



QUALITY MATTERS

Theme: Rethinking Higher Education Pedagogy for Quality Teaching

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QUOTES OF THIS ISSUE

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all”

Aristotle

“The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”

William Arthur Ward

This newsletter is published every three months by the Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance (CEIQA) of St. Mary's University (SMU). The objective of the newsletter is to inform the SMU community as well as the business and industry, government and non-government stakeholders and others which might be interested to know about the activities and accomplishments of the institution in fostering quality education and research in the Ethiopian Higher Education setting.

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FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

Dear Reader,
Welcome to Vol.15, No.58.

This edition of Quality Matters focuses on: ‘Rethinking Higher Education Pedagogy for Quality Education’. A considerable number of higher education instructors are blamed for using traditional methods of teaching. As a result, it seems that HEIs’ education lack the required level of quality education. Some of the possible reasons for this failure include: hiring non-teaching graduates based on their academic performance without considering their pedagogical competencies and assigning them to teach at higher education institutions, the interruption of giving pedagogical course as common course in most undergraduate programs,. In this paper, therefore, the most common forms of pedagogy are discussed briefly for the purpose of comparison and some aspects that can develop instructors’ pedagogical competencies are given.

Furthermore, Quality Matters had an interview with Dr. Solomon Areaya, from Addis Ababa University, to share with us his rich knowledge and experiences on higher education pedagogy.

In addition to this, this issue of Quality Matters has news on the training on Plan Preparation and Implementation given by Ato Shegaw G/Medhin, Director of Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance.



RESEARCH CORNER

Rethinking Higher Education Pedagogy for Quality Teaching

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Introduction

The word pedagogy has originated from the classical Greek word 'paidagogos': a combination of the words for boy and leader. In ancient Greek a man had responsibility for a child's education and upbringing. Therefore, pedagogy was used to deal primarily with the education of children whereas now its scope covers education of the entire population in terms of age as well as various groups (Shah, 2021). Furthermore, through time the concept pedagogy started to be seen as the art and science of teaching (Shah, 2021). However, currently, pedagogy, as a science of teaching, has not been given its due attention in most HEIs in Ethiopia. Therefore, the aim of this small paper is to show the major differences between traditional and current methods of teaching (i.e. teacher-centered and student centered approach) and to pin point the factors that are essentials or required to build up instructors pedagogical competencies.

Forms of Pedagogy

There is controversy regarding the forms of pedagogy. Some scholars classify the forms of pedagogy into teacher-centered pedagogy and learner-centered pedagogy. Others include critical pedagogy to this category (Shah, 2021). However, for this paper, I prefer to focus on teacher-centered and learner-centered category.

Teacher-centered pedagogy

Teacher-centered instruction is the long established teaching style in most countries of the world, including Ethiopia. As the name indicates, in this model, the teacher is dominant actor in the class. Every task of the activity even the students' behavior is decided by the teacher. Most of the students' activity is intended to develop the learners' cognitive domain. Regarding this, Hancock, Bray and Nason (2003) define teacher-centered instruction as follows:

The teacher (a) is the dominant leader who establishes and enforces rules in the classroom; (b) structures learning tasks and establishes the time and method for task completion; (c) states, explains and models the lesson objectives and actively maintains student on-task involvement; (d) responds to students through direct, right/wrong feedback, uses prompts and cues, and, if necessary, provides correct answers; (e) asks primarily direct, recall-recognition questions and few inferential questions; (f) summarizes frequently during and at the conclusion of a lesson; and (g) signals transitions between lesson points and topic areas (p. 366).

The role of the learner in a teacher-centered classroom is mostly passive. Learners respect their teacher and do as they are told to do (Balansag, 2018).

Traditional models of teaching and learning pedagogy might have been influenced by the practice of hierarchical societies that value respect for authority (Shah, 2021). Traditional teacher centered mode of delivery is often known for its disciplined, dull and boring classroom. It gives very little chance to students for learning by themselves. Probably, this sort of pedagogy might have also been influenced by the ancient times "religious and moral education or by the long established information and skills that were imparted to future generations in order to better prepare them for life ahead" (Shah, 2021, p. 357).

