

COLLEGE POST

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– SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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EDITORIAL

HIGHER EDUCATION : TIME TO LOOK TOWARDS COLLEGES



A lot of discussion took place on higher education during the last one year. The Human Resource Development Ministry came out with four bills pertaining to reforms in higher education. Prior to that, we had a debate on National Commission for Higher Education and Research. It is hoped that all the initiatives taken by the MHRD will find suitable response from the Parliament. The question should be: whether all these initiatives will impact the larger part of higher education, that is, thousands of colleges, which are enrolling more than 80 percent of students in higher education? Given the scenario at the national level, there are no indications that the policy-makers are concerned about this large part of higher education system. There is an assumption that, if we take care of the universities we will take care of higher education. This assumption, in

our view, restrains the thinking process about supporting and reforming present system of affiliated colleges. Presently there are three sets of colleges. Colleges affiliated to universities in their respective area, autonomous colleges, and colleges which provide diploma under approval of AICTE. These are mainly colleges offering PG Diploma in Management. Within affiliated colleges there are further three categories, namely, Government colleges, Trust-run colleges with the support of the State/Central Government and private self-financing colleges. Even government and Trust-run government supported colleges have also been allowed to have self-financing courses.

What has been stated above is a well-known fact: one would be wondering what is the issue to refer to these types of colleges in this editorial. Yes, there is an issue of quality of educational processes in these colleges. Government colleges have frozen the appointment of teachers, Trust-run colleges, receiving grants from government for salary of teachers, have also not been allowed new recruitment and government have frozen grant-in-aid. This has seriously impacted the classroom processes and quality of education in them. The number of such colleges runs into thousands. Majority of students come from portals of these colleges, but we have not been able to address the issue of quality of processes and outcome of teaching and learning in the affiliated colleges. We have allocated major chunk of enhanced resources on higher education to the central universities and for creating so-called world-class universities. That is fine, but not paying adequate attention to colleges will adversely affect competitive edge of India in intellectual capital market of the world.

The policy of liberalization has allowed private self-financing colleges to come up. This has added a significant number of

professional education colleges in the country. This has greatly relieved pressure on students who are seeking admission in professional colleges. These institutions cater to a large number of engineering and management aspirants. These institutions have by and large created good infrastructures, but classroom and laboratory process and research suffer for want of good teachers and resources.

Hence the issue is: how do we ensure adequate resources, adequate quality of teaching-learning process and adequate number of teachers to support this? During eighties of the last century, a Commission on Teachers in School and Higher Education was constituted and this commission made several recommendations. Since then no thought has been given to this issue.

We feel urgent attention has to be given to address the issues of: (a) diversified and relevant curriculum, (b) evaluation and certification, (c) appointment of teachers and adequate remuneration to teachers in colleges including adhoc and part-time teachers. It is high time to address these issues so as to ensure quality of process and outcome in more than 20 thousand colleges in the country. One of the ways is to set up a separate Commission for Colleges. The agenda of National Council for Higher Education and Research is being very vast- it may not be able to address the issues pertaining to colleges.

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Editor
G.D. Sharma
Co-editor
Baldev Mahajan

Seventh Annual Conference of Indian Colleges Forum on Higher Education in India : Developing Dynamics held in collaboration with Meghalaya College Principals Council, Shillong from February 3-5, 2011

Inaugural Function

Indian Colleges Forum conducted its 17th Annual Conference at Union Christian College, Barapani, Shillong. Nearly 100 College Principals drawn from various parts of the country participated in the conference. The conference was inaugurated by His Excellency the Governor of Meghalaya, Shri Mushahari. In his inaugural address he stressed on quality of education, character-building role of institutions and promotion of value system in higher education. Welcome address was given by Dr. Miranda, President, Meghalaya College Principals Council.

Dr. G.D. Sharma, President, SEED and ICF highlighted the theme of the conference and also gave key note address on main theme of the conference—Higher Education in India: Developing Dynamics

Principal Samuel Lyndem of the host Union Christian College, Shillong and Dr. B.K Tyagi, Secretary ICF, proposed a vote thanks on behalf of the host institution and ICF, respectively.

Followed by this, technical sessions on the following themes were held:

- Quality of Higher Education for sustained growth and Development
- ICT-Enabled Higher Education
- Funding of Higher Education and other Associated Problems
- Networking for Professional and Skill-Oriented Education

Professor Sudhanshu Bhusan, Head Higher Education, NUEPA, New Delhi gave special address on funding of higher education.

