

MAKING MANAGEMENT TEACHING EFFECTIVE - ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Teaching management is increasingly becoming important as the need for the management teachers as well as demand for effective managers grows. However, how management needs to be taught has not been given the kind of attention that should have been. Apart from the basic teaching skills there are certain specifics that need to be addressed because teaching management is different in several aspects. A management teacher has to understand that teaching about management and teaching the art of managing are different. Most management teachers end up teaching about management rather than about managing. This difference must be borne in mind before management can be taught effectively. There is need to first understand what management is all about. Interestingly there is more confusion than clarity and definitions galore hardly help. Management being an inter-disciplinary subject a wider appreciation of social sciences is required. Management teachers must first enrich themselves with the allied disciplines like Economics, Political Science, Commerce, Sociology, etc. Psychology of course is the most important of the disciplines for managers. The present article deals with the issue elaborately.

PROLOGUE

Of late, questions are being raised about both, the ability of management students to deliver and the effectiveness of management teaching. Needless to say that a deeper analysis will suggest that in many cases the later may have a significant influence the former. Naturally it needs some serious probing as to what needs to be taught and in what way so that the MBAs can be made to deliver the results organizations are interested in. the state of management education is in a continuous disarray failing to move towards any sort of consensus. There is no agreement on the best style while business schools continue to dump potential managers in droves even as organizations still seem clueless as to what stuff managers should be made of.

Management as a practice existed when there were no theories, nor any business schools.

Way back thinker, philosopher, playwright, George Bernard Shaw, had said that the only golden rule in life is that there is no golden rule and this was much later endorsed by management practitioner and writer, Harold Geneen, in his famous 'Theory G on Management' stating that the only theory is that there is no theory. While what to teach in management is still an enigma, how to teach is also a riddle. Essentially, then, the two basic issues that remain as far as Management Education is concerned is 'What to Teach?' and 'How to Teach?' So it is Content Management and Classroom Management.

Learning through the ages, today we have more knowledge about teaching per se than ever before. Researches show that teachers' actions in the classrooms have far greater impact on student achievement than the school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality, and

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community involvement. We are aware that one of the teacher's most important jobs is managing the classroom effectively. In fact classroom management has the greatest effect on student achievement. Teachers imparting management education thus need to know what management teaching is and how to manage management teaching classrooms.

TEACHING EFFECTIVELY - FIRST THINGS FIRST

The first and foremost question is whether management teaching is different from that of teaching other subjects. The answer however is both yes and no. Yes, because management is definitely a different discipline. It is mostly these four attributes of observation, decision, action and interpretation. Since management is a continuous process these attributes are continuous and cyclic calling for reinterpretation in certain situations. Like in case of the medical sciences. So in this regards cues may be taken from the medical college and the doctor. Perceptual skills, inferential skills, the ability to see the big picture are all required. Reading the context as well as between the lines. Now inculcating these skills are certainly a challenging task as we are trying to impart cognitive and soft skill. These skills require a different kind of orientation. But that apart management teachers are also teachers and they must know the basics of teaching that is communicating effectively and transforming personalities. Touching the core is a basic requirement. There is need to develop this knack for effective teaching. Teaching is both a science and art. While science is what teacher can acquire by learning the art calls for development through practice and experience. The teaching process involves some basic grammar. The following describe the five most effective strategies that can be used by teacher for effective classroom behaviour management.

Being Fair and Consistent

Being fair and consistent is probably the most important skill that a teacher needs to possess. Teacher has to maintain consistency with all students in the class room and at same

time has to customized his teaching

Creating a performing Classroom Environment

Creating a classroom community where you jointly develop your classroom rules or rights and responsibilities create a culture of the class and set the norms of behavior for the students. Building a performing culture, a learning atmosphere is what is required.

Basic Teaching Skills

Basic teaching skills that is the repertoire of skills that the teacher must have in his bag to engage the students. Specifically, such skills include the lesson structure/organisation, questioning skills and wait time. When planning lessons and the content the teacher must consider the types of strategies s/he will need to use in order to maintain the interests of the students and hopefully then have less behavioural issues. Some of the following strategies like cooperative learning, mind mapping, concept attainment, learning centers and role plays may help. A teacher must be good at the art of questioning.

Developing a student friendly personality

Making the student feel at ease is important. The teacher should rule not by fear but by love. His should be respected and obeyed rather than hated. A teacher's personality holds the key and he must be the role model. The teacher leader is the recommended model. The looks, mannerism style are all important. Teaching is a stage show and effective performance depends on effective communication.

Classroom Management

The ability to manage the behaviour the class effectively is one of the top skills that every teacher needs. Even the most meticulously planned lessons can go to pot if students misbehave. Positive ways to manage behaviour include a range of techniques for getting your class under control. These are establishing explicit rules and routines, providing students with clear choices around their behaviour, and letting them start each day with a clean slate as far as possible.

Keeping student engaged in meaningful and worthwhile activities is a useful strategy.

MANAGEMENT TEACHING SPECIFICS

Apart from the basic teaching skills mentioned above there are certain specifics that need to be addressed because teaching management is different in several aspects. A management teacher has to understand that teaching about management and teaching the art of managing are different. Most management teachers end up teaching about management rather than about managing. This difference must be borne in mind before management can be taught effectively. There is need to first understand what management is all about. Interestingly there is more confusion than clarity and definitions galore hardly help. Management being an inter-disciplinary subject a wider appreciation of social sciences is required. Management teachers must first enrich themselves with the allied disciplines like Economics, Political Science, Commerce, Sociology, etc. Psychology of course is the most important of the disciplines for managers.