Learner-centered instruction

The birth of learner-centered pedagogy was a result of dissatisfaction towards the traditional education mostly because of the passive role that it imparted upon the learner. Learner-centered instruction provides learners the opportunity to take responsibility



for their own learning. The teacher's role is facilitating the learning condition and lead students for better learning outcomes (Balansag, 2018). Again to quote Hancock, Bray and Nason (2003) in learner-centered instructions:

(a) teachers are a catalyst or helper to students who establish and enforce their own rules; (b) teachers respond to student work through neutral feedback and encourage students to provide alternative/ additional responses, (c) teachers ask mostly divergent questions and few recall questions, (d) students are allowed to select the learning task and the manner and order in which it is completed, (e) students are presented with examples of the content to be learned and are encouraged to identify the rule of behavior embedded in the content. (f) students are encouraged to summarize and review important lesson objectives throughout the lesson and the conclusion of the activity; (g) students are encouraged to choose new activities in the session and select different topics for study, and (h) students signal their readiness for transition to the next learning set (pp. 366-367).

The roles of learners in student-centered pedagogy are:

- *An active participant who is consciously engaged in the learning process and regularly interacts with the teacher as well as other learners in the social construct of the classroom;*
- *An active thinker who thinks individually to derive meaning for self and collaboratively to construct social meaning with others, and also one who thinks critically about his/her learning;*
- *An active challenger who asks questions, challenges others' ideas, responds to others' questions through well thought out answers;*
- *An active communicator, who confidently communicates with others and effectively enters into a dialogue with teacher and peers, creates meaning by way of interactions with others;*
- *An active problem solver who launches inquiry when presented with realistic/authentic problems*

to find solutions; and

- *Active initiators who negotiate, challenge, reason, justify and provide feedback to other ideas (during collective discussions presented by other members of the learning community) (Shah, 2021, p. 374).*

However, the two approaches are not mutually contradictory. There are times where teacher centered modality is advantageous. For example, whole class question and answer to check students' understanding or to explain the procedure of a task to the whole class before students start working individually (Shah, 2021).

Nevertheless, despite the huge advantage of learner-centered pedagogy, it seems challenging for university instructors' to move from teacher-centered pedagogy to learner-centered pedagogy. One of the possible reason for this failure, according to Biru, Demas & Woldehawariat (2018) is that university instructors are recruited on the strength of their class achievement rather than their pedagogical knowledge and skills. Thus, "most lecturers in higher education adhere to traditional teaching methods or follow the teaching methods they were taught while they were students... and their main pedagogical strategy to be used in their class is the lecturing method" (Woldemanuel, Atagana, & Engida, 2013, p. 53).

Moreover, this absence of pedagogical training of university instructors often "results in the maintenance of the old methods of teaching, which often focus on the instructors instead of the needs of students and on the subject matter instead of the transfer of knowledge" (Biru, Demas, & Woldehawariat, 2018).

Offering effective teaching and producing good-quality graduates requires university instructors to possess a combination of knowledge of the subject matter and pedagogical competence. For this purpose the next section deals with the concept of pedagogical competence.



The Concept of Pedagogical Competence

Quality teaching is highly correlated with the use of effective pedagogical techniques to bring quality learning to students. This includes the ability to design effective curriculum and course content, the use of a variety of learning contexts, the use of feedback, and effective assessment techniques (Biru, Demas, & Woldehawariat, 2018). Accordingly, instructors are required to develop their pedagogical competence.

In the realm of higher education, pedagogical competence is more important than the course content (Shah, 2021).

Apelgren & Giertz (2010) highlight a number of aspects which they believe to be important to develop instructors' pedagogical competence. These aspects are:

Attitude

According to Apelgren & Giertz (2010) building positive attitude towards the students and the subject is the cornerstone of pedagogical competence. Attitude according to them means the perception of the lecturer with respect to his own responsibilities, the responsibilities of the students and his pedagogical outlook. In this way instructors ensure good contact with all students, create good teaching climate, help students to develop good study habits, stimulate students to be active learners and to listen to students (Apelgren & Giertz, 2010).

Knowledge

The other aspect instructors require to develop their pedagogical competence is developing appropriate knowledge of the subject matter how student learn, the teaching process and teaching methods, the goal of the course and the organization. However, attaining the knowledge in these areas alone is not sufficient unless it is applied properly. Instructors must be willing to apply their knowledge appropriately. Thus, Apelgren & Giertz (2010) mentioned the following techniques of developing pedagogical competence.

Ability

According to Apelgren & Giertz (2010) instructors need the appropriate ability to translate their knowledge into practice. For example, they need the ability to plan and organize activity, to structure and present material in a subject in an appropriate way for students, ability to adapt teaching to the particular group of students and the situation.

Adapting to the situation

The other point Apelgren & Giertz have raised is ability of instructors to adapt to the situations. Since students come with different interest and mental ability, instructors must be in a position to handle the diversity of students in the best way to get the most out of the teaching learning practice (2010).

