

Teaching Learning and Evaluation practices in Undergraduate Colleges Ideals and Realities

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I. Introduction

Teaching and Learning are to join hands and have a synthesis to bring about desired changes in the behavioural pattern of the learner. At present, traditional approaches are followed to disseminate knowledge to the stakeholders at the UG level. In the NAAC assessed colleges, the lecture-method is supplemented with learner-centred activities such as Group Discussions, Seminars, Symposia, Quiz etc., Students are exposed to MANA TV telecasts on the electronic media. Guest-Lectures by experts are arranged to ignite the young minds.

Special instructional programmes such as Tutorials, Remedial Coaching, Ward System etc., are being tried in almost all the colleges to guide slow-learners and under-achievers, mostly who are first generation learners. In NAAC assessed colleges Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) are established to monitor and review the academic progress.

Students' performance is assessed through Assignments, Unit Tests, Term-End examinations, while teachers' performance is monitored through Self Appraisal Reports and Academic Performance Indicators.

II. Higher Education Institutions In India And Globalisation

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been entrusted with the responsibility of performance evaluation and accreditation of universities and affiliated colleges in the country. It promotes the healthy practices of the educational system with a holistic approach. In these days of globalization and borderless education, we have to evolve parameters of quality with the local interests in focus.

India has a large Higher Education sector, the third largest in the world in student numbers after China and the United States. There are about 700 universities and 35000 colleges offering 420 diversified courses across the country. These institutes are brimming with 20 million students and a million teachers. In terms of excellence, research and innovative practices, barring a few exceptions like IITs, IIMs and Central Universities; we are unable to compete with the world's best institutions.

The theme of the present article is to make a critical survey of the best practices in Teaching- Learning and evaluation in vogue in undergraduate colleges and to suggest some constructive measures so as to re-orient and fine tune the existing strategies to meet the challenges ahead.

III. Problems And Remedies

Dearth of Teaching-Learning Material

The problem of lack of appropriate Teaching-Learning Material is another problem besides the lack of teacher-centred and the much needed teacher-taught rapport. In order to supplement the traditional methods of instruction, the latest educational hardwares and softwares are to be made available in UG colleges, thus giving a thrust to e-learning. Teachers must be equipped to handle sophisticated educational technologies like the Smart Board LCD Projector, the OHP, Power Point Presentations and Video Conferencing etc.

Inappropriate Evaluation Tools

The evaluation tests are designed to test the cognitive skills, the rote memory but not the creative abilities of the learner. In the existing pattern, there is no provision for extensive reading on the part of the learner. As an innovative step in this direction, the Open-Book system could be tried. To strengthen learner-centred education, time-bound assignment system could be given serious thought. Semester and Trimester systems with a continuous evaluation may be extended to the UG classes as well. Some "Best Practices" in corporate colleges may be identified and if found suitable, may be institutionalized in the government sector too.

Need for Faculty Improvement

Faculty must be encouraged to attend Refresher Courses, Orientation Programmes, Seminars and Workshops to update their skills and techniques. The teacher behavior, his classroom dynamics and managerial qualities will enhance the quality of instruction.

A teacher should look upon his teaching assignment not as a profession but as a sacred vocation, with a self-imposed code of conduct. If a teacher becomes wayward, undisciplined and drifts away from values, none can save the future generations from a catastrophe. "If gold rusts, what shall iron do?"

Rural-Urban Disparity

The existing rural-urban disparity is clearly discernible in the institutes of Higher Learning. A recent survey conducted by our students involving 100 students, has clearly reflected disparity. It was also found that, students with a rural background suffer from inherent deficiencies such as inferiority complex, lack of initiative and competencies in communication skills in English.

In order to overcome the learning problems of the rural students, Communicative English must be made compulsory under common core syllabus. Short-term Computer Literacy programmes for students, who have not chosen Computers as one of the optional, may be introduced to promote Soft Skills among students in this era of software boom.

Job-oriented and need based inter-disciplinary professional courses have to be introduced in the UG colleges with a view to nurture entrepreneurial skills in the 5 million odd graduates being generated every year. In the global-village context and the consumer-centred society, introduction of such new courses shall be preceded by a survey of the market demands. Students must be exposed to work experience and on the job training.

Sensitization of Women Students

In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, women students must be sensitized on issues confronting them such as domestic violence, discrimination against the girl-child, male chauvinism, pre-natal tests, etc., Further, women students shall be involved in AIDS, Dengue, Swine Flu Awareness campaigns, social forestry, Women's Literacy programmes etc.,

IV. Conclusion

The existing Teaching-Learning strategies have not delivered the good and the weaknesses outweigh the strength. Our achievements are not commensurate with the ideals projected. Results and academic output in most of the UG colleges are not so encouraging. Our immediate task is to redefine, restructure and fine-tune the Best Practices in order to promote quality instruction at the UG Level.

We shall endeavour to make our institutions, centres of excellence, with a brand image each. Benchmarking of the best practices in UG colleges shall be our utmost concern. It is high time, our policy makers, educationists and teachers had some introspection instead of being complacent.

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