

Trigger Question- Prof. Maya Salimath G: How to create readiness among students?

Good morning to all the learned , esteemed members. With a lot of worries i am writing this mail requesting suggestions and discussions (more of actionable & practical) from all these years of my experience in teaching and training students of various demographics, I have noticed in fact experienced that we faculties in spite during role of facilitators try to make students aware of what is the market requirements., what is been expected from them by the companies?., but still in spite of everything., there is a lot of resistance amongst the students to learn employability skills. They still are not ready to learn basic skills. And at the end of the day blame college placements. My thought here is how do we create readiness in students? This is not only related to employability skills but also other concerns like putting a little more efforts to be different among the mass.

Dr. RP Singh

You need to. Change the teaching methodology. Use experiential learning methods like role plays, syndicate discussions , management games to bring home the points and also to impart learning skills. Students behaviour will definitely change. You can experiment.

Dr. Umesh H. Arahunasi,

Based on my 16 years teaching experience, I can say one thing why students are resistant to learn basic employable skill is that "students are well aware of the fact that there is a lot of difference between our teaching and practical applicability". This reason may not be true in your case, but it is better to re-think twice into the course design.

Prof. Ramesh Vemuganti

Your concern is genuine & it is a major challenge for Management colleges & institutions today

The world has changed a lot in last 2 decades thanks to the information age , knowledge based economy & technology revolution. Institutions need to update & close the gaps in Information & Knowledge.

There are 3 things :

One, most of the colleges impart Soft skills training by appointing a Soft skills trainer/ faculty. This works to some extent but it is not complete. The students look at the trainer as one more faculty -- don't learn or regard much.

Next, a huge gap in Information & Knowledge of external environment. Management students & also some faculty think Jobs mean only in "Corporate", nothing else. That is a misconception. Corporates, whether large or small scale is only one segment -- that world is different. There are other fields where Management students get employed like start ups, SME sectors, Social entrepreneurs, Govt - state & central, NGO's, Mfg, Research, Contract R & D, Education, web services, electronic media, online portals, e commerce, more are emerging -- Faculty need more & more industry knowledge & exposure so that they can impart to the students. They need to attend more seminars, lectures, workshops & training programs.

Third, the students need grooming before they get into MBA -- after that the mindset is an issue. Right from schooling, other than a Morals period, how much of grooming lessons are taught. How to talk, behave, study, play, work, listen, struggle, build, own responsibility -- who teaches them ?? Then, they should know that they are taking a Management course without managing a single person or no clue of working in an organization for 1 DAY. How much of visualization they need to do. No wonder, they are lost & are taken over by other attractions -- escape route..

So, what is the panacea? ASAP, Management institutions must invite senior persons & good management consultants from industry for Guest lectures, a series of Sessions, seek their guidance/advice, listen & follow them; wherever they may be based in India, they must engage them. A 3 hour session will reveal several insights & a road map for future for the institution. Or else, the issues will continue & will only multiply. They need to start addressing above issues.

Prof. Ranganathan Aiyar

it looks our present approach is to make them feel that they do not know or do not want to know.... approach has to change.....**we have to instill confidence in them to the effect that it is enhancement....of their own values...** next is ...they already have crossed the boredom of a class room lecture in their under graduate programme...they want some thing that could be more challenging and hence they come with expectations of an IIM/Harvard/Stanford type of MBA in them...and they do not get it....and they get frustrated..... I have seen very ordinary students from across the continents when they reach US or UK...come out in flying colors...so finally...it is what we make them in the lecture class... our lectures must be interesting...use lot of materials that can enhance their thought process....not all students complain....a select few will always be there.... we have done a study in our Institute immediately after this semester results....I shall send that to you on Monday as we are closed for Padwa holidays... finally a management lecturer has to be a manager.....and it has to be proved in every one of us...we have to be models for our students.....i think that is what you did when you were with us....

