory and lectures. The move has been deemed an unusual one as it detaches from the traditional approach, wherein students of every course or discipline first undergo theory sessions followed by practicals.

Speaking on the new approach, professor Harish PM, dean, campus development at IIT-GN, said, "The idea was to



IIT-Gandhinagar —FILE PHOTO

make engineering more exciting and engaging. If we give students a problem or a project to work on without giving them any knowledge about the

same and then once they have attempted, we impart the theoretical aspect, it brings curiosity in them(sic)."

"We did a pilot project with

40 students of nearby government primary school where they were made to observe a JCB that they see on road and then asked them to work on a hydraulic robotic arm. Such a hands-on exposure not only nurtured the creativity of the young minds, but also drove learn-by-doing philosophy," he said. "There are total 40 hours of lectures per semester. With the changed philosophy, some maybe converted into practical. It is a slow process as we need to develop this pedagogy in all our courses."

He further added, "At the moment, there is one whole building that houses classrooms, where as other building for laboratories. To make this pedagogical approach more convenient, we are also going to bring labs and class-

rooms next to each other so that it becomes easy for students for follow our changed approach."

To overcome the dearth of good PhD scholars, IIT-GN took a leap of faith in becoming the first such institute in the country to offer a PhD to a BTech graduate. Dr Sudhir Jain, director, IIT-GN said, "We were not get good PhD students as after BTech, most would either get lured into joining big corporates and the rest would join MTech. Of those who join MTech, the ratio of them opting for further studies becomes minimal due to various reasons. This was the main reason we thought to tap good BTech students for our PhD programme before they sit for an interview."

Full report: www.dnaindia.com

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