

Exploring avenues for a quality culture and equipping students for placement

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Abstract

“Education is not information that is put into your brain and runs riot there. It is the manifestation of perfection already in man... That education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, and the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one’s own feet. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas” says Vivekananda. Some of the attitudes that support the success of a culture of quality are, passion, character, persistence, perseverance, adaptability, agility, trust, open and effective communication, ethical behaviour (honesty, morality, integrity, responsibility, accountability) , dedication, commitment, leadership, collaboration, and a desire to learn. An institution becomes a unique one if all the stakeholders join hands and collectively contribute to quality enhancement. This paper highlights the importance of the role played by the institution, the teachers and the parents towards moulding students and the role of students too in the process of quality enhancement thereby promoting placement.

An educational institution is a network of interdependent components. The success of the institution depends on the cooperation among the components towards the aim of the organization. A stakeholder is one who has an interest in the institution and who can contribute to its development and success. Students are considered the principal stakeholders since they are the direct beneficiaries of higher education institutions. The contribution of students is seminal for quality enhancement. (Pillai, 2006).

With a sprout of Higher Education Institutions over the past few years, there has been a lot of competition among education providers. Therefore, to have an edge over its competitors, any Institution which aspires to uphold the core values of education strives to create a quality culture.

A quality culture is an organizational value system that is conducive to the establishment and continual improvement of quality. Establishing a quality culture is like constructing a building. Creating and sustaining quality culture will not happen overnight.

There is a lack of consensus regarding the concept of ‘student participation’ in quality enhancement. Student participation in institutions of higher learning in India has largely been restricted to formation of students’ association or unions, holding elections for student councils in which students have been known to voice their demands or charter of demands on issues like fee reduction, waiving off charges, student concessions, better transport and hostel facilities, relaxation in rules, etc.(Gupta, 2007).

At the same time, it cannot be denied that the students do remain the key stakeholders in the educational process and their participation for quality assurance is certainly called for in the content of current educational scenario. It is the duty of the Institution to monitor if students are really being served. Since students are the actual participants in the process of learning and education, the expectations of students at the entry level have to be considered. The process starts with focusing on the target group i. e., prospective students and ends up

with qualified students, i. e., alumni who in turn act as valuable sources for the centre of higher education for motivating and attracting prospective candidates.

The reputation of any institution depends on the quality and excellence of service it provides. A student cannot acquire skills in a hostile environment. There is quality in every being. How to make use of it in an appropriate way for fulfilling goals is important. Quality is an attitude. If students have a good attitude about the institution and their contribution to the company, there will be good morale and good feelings. Students should first have a sense of belonging. They must be made to feel important for being there – a sense of pride to be associated with the institution.

Knowledge is power. Empowerment comes from knowledge. Different organizations have different motivational and attitudinal patterns. The best way to equip students for placement is to increase their attitude and aptitude. This can be done by assessing their calibre and matching their desire and strengths. Then definitely the interplay between the individual and the institutional factors becomes fruitful.

The teacher plays a pivotal role in any system of education. He/she has the potential to mould the tender minds of students. Students learn more from the teacher's attitude, values, ideas and personal characteristics than from the syllabus prescribed. Much depends on how the teacher behaves in the class, how much effort the teacher puts in to present the lessons in an interesting manner and how the teacher communicates to the students. The reputation of an institution and its influence on the life of the society is invariably determined by the kind of teachers working in it. An institution might boast of a good infrastructure and effective teaching materials, but everything becomes ineffective if the teacher is misfit or indifferent to his/her responsibilities.

Keeping in mind the rapid advancements in the society, the teacher has to go beyond the textbook and provide the students with guidance for their career. Teachers should strive to meet individual needs and preferences and develop gateways to provide student friendly access. In addition to the role of imparting education to the students, teachers should assume the role of parents since students consider them parent surrogates at college.

“Who dares to teach must never cease to learn” is a saying. The teacher should update himself/herself to meet the standards of the present day. Only if there is quality in teaching there will be qualitative learning. A teacher should have credentials to facilitate student learning. When deciding what teaching method to use, teachers should consider students' background, knowledge, environment and their learning goals as well as the standardized curriculum as determined by the relevant authority. Teaching should be full of ideas instead of being stuffed with facts. The relationship between the teacher and the taught is akin to the soil and the seed. So the teacher should take care to see that a rapport is established in the classroom for an exciting classroom experience. As teachers we should specify what to teach, why to teach and how to teach.

Most parents want higher education to provide moral values to their children. The rest will be taken care of. Education should make an individual morally straight and physically strong. It should enable him/her to pursue his/her dream however it is. No dream is too small, no profession is insignificant. So when he/she comes out of higher education it should give them that confidence to take the road less travelled by.

Both parents and teachers play a role in the transformative years of a child. They need to identify what the child's special skill sets are and guide them to pursue careers in tune

with that, there is definitely something each will be at ease with, excel in, which slowly evolve into their passion, parents and teachers should be helpers in identifying what it is, that will boost the confidence of the child because they will find themselves among star performers in that niche area. It will fetch them lucrative careers. Teachers should travel the extra mile and not just stop with blindly instilling confidence to all children; they should direct them to the right channel. In that way students do not just end up following the crowd.

It is quite evident that several of the ethical principles of yester years such as adherence to truth and non-violence, temperance in speech and conduct, tolerance and spirit of charity, etc., are losing grounds. Therefore strengthening of cultural and value-based education inputs is the need of the day. In a value-oriented education, students are taught to achieve success with honour, honesty and hard work. It has to be imparted by dedicated teachers with a clear vision, who, by their example serve as ideal mentors. The syllabus should give scope for practice besides theory, and more important, it should be abreast with the changing times. Finally, there is no point in imparting higher education if it cannot mould character. If it is not there, it is like giving a powerful weapon in the hands of a criminal or a fool and the result will be disastrous.

Students are unarguably the most important stakeholders of higher education. There are many success stories concerning students' partnership in quality assurance. When exemplary quality is expected in teachers, the same is expected in students too. When students are responsive and interactive, the teachers are greatly motivated to teach them. Students' cooperation and participation propel the teacher to show more involvement. Therefore students should make the maximum use of the available resources and contribute to quality enhancement. Above all, the college should be a home away from home for the students. A proper ambience should be created in the campus which ensures their well being.

The entire educational edifice is facing unprecedented challenges. The academic fraternity should wake up to the realities of the new world where the students and the teachers are partners learning together to make a difference in the world. Students should bring with them a particular orientation to learning and teachers should concentrate on enhancement of life-long learning skills and personal development to contribute to society at large.

Higher education should be meaningful and productive and provide students with proper avenues for excellence to flourish and develop. Everyone should join hands and gear up their efforts to ensure quality. Quality should be coupled with flexibility to meet the needs and interests of students with varying backgrounds and abilities. Quality can be made feasible by removing impediments to good education.

Works cited:

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