

Teaching management in the global context– Strategies beyond the syllabus

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Abstract

The world is getting globalised over the past few decades. Globalisation has shown its impact on almost all the business and subsequently the demand for global management education has also increased. In the current economic scenario all over the world-“Management” – as a stream of education and training has been acquiring new dimensions. Business schools are confronting a very dynamic environment as a result of dynamism in the business world in the areas of technology, economy, demography, behaviour of people etc. Gone are days when classroom teachings were enough for the aspirants to be a successful manager. In the present scenario the way management education is imparted needs a critical examination, as only developing talent the right way will take the world forward. As the environment in which business schools are operating are changing a change in pedagogies used for teaching management is also needed. The managers of any organisation need to be engaged in a continuous learning process. These managers are produced by the business schools and hence they need to build the system of continuous learning by bringing about changes in the pedagogies used for management education. This paper is aimed at discussing the innovative teaching and learning strategies for management education in the global context.

Keywords: Management education, Globalisation of education, Pedagogy, Teaching, Learning, Contemporary strategies.

Introduction

Pedagogy is the way of teaching; call it an art or a science. Effective learning happens with the right pedagogy. There are different approaches and strategies of teaching, none of them being universal in results as every situation demands a different pedagogy of teaching. Different pedagogies need to be used in various combinations depending on the type of course, type of students and the environment in which teaching-learning experience is to be created. Some strategies are better than others depending on the type of skills, field of knowledge to be taught, type of students, learning styles or students’ capabilities and interests. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards defines pedagogy as: “Content pedagogy refers to the pedagogical (teaching) skills teachers use to impart the specialized knowledge/content of their subject area(s). Effective teachers display a wide range of skills and abilities that lead to creating a learning environment where all students feel comfortable and are sure that they can succeed both academically and personally. This complex combination of skills and abilities is integrated in the professional teaching standards that also include essential knowledge, dispositions, and commitments that allow educators to practice at a high level.”

Less focus on the pedagogies used by teachers can be blamed for many children bogging down in schools and an increasing drop out ratios. A lack of focus on pedagogy also explains why we are not able to completely utilise the technology innovations for making our classrooms more interesting.

The effectiveness of teaching learning process at any level is dependent on the type of pedagogies been adopted, management education been no different. The world of business is changing asking for more focus on management of businesses. One needs to learn from the success and failures of other organisations. At the same time one needs

to be prepared for unexpected demands too. This change in the business world demands a complete transformation of management education. The classrooms of previous decades are no more successful. No doubt lecture methods are needed for teaching theories, but one cannot avoid the need of practical learning.

This paper discusses about some innovative teaching learning strategies. This paper suggests some strategies which may not be needed for teaching the syllabus, but will be highly useful in preparing the management aspirants for facing the real business world.

Review of Literature

Any activity designed consciously by one person to augment the learning of other can be named as pedagogy (Watkin and Mortimer).¹ Another definition explains pedagogy as the art of teaching in such a way which provides learners with greater experiences (Alexander).² Business schools and management institutes have been generally criticized for giving undue weightage on theory and quantitative techniques. It has been argued that management institutes have been neglecting the qualitative findings and behavioural aspects of interpersonal relationships in an organisation. According to Schwille et al.³ “evidence accumulated since the 1970s suggests that teaching is arguably the strongest school-level determinant of student achievement. However, there is still much debate on what it takes to produce excellence among teachers at large.” What makes teaching excellent is not very much clear but there is growing consensus that active-learning pedagogies are involved in excellent teaching (Ginsburg).⁴ Teachers have changing responsibilities now. They should test the current practices and structures, try out new approaches and wherever necessary, they should practice organisational change so that the systems can be improved (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards).⁵

Active learning methods are a means for making students capable of actively influencing the directions in which our political and social systems are moving. Many researchers are of the opinion that all learning is active, i.e. students are actively involved while listening to the lectures or presentations in the classroom. However, research literature suggests that students should do more than just listening. They should be actively involved in reading, writing, discussing and solving the issues (Chickering and Gamson).⁶ It is always good to celebrate the differences and value the diversity of thoughts, be it general higher education or management education.

Contemporary Strategies for Management Teaching On-site classes / Lectures / Sessions (Observational learning):

Students can be taken to corporate houses and organisations of different industries where a session is delivered by the officials of the respective organisation. This helps the students get a comprehensive idea of different management practices of different industries. Classroom lectures may be boring but when students are taken to the practical sites where business is actually done this adds to their practical learning. The type of exposure provided by on-site lectures adds to the observational learning. A lot of concepts are applied in the business world which is not directly taught in the syllabuses. Sending students to on-site sessions in organisations belonging to different field will make the knowledge base of students more comprehensive. For example the type of management techniques used specifically in a hotel industry may be entirely different than those applied in hospitals. Management institutions should try to get the permission from organisation for on-site sessions. This will add to the industry-academia interaction which ultimately will be useful for all the stakeholders involved.

