

Best Practices and Student Involvement in Quality Enhancement

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Abstract: *It is firmly believed by quality experts today that the quality of an educational institution is determined by the willingness, involvement and continued participation of all stakeholders namely students, teachers, alumni, management and public at large whose inputs can help in quality enhancement. However, the participation of students in the process of quality assurance in the capacity of being primary stakeholders has not received due importance and attention of the academic fraternity. University system is fraught with a feudal and archaic administration, as faculty itself is convinced that administrative work is more important than academics. How do we bring in the ideas of responsibility, obligation, without allowing for an arbitrary administration or interference from the Government? What sort of new norms can we reinvent to generate a healthy work culture that continuously engages in experimenting with new methods of pedagogy? This is where the new universities for professional education inform us about the possible experiments that need to be emulated. Students' participation in quality enhancement begins with quality awareness. It is highly essential to estimate the quality literacy among students so that systems can be developed to harness students' potential. The level of quality literacy among students should be objectively assessed. The study of quality literacy firstly attempts to calibrate the scale of measure, evolve methods to solicit feedback and evaluate the response as per opinions. The Student Quality Literacy Index (SQL index) quantifies and measures, the level of student observation of quality systems that are part of or external to institution, individual quality perceptions and perception of one's role in quality systems.*

Keywords: Quality enhancement, Alumni, archaic administration, Pedagogy, Student Literacy Index, quality awareness, Student's potential, perceptions

I. INTRODUCTION

The quality sustenance measures depend on the level of awareness and participation of stakeholders in the quality pursuits. The stakeholders need to educate themselves regarding various aspects of quality management systems in higher education. The quality movement in higher education has entered a new phase. With wide spread accreditation and assessment activities, quality in higher education has gained common acceptance. It is the time to develop processes that can sustain quality. Internal quality assurance cell, information and communalization technologies and re-accreditation procedures are valuable in enhancing quality. However, the onus of quality management should rest with the stakeholders; importantly, the students. As the Higher Education Academy (HEA) states, 'there is a huge range of different blended approaches; the balance between online and face-to-face components, and the integration of other methods, depends on the needs of learners and the context within which the learning is implemented.' (2017)

The General Information Dissemination processes take place right from the beginning of the programme of study to the students who enter into these institutions through different ways and means. Henceforth, the student community is well informed about the entire campus culture and the course offerings. Either public higher educational institutions or private funded institutions there are commonality measures in their initiatives regarding quality literacy among students. The entire period of perspective study plan, guidelines and instructions are given to the students at the beginning. Students are guided for their self-study and academic and career planning in this process. The impact of the programme of study and formation of character by the way of - intellectual, affective and psychomotor domains are also elaborated in the orientation given to the students during the beginning of the programme of study. All

of these activities are even demonstrated and senior students give testimonials during the first week for the freshers. These concepts help the students to get clear picture during the entry period itself. Teaching at all levels has to shift from teacher-perspective to student-perspective. Stating simply, teaching has to be student-centric instead of being teacher-centric. Passionate

teaching is a current teaching methodology gaining momentum all the world over. It is a high standard of teaching, learning and achievement of various forms of intellectual, physical, emotional and passionate endeavour in which teachers at their best engage. Christopher Day is a Professor of Education and Co-Director of the Centre for Research on Teacher and School of Development at the School of Education, University of Nottingham has made the following statements about passionate teaching.

Teachers with a passion for teaching are those who are committed, enthusiastic and intellectually and emotionally energetic in their work with students. Passionate teachers are aware of the challenge of the broader social context in which they teach, have a clear sense of identity and believe that they can make a difference to the learning and achievement of all their students. They care deeply about them. They like them. They care also about how and what they teach and are curious to learn more about both in order to become and remain more than merely competent. They are aware of the role played by emotion in classroom learning and teaching. For those teachers, teaching is a creative and adventurous profession and passion is not an option. It is essential to high quality teaching.

With the rapid development of society and economy there is a demand for professionalism in education. In this process the teachers and students learn from each other, explore the world of new knowledge and develop together. The ethics and sense of social responsibility are getting increasingly improved. Continuous improvement approaches help institutions to more rapidly respond to change and input from professional, organizational and industry sources. A method for evaluating courses, teaching and learning in higher education is sorely required by educational institutes to deliver quality education.

Quality enhancement (QE) in higher education is a deliberate process of change that leads to improvement. Enhancing something is fundamentally about trying to make the world a better place and succeeding in this enterprise. Teachers and HE Institutions voluntarily engage in QE both in order to improve student learning and their experiences of HE and to respond to the ever changing needs and interests of society. Voluntary participation in QE is driven by the same values that drive personal learning and facilitate the learning of others. It is an inclusive concept and a collective enterprise. It involves everyone who teaches, supports and guides students and the managers and administrators of HE institutions. It includes significant strategic initiatives and the many small things that people do to try to make things better.

