

Do Varsity Teachers Need Training?

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TEACHING-Learning units (TLU) are designed to develop teaching staff. Like all theories in social and management sciences educational staff development theories are not free from controversies. Such controversies relate to its need, its functions and its approaches. Let us analyse them in the context of the experience of Bangladesh Universities. However, it need be mentioned that none of the universities have an educational staff development unit. Teacher training is limited to primary and secondary schools and recently it has been extended to colleges.

There is no unanimity amongst the theorists on the basic concept of staff development. They can be classified into two basic categories—organization-centered theories and person-centered theories. The first group sees staff development in terms of inculcation of organizational culture, international values and goals of organisation, acceptance of the structure and rules and finally promotion of necessary skills for organisational efficiency.

The second group views staff development as a continuous process to build competence and confidence in the individual which it is argued would automatically promote commitment to the objectives of the system and induce innovation in his work. The emphasis is on how to be his own best self in the latter while the first emphasises how to perform in the context of the organisation.

However, the proper approach is to fuse the organisational and person centered approaches so that the organisations can build on the strengths of the individual and the individuals can see his opportunities and constraints within the framework of the organisation and its needs.

The Need

It is indeed unique that university teachers do not go through any formal training before they embark on their job. The interaction with their seniors in the university departments of Bangladesh directs our attention to the following factors:

(1) The new recruits know the 'content' of work from their years as students;

(2) They also know how to communicate the contents from their years as students—by observing more effective and less effective teachers;

(3) They also learn the sequencing of contents from their interactions;

(4) They also know about growth in their respective disciplines if the library is rich and ready.

Further, many of the new recruits in the universities in the developing countries go through a further enrichment programme when they go abroad for higher studies. Many seniors are of the opinion that observing a potential recruit properly and grooming him for three to four years, if properly done, do not leave much of a room for further training and development in communication skill and curriculum development.

Those who held such view are of the opinion that failure to judge a student's potential as teacher, recruitment on the basis of examination results only, absence of a period for gaining practical experience through 'apprenticeship' are among the reasons for ineffective performance of the new recruits in the universities.

In this context a reference to a survey of selected departments and institutes of certain Bangladesh Universities can be made. The survey was carried out in 1983. The sample size was 500 teachers of whom the 160 were from technical universities and 240 from general universities which again were equally divided between science and non-science groups. Of the samples 150 were professors or associate professors, and 305 were assistant professors and lecturers; of the first group 15 had no foreign education or training, of the second group 220 were in that category.

The 500 teachers were asked to assess needs in terms of:

- (a) Development of communication ability; (b) knowledge of teaching methods; (c) knowledge of curriculum development process; (d) knowledge of modern educational technology; (e) academic programme planning and review process; and (f) techniques of using library for teaching and research. The methodology applied was open-ended discussion.

An overwhelming majority of the teachers said lack of

knowledge of academic programming, planning and review contribute to making performance of new recruits ineffective. They felt that lack of knowledge of curriculum development is the second most important factor. Lack of use of library for teaching and research, and lack of knowledge of modern educational technology got third and fourth highest scores.

Objectives

The basic objective of a TLU should be to inform and support self-development of the teachers so that two-way process of communication between the teacher and the student around a subject within the broader context of education becomes meaningful. It has many facets.

The teacher has to be assisted in maintaining the

scholarship necessary to teach effectively, in undertaking reflective enquiry vis-a-vis his teaching responsibility and in contributing towards advancement of knowledge.

The teacher individually and as a member of the team has to be assisted in relating his teaching to other units of teaching and broader context of society and education as well as students need for development which is possible if the teacher is assisted to become responsive to student needs and social environment, to relate effectively to relevant wider educational experience and to make him realise his role as a facilitator through communication and interaction so that courses and curricula are designed and redesigned continuously to accommodate new developments in the discipline, to accommo-

date institutional priorities and to innovate new approaches.

The following points need be noted:

1. Instructional effectiveness takes place within organisational and professional interactive framework.

2. Knowledge to be effectively used, enriched and communicated needs a skill and attitudinal base, and

3. Teaching-learning units concern themselves to build these skill attitudinal interaction for effective organisational and individual attainments. Adults are in general difficult learners; teachers are more so. Unless the learning styles suit their personalities and attitudes, the teaching-learning units would not be effective. Unlike attitudinal studies on managers, there are precious little on teachers and none for Bangladesh. Under

the circumstances, we have fallen back on generalities. Teachers may be classified in many different ways, but for teacher-learner, I think the classification give by Honey and Mumford, is quite appropriate.

