Approaches to Confidence Building as a Primary Objective in Postgraduate Degree Programmes

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ABSTRACT

The aim of higher education is to equip the youth with confidence in professional and public life so as to meet the challenges in life. University education is aimed at distinct objectives such as enhancement of knowledge and skills. But the application of knowledge requires skills and application of skills require confidence. Fulfilling these objectives imposes specific demands, not only on the content or teaching methods or teachers but also the variety of experiences the students are exposed to that count their excellence in the professional realm. Designing, developing, focussing, and exposing students to these confidence inducers are of paramount importance. This approach points to the myth of curriculum as a singular means of learning, alternatively a convergence of multiple approaches necessary to impart confidence among the learners. A variety of activities which are carried out as part and parcel of postgraduate degree level courses carry along with it inbuilt confidence inducers which serve to attain the desired outcome of learning. This paper discusses the role of confidence and the techniques of imparting confidence among learners vis-a-vis knowledge and skills.

Keywords: Higher education, Confidence inducers, Confidence, Objectives of higher education, Knowledge and skills.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Education seeks to prepare youth to face challenges in life. The aim of higher education is to acquire leadership in professional and public life so as to meet these challenges. It is believed that University education is aimed at distinct objectives such as enhancement of knowledge and skills. The ever increasing demands of changes in environmental conditions including progress in technology, changing aspirations of the youth, job market conditions, growing competition, shortage of skills, expectations of the employers, variations in job responsibilities, needs of society, evolving work situations the objectives of higher education cannot remain constant. Identifying and fulfilling these ever changing objectives imposes specific demands, not only on the content but also on teachers, teaching methods, and exposure gained in the institution. Application of knowledge requires skills and application of skills require confidence. Only knowledge and skills are not enough. The solution to problems in job situations and real life situations could be possible by mastering confidence while being a learner. This points to the fallacy of lectures as an ideal learning method and points to involvement and participation of students in a whole deal of learning experiences around them. A variety of confidence inducers come into use. Each learning method should carefully devise and deploys confidence inducers built into it so as to attain the desired outcome of learning. In this paper, we made an attempt to analyse the importance of higher education with the extended objective of knowledge with confidence as a prime agent for growth among learners vis-a-vis knowledge with skills [1-14].

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

This paper is an attempt to investigate the relevance of curriculum planning and designing the Post Graduate Programmes in Higher educational institutions in order to transform the students as leaders and innovators. The discussion also brings to light the aims and objectives as follows :

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(1) To know what should be the objective of Post Graduate Courses over and above curriculum transaction.

(2) To understand the relative importance of PG courses as compared to undergraduate programmes.

(3) To bring to light the holistic inputs that accompanies curriculum delivery.

(4) To appraise the various approaches resorted for Confidence building.

(5) To analyse interventional areas and strategies for Confidence building.

3. OBJECTIVES OF POST GRADUATE COURSES :

By keeping the above analysis in view the following propositions are suggested:

(1) Knowledge is an integral part of learning. But sheer knowledge is a blunt weapon.

(2) Skills denote practical application of knowledge. It is the capacity acquired and developed to transform learning into action.

(3) Confidence is a sum total of attributes namely courage leadership and wisdom which support utilization of knowledge and application of skills.

(4) The goal of Higher education is to induce confidence to face challenging situations in real life and work life and stand on one's own feet. Confidence building supports lifelong learning and encourages attitude toward experimentation.

4. COMPARISON OF UG AND PG PROGRAMMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION :

A comparison of Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes based on their broader objectives is given below in table 1.

Table 1: Intended objectives and expected outcome of UG and PG programmes.

S. No.	Programme	Broader Objectives	Expected student attributes	Outcome
1	Undergraduate programme	Developing an adequate foundation of knowledge which can generate interest in fostering more knowledge and musters skills to apply the knowledge in practice.	(1) Strong Baseline information. (2) Abundant skills (3) Capacity for application	(1) Versatility (2) Manoeuvrability (3) Application of knowledge
2	Postgraduate programme	Create leaders and innovators who possess the courage, confidence, and conviction to make appropriate decisions in all kinds of circumstances using the knowledge base and skills for systematic analysis	(1) Confidence in decision making (2) Courageous leader. (3) Creative innovator	(1) Viable decisions (2) Leading a team (3) Discover newer ways of doing

5. VARIOUS APPROACHES TO BUILD THE CONFIDENCE :

Based on the development tools adopted which focus on a set of the intended outcome, a variety of approaches could be distinguished [2-6]. A list of such approach is given below in table 2.