The quality of learning opportunities made available to students is of great importance in the maintenance of standards. These are concerned with the effectiveness of teaching, the learning resources and the academic support in promoting student learning and achievement.

Personality development classes may be conducted to the second and third year students and they may train the other students in the following years. Students may be invited to take part in the maintenance of buildings rather than destroying. If students themselves are put in charge of the facilities at the college, if taken care by the management the student community certainly will not lodge into such works they will cultivate a sense of belongingness and ownership. This new image of the student as the manager of the facilities is miles away from the Victorian notion of students as intrinsically destructive. Gardening may be undertaken by the Botany students of the college. The activities like naming of the species identifying them and contributing to their classroom will enhance the learning. If they can develop a garden of medicinal plants it will certainly be viewed as a significant contribution to the campus environment .

The examination procedure in the Indian higher education system needs to be addressed at the earliest. Unfortunately our examination system does not take into consideration the work done by the students in different capacities and hence the certificate and the marks card issued by the colleges and universities do not reflect anything other than the academic attainment of the student. It reflects in the student participation also. The participation of the students in the academic, co-curricular activities and extracurricular activities needs to be emphasized in our educational system. Otherwise our students will not show interest in the things other than their course syllabus and this would certainly be detrimental to their career. If students' community has been identified for their strengths and trained in the areas they need to be

focused may enhance the learning outcomes. The students will be in a better position to face challenges in the of life and also do better in their work places if they move beyond their curriculum when in college.

Quality evaluation, the assessing and enhancing of teaching and learning in higher education, has been placed squarely on the contemporary agenda in higher education (Newton, 2002). Evaluation of the quality of mentoring programmes in higher education is no exception in this regard (Miller, 2002, pp. 237-59). However, such evaluation is not unproblematic. As Watty (2003) highlighted, there are different ways of conceptualizing quality in the context of higher education. These conceptualizations, according to Vroeijenstijn (1992), come about because a variety of stakeholders have an interest in the quality of higher education but not everyone has the same idea about exactly what constitutes that quality.

Quality in higher education can be understood in terms of satisfaction level of stakeholders viz. students, teachers, parents, politicians, potential employers, promoters, funding agencies and the public. In the absence of definite standards valid to all situations, it is well construed as an institution's movement toward its mission in diverse settings, and change taking place in the outlook of all the stakeholders. Quality is obviously difficult to quantify. The students may be seeking career-making education and for that the facilities required for effective teaching/learning process. Management and parents may be looking toward good scores while prospective employers expect competent manpower. Even then better way of understanding the quality is how far education is able to satisfy the needs and expectations of various segments of society, to be more specific the stakeholders of education.

Main stakeholders of education include students, parents, teachers, and management of the institution, prospective employers, government and politicians. Among these stakeholders, students form the focal group which should determine what should be taught and how. In fact all other stakeholders exist to bring about transformation in the students. Quality education focuses at fulfilling the expectations of the students and nurturing their potential. The methodology described is highly simplified here for ease of common understanding. The system of students' quality literacy index (SQL Index) is developed into an independently usable kit. The Student quality literacy index kit is available with open source which can be adapted by any institution.

In addition to being a method of measuring students' quality literacy, the study also brings out evaluation of institution by students. It will be highly useful in review and revision of local policies at institution level. As regular practice, SQL study at institutions will help in revising local quality bench marks. It will also serve as an additional testimony for the institution during NAAC assessment and accreditation process.

Five main quality perspectives are:

- (a) an assurance perspective whereby academic standards are verified and our commitment to students is honoured.
- (b) an enhancement perspective whereby our vision is realized through critical self evaluation and programmes and teaching which are imaginative and forward looking.
- (c) a customer care perspective, where one listens and responds to the student voice; respects and embraces diversity; encourages student engagement with quality processes; and ensures that systems are in place to responded appropriately to issues raised.
- (d) Identifying appropriate SMART targets, defined by outcome rather than process wherever possible and contributing to the drive for the better achievement of students.
- (e) to respond to new challenges and promoting greater collaboration and co-operation across and between institutions.

II. CONCLUSION

Any amount of physical infrastructure cannot bring about the desired quantum change. It is only the quality of human infrastructure that would make a quantum difference. We are on a quality journey. May God enlighten us and enable us to contribute our best for a higher education which will contribute to the formation of strong and responsible women and consequently a better society. The consistency of obtaining feedback across board in the higher education institutions and the systems in place to measure, analyze and make midcourse corrections had given the pathway for quality enhancement process - the second dimension of quality literacy among student community. Finally, the third dimension, delivery of support services has been thoroughly implemented in most of the excellence higher education institutions. Thus, the three dimensional perspective of quality literacy among student community has given leaps and bounds of educational excellence.

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