If a teacher is activist in nature, he learns least from lectures, monologues, statements, explanation and precise instruction etc. He learns more from exciting experiences involving diverse range of activities, solving problems and bouncing ideas.

If a teacher is reflective in nature, he learns best made a leader and put into role-playing, being given cut and dried instruction about how to do things and being put into situations which require action without planning. On the other hand he learns more through observation and analysis with-

out being an active participant.

If a teacher is pragmatist in nature, he hates theories and generalisations, absence of guidelines and unnecessary managerial obstacles to implementations of programmes. He learns most from trying out techniques related to problems he is familiar with if there is an opportunity to implement what he has learnt.

If a teacher is a theorist, he recoils from lack of context or purpose and he rejects platitudes and gimmickery. On the other hand, he learns most if the learning process stretches his intellect through analysis of complex situation through concept building, system analysis, model formulation and test of theoretical framework.

Since these pure types are rare and since groups are likely to be a mix, the organ-

isation of TLU has to be sensitive to the mix and the programme has to be flexible. This can be done through one-to-one relationship even in a group setting, offering self-learning as well as learning from peers, emphasising choices and alternatives, and making room for increasing their control over methods and content of learning. These are difficult tasks indeed.

In this context the role of teacher counselling assumes great relevance. The new entrant as well as those in the early phase of their career need a caring and supportive environment and peer's work as the developer of talents through seeding and weaning assumes great importance.

This work can be formalised in a teacher-learning unit.

Abstracted from the paper presented at a 3-day conference of the Bangladesh Economic Association held in Dhaka from January 17 to 19. The author is Professor of the Institute of Business Administration, DU.

Labyrinth of Knowledge

A Nobel Laureate Speaks:



Baruch S. Blumberg

Interesting metaphor for this process.

Daedalus was an architect, a sculptor, an engineer, an artisan and a problem solver. But each time he solved a problem, other problems were generated. While serving at the court of King Minos of Crete, he solved the problems of Queen Pasiphe's love for a great white bull. He designed and built a model, a life-size hollow cow. When the Queen was placed inside, she became impregnated. However, this solution to her problem raised another one, namely, the issue of this union, the dreaded man-monster, the Minotaur.

Daedalus solved this problem by designing and constructing the Labyrinth, a maze in which the Minotaur was secured. This in turn created another problem: Athenian youths and maidens had to be offered to the Minotaur each year, which caused Daedalus much grief since he himself was an Athenian. To resolve this situation he helped Theseus and Ariadne (daughter of the King and Queen and therefore half sister to the monster) to kill the Minotaur and escape

from the great maze. But this led to Daedalus' imprisonment in the Labyrinth along with his son Icarus. The solution to this problem—the escape of Daedalus and Icarus, using wings that Daedalus had designed and made of feathers and wax—led to the death of Icarus. Daedalus, however, flew on to other adventures and to the solution and creation of new problems.

Thus the product of scientific creativity and problem solving often seems to be a new problem, even though the overall result may be satisfactory. It is valuable to keep this possibility in mind as we use science to solve new social problems arising from advances in technology, such as improvements in health care.

The World Health Organisation has set itself the goal of achieving "health for all by the year 2000". Measures to

achieve this will include those taken by governments and civic organisations, and those which are the responsibility of the individual. The former are particularly important in developing countries. Primary among them are ensuring the purity of food and water, appropriate management of the disposal of human wastes, control of disease carrying insects, and mass vaccinations programmes.

In the developed countries, because of the generally high standard of living, good hous-

ing and sophisticated infrastructure, many of these problems have been solved. If these achievements can be extended to countries where life expectancy is shorter, dramatic improvements can be predicted.

Both in the developed and the developing countries, the individuals participation in the process of health care is essential.

Changes in everyday behaviour are essential requirements for a healthy community.

Cigarette smoking, excessive use of alcohol, diets which lead to obesity and a high level of cholesterol, and lack of regular exercise, are responsible for a major part of the disease load. Accidents, often caused by automobile drivers under the influence of alcohol, and violent behaviour, homicides and suicide, are major contributors to premature death.

Obviously, society plays a large part in helping to alter behaviour along lines acceptable to it, but ultimately it is the individual who must give up destructive habits.

There is evidence that society responds to useful information produced by research and can bring about changes in people's lifestyle. In the United States, and to a lesser extent in other countries, the number of smokers has decreased dramatically in the past decade, and this is reflected, in part, in the plateauing and decrease in the curve of lung cancer incidence in males.

During the past few years there has been a dramatic decrease in cardiovascular disease in many population groups in the USA and elsewhere.

These results are partly due to improvements in medical and hospital care, but they can be largely attributed to healthier diets and the popularity of vigorous physical activity—approaching near mania in some communities.