Peer teaching

Peer teaching is a method by which one student instructs another student in material on which the first is an expert and the second is a novice. It is said that to teach is to learn twice. Peer teaching was first introduced as a theory by Scotsman Andrew Bell in 1795. The concept however has gained more accepted in past few decades. The concept can be used in variety of ways. Like the one where senior students are given some or complete responsibility of teaching the junior ones; known as surrogate teaching. Students who are expert in one subject can be assigned as mentor to other student, generally on a one to one basis. This form of peer teaching is known as Proctoring program. The class can be arranged in small groups where each member of the group is responsible for teaching a unique concept to others in the group. This type of peer teaching is known as cooperative learning. This adds to the team spirit of students studying in groups. A specific form of cooperative learning is when classmates are divided into pairs to teach each other. Introducing peer teaching offers several benefits. Few of them are listed below:

1. Individualized learning
2. Direct interaction with the tutor helps in active learning
3. Learning of peer teachers get reinforced when teaching other students.
4. Students feel comfortable in asking queries and feel more open while they interact with peer.
5. Students and peer teachers share same levels of dialogue which allows for a better understanding.
6. Teachers get more time to focus on important topics which are hard for the students to learn.

Reverse mentoring

Reverse mentoring refers to an initiative in which older students are paired with and mentored by junior students on topics such as technology, social media and current trends. The concept of reverse mentoring is a novel way of helping learning of both sides. Generally reverse mentoring is applied in technology related areas as the juniors generally happen to be more technologically savvy than the seniors. However, the concept can be used for other areas like innovative ideas, language skills etc. One form of reverse mentoring which will surely increase the confidence level of students is student to teacher mentoring. Teachers can also learn the new happenings from students and try to assimilate those new concepts in their teaching in order to make their teaching up-to-date. The relation in reverse mentoring is written off by trust over each other which help in learning of both mentor and mentee. Mentors develop relations; improve their leadership and social competences through reverse mentoring programmes. All these skills are very much needed for being a good manager in any organisation.

Managing generation Y students

The students who get them enrolled in the management courses belong to Generation Y, also called as “millennials.” Thus it is important to understand them. The management institutes need to create a competitive advantage in recruitment and understand how courses should be designed, evolved and delivered. Millennials expect a lot and they don’t have patience of waiting for whatever they want. Millennials are born in the time of rapid technological advancements. These students opt to take notes in their phablets or tablets instead of pen and paper. All these things need to be taken care of when dealing with the current students. The teachers need to update themselves with the latest trends in technology in order to be accepted and respected by the generation Y. The key to managing Generation Y is about understanding that everyone sees the world their own way. Thus the teaching pedagogies also need to be tailor made according to the student one is dealing with. As it is said we rob the students of tomorrow by teaching them the way we used to teach them yesterday.

Building right attitude

Attitude is a predisposition about a person, event, place or situation. The way one believes or feels about something is what we call as his/her attitude. Building the right attitude

can go a long way in getting positive results. To build right attitude one needs key traits of emotional intelligence.

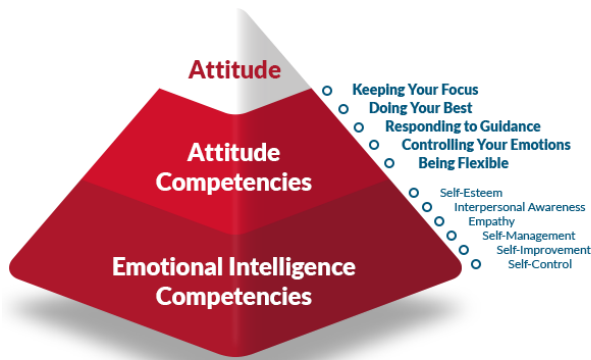


Fig. 1: Pyramid of Attitude

Source: <http://www.nationalsoftskills.org/three-step-process-to-teaching-a-positive-attitude/>

Teachers in management education need to teach these emotional intelligence competencies and convert them to positive personal habits. In order to bring the right attitude to students the teachers themselves need to practice positive attitude and show it in their behaviour. The whole logic behind developing the right attitude is self-fulfilling prophecy. The concept of self-fulfilling prophecy is given by Robert K. Merton. According to him “The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the original false conception come true.” Once students start showing positive attitudes it needs to be converted in good habits. To develop a habit one needs to change what they say as their verbal statement control their feelings, feelings control thoughts and thoughts control their behaviour. A repeated behaviour makes habit. Students in management education need to be taught about the importance of right attitude as corporates now prefer people with right attitude over people with the right skills.

