

Towards an Educated India: Making Learning Curriculum Effective

WRITING or scripting a curriculum / syllabus presents some challenges. On the one hand, as the first communication with the students, the curriculum needs to convey the excitement and interest of the course, and give the students a sense of how this course(s) will change them and why they might want to take it. On the other hand, it can pose great threat if it is not covered in an experiential manner in the higher education.

The curriculum plays a vital role in both learning and teaching. It ensures a fair and impartial understanding between the instructor and students; it also defines policies relating to the course(s): these include what students would be learning in a course, behavior in the classroom, and efforts on student's behalf to be put into the course; in short, it provides a roadmap of course.

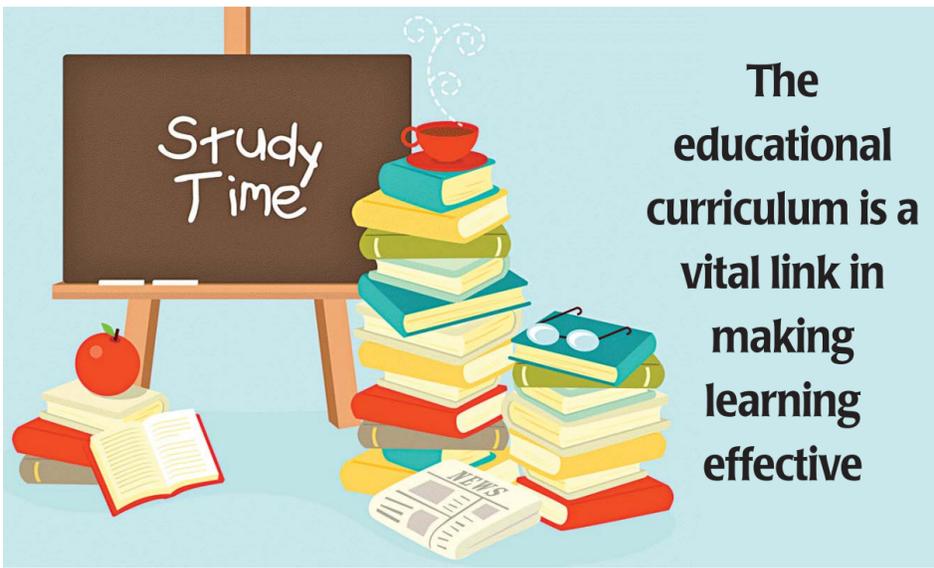
Both syllabus and curriculum are often used synonymously. While, curriculum is a focus of study, consisting of various courses all designed to reach a particular proficiency or qualification, a syllabus usually contains specific information about the course.

Human life, however varied, consists of performance of specific activities. Education is expected to prepare the students for life including the specific activities they choose. The education that one acquires is required to strengthen one to go out into the world of affairs and help him / her survive the profession that is ultimately chosen. And finally, Higher Education aims at improving our abilities, attitudes, habits, approaches and manners to cope with our professional lives. The course coverage & curriculum therefore should be definite and particularized. The curriculum should be one such that will enable the students to have series of sensitizations of experiences of the world of affairs.

The progress in Higher Education all over the world has set the thinkers and advocates consider the following facts about educational purposes of the curriculum:

1. What educational purposes a specific course should seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences should be provided that is likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Since the real purpose of Higher Education is not to have the instructor perform certain activities but to bring about significant changes in the students' views and sensitizing him / her to the professional world, it becomes important to recognize that



The educational curriculum is a vital link in making learning effective

any statements of objectives of the curriculum should be a statement of changes to take place in the behavior pattern of students.

Today, students pursuing higher & technical courses often complain that the curriculum design is defective and the syllabus not covered scientifically; it has not guided their learning or informed them what they needed to know in order to derive maximum benefit from the class. In short, today syllabuses are not learner centered. We see a lot of overlapping of topics, unwanted repetition, and sluggish treatment to the topics covered, which in turn tire the learner to a great extent.

The gap between industry's needs and the academic community's aspirations is becoming larger; in other words this gap is widening every year. Compulsions of a global market are bound to force industry in general to look afresh at their innovative processes and efforts. This process must be guided by higher and technical education by a complete paradigm shift from a simple capital intensive trading to a technology driven entrepreneurial one. In today's world technology is driving our

lives. New technologies are certainly part of the changes which in turn have changed the processes. We cannot afford to be cocooned in our creations and drag them on for our lives; our higher educational processes hence would need swift changes. One of them is changing the curriculum / syllabus after regular intervals and secondly, regular review of them. This also includes constant shuffle / change in the learning pedagogies.