BARUCH SAMUEL BLUMBERG, of the United States, shared the 1976 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine with D.C Gajdusek for discoveries concerning new mechanisms for the origin and spread of infectious disease. His research on population genetics led to the discovery of the "Australian antigen" and its role in Hepatitis.

Gulf crisis

25 million comic books bombard Iraqi troops!

RIYADH, Feb 8: Iraqi troops are being bombarded by more than just Allied bombs—millions of leaflets urging them to desert have rained down on their lines since the war began, reports AFP.

Colonel Ahmed Al-Robayan, a Saudi military spokesman said here Wednesday that the allies have printed 25 million comic book-style psychological warfare leaflets.

He said that about 14 million had been distributed so far, dropped from airplanes or fired by artillery.

A US military spokesman Brigadier General Richard Neal said that some of the Iraqi troops who have crossed the border into Saudi Arabia and given themselves up were carrying the tracts.

The leaflets, which come in color and black-and-white editions, feature an "invitation" to surrender written over the

seal of the joint forces, two olive branches encircling a globe.

The leaflets invite Iraqi troops to "fully enjoy the Arabic hospitality, security, peace and medical attention; and to return back home when the whole ordeal orchestrated by Saddam Hussein is over."

One leaflet features a picture of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia next to a cartoon bubble which contains a drawing of a row of three unarmed troops holding hands.

On the same page is a picture of the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein's bubble contains a drawing of two bodies, a machine gunner, a tank and the flag of Kuwait.

Another drawing, by a Saudi cartoonist, is of an elderly man, presumably an Iraqi father, sitting in a chair

thinking to himself "when will my son come home."

His wife sits cross-legged on the floor nearby picturing her son dead on the battlefield, bagged and missing one leg.

Another leaflet features an Iraqi soldier carrying a caricature of Saddam Hussein—scorpions for caputlets and the skull and crossbones on his beret—on his back.

The soldier sings a popular Iraqi song whose words have been changed. The song refers to the Shatt-al-Arab, the narrow waterway between Iran and Iraq which was a focus of their eight-year war.

The song goes: "I crossed the Shatt as you desired. And carried you over my head

With each attack I fear that death is very near.

And that I am close to drawing my last breath."

Bangladeshis flee Iraq

TEHERAN, Feb 8: Two hundred and seventeen foreigners fleeing the war in Iraq—including Filipinos, Bangladeshis and Sudanese—arrived late Tuesday at the western Iranian border town of Khorravi, the official IRNA news agency reported, reports AFP.

The new arrivals bring to 4,250 the number of foreigners entering Iran through Khorravi since the war against Iraq began on January 17.

On Tuesday, Iran said 20 Iraqi civilians had crossed into Iran in recent days, mostly from Iraq's eastern borders, following intensified Allied bombing of Baghdad.

Transit camps have been set up to accommodate the refugees in various border towns.

Allied planes to be allowed refuelling in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Feb 8: The Sri Lankan government agreed yesterday to allow allied planes and ships involved in the Gulf war to refuel in Colombo on condition they carried non-lethal supplies, authoritative sources said, reports Reuter.

The decision was taken after a request by Washington and other members of the coalition forces for refuelling facilities in Sri Lanka, they said.

The government had agreed to allow use of facilities for planes and ships carrying non-lethal supplies, the evacuation of injured and those on other humanitarian and emergency missions, the sources said.

Colombo would make it clear it would not allow base facilities for planes and ships on combat missions and for those carrying nuclear weapons, they said.

An official announcement on the government's decision would be made later on Wednesday, the sources said.

20,000 Kuwaiti exiles without running water in Damman

DAMMAN (Saudi Arabia), Feb 8: More than 6,000 families totalling about 20,000 people are living in 34 high-rise apartment blocks without running water in this Saudi city surrounded by sand, reports Reuter.

And each family is praying for the day they can move to even worse conditions.

Welcome to the Kuwaiti mini-city in this northern Saudi Arabian town, a few hours drive from a homeland the residents fled in fear as Iraq's troops swept in last August 2.

The mini-city, whose buildings seemed copied from the sketchbook of a New York city urban planner, is home to one of the largest concentrations of Kuwaiti exiles.

Before the Kuwaiti families moved in, the 34 14-story buildings with spacious balconies were empty for a decade—a tribute to Saudi

reluctance to live in anything but a house "where you can see the sun from every corner."

Engineer Sulman Al-Mani sits in a ground floor office with so many "free Kuwait" signs that even the toilet door has one.

Al-Mani, who fled Kuwait five months after the Iraqi invasion, said he had received bad news on Thursday. He was told the school across the street from his Kuwait City home had been bombed.