Prof. Bholanath Dutta

My understanding and experience on the subject:

1. No check on input quality, No test on managerial aptitude.
2. Many students join MBA considering it just another academic program. Or when don't get any other opportunity or confused, then join MBA program.
3. Lack of right orientation to the students when they step in MBA college - very crucial.
4. Many promises made while admission but later not delivered leading loss of interest.
5. Quality is a big concern. Big qualification, good knowledge is one aspect but imparting knowledge is totally different.
6. One research conducted shows attendance has nothing to do with the academic performance---fate of affiliated colleges.
7. Students academically superior but don't get placement.
8. Affiliated colleges, syllabus-based teaching and centralized university system further worsen the matter.
9. By and large soft skills both by internal and external faculty not successful. Even integration of soft skill program doesn't yield much. A charismatic trainer, not average one, can bring change in the mindset.
10. A true teacher inspires. Teaching is the most challenging task. A teacher needs to be innovative, creative, charismatic and have good understanding on the subject and real world.
11. Many soft skills and life skills can be integrated along with class room teaching. Teacher really needs to work towards it and prepare well. Outcome must be tangible.
12. Students, readiness = f(college culture + Processes + Pedagogy + Teachers' ability to inspire + Knowledge + placement + career guidance + support system)
13. A good B-school process= academic rigour/support system.
14. I will repeat within the given constraints, it is possible make the students employable very much in all tier -II & III institutions.

Dr. Ruchi Shukla

I completely agree to your opinion that initiative and energy required by the students towards a program is low but i equally hold institutions and

system responsible which has conditioned students to believe that they can get their way through without working hard.

Pl try and understand the consequences of policies like that of CBSE implemented by our Minister Mr. Kapil Sibal where all students till class IX shall be promoted to the next grade irrespective of their grades. What is the quality of students we are likely to get in the coming 5-7 years.

Added employability skills require training which calls for a great deal of investment of time and inclination.

Prof. Seema Shah

Experiential learning is a must specially in today's context/. Try out showing some movies followed by a discussion. Students today are more interested in trying out things on their own... Give them some good assignments, individual or in small groups where each one has to contribute. It works well. Also design some assignment where they have to play a manager's role and practice theory.

Dr Narinder Bhasin

I suggest if u have to take 30 hrs session for one subject try to complete syllabus in 10 hrs and remaining 20 hrs spend in case studies , industry visits ,research assignments , role plays and projects on the themes relevant to industry Then u will find the readiness in students

Prof. Krishna

As a placement trainer & resource person who has delivered knowledge partnership modules across 40 B-Schools & institutions, have validated experiences that every teacher, faculty member, & trainer should focus on creating self-awareness among the learning community. Any amount of external influence or force does not bring any change if there is no self-awareness & belief. Once the change within is brought about then the learning attitude among learners blossoms. Faculty members should consider themselves as co-learners & not as moral policemen or judges sitting on top of learners.

Make every learner to know, understand, manage, & lead self. This would lead to transformational change, a more permanent learning inspiration that will be the true guiding aspiration to be responsible & accountable. In short create ownership among the learning community on the self.

Happy learning & sharing.

Consider myself as a product of love & knowledge crafted by my teachers.

Prof. Archana

Our worry in the rural area like Pandharpur is same. I can say that we are doing everything possible. In your one of the mails, you had given the ways to make Ideal B-Schools. We have already implemented the ways, but what i feel is that the students' don't have the capacity to grasp it within only two years and they can not run as fast as we expect them to. Then their interest may go down.

The other thing (you all may have also observed) in rural area is that the students take MBA course as very prestigious and they expect very high profile job immediatly and when they don't get that, their moral go down. We, the faculty members of SKNSBS, always discuss on the same problem.

The reasons what we feel is the input students we are getting and the less time to make them compatible with today's market their enthusiasum

Prof. G. Surender Reddy

The principal role of a teacher is to inspire the taught. We should do everything it takes to achieve it.

Mr. Stephen Narayanan

Maya has raised a very pertinent topic which surely concerns Faculties as well as Placement staff's.

Often times in Institutes (I have already worked in 3 Institutes) it is found that there is a big gap between Faculties & Placement staffers. Though most points shared by other MTC-ians are very much valid, this gap is exploited by Students who take advantage of the differencesresult is Politics.....it is bad...though students concentration should be on their studies and area of expertise and gain maximum mileage from their Summer Training, Project work & all such Industry/Corporate tie-ups...except for a meager 30% students really dedicated to imbibing skills during these exposure....majority are still not ready for the Challenges in Life ahead. I would like to draw the attention of our members themselves to their wards...do a little self introspection and see if their own wards are committed and focused in their learning or are they too the members of groups who hang out to have fun at the College. And we brush it away as the growing up years....and though they would be having good counselors at home...they would prefer...professional counseling from the Institute where they study. Is it because they don't trust the judgement of their own parents? Is it the Generation gap phenomenon...? Many members would definitely claim that they are more of a friend to their wards...but if so were the case, why

would their child seek others guidance? I can understand the stress of work which leaves little time for family....so everybody is on their own....