Skill enhancement

Management skills cannot be enhanced by theoretical lectures alone. For enhancing the management capabilities of students the institutes should form students’ action committees which should cover various administrative and professional activities. Each committee can be headed by a faculty member or officer to provide a platform to students for showing their management capabilities through managing life-size projects outside the classrooms. These activities will give an opportunity to students for assuming leadership and enhancing their management skills. Annual activities for enhancing skills may include organising management fests, conferences, workshops for skills and career development, relevant social events etc. The students should be sent for personality identification exercises, Rational Emotive Therapy, Managing Emotions, Time Management and Stress Management. Students should also

be trained in public speaking, body language, etiquettes and preparation of reports.

Focus on soft skills

Soft skills is a term used by employers to refer to the more intangible and non-technical abilities that are sought from candidates. In most competitive job markets, recruitment criteria do not stop at technical ability and specialist knowledge. Key Soft Skills are:

1. *Communication*
2. *Self-Motivation*
3. *Leadership*
4. *Responsibility*
5. *Teamwork*
6. *Problem Solving*
7. *Decisiveness*
8. *Ability to Work Under Pressure and Time Management*
9. *Flexibility*
10. *Negotiation and Conflict Resolution*

While teaching management these soft skills needs to be kept in mind and actions should be directed for developing students in these areas for higher employability.

Management games

Management games is a type of training method used for teaching management concepts through games. An artificial environment is created which simulates the real situation occurring in managing the organisations. It may relate to planning, behaviour, decision making, communication, time management etc. These games allow the evaluation of decisions and how people respond to various situations. They allow the creation of problems in the most complex ways. They help in improving communication, problem solving and brainstorming. They can take various forms like:

1. Desktop business games (such as Monopoly)
2. Computer games (e.g. various turn-based strategies, building games)
3. Team learning games (e.g. through teambuilding)

The aim of these games is to promote analysing skills, decision making skills and team spirit.

Simulation exercises

Simulation exercises are exercises that mimic real-life professional scenarios for the objective assessment of employee and candidate competencies. There are a wide range of simulation exercises like:

1. Role play exercises
2. In-tray exercises
3. Analysis and presentation exercises
4. Group exercises
5. Interaction exercises
6. Fact-finding exercises
7. Management exercises

Case studies

The students are presented with real life business problems and asked to imagine themselves as professionals who encounter them. They are then asked to analyse the situation, identify the problems and give an optimum solution to the problems by evaluating all the alternative solutions rationally. Case studies help the students to get along with the real problems faced by the organisations. It aims at enhancing critical thinking skills, strategic planning and brainstorming for reaching to a feasible solution. It is one of the most popular pedagogy used by top management institutions in India and abroad.

Movies – lessons of management

Movies can be shown to management students to highlight the management aspects shown in the movies. There are so many movies which show us examples of different management principles being applied. Movies involve students more and hence the learning is also long lasting. They can be used to support the teaching of historical events, team building and many more concepts related to management.

They can be used to:

1. Reinforce a grammar point
2. Listen for gist
3. Practice vocabulary
4. Discuss and debate
5. Role play

Teachings through religious books

It doesn't matter if you're an atheist, devout follower of your faith, an agnostic, or anywhere in between—there's wisdom to be learned from the world's religions.

1. The Bhagvad Gita teaches self-management. The reason is that unless the Manager reaches a level of excellence and effectiveness that sets him apart from the others whom he is managing, he will be merely a face in the crowd and not an achiever.
2. The Quran Teaches Obedience and respect for authority. This is essential in any corporate setting. If the workforce does not have obedience and respect for authority, the structure would fail. The organization would not be able to function properly.
3. The Bible teaches Servant Leadership. As a servant leader, the manager should feel that he is a servant first. The concept focuses on keeping the needs of other before own needs. Once a manager understands the perspectives of other people, provide them with necessary support for achieving their personal and professional goals, encourage participation in decision making and build a sense of ownership in the team; they encourage higher engagement, more trust and deeper relationships with its members.
4. Guru Granth Sahib teaches original and innovative thinking which is relevant to the society.

Conclusion

With the fast pace of change at the global level, the methodologies used for teaching management should also be changed. Without changing the old ways of teaching we cannot expect new outcomes of our efforts. To fit in the world teachers in management education should also start adopting new pedagogies of teaching. Management institutions have no other options but to manage the demands of dynamic business environment and equip the future managers with all the needed skills so that they can formulate and implement the best strategies. The teaching methods for the management education at the global level needs to focus on inculcating qualities like leadership, communication skills, team work etc. in the students so that they can be the societal and economic change agents.

Source of funding

None.

Conflict of interest

None.

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How to cite this article: Kaitharath TJ. Teaching management in the global context– Strategies beyond the syllabus. *J Manag Res Anal* 2019;6(3):137-41.