As far as he knows his mother and sister are still living in the house. The school across the street had been taken over by Iraqi troops. "We have one hope, we need our country. We don't need money. We need the sound of our country," he said.

Like many Kuwaitis, he is partly resigned to the idea that much in his homeland may have to be destroyed

before it is restored to Kuwaitis.

Kuwaiti ministers planning the reconstruction of the country say it will have to rebuild from the ground up because so much has been destroyed and looted by the occupying forces.

And nobody knows what will happen when the ground war takes place.

Will the Iraqis follow a scorched earth policy before departing? Will the allies mount a siege of Kuwait city cutting off food and supplies to all inside to starve the Iraqis out?

Nurse Monera Ibrahim doesn't want to guess. She says she is too full of memories from her last four days in Iraq when Iraqi troops took over her hospital and evicted the Kuwaiti patients, the Kuwaiti doctors and nurses and even the Kuwaiti babies

in incubators. She says she doesn't know what is happening in Kuwait. The last letter she received was smuggled out of Kuwait to Jordan, posted to Egypt, then to Bahrain and finally to Saudi Arabia. Al-Mani says he, too, does not know what is happening. But he says it cannot be good.

When he left Kuwait to take his sick wife to hospital in Damman, Iraqi troops stole his money and identity papers at the border.

He said he was one of the lucky ones. "They change the rules every day. Sometimes they shoot the men, sometimes they take the car and leave the women and children to walk in the desert.

"Sometimes they shoot the men and make the women pay for the bullets. Their goal is an empty Kuwait."

US to help post-war Iraq, says Baker

WASHINGTON, Feb 8: US Secretary of State James Baker, outlining for the first time in some detail ideas for a post-war peace in the Middle East, said on Wednesday the US-led coalition would aid Iraq in reconstruction efforts after the Gulf war ends, reports Reuter.

Testifying before Congress, Baker also suggested Iraq could play a role in peace-making once the fighting is over.

"The time of reconstruction and recovery should not be the occasion for vengeful actions against a nation forced to war by a dictator's ambition," he said, adding: "the secure and prosperous future everyone hope to see in the Gulf must include Iraq."

Baker's testimony appeared aimed at calming the fears of some key governments, including the Soviet Union, which have expressed increasing worry about the damage inflicted by relentless

US-dominated aerial attacks on Iraq.

The United States has not had diplomatic relations with Iran since Islamic fundamentalists held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days in 1979. In recent days, US officials have dismissed Tehran's offer to mediate an end to the Gulf war.

Nevertheless, Baker made a new overture to Iran in his appearance before the house foreign affairs committee.

A key postwar goal will be greater stability for the Gulf region and the Gulf cooperation council would be expected to take the lead in "building a reinforcing network of new and strengthened security ties", he said.

"No regional state should be excluded from these arrangements, postwar Iraq could have an important contribution to play. And so could Iran as a major power in the Gulf," he added.



PRAGUE. A Czechoslovakian soldier kisses his girlfriend goodbye, while a TV set in the hall of Prague airport reports on the situation in the Gulf. Thirty-seven soldier volunteers left for Saudi Arabia February 5 to reinforce the special anti-chemical unit operating in the area. —AFP/UNB photo.

Arafat behind Saddam's Palestinian link

PARIS, Feb 8: PLO leader Yasser Arafat has said it was the Palestinians who asked Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to link the Palestinian problem to any resolution of the Gulf conflict, reports AFP.

In an interview to be published in the French Communist Sunday newspaper, supported the Palestinian people and not the opposite.

Mr. Arafat had been asked why the Palestine Liberation Organization was backing the Iraqi regime.

"Saddam Hussein accepted the request of our people who live under Israeli occupation to make the link between oil and the Palestinian question," he said.

"I repeat, he is backing us in this case, our demand which was officially voiced in the August 12 proposals," he said referring to Mr. Hussein's request that all the Middle East problems be handled together.

"That is the real story," he said.

The PLO leader urged France and the European Community to play a role in finding a peaceful settlement, and said the United Nations Security Council must play its role like it has done in other conflicts in other parts of the world.

He accused the United States of wanting to impose a "new world order" and said it had "completely exceeded" Security Council resolutions on the conflict that "never gave any mandate to destroy the infrastructures of the Iraqi people... and to kill children and Iraqi citizens."

He also condemned the lack of "the slightest sign of opposition or official international protest" against the curfew imposed by Israel on the occupied territories.

"Nothing can be done, there can be no solution, no security, no peace in the region if the rights of Palestinians and the PLO are denied," he said.