

Capacity Building for Quality Enhancement in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions strive to produce quality professionals, who would be intellectually robust, emotionally balanced, and economically productive, socially committed and spiritually satisfied so that they make meaning in their lives and contribute to the society. Teachers have a big role in maintaining this. Teacher quality influences curriculum, provides leadership, and promote student progression. Curriculum delivery and pedagogy should incorporate multitude of learning experiences and innovative learning methodologies. So much so the faculty should be exposed to advance knowledge and skill through a variety of ways which would be mutually complementary for both the teacher and the taught. Their capacities should be developed and all the more periodically recharged for sustained results. This paper discusses capacity building through establishing sustainable mechanisms to improve quality in teaching as reflected in the values and culture of the institution.

Keywords: Capacity building, Quality enhancement, Higher education.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Maintaining the profile of students and teachers is a major challenge for higher educational institutions. Teacher quality influences curriculum, provides leadership, and promote student progression. With this in view, institutions resort to a lot of ways by which they can attract, motivate and maintain high standards of excellence among teachers. Curriculum design and delivery should take into account the growing needs, changing interests and pace of learners. In order to meet this, pedagogy should incorporate multitude of learning experiences and innovative learning methodologies. So much so the faculty should be exposed to advance knowledge and skill through a variety of ways which would be mutually complementary for the teacher and the taught. Academic improvements and teacher quality up-gradation is best possible if mechanisms are put in place which would monitor the quality of teaching-learning. Side

by side, ways and means of enhancing faculty capacity becomes important. A variety of ways could be introduced to build the capacity of the faculty [1-34].

2. EXPOSURE TO ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF FACULTY :

Plenty of avenues are open to adopt learning. It is important because such exposures are a vital source to upgrade knowledge and skills beyond the confines of curriculum. Students and faculty obtain opportunities to advance level of knowledge and skills through such means.

- ✓ Seminars – Seminars, symposium and conferences conducted periodically encourage student participation. Students also participate in similar programmes by other institutions.
- ✓ Workshops – Workshops/Trainings are organized periodically.
- ✓ Guest lectures – Experts from industry & NGO deliver the lectures on various

ongoing issues and current happenings in the corporate world/community to provide real time information and knowledge to the students.

- ✓ Blended learning – In addition to chalk and talk method of teaching, the faculty members use the IT enabled learning tools such as PPT, Video clippings, Audio system, Online sources, Simulation software, Communication lab and Decision making games and Field work conference to expose the students to combine advanced knowledge with practical learning.
- ✓ Certificate Programmes : A large number of Certificate programmes are offered to build employability skills in students and reduce the gap between curriculum and industry.
- ✓ Research Based Projects : All courses offer Research based projects for preparing dissertation through guidance and supervision.
- ✓ Practical Assignments : Assignments are required to be submitted by the students on various topics which is within the curriculum. This is taken for calculating internal assessment marks.

3. MONITORING QUALITY OF TEACHING-LEARNING :

It is important that the institution has built in mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching-learning. This practice focuses on ensuring quality and capacity of the faculty. It can be implemented through a variety of means.

- ✓ **Conducting Internal Examinations** : Internal examinations conducted at regular intervals as planned in the academic calendar at the beginning of the calendar year/semester will reveal the performance of students which will indicate the extent of preparedness developed, syllabus completion on time through direct involvement of faculty.
- ✓ **Result Analysis** : The results of the final examinations could be analysed through segregating students in terms of their

achievements as reflected in the marks scored in each examination. The faculty who has been engaging classes for the concerned subjects will own responsibility for the poor performance of the students.

- ✓ **Feedback from Students**: Collecting feedback from students in a properly designed format at the end of every semester and reviewed by the Head of the institution is shared with the concerned faculty for rectification and improvement. This serves the function of exit interview.
- ✓ **Class Visits** : A direct and first hand appraisal of the classes is obtained during surprise visits to the classes in progress by competent authority.
- ✓ **IQAC**: IQAC plays a great role in closely monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching- learning processes.
- ✓ **CCD Monitoring of the Classes** : Use of modern technology such as closed circuit camera help to maintain discipline and regularity of classes which is conducive to effective learning.
- ✓ **Suggestion Box** : There are students who hesitate to open-up in free forums. Such students can make use of the suggestion box. Suggestions, among other things could include quality of teaching of the various subjects.
- ✓ **End User Benefit Documentation** :This is a practice of monitoring the classes while in progress, by visiting the classes and recording the signature of faculty. This ensures that the end users are benefitted.