Participants also did group work on the following aspects:

- a. Funding for Higher Education
- b. Social Justice in Higher Education
- c. Reforming Higher Education – Focus on Colleges
- d. ICT in Higher Education for Quality Improvement

They also made recommendations under each of the aspects for the consideration of relevant authorities. Dr. Debasis Choudhary presented summary of proceedings and recommendations.

Valedictory Function

Valedictory address was given by Shri Oscar Fernandes, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education. The function was presided by Dr. Mukul Sangma, Chief Minister of Meghalaya. Guest of Honours were : Shri PP Srivastav, Member NEC and Ms. Ampreen Lyngdoh, Hon. Minister of Education, Meghalaya.

In his valedictory address Shri Fernandes said, the colleges need to have special attention as they form a very important part of higher education. He said Standing Committee on education will consider issues raised in this forum. Mrs. B. Oscar Fernandez graced the occasion and distributed certificate to the participants.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Dr. Sangma, welcomed participants from different parts of the country and said his government is making all out efforts to promote colleges in the state. He said Meghalaya was known as educational hub in this region. His efforts is to make Meghalaya a modern education hub in North Eastern Region.

Shri PP Srivastav, Member NEC said that colleges form very important part of higher education. In fact most of higher education is done in colleges. He drew simile of education with human body. School are like legs in the body, colleges are belly of higher education and university is head. If belly is not taken care of properly head will suffer. It is, therefore, imperative that colleges are adequately supported and freedom should be given to them to innovate and develop.

Ms. Lyngdoh, Hon'ble Minister of Education, welcomed participants from different parts of the country and said her ministry has been able attend to some of the problems pertaining to staff and other related matters. Her ministry is committed to development of higher education in the state.

Dr (Smt) V. Kharmawphlang, Principal, CTE & Conference Coordinator, proposed a vote of thanks. Dr. S.C. Sharma , Vice President , SEED proposed vote of thanks on behalf of SEED, ICF.

Dr. C. Masser, Principal, Lady Keeny College Shilling, coordinated the proceedings of conference. Dr. E.V. Miranda, Chaired the Group Wolrk.

Colleges to have degree granting status

HRD constituted Committee headed by Professor Madhav Menon recommends that leading colleges should be given degree granting status. They could be given status of deemed to be university under the UGC ACT.

Foreign Education Providers' Bill

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, chaired by Shri Oscar Fernandes held discussions with stakeholders on Foreign Education Providers Bill. He requested deposing members to give their response on the questionnaire devised by the Standing Committee.

Swami Vivekananda (Cover Page)

SEED ICF celebrates 150 years of Swami Vivekananda, Spiritual Guru of World and thinker of Indian renaissance of Vedic and Modern world. He has shown path of progress and pride in being Indian.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT CROSSROADS — A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

SHRUTI VIP*

The paper examines developments in higher education in the context of changes pertaining to industrial, post industrial and neo-liberalisation. It raises concerns pertaining to gender aspects and makes recommendations to root policies in today's realities.

INDIA is said to be at the forefront of the knowledge revolution and one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Yet it has a quarter of the world's poorest people and the largest number of illiterate women (over 40 per cent). It was ranked 62nd among 108 developing countries in 2005 listed in the Gender Development Index (UNDP, 2007). Higher education in India suffers from several systemic deficiencies. As a result, it continues to provide graduates that are unemployable despite emerging shortages of skilled manpower in an increasing number of sectors. The standards of academic research are declining. Some of the problems of the Indian higher education, such as – the unwieldy affiliating system, inflexible academic structure, uneven capacity across various subjects, eroding autonomy of academic institutions, and the low level of public funding are well known. Many other concerns relating to the dysfunctional regulatory environment, the accreditation system that has low coverage and no consequences, absence of incentives for performing well, and the unjust public funding policies are not well recognised. Higher education institutions are embedded in a national political, regulative and governance systems. Higher education is witnessing a process of deep institutional change that involves the deinstitutionalization of its rooted policy and values frameworks and the parallel institutionalization of new ones. These processes entail a more or less strong resistances, conflicts, tensions but also efforts to conciliate, adapt, translate, assemble the new with the old, the national features of higher education system with the new globalizing pressures, the single institutions structural and cultural features with the new imperatives and demands. (Massimiliano Vaira 2004).

Policy does not emerge within a vacuum. Rather it develops within particular sets of values, pressures,

constraints, needs, aspirations and structural arrangements various interest groups, political parties and the media. The authors of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) Reports, 2006-08 and Yash Pal Committee Report, envisage a comprehensive and radical programme of educational reform at all levels of education in India so as to bring the country into the new knowledge economy.