When there was a huge Demand for MBA's...looking at Business Opportunity...all and sundry jumped into the B-School Bandwagon business....in North... the bania's (moneylender's)...the politicians who don't know ABC of academics....all opened up B-Schools with the sole moto of making some fast bucks....and the resultant degeneration of the MBA communities...resulted in Low pay packages...and as the Supply outstripped the Demand...we now have the phenomenon of B-Schools applying for Closure as the Seats have gone begging....

It is a collective responsibility of Parents, Schools, Colleges to Guide, Motivate & Encourage youngsters...Gen-Nxt to find their grooves....but as I said...people don't have time....and when the basics itself are not clear...the student is in a situation of being in a pitch black room groping around..till he finds the door to success.

Promises are made only to be broken and it is not just the domain of politicians alone.Similarly for admission...to fill their allotted quota of seats..tall claims are made by Institutes but when it comes for fulfillment of the promises....there is heartbreak for students. But time and experience is a great leveler. Youngsters these days are a lot smarter and they would not be cowed down...those of the Institutes who fail to deliver would run into problems when students take matters in their hands....

A good Institute is one which enjoys the confidence of student community....both past and present and Alumnus's are the backbone of the Institute.

Prof. Bholanath

I have further three observations in continuation with my previous mail and based on views/concerns expressed by others:

1. 'There are no good or bad colleges but only good or bad managements'--- It is true if we look at the wider implications.
2. Soft-skill, Life skill and other value addition courses are important. Apart from that placement training to be conducted with minimum focused agenda.
3. Serious career guidance and counseling may be helpful.

Prof. Ranganathan Aiyar

We have a core committee in our Institute and one of the members is the placement officer....we discuss all issues relating to the governance of the institute and all the matters are discussed in this meeting....members of staff including non teaching are members of this committee.... as I said earlier...i do not blame any body...i always take the boys in confidence...conduct an

aptitude test...which even our lecturers are subjected to....this brings an element of inclusion in the activities of the institute.... placement.....an institute is not a job placement agency.....it is unfortunate that the term campus placement has been completely mistaken to mean that at any cost an MBA participant has to be placed by the Institute...finally it becomes the responsibility of the Director and the TPO... most of the Directors/lecturers are not aware of the individual skills that each specialization requires.....we have to decide on the skills that are required and then start integrating a student into the profession...examinations need to look into these aspects....no one is ready for change gentle people in this fora....we want to continue with the same....since we do not want to learn anything new....has any one lecturer undergone any training of any sort during the past 3 years....esp...trainings like brain mapping, evaluation techniques etc....again now we start blaming the management....we have all seen this for donkey's years that managements are interested in making money and money only... but still this year...i have seen admission tests going full.....so let us wait and see...

Dr. Padma Mishra

Resistance to learn Skills.... That sounds so familiar. Yes we are facing a similar problem and it does not stop at management...it is in engineering streams also. Also the problem isnt just of resistance to learn skills. The students do not want to register and appear for interview and blame everyone for their misfortune. It is quite self destructive. Even the Personality development training has not proved effective.

In fact I will share an experience. When all convincing failed by the placement department we notified that they would have to appear fro interview compulsorily. They did and said to the interview board that they were not interested and had come only because they were forced. Now the package was good and the company was an MNC. I had a talk with some of the students...the problem was really peculiar. Since most of the companies were taking written aptitude test..so they were afraid of being ridiculed if they failed.

They were behaving typically like indian crabs... where if one tried to get out others pulled him/her down. So those who were not appearing were actually creating a psychological or peer group influence or rather hindrance by making fun of those who wanted ...publicly...

The only solution that came to my mind was to give one to one counselling. I and my faculty members have started engaging students into discussions on their career and job aspirations and where they want to go..In fact half of my time left after i take my regular 3 periods goes into talking to individual students. or may small groups. of them.

See the thing is placement cell and training departments are all good. The crux of the truth is students listen ultimately to their main faculty members who are teaching them the course. A student looks for the benchmark.. or .a standardwhich is someone who is knowledgeable, articulate and is ready to listen to them.. and off course belongs to their choosen profession.