Perseverance

The other aspect of pedagogical competence is perseverance. Unless instructors have the ability and the will to work regularly and efficiently their instructions may not be effective. Therefore, perseverance is emphasized as an important aspect of pedagogical competence (Apelgren & Giertz, 2010).

Continuous development

According to Apelgren & Giertz (2010) pedagogical competence is dynamic. Always there is change in the world of education. Due to this instructors must continuously search for and take new knowledge and learn from their new experiences to update themselves to best support their students learning.

According to them, pedagogical competence means continuously evaluating one's pedagogical practice in the light of what research findings have shown to best promote student learning and making necessary adjustment.

To sum up, content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are significantly needed in teaching at higher education institutions. Pedagogical competency can enable teachers believe in teaching their sub-



jects a better way. Knowledge of pedagogical competency would help to understand how to explore their content knowledge and how to deliver it into a good instruction (Shah, 2021).

The knowledge such as subject matter, curriculum, teaching strategy, and learners’ learning is an important element to be possessed by instructors in order to maintain students’ learning achievement.

However, trying to teach without adequate knowledge of pedagogy is not advisable because it may not bring the required quality of education. For attaining good quality of education, students should take responsibility for their own learning. The role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning environment. Thus, pedagogy must get its due attention in higher education institutions for quality education.

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SMU News

Training Held on Plan Preparation and Implementation

Based on the request from various units and offices of St. Mary’s University and the needs assessment conducted by Human Resource Office of the University in the fiscal year, a half day training was given on Plan Preparation and Implementation.

Twenty-five people were invited to take the training. Out of these, twenty one of them attended the training which was held at the Green Campus main library on June 11, 2021.

The training was conducted by Ato Shegaw Gebre Medhin, Director of Center for Educational Improvement and Quality Assurance.

The purpose of the training was to identify the strengths and drawbacks of the plan accomplishment of the fiscal year and to inform offices and units to take the necessary cautions for the 2014 fiscal year. For this purpose:

- The what of planning
- Major components of planning
- Source of planning
- Plan revision
- Plan accomplishment
- Unplanned activities
- Accountability of plan accomplishment
- Report writing on plan accomplishment and



- Follow up and monitoring

were the focus the training.

Finally, some questions and suggestions were forwarded by the participants and Ato Shegaw answered the questions and gave additional explanations. At last, the Director of Human Resource Office closed the meeting thanking the participants and promising to organize similar training for the future.



Partakers of the training keeping their social distance

INTERVIEW

Interview with Dr. Solomon Areaya

Dr. Solomon Areaya is an Associate Professor of Education, Addis Ababa University College of Education and Behavioral Studies. Dr. Solomon received his PhD degree in Education from University of East Anglia, UK, in 2007. He earned his bachelor's degree in Mathematics in 1987 and received a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction in 2000 from Addis Ababa University. In total, he has 35 years of experience in the teaching profession.

Currently, he is working at Addis Ababa University College of Education and Behavioral Studies. He is also a joint member of the Departments of Curriculum & Instruction and Science & Mathematics Education. Largely, he is involved in the graduate programs and advisement of PhD Candidates.



Quality Matters has interviewed him to reflect his view on Higher Education pedagogy. Here is the extract:

QM: What is pedagogy for you?

Dr. Solomon: Teaching is both science and art whereas learning is social and individual activity which takes place as a result of social interaction and or cognitive process in the mind of the individual. Teaching is not an end by itself but a means for learning to happen.



Accordingly, we could safely assert that the end of teaching is learning. On the other hand, there are multiples theories explaining and predicting how learning could happen as a social being and as individual. The more we know about how people learn the more we could help them for their learning to happen. Therefore, pedagogy for me is methods and techniques of helping others to learn. People naturally need assistance and guidance to know and learn something. So, the process of assisting and helping others to learn on the basis of scientific theories and techniques is what I call pedagogy.

QM: What are the major pedagogical approaches?

Solomon: The pedagogical approaches teachers should choose and employ depend and is dictated by the specific nature of the learners. There is no universally proved fit for all kind of pedagogy. However, focusing on individual's need and making students the center of the instructional process is the widely accepted approach by educators. That is, making the teaching learning approach as students centered as possible and engaging learners to the maximum possibility in their own learning could bring real learning.

Real learning happens when students are allowed to construct their own knowledge through systematic pedagogical support by their teachers. The fact that there is no ready-made knowledge and that students should be given opportunity to create and or construct their own knowledge would lead us toward favoring constructivist approach. Constructivism is not only a

pedagogy but theory of knowledge as well.