Table 2 : Various Approaches to Build Confidence

S. No.	Approaches	Focussed Outcome
1	Value based Approach	Inculcating Strength and Pride, reassurance of self
2	Curriculum based Approach	Boost Creativity; develop self-responsibility, Ability to meet deadlines, self-confidence.
3	Activity Based Approach	Organizational ability, Team Management, Contributing to self-fulfilment, Develop team spirit, Value of working together, sound health and

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

		release of aggressive energy.
4	Field Based Approach	Organising skills, Re-defining once own role, Responding to broader social realities.
5	Self Development Approach	Setting own example, Fostering values and developing leadership, Preparations for future roles, Grooming, Managing once own issues.
6	Educational Approach	Positive approach to learning, Opportunity to widen thinking, Relate with standards, Keeping updated, and understand others better.
7	Project learning approach	Preparations to perform job independently, identification and responds to needs, timely execution.
8	Performance and Reward Approach	Reward as motivators, Proactive learning,
9	Technology Driven Approach	Real time utilization of technology breakthrough, Making task easy, Keeping pace with changing times,
10	Feedback and Systemic Approach	Role models for future, Scope for improvement, Looking ahead for tomorrow,
11	Support systems approach	Sense of togetherness, Overcoming weaknesses, and Gathering spirits.

(1) Value based Approach :

Vision and mission are the beacons which carry the institution forward in a pre-determined direction. Hence this approach focuses on inducing confidence as a core value through a set of institutional values which are inherent in the vision and mission of the institution. The vision and mission express the institution's commitment to the stakeholders and responsibility to the learners. Organizational climate expresses the intangible atmosphere prevailing in the organization as reflected in the values governing relationships in the institution. These values which guide the interactional patterns can assimilate confidence in the learners if given appropriate thrust.

(2) Curriculum based Approach :

The ways and means adopted for effective curriculum delivery are potential means of confidence building. They promote learner participation in the learning process which inevitably develops self confidence among the learners. Attendance in classes is not treated as deterrence but a mechanism for inclusiveness and by fostering critical thinking the learners are open to new ideas. Innovative thinking evolves out of positive communication in curricular transactions [9-20].

(3) Activity based Approach :

Both aesthetic drives and release of aggressive energy find expression in the form of activities such as extracurricular, maybe sports and games or cultural, such as organizing programmes and celebrating events. Activity based approach is a useful input for confidence building given its edge over others to combine entertainment with learning.

(4) Field based Approach :

Community service and outreach programmes takes learners directly to wider social realities which helps redefine once own goal. Social service is a wonderful learning experience to identify with the weaker, disadvantaged and marginalized so that opportunity to serve them becomes the goal in life. Thereby they gain incredible confidence as leaders to transform unfavourable situations into best fitting opportunities. Leadership is most desirable human qualification to emerge winner in all avenues of life.

(5) Self Development Approach :

Desire to manage once own issues independently is inherent in every person. This in capacitated by adverse circumstances and unfavourable surroundings. Confidence to perform can be created through role clarity and setting own example. A variety of ways for self development are possible in higher education institution such as representation in committees and councils, discipline as proactive learning, internships for role clarity etc.

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SRINIVAS
PUBLICATION

(6) Educational Approach :

Making use of opportunities which utilises educational platforms as a positive approach in learning serves to build confidence among learners simultaneously. This is a broad spectrum covering all supplementary activities which runs parallel to curricular learning. Through widening thinking and understanding it enables clearer perception of situations and proper ways of acting.

(7) Project Learning Approach :

Projects are time bound assignments especially in the nature of investigation through scientific exploration of a problem and coming out with results. This can stimulate among the learners spirit of enquiry, responding to the needs, timely execution and quest for results. Faith in the objectives, manner of enquiry, deadlines and convection about results at each of these stages demonstrate confidence acquired during the process of learning and capacity to replicate in similar context.

(8) Performance and Reward Approach :

Performance is often linked to reward. This works well if the learners are distinguished for accomplishments. Recognition brings pride and confidence. In teams if success is shared, there would be a synergy arising out of the reward.

(9) Technology Driven Approach :

In modern day technology is taking the upper hand in all walks of life. This is true of education also. Technology has become part and parcel of education. Interestingly, the new generation is absorbing technology fast so that learning becomes fast through adoption of technology. Man has become confident of winning if technology is at his help. Virtual lab, high tech classrooms, e-resources, computers and gadgets generate better and faster result in keeping pace in this complex world of rapidly growing knowledge.

