

**INTEGRATING MANAGERIAL SKILLS WITH PEDAGOGIC ACTIVITY:  
EXPLORATION OF CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

The attempt of the paper is to outline the advantages of integrating the concepts in Management and Communication studies in a classroom situation. The paper delineates the importance on the part of the teacher to have a working knowledge in management principles would help in a big way to understand and operate effectively in classroom situations. An understanding of planning, controlling, organizing and leading will make the teaching-learning process effective. The Management by Objectives philosophy enables the teachers to improve their performance and increase their effectiveness. By learning the behavioural dynamics the teacher can understand a student better. Further, the teacher is also a life skill provider wherein which he/she trains the students for better communication competency.

**INTRODUCTION**

A teacher becomes successful only if he/she responds to the pedagogic demands in a class room environment creatively and imaginatively. The manifold responsibilities of presenting the topic to a group create diverse problems and that itself is, in turn, a challenge posed to a teacher. The present day teacher realizes that the student community has changed a lot and they are no more a hapless lot waiting for the elixir of knowledge from the teacher. They are dynamic enough to think for themselves and come up with original ideas. Hence a teacher should devise means and methods to keep the students on track as per the aspirations of the curriculum. A few assumptions are important to keep one ahead of the times. They include,

1. A teacher should not be a tyrannical pedantic pedagogue but a friendly facilitator of the learning process.
2. The teacher should transcend the limits of syllabus prescribed without deviating from the curricular requirements.
3. The teacher needs to overcome negative approach and indifference.
4. The teacher should motivate students to overcome reticence and make them communicate freely and effectively.
5. The teacher should be willing to delegate responsibility.
6. He/she should humanize attitudes on discipline.

7. The teacher should adopt new strategies in teaching methodology for creating surprise, interest and excitement among learners.
8. The teacher-student interaction must help to bring out pitfalls in teaching thereby contributing positively to the teacher's strategy.
9. The teacher should harmonize life skills with subject skills.
10. Higher level learning should be ensured through self exploration among the learners.

It is in this context that the teaching process is to be looked at, added with some guiding principles of management. The teacher can help himself/herself by bringing in the key concepts of management into the classroom environment. The teachers are working within a not-so-rigid and a not-so-flexible system.

### **Fundamental concepts in Management and the learning environment**

Any conceptual study of Management sciences starts from systems and processes. They include planning, controlling, organizing and leading. In the discussion below each term will be analyzed with its apparent practical domain. Planning deals with deciding in advance what actions to take and when and how to take them. Planning implies making choices, committing resources and a time horizon. Planning involves finding the right choice from a number of diverse opportunities, committing and allocating organizations limited resources towards achieving its objectives in the best possible manner and anticipating opportunities and problems. The teacher has many objectives to fulfill at the beginning of the session and he/she tries to realize it in the stipulated time. The curriculum and the syllabus prescribed pose a great challenge for the teacher, that too in a rigid time frame. An imaginative planning of the syllabus, awareness of the limited resources in a realistic way and an emphasis on the fundamental principles might help a teacher to plan and execute the duties sincerely to the student community.

Planning and controlling go hand in hand. There can be no control without a plan and plans cannot be successfully implemented in the absence of controls. Controlling provides a means of checking the progress of the plans and correcting any deviations that may occur along the way. A control is meaningful only when there is clear cut responsibility for activities and results. The steps include establishment of standards, measurement of performance and correcting deviations. In a classroom situation the teacher should ideally be a facilitator. He must encourage the learning process. A control is necessary when the teacher identifies a major deviation from the prescribed objective. The responsibility of a teacher is more in controlling the session of interaction with students at the time of learning.

Organizing refers to the formal grouping of people and activities to facilitate achievement of the firm's objectives. Issues which are discussed under this category include the type of organization structure, degree of centralization, levels of management, span of control and delegation of authority. This is a period of decentralization at all levels. So a teacher too should catch up with the spirit of the time. A teacher must convince the students that they are as important as the teacher in the process. The atmosphere must be cordial enough to accommodate divergent views. This would bring out fruitful interaction. The process of organizing in a class room gives stress to delegation of authority and lesser degree of centralization. Thus learning becomes more learner-centered and teacher-centric.

Further, motivating and leading are quite relevant to the discussion on management concepts. The role of a manager is to find a set of common factors which can motivate all his/her people coming from various backgrounds and working at various levels. The qualities that are stressed include honesty and integrity, excellent communication, setting example at work, objective in decision making and consultative and participatory approach. The teacher's role is to inspire the students by creating an innate urge for more knowledge. The success of the teacher primarily depends on making the students learn willingly and to work for desired results. If a teacher has a degree of motivational force and leadership, he could overcome the negative thinking of the academically backward students. Thus the qualities that are enumerated above are applicable for the teacher also.

It would be much rewarding if we could understand the concept of Management by Objectives. The term MBO connotes not just a specific tool but rather an approach or philosophy of management. This enables the managers to improve their performance and increase their effectiveness. It provides a framework for organizational and managerial decisions. The emphasis on results than activities, objectives for specific positions, participatory objectives setting, identification of key result areas, and establishment of periodic review system make this philosophy a highly dynamic one. By bringing this concept into a class room context, a teacher can reap new insights into the process of teaching. He/she would be benefited by concentrating more on the effectiveness and the productivity of teaching methods. The teacher would adopt new strategies depending on the demand of the subject and the requirement of the pupils. Conducting open discussions with students and understanding the problems from the students' perspectives would result from this strategy. One can conduct tests for qualitative analysis which can in turn work as a feedback on how

much the students have understood the topic and how much interest the teachers could initiate.