We all at some point in our student life went to a particular professor to resolve our inner chaos....and confusion...

Now the problem is the strength of students in a class is so big...we just cannot do so much. we have a mentor system...but it has its limitations. My biggest challenge lies in the fact that i am a faculty....and also a HOD....It is very challenging to balance between giving them a sympathetic ear and being strict to maintain discipline....

But try, talking to them.....all they need is a sincere talk.....it works.

Some tips..where to talk

1. And please don't sit across the table or around a table. Better would be to do it out of your cabin and his/her classroom. That gives a middle ground.
2. Choose a room well lit with windows, although an open ground with a lot nice trees would be perfect... other wise any place which is does not have disturbance is ok..
3. I am a little into Vastu...so if you sit on the chair facing east... you could get more favourable results. Allow the students to sit around you at their will. Do not try to direct them. They are trying to find their comfortability vis-a vis you.
4. Please don't give them a clue why they are there ..call them for something like project, extra...and work your way to more career related issues
5. learn to draw the line. if someone is hesitant to speak..don't force..record it in mind and remember to handle later.... separately.
6. If you must talk standing...keep it brief...
7. Once you listen to a student...give advice after asking whether he/she needs it... He/she is a grownup...will not be too keen to take it...but if you ask you will give him/her a feeling that his/her opinion matters. He or she will definitely take your advice.
8. If he/she says they know...leave it at that..or ask what it is..
9. Don't focus on all the students from the start...focus on a few..but make it clear they are not your favorites and they are expected to live upto whatever they promise you. difficult isn't it...yes it is...but then when was grooming a individual to become a worthwhile citizen... easy... It is not the work for weak hearts.
10. Other students will come themselves. ...

This technique may not be perfect....and there might be a lot that could be added.

The results are painfully slow.....But it does work...

Principal Rani Verma

Creation of **aspirations** gives the right direction to a student career. Student must be convinced that beside parents, teacher is the person who is interested in his bright career.They don't listen to all teachers and consider them as mentors. Many of Parents complain that their children don't listen. We found children don't listen to those parents who continuously nag them. Parents of

toppers create aspirations in the mind of their children and only facilitate. My servant daughter is MBA and magic is creation of aspirations. They don't listen to teachers who take the roles of parents.

We have created an Eco- system of self driven students. We have to guide them to become responsible persons able to distinguish right and wrong and able to choose their careers. We have to show them the right path. However they are supported by all vedic and modern techniques. We get Aptitude Test done by professionals and Career Counseling by successful Counselors. We conduct programs for parents also. Outliers go on reducing and for them separate face to face counselling is done.

As a Head of Institution of excellence we also mean business and TC (Termination Certificate) is given, however with a help o get him admitted to other institution.. One or two examples set the right tune and direction for rest. But every thing is done without any vengeance and in good faith.

We have developed Art of Success Model based on Patanjali's Ashtang Yoga and is very successful and tested over years and for thousands of students.

Prof. Raj Mahinder Pal Verma

I have following points to be made but I am sorry for being outspoken:

1. One should not play a role for which he/ she is not effective. There are various roles for a management teacher such as pure teacher / counsellor/ mentor/ event manager/ administrator/ placement officer / public relations etc. Beside teacher additional role should be taken only if you are effective in that role.
2. Head of Institution should be careful in selecting a role where he / she is effective. Otherwise he loses value before other teachers and students. Ultimately loses administrative control.
3. Content and depth of content is very important for a teacher to command respect.
4. Ideally college teacher should be crucial for Soft Skill Courses and Mentor role. But student is interested in knowing other side i.e Corporate. There is a disconnect in the knowledge and experience of college teacher. We have also tried Spiritual Persons / Swamijis, they were also not successful as they go in Katha mode. Best results are obtained by conducting workshops by an Industry Expert with experience in such type of counseling.
5. For MBA students we have to give them directions and show the right path. We can not go in a mode of too much hand holding. They are PG students.
6. Students behaving funny before Recruitment Company's not only spoil their career but spoil the name of the Institution. They should be debarred from further recruitment process. As a Recruiter we also create shock wave by outright rejecting them as they are from a particular Institution. It sends right message. Some time back company's even advertised that students from a particular university need not apply. But many company's don't advertise but instructions are available to select / reject colleges

7. In any of the thread we have not discussed type of MBA students and their behaviour and strategies to deal with them.
8. We deal with both Engineering & Management students. There are strong reservations with management students.
9. Career counseling should be regular affair.by teachers.
10. I use trap the student strategy. We ask the student what is his/her goal of life. Then to full fill that goal what competencies and capabilities are required. Slowly we brought them on values required. We have got experience of both Corporate and Academics and understand the need for both. As we have to council from Career Planning to Career Development and Career Management.

