Pedagogical Methodologies of Teaching: Focus on Learn to Learn

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Abstract- 21st Century global competition demands the professional education and students to be competitive enough to face the global competition. At this juncture, there is a dire need in bringing vast changes in not only curricula of the professional education but also Teaching and Training methodologies focusing on Learner Centric system /approach. This paper throws a light on 'focus on Learn to learn' approach which can also be called as Self Reliant Learning (SRL) methodology to be inculcated and implemented in professional education. This methodology enables students to search for resources, generate creative ideas, assimilate new thoughts and arrive at a common conclusion. This practical practice enhances them to cop up with work place challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Participants / Students learn and acquire knowledge by various ways i.e. watching or observation and listening; acting and reflecting; memorizing and visualizing etc. In the same way teaching methods also vary like some of the lectures lecture, some demonstrate and discuss where as some insist on applications, few of them memorizing and others understanding. To what extent or level it is received by student depends on student(s) receptive ability, interest on the content or topic, compatibility of the students' learning style, Teaching ability, style, demonstration standard of the instructors or facilitator.

Most of the cases mismatch occurs or lies between the conventional teaching styles & methods of professional college professors and professional students. This results students becoming bored, inactive in the class that leads for lukewarm performance in the evaluation (tests, viva, assessments). This even some times leads for losing interest in particular studies, hostile classes, dropouts, etc.

Most seriously, professional incompetence gets increased among students and country loses potentially excellent leaders, Managers, Engineers, etc of future.

In discussing this situation I'd like to explore focus on learn to learn methodology that has been best viewed to promote excellence in skill development and create self centric learners that is expected to be the most admired way in this web based learning generation.

> Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow. -- *Ralph Waldo emerson*

II. SUITABILITY OF INDUCTIVE/DEDUCTIVE METHODOLOGIES

It is felt that the two different methodologies of induction and deduction are indeed different learning preferences and different teaching approaches, for below the graduate level induction method can be the best, whether it be called problem-based learning, discovery learning, inquiry learning, or some variation on those themes. When it comes to reality most of the colleges exercise the traditional deductive methodology with "fundamentals" and proceeding to applications (—"Just tell me exactly what I need to know for the test, not one word more or less."). Even most of the students do prefer the same as inductive presentation is not a concise and prescriptive (—you have to take a thorny problem or a collection of observations or data and try to make sense of it).

(My speculation in the paper that more students would prefer induction was refuted by additional sampling.) I don't want instructors to be able to determine somehow that their students prefer deductive presentation and use that result to justify continuing to use the traditional but less effective lecture paradigm in their courses and curricula. Therefore I feel it's time to give a serious thought on these models.

III. VISUAL/AUDITORY DIMENSION TO VISUAL/VERBAL DIMENSION

"Visual" information clearly includes pictures, diagrams, charts, plots, animations, etc., and "auditory" information clearly includes spoken words and other sounds. The one medium of information transmission that is not clear is written prose. It is perceived visually and so obviously cannot be categorized as auditory, but it is also a mistake to lump it into the visual category as though it were equivalent to a picture in transmitting information. Cognitive scientists have established that our brains generally convert written words into their spoken equivalents and process them in the same way that they process spoken words. Written words are therefore not equivalent to real visual information: to a visual learner, a picture is truly worth a thousand words, whether they are spoken or written. Making the learning style pair *visual* and *verbal* solves this problem by permitting spoken and written words to be included in the same category (verbal). For more details about the cognition studies that led to this conclusion, see

R.M. Felder and E.R. Henriques, "Learning and Teaching Styles in Foreign and Second Language Education," *Foreign Language Annals, 28* (1), 21–31 (1995). <*http://www.ncsu.edu/felder-public/Papers/FLAnnals.pdf*>.

IV. REVIEW ON CHANGING TRENDS OF TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Conventional Teaching Methodologies (Static, classroom-led and teacher-centric delivery) are giving way to dynamic, content-led and student-centric learning

Technology-led developments have ensured that what is state-of-the-art yesterday is obsolete today. By definition that has mandated the entire approach to pedagogy to shift from teaching to learning in the 21st century knowledge economy. Instead of just encouraging students to learn, we now have to focus on helping students master the survival imperative of "learn to learn."

When they (participants) master the methodology, tools and techniques of learning they are ready to learn on their own continuously; that is the only way they can remain current and relevant since content development and delivery via technology is moving so fast these days. Static, classroom-led and teacher-centric delivery is giving way to dynamic, content-led and student-centric learning. The "teacher" is evolving into the "mentor" who points the way and helps students' access resources that clarify doubts and problems on their own. This approach is especially important in post-graduate programs, the last opportunity to make our vast multitudes of students employable.

Students arrive at the portals of different professional programs after 15 years of association with teacher-led teaching arena. Any incipient creativity or ability to think has long since been compromised by rote learning. In order to add value in the work place these students must be able to think for them, find and assemble resources, solve problems as they arise, act decisively and create consistent results. This is the skill-set that makes a person employable throughout his or her career. This skill-set can be developed and retained with razor sharpness only by intense and continuous learning. Therefore, professional students have to be discouraged from the "taught" mindset and encouraged to migrate into the "learning how to learn" mindset.

In the light of my experience I'm convinced that the pedagogical methodology provides a great room for the young minds to ponder on the given task or activity that leads to generating new ideas and then these ideas will be shared with co-participants, finding solutions and striving for optimal individual contribution to accomplish group task. This is the basic philosophy underlying the Self Reliant Learning (SRL) methodology, which is all about participants being made responsible for learning together in groups (buzz or syndicate) without teacher intervention, demonstrating their learning insights/ knowledge through individual presentation, open discussion and being quizzed by other students.

The foundation of this methodology is to focus on imbibe Self Reliant Learning attitude, contributing towards achieving a common goal/ objective ,enhancing group dynamism and apply exponential pressure in an entirely positive, non-threatening and encouraging environment. Typically, the SRL program is run form five days with about 15 articles from world class journals being the focal points. Drawn from diverse subjects, participants study the material and work on their presentations in groups. The focus is not merely the content of the articles. Rather, it is the ability to understand concepts, communicate that understanding, ability to work in groups, present in public, think in innovative manner, help and lead teammates. The combination of these factors is highly potent in building the ability to cope, learn and deliver under extreme pressure. All these abilities craft tremendous self confidence in the participant that he/she can withstand and overcome the most challenging professional as well as personal circumstances.

> Global learners should be given the freedom to devise their own methods of solving problems rather than being forced to adopt the professor's strategy, and they should be exposed periodically to advanced concepts before these concepts would normally be introduced.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In 21st century knowledge economy the Conventional Teaching Methodologies (Static, classroom-led and teacher-centric delivery) are giving way to dynamic, content-led and student-centric learning.

In learner centric teaching approach emphasizing on learn to learn methodology can provide a great scope for practical learning experience, enhance group dynamism, boosts self confidence and creates a great platform to cop up with work place challenges resulting to optimal performance of a group. Apart from that students also cultivate a habit of continuous learning process that would not only create a room for acquiring up dated knowledge, but also excelling in their career or profession. I perceive that the increasing globalized competition will be the mother of many more creative teaching methodologies like SRL methodology in years to come.

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