4. CAPACITY BUILDING OF FACULTY :

Although teaching-learning is a mutually complementary process, it is presumed that quality teaching contributes to quality learning. Therefore ways and means of enhancing faculty capacity becomes important. In general training programmes serve to build the capacity of the faculty in the entire range of curriculum handling, knowledge management and student evaluation.

(1) Technology based data analysis: The faculty members acquire competence in technology based data analysis through use of

SPSS, simulation etc. during Faculty Development programmes.

(2) Counselling and Mentoring: Training programmes conducted to train the faculty in counselling, serve to improve their capacity to handle student problems arising out of stress, neglect, loneliness and domestic difficulties.

(3) Handling new curriculum : Faculty Training Programmes organized by the institution shall discuss weightage of each topic relevant references, approaches and methods, pattern of questions, background knowledge required to be created to learn etc. Teaching plans are required to be prepared and study material to be developed by individual faculty. Before taking a new subject during a particular year by a faculty, discussion is generated in the training programme. The depth and framework of the subject form the content of the discussion.

(4) Content/Knowledge management : Faculty members identify, acquire and transform the relevant information into knowledge. The sources of information include books, periodicals, journals, video clippings, databases etc. These information are tailored suitably to prepare study materials and transformed in the form of lectures, PPT presentations, and other methods etc.

(5) Selection, Development and Use of Enrichment materials: Faculty training programmes provide a spectrum of supplementary materials which serves to be used as enrichment materials. Such for example are Open Source Courseware, NPTEL Lectures, Freely downloadable books from internet etc. The competency to dovetail such materials is acquired in the training programmes.

(6) Student Assessment and Evaluation: Faculty training programmes help the faculty in equipping them for fair and transparent assessment of the students

(7) Cross cutting issues : Cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, climate change etc. are discussed in the Faculty training programme due to their significance in the present context for human sustenance and survival. Subject experts in this area are brought in to deliver speeches on relevant topics concerning the above.

(8) Audio Visual Aids/multimedia : Faculty training programmes include certain sessions on usage of audio-visuals and multimedia. Live demonstrations are performed by the trainers who take care of such systems.

(9) Teaching learning material-Development, Selection and Use : Through training/induction programmes, faculty members develop skill to prepare and use teaching-learning materials such as session-wise teaching plan and study materials according to the syllabus, Question bank, Business cases and PPT presentations.

5. MEASURES OF RECHARGING :

1. Providing Opportunity to teach new Subjects : Teachers are encouraged to teach new subjects every year so that they enjoy the freedom of choosing the subjects liked and avoid monotony in teaching same subject continuously for many years. This also helps in enhancing their knowledge capacities widely and makes them competent.

2. Providing support for technology based information collection : Based on various trainings provided to acquire new knowledge through technology based information collection, the obsolete methods/techniques of faculty members are replaced.

3. Incorporation of Value added Chapter in each subject: Over and above the prescribed syllabus teachers choose to add a few sessions of value addition in each subject. This helps to enrich their job through discovering recent developments in the subject.

4. Encouragement for innovative teaching Practices: Teachers should be encouraged to bring in creativity and innovation in teaching practices. Such for example, are 'Entry test and Summarization' by students during each class, new and relevant business cases and business games aimed at increased participation of students etc.

5. Curriculum development : Providing opportunity for participating in curriculum development, serves to recharge the teachers.

6. Introducing Certificate courses: Through Certificate programmes designed to meet the latest trends in the industry, teachers get opportunity to choose, learn and deliver subjects

of their choice.

7. Research Centre In-charge: Identified emerging areas could be used for promoting research by forming Research Centres and expertise of the faculty may be utilized in the capacity of in-charge of research centre.

8. Sabbatical Leave : A policy to grant study leave for pursuing Ph.D. research on full time. Protecting the job and availing benefits.

9. Support for Research : This persuades faculty to earn higher degrees by pursuing research.

10. Research Grants : Through promoting the efforts to obtain funded projects and research grants from appropriate funding agencies the institute can build capacity and profile of the faculty. A policy to provide seed money for research is also encouraging.