Shri Virendra Goel

I would prefer to use the term 'Competency Building' that includes knowledge (Both general management and domain specific) skills (includes soft skills, life skills and the domain specific skills), Attitude and the Habits. Instead of emphasizing too much on placement we should develop a model of competency building and then work towards competency building from day one till the last day of the student in the institute.

The day we are able to establish that placement is neither the responsibility of the institution nor can it claim any credit for placement of its students. Institution's responsibility is to provide the opportunity to the students to build their competency and the result will be a result of hard work put in by the faculty and the student concerned, we shall be able to throw the bill in student's court and I believe this will bring about attitude change among students that we are so seriously discussing.

Mr. Stephen Narayanan

Very True Mr.Goel...when students come to us asking for past Placement data...No. of Companies....cross-sector etc., we tell them that bringing the Corporates is our work....cracking the process is what they should aim at....I specifically tell them that we can take the Horse to the Water but cannot make it drink the water...likewise...the best of the facilities for a learning experience is available and a rich knowledge gaining syllabus is being offered but how much of it they can utilize effectively.... And as our academic colleague Raj Mohinderpal Verma has pointed out...at time overzealous faculties jump the barrel and do more damage than good....personally rivalry too makes them susceptible to giving false guidance which leaves the students in the lurch....Raj Ji's plain speak in Point.1 - (he has already excused himself for being plainspeaking) is perhaps borne out of his years of experience noticing and observing this fallacy of human nature.... What we fail to understand is when at 18 a person can choose and elect a representative, get a driving licence and a licence to drink....and at 20 can choose his/her own life-partner...why then aren't they focussed in their choice of Career?

Our Educational system is not bad...infact it is among the best in the world...the black boards may vanish and replaced by White Boards and Educational Touch screen....but the syllabi...the teaching pedagogy...it helps students grey cells in learning and understanding things...but once through college...they are again LOST.

Could be we can blame it on the Canteen....or the people who ply them with CADBURY's ECLAIRS and are the mysterious foreign hand behind them Getting LOST.

Prof. K.Paranjpe

Dear Sir, The B-schools have taken a position of combining education with placement of students as their new responsibility. The reasons are obvious. The B school is run on business lines where student growth (in numbers) and profits matter more than the refinement of the student.

If one cuts out the placement aspect would anyone still opt for Business education. The answer is not completely in the negative for there will always be students who see real value in a business education than placements.If such were indeed the case, then one would get genuinely interested students to start with. The job of the teacher would then be to impart serious business education and at the very least remove the student's interest as a major factor in the class room.

At the other extreme is the position of an institute as a recruitment agency cum center. in this mode, the student pays for the placement position aspired for. The teacher's role is reduced to a propagandist for his subject expecting the student to subscribe to the subject. It is obvious that students will choose and pick their subjects that interest them. It is clear that making the students take courses that seem to have little or no relevance is counter productive. The teachers taking the subjects find it painful to teach a bunch of disinterested students.

The market reality is that students are customers but they do not have the choice of subjects to choose that best suits them. At best they have the choice of a specialization. The result is that they find themselves attending subjects that they consider too abstract and far removed and quickly lose interest in them.As regards placement too, they find themselves restricted to only certain type of jobs also not to their liking.

The effect of all these pressures is the falling admission of students to B schools. There is a need to correct the offering made by the Institutes to prospective students. Some measures are

a) pre- admission counseling,

b) offering a choice of subjects right from the first year itself.

c) Moving away from the mindset that everyone must undergo the same basic courses in the first year

d) moving away from the mindset of slotting students into HR, Marketing, Finance etc rather offering the students the choice of subjects suiting their personality

e) removing the distinction of basic level course and a higher level course. For eg a student might choose project management, project finance and project marketing or any combination that he may think is important.

f) all the subjects should be offered and conducted considering a minimum of 10 students. These are my personal views.