### **Behavioural dynamics and self concept**

Moreover a substantial understanding of behavioural dynamics can also be beneficial. It is that branch of study which gives us a lot of psychological insights into interpersonal relations, leadership and group dynamics. The ways of developing interpersonal relationship can be identified in four stages, viz., forming first impressions, developing mutual expectations, honouring psychological contracts, developing trusts and influence. The first stage of socialization is forming the initial impression. Initial favourable impressions do not guarantee long term relationships but they are essential for entering into enduring relationship with others. In forming first impressions, non verbal behaviour carries same weight as verbal behaviour. In the second stage a set of mutual expectations are worked out and understood by the parties. Many of these expectations are unwritten and unspoken. Hence they are termed psychological contracts. An effective interpersonal or work relationship cannot develop unless the participants are willing to honour their psychological contracts. The result of fulfilling the psychological contracts is an increased level of trust and influence. These ideas are no doubt important for teachers. A teacher in order to improve interpersonal competence must have a fairly accurate idea about one's self-concept. He/she must do a critical analysis of his/her own self to get a clear picture about one's self concept. A teacher must develop a positive working relationship with the students. He must impress, inspire and instill a sense of trust and affection.

To increase interpersonal awareness, the conceptual model of Johari Window would help. It was a schematic model developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham which shows how people expose themselves to others and receive feedback from others in their interpersonal relationships. One can see that interpersonal competence can be greatly enhanced by enlarging 'Arena' with the help of feedback and self disclosure.

The OPEN pane of the window are those things in my life that I know about and that you know about.

The HIDDEN pane of the window is my collection of things that I keep to myself.

The BLIND pane of the window is occasionally called the 'bad breath' quadrant.

The UNKNOWN pane of the window is that which is hidden from me and from you, even though it may affect our relationship.

<b>People in mature group interactions.</b>		
	Known to self	Not Known to self
Known to others	<b>OPEN</b>	<b>BLIND</b>
Not Known to others	<b>HIDDEN</b>	<b>UNKNOWN</b>

### **Leadership Styles**

Just as a manager through a style of functioning influences attitudes and expectations, which in turn encourage or discourage the follower's activity or achievement, enhance or diminish the follower's commitment to the work, a teacher can also influence the students either affirmatively or negatively. McGregor (1960) has categorized leadership styles into broad categories having two different beliefs and assumptions, which he called Theory X and Theory Y.

This theory certainly applies well to the teaching community. Preconceived notions, prejudices do really harm the prospects of teachers. They often consider that many students dislike studies and teachers often want to assert their control over the students to make them work and sometimes even going to the extent of corporal punishments. They belong to category of Theory X. Teachers should recognize that students, in a proper environment of motivation, would really develop interest in the subject and they can even be left free to themselves. By exercising our control and authority to a level of intimidation, the effect can be counter productive.

### **Group dynamics and life skills**

Finally pondering over the concept of group dynamics, one can instinctively recognize the importance of this concept and its implications in the learning process. Group Dynamics is concerned with the interactions and forces among group members in a social situation. In the 1930s Kurt Lewin popularized the term to mean interaction of forces among group members in a social situation. A particular class room of students is a group primarily because they (a) have a common objective (b) interact with each other to accomplish their objective (c) are aware of one another (d) perceive themselves to be part of the group. Hence the teacher must encourage group activities in formal and informal situations. When a teacher becomes a facilitator, he must create an atmosphere to make pupils participate in various activities.

In a child centered approach for furthering life skill, the teacher needs to give priority to learning new skill, attitudes and to make them usefully applicable. Students learn from both the teacher and from each other. Teachers make use of participatory and interactive activities. The methods of skills acquisition involve peer support and cooperative learning. Thus role playing, debates, group work, decision mapping are integrated into the learning process. Communication thus becomes an essential part of the interactive process. It is the responsibility of the teacher to over barriers related to environment, semantics and psychology. The suggestions that one can make in this are;

- a) Use direct simple language and avoid words which can have ambiguous meaning
- b) Use feedback
- c) Listen with intelligence and understanding
- d) Create constructive environment for the expression of ideas
- e) One should be careful about the nuances of nonverbal communication

### **Conclusion**

As the paper has suggested it would be of immense help if the teacher could possibly diversify his/her attitudes to other disciplines. A working knowledge in management principles would help in a big way to understand and operate effectively in classroom situations. An understanding of planning, controlling, organizing and leading will make the teaching-learning process effective. The MBO philosophy enables the teachers to improve their performance and increase their effectiveness. The teacher can understand a student better by learning the behavioural dynamics for intimate psychological insight. Further, the teacher is also a life skill provider wherein which he/she trains the students for better communication competency. He/she can gain much from an awareness of the possibilities of management and communication studies. This paper thus emphasizes the merit of conducting the teaching learning process from a multidisciplinary perspective.

### **References**

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