QM: Currently, several public and private higher education institution hire graduates with a high GPA and assign them to teach students without considering the graduates' pedagogical knowledge. Do you think they will be efficient and effective in teaching at universities? If not why?

Solomon: There is a wide gap and difference between a subject/content expert and a subject/content teacher. Subject expert is a person who has strong knowledge and skill about a specific subject matter whereas a subject teacher could be the same person but should have to have additional skill about how to teach the subject matter. A person could be a scientist or a mathematician but may not be efficient teacher even at lower grade levels because he/she lacks a very important ingredient of the teaching profession (Pedagogy).

Teaching is helping others to learn. If so, we have to know how to help others to learn; otherwise we may end up to the opposite effect to the extent we may completely destroy students' learning potential and future interest for learning a specific subject area. Accordingly, having a high GPA and even knowledge doesn't grantee a person to be effective and efficient teacher at all levels of education unless coupled with the necessary professional know-how like pedagogy and communication skills.

QM: What is the pedagogical background of instructors in our higher education institutions?



Solomon: Traditionally there was a tendency of believing that strong subject matter knowledge and skills are the only factors required for a person to be considered as a teacher in higher education system.

On the other hand, the reality and context of higher education in Ethiopia are dictating that teacher should assist and support their students more than at any other stages of the education system. The background of students in higher education is so diverse that diverse and multidimensional pedagogical approach plus guidance and counseling are required for students' successful completion of their education.

From this perspective the pedagogical background of teachers in higher education system in Ethiopia is not yet up to what it should be. I believe good number of teachers is devoid of pedagogical background. Not only they lack the pedagogical element necessary for effective teaching but they also lack the interest to develop their pedagogical missing element. By and large they believe that their content knowledge and their experience at university suffice for the purpose. I believe each teacher in higher education should be an educator in his /her respective area of specialization if students have to get maximum from the universities.

QM: Why is pedagogical knowledge necessary for an instructors, and students?

Solomon: The instructional (teaching-learning) process is the interaction of three key players. The teacher, students, and the curriculum are continually interacting in the classroom during teaching and learning process. For learning to happen this interaction has to be active and intentionally centered towards students. Pedagogy is always playing an implicit and explicit role by way of making life easy and smooth communication to happen in the classroom. Without pedagogy

there may be noise and conversation in the classroom, but may not be teaching and learning. Pedagogy gives confidence for teachers to communicate with purpose and achieve their purpose while it creates a learning opportunity for students.

QM: Do you think higher diploma program (HDP) which is currently given in higher institutions contributes or substitutes pedagogical courses

Solomon: Currently, there appears to be awareness about the importance of pedagogical knowledge and skills for higher education teachers. This is a very important start. The HDP was intended to at least sensitize higher education teachers who have pedagogical limitations. I believe the HDP could at least create awareness but it doesn't substitute proper education course in general and pedagogical detailed courses in particular. Pedagogy cannot be covered by a single course or module. It includes curriculum, educational psychology, classroom management, instructional design and media and many others. From this point of view, the single course or module designed without strict implementation modality plus without real interest of many staff cannot suffice the purpose. I believe there has to be extended induction program and CPD which may be linked with staff promotion and also be measured against students' learning impact.

QM: At present, to what extent pedagogical courses are given their due attention. What is your view in this regard?

Solomon: Some years ago, when all universities in Ethiopia were instructed to conduct BPR (Business Process Reengineering), one of the key reforms introduced at Addis Ababa University graduate program was the inclusion of one pedagogy course to all Master's programs. This pedagogy course/module was



handled by the college of education department of Curriculum & Instruction.

Around the beginning of the implementation, it attracted the interest of many new and young graduate assistants who are eager and ready to embark in to the teaching profession. However, the course was not warmly accepted by many colleges and senior staffs for no reason. Gradually, the attention for the pedagogy course/module declined to the extent good number of departments complained to drop the course from their program.

Currently, it almost lost its existence except in few colleges and departments. Surprisingly when departments are reviewing their curricula, the first reform they are doing is dropping the pedagogy course from the program package. At this point, one can't help this but sacrificing students for experimentation of "teaching-learning". I really would like to call upon the concerned policy makers to revisit the teaching-learning practices and culture in some of the higher education institutions by way of saving the generation.

QM: What are the disadvantages of teaching without pedagogical training?

Solomon: This is like asking 'what is the disadvantage of driving a car without holding a driving license'. Teaching is a profession to be performed by educated as well as by trained person. It is not a job to be done by any educated but untrained person. Teaching is not experimentation by content experts but a respected and valued job to be done by trained and professional teachers at all levels. Not only trained person but also licensed and certified teacher is needed for the level.