(10) Feedback and systemic Approach :

Feedback is a monitoring tool to take the system forward. Stakeholder feedback gives predictable impression about how others perceive the system. Learners bank on the institution and the institution bank on the curriculum. Attempt to improve the curriculum through feedback would enhance the effort of the institution to nurture the confidence of the learners.

(11) Support Systems Approach :

Support systems help a person to remain steady overcoming oscillations in social relationships and own performance. It provides sense of togetherness alleviating the stress caused due to emotional issues. Release of tensions, identification of weaknesses with positive spirit can gather confidence. Once own parents and peers apart from counsellor or mentor can serve as a support mechanism if the person is integrated into it.

6. INTERVENTIONAL AREAS FOR CONFIDENCE BUILDING :

The approaches for confidence building suggest plenty of interventional areas and any single development tool has multiple outcomes. For instance, curriculum as an interventional area has many development tools namely attendance, assignment, presentation etc. A comprehensive list of development tools and corresponding interventional strategies with their intended outcome is listed below.

Table 3 : Interventional Areas for Confidence building in PG programmes

Sl. No.	Development tools	Interventional strategy	Intended outcome
1	Vision and mission	Institutional policies	Inculcating strength and pride
2	Organisational climate	Learning environment, teacher-student relations	Reassurance
3	Assignment	Homework	Ability to meet deadlines
4	Attendance	Student friendly attitude	Self responsibility
5	Presentations	Encouraging to express	Self confidence
6	Discipline	Setting one's own example	Developing leadership, fostering values

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

7	Curricular activities	Participation, develop the openness to new ideas	Boost creativity
8	Extra-curricular activities	Freedom of expression and aesthetic drives	Contributing to self-fulfilment
9	Cultural activities	Organizing programmes and celebrating events	Creating responsibility
10	Community service	Awarding incentive marks, scheduling activities, leading programmes	Developing organizing skills
11	Outreach programmes	Conduct medical camps, old clothes distribution, community survey	Redefining one's own role
12	NSS/Red Cross etc.	Organising programmes, periodically involving students	Responding to broader social realities
13	Study material	Simplified notes tailor-made to suit curriculum	Positive approach to learning
14	Educational CDs	Creating interest in learning	Opportunity to widen thinking
15	NPTEL lectures	Use of media, lectures of eminent academics	Relate with standards
16	E-resources	Online certification programmes	Real time utilization of technology breakthrough
17	Research project and dissertation	Scientific investigation and study reports	Preparations to perform job independently
18	Term paper	Report writing	Responding to needs
19	Literature review	Collecting newspaper clippings on topics of academic value	Keeping updated
20	Special classes	Improve communication	Understand others better
21	Practical	Weekend trainings	Value of time
22	Games	Better use of leisure	Develop team spirit, the value of working together
23	Sports	Participation	Build sound health and release aggressive energy
24	Prizes for Achievers	Best outgoing student, Best academics, Best Cultural	Reward as motivators
25	Event Management	Develop programme Organizing ability	Proactive learning
26	Committees and Council	Such as Student Council, Curriculum Committee, Grievance Committee	Managing one's own issues
27	Communication with stakeholders	Industry executives for talks and functions	Look ahead for tomorrow
28	Feedback	Curriculum feedback from stakeholders, alumni	Scope for improvement
29	Internship	Provide industry exposure.	Preparation for future roles
30	Promote Employability	Identify industry requirements and employer expectations	Grooming
31	Mobilize Opportunity	Reaching jobs at doorstep	Making task easy
32	Tech Savvy	Adapt to changing trends in Information technology	Keep pace with changing times
33	Networking	Communication with parents	Sense of togetherness
34	Mentoring	Tutoring and Remedial classes	Overcoming weakness
35	Counselling	Solving emotional problems	Release tensions and

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

			gather spirits
36	New students	Facilitate adjustment	New found happiness
37	Alumni	Attracted by young achievers and adopt ways to equip themselves, receive advice and help	Role models for future

7. CONCLUSION :

To be successful, demands confidence to face challenges in the ever increasing face of competition. For that matter, a manager is a good decision maker more than anything and all walks of life require managerial ability. Building confidence is integral to P.G. Courses as it becomes the operational avenue for the fulfilment of employability. Various approaches emphasize various interventional areas and development strategies. A holistic approach may be a better fit to impart confidence.

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