It will be worthwhile to read available literature by Drucker, Mintzberg and Tom Peters as also Japanese management practices and Indian scriptural texts in order to gain an insight into the practice of management for effective teaching of the practice. Management as a practice resembles the medical science most as solutions to the problems involve a lot of innovativeness, creativity and out of the box thinking. It involves seeing the big picture and thinking beyond the frame. Teaching wisdom, judgement and positive attitude is easier said than done. But it has to be taught because that is what management is all about. It has to be borne in mind that for teaching management a learner centric model rather than the prevalent teacher centric model has to be developed. Effective management involves three attributes that are IQ, EQ and MQ. And management teachers need to raise all three in their students. Naturally some extra skills are also called for.

Management as a separate discipline made its debut on the Indian education scene in the

mid-fifties when the government of India set up a board of management studies under the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE). This, followed by the setting up of Administrative Staff College of India at Hyderabad and subsequently the two Indian Institutes of Management at Calcutta and Ahmedabad, marked the advent of professional management education as an important branch of knowledge. The growth of Management education became phenomenal since then.

There are a few thousand such institutions in India, duly recognized and functional. There is little doubt that formal management education has become the fastest growing sector of education in India. But herein lie the problems. There are premier institutions like IIM's, XLRI, FMS Delhi, Jamnalal Bajaj and a few others which command high brand value in the job market. But the others are not having that demand. They simply appear to be the poor country cousins of such institutes having low or no demand. In fact, the past couple of years have seen many a management institute closed down for want of students we are producing two sets of managers, *crème de la crème* and the run of the mill. Therefore, it is time to think seriously about management education and two issues are important- what to teach and how to teach?

Talking about the first issue there is need for finding out the basic job descriptions. What should be taught? In other words designing a standardized curriculum. Doubts are already being raised about the relevance of the management education that is given. And that too not only in India. Even at Harvard Business School, the Mecca of management education, the need for designing a more responsive curriculum is being felt. In fact, the very fundamental question, whether management can be taught, has cropped up. And with high sounding jargon and casual expressions like 'management by wandering around' finding place in serious management literature, the very concept of management education has taken a beating.

Occasionally, we hear the tongue-in-cheek remark that management is fifty percent common

sense and fifty per cent nonsense. If things are allowed to drift such cottage comments may well become a definition. And that will be the end of management education.

The basics need to be addressed to, especially in the wake of all that is going on with regard to management education. Studies have revealed that more than half of the chief executives of Fortune 500 companies were the 'C' grade students and around 50 per cent of the America's fabled millionaire entrepreneurs never finished college. Bill Gates, CEO of the American blue chip Microsoft, says that his criterion for selection is not experience but intelligence. Nearer home, a survey conducted by the Madras based Academy for Management Excellence came out with a long list of short comings of MBAs from leading institutes. Obviously, it is not easy to design the stuff that good managers are made of. Not only because of the findings mentioned above but for other reasons too.

A learning method that allows to develop their potential and innovativeness needs to be devised. Students should be taught to be creative while coping and adopting to fast changing business demands rather than being stuffed with too much information.

There is mounting evidence to suggest that there is a wide gap between what is needed on the job and what is taught in the management schools. Use of detached case studies and disconnected theories will not fill this gap. Academics and executives need to put their art together and share the responsibility of designing a responsive curriculum by confronting the real issues surrounding management education.

THE ESSENTIALS

Managerial roles involve many actions, many approaches and many ways of doing things, all effective at given situations. Thus, there cannot be the one best formula for all situations and all times. Context is a critical determinant and this has always to be there in the mind of the teacher when management is being taught. Making the learner aware of this basic reality is one important job of a teacher because often the

learner, i.e., the management students look for one best way which is not there. Preparing managers involves making them ready for three different kinds of roles, namely, the Leader, the Manager, and the Administrator. As a manager all these three roles in the way of the management practice and the one weakness of management teaching is that usually we end up making either a leader or a manager or an administrator. Depending on the demands of the situations all three roles are required to be played and sometimes choosing the right role for the right situation becomes crucial. Inculcating this sense of judgement is a critical element of management teaching and it is here that the teacher's ability is put to test. Not that manager capability can only be developed in a classroom but preparation for that must start in the class. The three roles as mentioned above have a fine distinction between them but they are important. The leader needs initiative and risk taking, the manager needs execution ability and the administrator makes people do the execution job meticulously. For management teaching these distinctions need to be always borne in mind and lessons imparted accordingly.

CONCLUSION

Management problems are not isolated to commercial enterprises. They extend to government departments, non-profit organizations, health care agencies and educational institutions. Management schools should train people to solve problems in all these fields. There is no perfect recipe for a business school program. But this is precisely the reason why planning and management of management education needs to be taken more seriously. The quality of people who teach needs to be monitored rigorously and regularly. One way can be to make mandatory provisions for interchange between corporate and the academic world. A responsive management education must be a proper mix of semester based analytical programs and the more practical executive approach. Good managers are not people with good degrees. They are people who give good results. Management as a practice

is more than the suffix or prefix that people use today to qualify management education. It is a science and an art that has to be understood in light of the context in which it has to be applied. Learning the teaching techniques from the medical sciences may do a lot of good for management teaching.

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