Academic integrity and honesty are essential in the development of a professional education curriculum as well as syllabus of various subjects. The society is not willing to tolerate dishonest or otherwise unethical professional managers. The professional courses are generally excellent at teaching the numbers and analysis of risk with mathematical tools to evaluate the time value of money, etc. They should prepare students to live with risk, balancing professional and personal life, fairness in life, an internalization that selling right is listening first, solving people's problems and empathize with them. Most importantly each higher education program should emphasize on executing rather than only on making

strategies. We cannot afford to merely make strategies and depend on other to execute them. Executing is more vital for business success. The professional courses must incorporate them in the curriculum coverage.

(This article has been authored by **Dr. Vidya Hattangadi**, Professor of Marketing and Director at Anjuman-I-Islam's Allana Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai. She may be contacted at vidyah_28@yahoo.com.)

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Combining Innovation and a Business idea

FOR all those who are not very sure or comfortable about blogging, here is some good news. The young students can start working and also earn recognition, monetary compensation as well as publish their work online with an entire new platform to express themselves. The brainchild of Pushpendra Mehta, an author and a consultant, VCherish.com is an online media and electronic publishing website that invites young minds all over the globe to be counted, heard and involved in meaningful conversations. Kaveri Roy chats with the new-age entrepreneur on many things, including his hopes to empower the Gen Next through a common platform of VCherish. Excerpts:

How did 'VCherish' happen? What was your motivation behind such a new age entrepreneurial venture?

VCherish.com happened after the realization that there is no 'online media and e-publishing' initiative for young minds (age 15-45) across big city and small town India that provides them a paid freelance opportunity to express themselves and be heard. My motivation comes from a belief that it is this legion that can tomorrow create a truly 'developed' world...And what better way than virtual media and e-publishing to capture young minds "experiences, opinions, views, thoughts, and ideas."

What inspired you to venture into entrepreneurship after attaining such heights in your earlier profession?

As a professional with an entrepreneurial bent of mind, I thought it best to integrate my creative and business acumen as an "author, online media entrepreneur and career strategist" to make a small difference in the lives of young minds.

How do you see VCherish providing a substantial and sustainable earning opportunity to its target audience? What has been



IN CONVERSATION

the response to this innovative concept so far?

Earning in the new age is measured by the integration of the 'visibility' index and the 'earning' index. We go beyond the earning opportunity for our target audience. Because we publish the "name, profile and picture" of each paid freelance contributor, it does enhance their "recognition" index (within the domestic and international milieu) that can possibly be leveraged by them in various aspects of life - personal and professional. Currently we offer all our contributors a small fee for their contributions (articles and videos) and hope that as we grow we will make the compensation structure more attractive.

In a short period of time, VCherish.com has attained an international dimension and has published a variety of articles, pictures and videos encompassing big city and small town India, interesting facets of London, Italy and South Korea, and contributions received from New Zealand, Philippines, Tunisia and Silicon Valley, US.

How important a platform could VCherish.com be for young wannabe writers and authors?

A degree may not be mandatory for entrepreneurial success, but provides a network and the exposure to differentiated minds, which

MEET THE MAN:

An alumnus of the Northwestern University, U.S.A., Pushpendra Mehta has authored non-fiction book titled 'The Game of Life & Relationships: Few Are Prepared' in 2006. His book was reviewed as the best non-fiction work for the month of May-2006 by Suzie Housley. His new book titled 'Tomorrow's Young Achievers' deals with Entrepreneurship, risks and a range of related issues. A writer, author, journalist, career strategist and consultant, VCherish.com is Mehta's first venture into entrepreneurship.

We provide an opportunity to young wannabe writers, irrespective of location, academic or professional status, including experienced writers to publish with VCherish.com and fervently believe that providing an opportunity to "Young Minds" to contribute through articles, video and pictures will shape the creative energies and independent voice of the young for the 21st Century will belong to creative people.

How relevant do you think is a degree when it comes to real life Entrepreneurship?

A degree may not be mandatory for entrepreneurial success, but provides a network and the exposure to differentiated minds, which

can harness the entrepreneurial effort in a knowledge and digital world.

What kind of skills do you think are imperative to be a first generation entrepreneur, especially if one is starting young? Any tips to aspiring young entrepreneurs?

The ability to dream big and yet start small is imperative if one is starting young. It is important to acquire skills in marketing, public relations, communications, human resources, financial analysis, and negotiations, including the ability to develop a sound business plan. I would recommend young minds to first believe that experience is not mandatory for entrepreneurial success, and inexperienced minds too can create history as long as they believe in creating their own paradigms. Through my new book "Tomorrow's Young Achievers" I hope to inspire young minds to think 'Big, Bold and Different' because "History will remember you only if you are bold, chase big dreams, pursue your passion, make 'the' difference and are 'pro-unconventional' risks."

What are the future plans for VCherish?

We hopefully, will expand in a phased manner (2012-2014) to include "online education, retailing and events" for young minds under the aegis of VCherish.com

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