Yash Pal, Chairman of the Joint Review Committee of the UGC and AICTE (2008) remarked that one of the reasons for the world being in the present mess is that the universities are not performing their functions

The standards of academic research are declining. Some of the problems of the Indian higher education, such as – the unwieldy affiliating system, inflexible academic structure, uneven capacity across various subjects, eroding autonomy of academic institutions, and the low level of public funding are well known.

properly. An urgent need for change was envisaged by different commissions on education from Radhakrishnan commission in 1940's, Kothari Commission in 1970's and Knowledge Commission in 2000's. But the change should come from within, rather than through any regulatory authority or government order. (B. Panduranga Narsimha Rao 2009). In India universities need to move beyond the concept of merely offering industry or community related courses and give due importance to collaboration. Universities should have permeable boundaries whereby the emphasis should be on integration rather than fragmentation.

Through University Outreach Programmes, concepts like open-distance Learning, Corporate Universities, extension education, adult education, university industry interaction etc. need to be imbibed to bring about collaboration rather than erecting isolated ivory towers.

Universities were established by the British government to serve the British domination in the second half of 19th century. However, the western liberal education also provided an opportunity to the Indian intellectuals to question British rule and became a powerful force in the freedom struggle to liberate India from British control. After independence universities stood for values of humanism scientific spirit during industrial growth. India's late arrival in the industrial transformation and also the legacy of British rule meant that state supported universities during first phase of

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expansion after independence could support the transformation to a limited extent. J.P.Naik had pointed out way back in 1975 that the development of an educational programme for the out of school youth should be based on the educational needs and interests of the young on the one hand and of the institutional and human resources available on the other.

The contemporary phase in the transformation of higher education is the age of globalization or post industrialization which is characterized by the IT revolution. Universities are again in the phase of transformation to support the generation of knowledge. Most importantly, the phase is witnessing an intense competition among capitalist nations and market is playing a dominant role. The neo liberal state is supporting the market but occupies important role in correcting the distortions of the market. Universities in India are facing dual transformation phase – phase of industrial transformation as well as post industrial transformation thereby making renovation and rejuvenation of higher education in India a necessity.

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Contradictions between Structures and Functions of Industrial and Post Industrial Phases

There is a dilemma that if regulatory structure is dismantled and new market friendly structure is established education will become elite oriented. If the old structure is continued, universities in a globalised scenario will lose their relevance. Hence a practical approach needs to be developed to remodel the structure in such a manner that universities are able to perform twin functions where it satisfies the conditions for industrial as well as post-industrial transformation. Probably NKC and YCR reports are attempts in this direction. NKC recommends steps for creating a system that supports establishing conditions for an effective market order.

In line with the spread of neo-liberal constitutionalism, GATS provides a political and legal framework for deregulation and privatization of education. Owing to the already existing overburdening of the public system due to budget constraints, governments have started increasingly to 'commercialize' public services to make them 'profit-oriented'. In such a case the government is obliged to grant market access (Article XVI) and national treatment (Article XVII). Much of liberalization in education comes as overflows from other sectors, free trade or protectionist interests and from the neo-liberal constitutionalist agenda espoused most forcefully by

international organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD. However a focus on GATS is not sufficient as it is equally imperative to understand the ideals of neo liberalism as reflected in the recommendations of Knowledge Commission.

Critical Appraisal of NKC

State guided by the market principles, as under neo-liberal doctrine, will perpetuate the differentiation and hierarchy. It is not the efficiency guided by the rules of market but the efficiency in terms of social priorities that should form the basis of education reform in a developing country like India. The agenda of reforms should include inclusion, quality, excellence, relevance and values to be created in the society. In the present phase of globalisation, when the movement of ideas and information is very fast, the developed countries have attempted to tap the resources that lie embedded in the

human resources of the developing countries. Thus knowledge has become the source of extracting surplus from developing countries either by making investments in the developing countries in the education sector or by inviting students from the developing world in the name of internationalization of education. It is imperative that India does not fall in the trap of the neo-colonialist strategy devised by the developed countries in the name of Knowledge Economy. It remains to be seen whether the educational policy of India has fallen in the trap of 'Finance Imperialism' and following the diktats of the World Bank and the I.M.F or the state has maximised national interests as well?

NKC seems to be guided by the necessity of reproducing the corporate capitalism. Thus while its recommendations will guide India to be a major capitalist

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power, it might be an India of greater differentiation and hierarchy. The suggestion of NKC of encouraging pluralism, diversity and differentiation in educational institutions and avoidance of uniform "one-size fits-all" institutions also needs to be critically evaluated. NKC notes that 'higher education is about a quest for excellence. It is, at least in part, about distinction and not always about levelling.' However, there is no reason

why equal opportunities should not be created for all institutions, although at any point of time there will remain differentiation.

