

Operational Plan on Teaching-Learning at Departmental Level

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Abstract

Strategic planning is a means to set directions towards achieving the vision of the University. It is a mission in action. It is a plan of growth and efficiency than any other similar set up McConkey (1981). Strategic planning is a structured approach to foresee the future and exploiting the inevitable. There is a need to have such plans in any University to function efficiently within its financial constraints at the same time be competent and vision bound. Well functioning University cannot afford to be static and needs continuous updation. Therefore it is an intellectual and a must exercise (Jurinksi, 1993). This paper focuses on operational plan on teaching-learning at the departmental level.

Keywords: Strategic planning, Operational plan, Efficiency, Teaching, Learning

Introduction

Teaching-learning is the core of any educational set up and it exists invariably. To reap the maximum benefits, one has to strengthen teaching-learning. How do we go about it? Some of the strengthening components of teaching-learning activities are joint teaching/co-teaching, deputation of faculty, reduction of course volume, building core competency, course plan, strengthening BOS, review of curriculum, use of ICT, strengthen or replace traditional courses, strengthen CIA with current and contemporary topics, movement from teacher-centric to student-centric teaching and introducing self learning courses. The operational plan for these components has been discussed in this paper.

Joint Teaching or Co-Teaching

Joint teaching or Co-teaching is defined as sharing a class by more than one teacher for effective teaching-learning process. Participating teachers in Joint teaching need to plan conduct and also evaluate the learning activities. Team teaching organized properly will help in reaching out to more number of students who have different styles of learning as different teachers will have different teaching styles. Team teaching will expose teachers to the subject expertise of their colleagues, different styles of planning and teaching and above all, it will help them acquire deeper understanding of subject matter. Departments need to plan out in detail before team teaching is implemented. Team teaching could be practiced in different ways. Some possible options are the following.

- a) Two or more teachers teach the same group at the same time.
- b) Team members meet to share ideas and resources but generally function independently.
- c) Team of teachers shares a common resource centre.
- d) Planning is shared, but teachers teach their own skill area to the whole group.

For implementation of team teaching in departments, departments need to first identify the subject area for team teaching. This could be done keeping in view the professional development of the teachers and learning styles of students. Once the subject area is identified, teachers need to be selected for team teaching on certain criteria. Expertise of teachers on the subject matter. Teaching experience of the teachers in the particular subject or topic could be some of the criteria that could be considered for selection of teachers for team teaching. Departments need to evaluate the effectiveness of team teaching on a regular basis.

Deputation of Faculty

Since there are many areas of interdisciplinary nature in every course, departments can seek the help of faculty from other departments who would have the specialization in that particular area. Departments may also consider introducing topics of interdisciplinary nature in their curriculum, useful in achieving course objectives.

Reduction of Course Volume

Course volume beyond a certain limit could cause strain in the teaching-learning process and may result in failure to achieve the objectives of the course. Hence it is very important to review the strength of the course volume periodically and make necessary modifications to ensure that course volume is appropriate. Experts' opinion also needs to be taken in this regard. Departments need to ensure that the total credit in a semester is not exceeding a prescribed limit.

Building Core Competency

Core competency is the fundamental knowledge, ability or expertise in a subject area or skill set. Faculty requires competency in different areas for effective teaching. Hence it is appropriate for every department to take measures in a planned manner to ensure faculty members master competencies which will help them to be more competent teachers. Departments could list out various competencies on priority basis and plan out strategies for building those competencies in the Faculty in a phased manner.

Course Plan

Teachers can strengthen their course plan by supplementing it with specific objectives and learning outcomes for the semester.

Strengthening Board of Studies (BOS)

The departments may strengthen their BOS by inviting experts from various fields, such as industry, corporate sector, education etc to have deliberate discussions on various aspects of the course which cater to the needs of industry and global competition.

Review of Curriculum

Teachers may note down the weaknesses existing in the present curriculum based on their experience and discuss it with experts of varied field to revise the curriculum.

Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

As the present day teaching is technology based, teacher need to go beyond just using power point presentations. Teacher has to explore the advantages of technology at various levels, such as Tablets, Software enabled teaching-learning process, smart board etc

Strengthen or Replace Traditional Courses

Traditional courses B.com, B.Sc, B.A, B.Ed has its lasting value even today but needs to be enriched with new ideas related to present scenario and more orientation towards the current trend. This can be done by identifying emerging areas matching the requirements with discussion in the department and discuss for its feasibility at the BOS meeting.

Strengthen Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA) with Current and Contemporary Topics

Continuous Internal Assessment is an assessment to evaluate the performance of the students on a regular basis. This will enhance the students skill sets (thinking, reasoning etc) and it will help teachers to inculcate the competence of research culture. With regard to continuous internal assessment, departments can discuss the contemporary topics related to the subject which is of interest to the students and can add value to their learning by setting clearly defined criteria for objective evaluation.

Movement from Teacher-Centric to Student-Centric Teaching

Student-centric teaching is focused on the student's needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. Student-centric teaching has the following advantages

- Strengthens student motivation
- Promotes peer communication
- Reduces disruptive behaviour
- Builds student-teacher relationships
- Promotes discovery/active learning
- Builds Responsibility for one's own learning

With the rising importance of student-centric teaching, various student-centric teaching strategies like discussion method, activity method, role-play and project method can be taken up as per the needs of students.

Introduction of Self Learning Courses

Self learning is the best way of learning because it drives the students to understand the concepts in a better way and in a free atmosphere with lateral thinking. Self learning courses can be introduced by identifying the course which facilitates self learning and by identifying faculty mentors facilitating with necessary inputs. The appropriate credits and evaluation pattern can be fixed through discussion within the department and finalising it in the Board of Studies.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper is served if the academic community across the globe are able to meet the expectations of stake holders and bring about changes in the current practices for quality enhancement.

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