11. Teaching Experience in other National Institutions/ specialized Programmes :

Appointing experienced teachers who have qualified from National Institutions and encouragement to gain exposure by participating in various programmes held in National Institutions are ways to overcome redundancy.

12. Industrial Engagement: Appointing teachers who have experience in industry/related fields and promoting consultancy services by the teachers provide advantage to gain experience without being away from the job.

6. VALUES IN INSTITUTIONS CULTURE OF DEVELOPING FACULTY POTENTIAL:

The institution grooms leadership at different levels. Such for example are individual level, job related level and career orientation level. This is intended to bring about desired outcome in consonance with the values in the institution's culture (Table 1).

Table 1 : Levels of leadership and expected outcome through different ways of grooming.

S. No.	Levels of leadership	Ways of grooming	Outcome
1	Individual level	1. Open communication 2. Trust 3. Mutual respect 4. Cooperation 5. Collaboration	Clear thinking Better followers Getting on well Learn from each other Task simplified
2	Job related	1. Rewards 2. Competition 3. Motivation 4. Guidance 5. Team spirit	Identification with purpose Desire for better More output Listen to advise Sense of togetherness
3	Career Orientation	1. Providing adequate opportunity 2. Entrusting responsibility 3. Creating confidence 4. Building skills 5. Upgrading knowledge 6. Increasing job satisfaction 7. Excelling in career	Create growth More accountability Belief in self Strive for perfection Thorough understanding Pleasure in doing work Self-actualization

The following six values with corresponding practices are to be embedded in the Institute's culture of developing the full potential of its faculty members and students.

1. Self Responsibility: Individual takes responsibility of their job, team, function,

Institution, the way they wish it to be.

2. Authentic Communication: Individual communication is open, honest, and transparent.

3. Trust: Individuals feel safe enough to try out new behaviors and take risks without fear.

4. Personal and group process skills:

Individuals and Institutions have established protocols and developed skills which are regularly deployed to resolve interpersonal issues that come across and are resolved quickly and clearly.

5. Learning and Growing: Individuals are encouraged and rewarded to work on the real growth issues necessary for professional and personal development within the framework of the organization. Individuals are never mutually challenging, but supporting each other to develop and grow.

Table

6. Caring: The organizational leadership demonstrate in tangible ways concern for individual employees well being. Employees feel valued and are inspired to put in their best effort.

7. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR FACULTY IMPROVEMENT :

The institution should have mechanisms to continuously review the teaching-learning process as given in table 2. Such for example are as follows :

Table 2 : Institutional mechanism for faculty improvement.

S. No.	Mechanisms	Structure, methodologies of operation	Outcome
1	Teachers Diary	Date wise, time wise, classes according to the time table is recorded in teachers dairy. This gives a clear picture that the classes are conducted systematically	Faculty realizes importance of adhering to the schedules.
2	Attendance Register	The number of classes taken versus the number of working days gives a direct measure of teaching input.	Faculty realizes the importance of the classes.
3	Student Feedback	Appraisal forms are distributed to the students on the last working day of the semester. This is confidently collected and passed on to the head of the institute for review.	Faculties identify need for improvement.
4	Performance appraisal	Performance self appraisal is done by the faculty. Against each of the appraisal items, the head of the institute marks his assessment in the form of grade point.	Faculty identify weakness
5	Result analysis	Result analysis is done for finding out the percentage of marks scored by the students in each of the subjects. This together is treated as a measure of the concerned faculties teaching efficiency.	Faculty realizes need for improvement.
6	Meetings with the faculty	Meetings with faculty are conducted by Management/ Head of the institute. Poor performance	Faculty develops increased accountability.

		like low pass percentage and poor marks are sought explanation.	
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8. CONCLUSION :

Institutional commitment to build capacity of its faculty is embedded in its culture as reflected in the values they uphold. Punctuality, adhering to schedules, accountability in achieving results and responding to feedback through positive changes are the outcome of various mechanisms adopted. These mechanisms trigger certain processes which promote the academic ambience and work culture. The plethora of measures to build the capacity of the faculty and recharge them suggested here are indicative of the enormous scope and its contribution to quality enhancement through capacity building in higher education.

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