Therefore, I assert that there is no advantage of teach-

ing without pedagogical training. Teaching without pedagogical training instead would damage students' potential and interest. It may not facilitate students' learning. Teaching is not like dissemination of news where the audience has the right to listen or not. Students are supposed to benefit from the teaching. Hence, teaching without pedagogical training would potentially diminish the learning context and opportunity for learning.

QM: What solutions do you suggest to narrow the gap created between teaching and pedagogy?

Solomon: Teaching is a means for learning. Learning needs support from others in different modality. So far, pedagogy is believed to be fusing the process of teaching and learning. The more we appreciate the role of pedagogy for teaching the more we help learning to happen on the side of the learners. In Ethiopia, however, you are perfect and skillful in driving a car you are not allowed to drive a car without holding a driving license. Furthermore, having a driving license is not enough unless renewed periodically. Similarly, the teaching profession has to be done by licensed teachers whose license should be renewed periodically. I think we need to overhaul our teacher education system including teaching in higher education. This may need political decision and strict policy guideline and implementation although it may take time and resources. But it has to start somewhere. We also have to learn from other well developed countries' experience in general and higher learning institutions, who are valuing pedagogy and succeeded in promoting their students leaning, in particular.

QM: Thank you so much for devoting a portion your time to talk about the status of pedagogy in Higher education institutions.

Solomon: Thank you.



Education Jokes

Two guys decide that they'd go out drinking on the night before their exam.

Wasted on the night before, the two arrive at the university well after the exam ended. They went straight to the professor, saying that they couldn't take the test because one of the car's tires had gone flat. Surprisingly, the professor allows them and promptly tells them to come back tomorrow.

The two take this chance to cram as much as they can, and they return to the professor, ready for the test. The prof takes them into separate rooms and hands over their test papers. Flipping it over, they howl in laughter, seeing these simple questions like "What subatomic particles make up an atom?". This is too easy, they thought.

Once they've reached the final question, the two guys' jaw hung loose as they read "For 90 points, specify which tire went flat yesterday."

A university student wanted to sit next to one of his teachers at lunch

However, the teacher looked at the student with an arrogant face and said:

'A swan shan't be friends with a pig.'

'Then I shall fly on,' answered the student with a smile.

The teacher was clearly vexed by the cheeky reply and decided to make sure to do everything in his power to fail the student at the exams.

At the oral exam, he gave the student the hardest questions, but the student had amazing answers for everything. Therefore, hoping he could still fail his victim, the teacher asked him a trickier question:

'You're walking on a road and you find two bags. One contains gold, the other cleverness. Which bag do you choose?'

'The gold.'

'Unfortunately, I don't agree. I'd choose cleverness, because that's more important than money.'

'Everyone would choose what they don't have,' says the student.

The teacher turns red, and he's so angry he writes "ass" on the student's paper. The student leaves without looking at the paper. However, he returns shortly, gives back his paper and says:

'Excuse me sir, you did sign my paper, but you forgot to give my grade!'

An Invitation to Submit Letters to the Editor

QM is pleased to announce the introduction of a section that will feature letters to the editor. Those who wish to comment on an article published or anything in the newsletter will now have an opportunity to do so. We would welcome your input! Please send your news, and comments even an article related to quality education to share in upcoming newsletters:

To submit a letter to the editor, please email ceiqa@smuc.edu.et

Virtual links on Quality Assurance

Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) www.anqahe.org

Asian Pacific Quality Network (<http://www.apqn.org>)

ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) www.mqa.gov.my/oqan/

Association of African University (www.aau.org)

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www.mqa.gov.my/aqaalw/index01.cfm

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Center for International Research on Higher Education (<http://bc.org/avp/soe/cihe>)

Ethiopian Ministry of Education (<http://www.moe.gov.et>)

Eurasian Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) www.eaqan.org

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (<http://www.enqa.eu>)

European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education (EQANIE) www.eqanie.eu

Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (www.higher.edu.et)

Institute of International Education (www.iie.org)

International center of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE) www.the-ice.org

International Council for Open and Distance Learning (www.icde.org)

International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (<http://www.eric.ed.gov>)

International Network for Higher Education in Africa (NHEA) (<http://www.be.edu>)

International Network for Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
<http://www.inqaahe.org>

Program for Research on Private Higher Education (PROPHE)(www.allbany.edu/eaps/prophe)

Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia (<http://www.qsae.org>)

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK) (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>) Talloires network
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St. Mary's University

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