For the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) to make the right recommendations, it needs to know the real causes of past failures. No NKC document has

studied the past record of knowledge management in India. Has the NKC done something to ensure these remains to be seen “Expert raj” may be worse than license raj. In following the Western precedents, a la Macaulay has continued to pervade in the educational system. Though the commission acknowledges that mathematics and science education ought to be a priority, the content and approach of these subjects should be rooted to Indian context, indigenous in applicability and do away with the ghost of Macaulay that still haunts our education system. In the current wave of market reforms, questions are being raised on the role of the state and on the rationale of public subsidies, and it is also being indicated that it is both desirable and feasible to reduce, if not eliminate altogether, the public subsidies in higher education.

Issues of Equity

The definition of knowledge as projected by NKC is limited, uncritical and abstract, and not located in the grounded realities of oppression and marginalisation in Indian society. Instead of playing a critical and leading role in providing a balanced vision of future national development, the reports emphasize the need for trained, English-speaking technical personnel for global corporations, validate privatization, and justify the focus on the techno-sciences and the expanding information technology sector at the expense of the social sciences and humanities. The discourse of efficient management, maximising productivity, downsizing institutions and rationalising operations rather than of educational goals, social responsibility, accommodating diversity and providing equity, access and justice is definitely going to downplay the issue of gender disparity. As such, the reports do not treat gender issues with any degree of seriousness. The implications of the reforms for women’s education and empowerment are as follows:

- The NKC report commodifies knowledge as capital to maintain a “competitive edge” in the new global world. Science and technology, “relevant” education which will produce trained workers for the industry, intellectual property rights and innovation form the core of this document to the near exclusion of the social sciences and the arts, which have the greatest number of women students and academics.
- Those who are least likely to have access to technology — the poor, women and the marginalised (the majority of the population) remain on the other side of the “digital divide”.
- A major concern in the Knowledge Commission

reports is with language. English is described as a “determinant to access”, thus disadvantaging those who do not have English-medium schooling, the majority being girls.

- This policy will put higher education beyond the reach of poor students, particularly of women. Fee waivers have been suggested for “needy” students, but the social and cultural context and factors that discriminate against women are ignored. For example, many parents are not inclined to invest in their daughters’ education because of socio-cultural reasons, even when they can pay for it (Chanana Karuna).
- Women and men have different needs and constraints when accessing and using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). There is a greater need to focus on differentials and variations among women by class, race and ethnicity and

address debates on gender and globalization which have not been attempted by either of the two reports adequately.

- Modernisation and globalisation processes have had complex and contradictory effects on women altering gender relations as a result of women’s entry into the public sphere e.g. women’s rights to education, gainful employment, and health are all under threat as a result of government cutbacks in these spheres. Most of the private institutions are very expensive and a longstanding understanding of the social situation of women indicates that a majority of the parents are reluctant to invest in the

education of their daughters whose education does not have a production value because her income goes to the groom’s family.

- Finally, gender issues do not figure at all in any of the reports. In fact, women are never mentioned as a social category. Gender is left to “Potential Future Areas”, which is to be discussed later along with public health, environment and teacher training.

It is pertinent to note that none of the reports have analysed the limits under which UGC has been providing the institutional support to university system in India. UGC was an agency to provide guideline to maintain standards in higher education to the universities. It also provided the plan support to development purposes.

Limits of UGC

It is pertinent to note that none of the reports have analysed the limits under which UGC has been providing the institutional support to university system in India. UGC was an agency to provide guideline to maintain standards in higher education to the universities. It also provided the plan support to development purposes. The only instrument of control with UGC was that it could stop funding to a limited number of institutions if they failed to comply with regulations for the maintenance of standards. State governments and universities under state act were constitutionally independent under the federal governance. UGC had no power to interfere with

the functioning of the university under federal structure. Though UGC became another bureaucratic organisation rather than developing an academic outfit to guide the university, simply by reducing UGC's role as mere funder would not serve the purpose of improving higher education.

Both the reports have pointed out a deep crisis in higher education in India. and have many useful ideas for reforms but these merit serious discussion and consensus building. Higher education policies rooted in the past will not work. (Aggarwal Pawan, 2007) We need policies rooted in today's realities with ability to adjust to changing circumstances as D.S. Kothari pointed out more than 40 years ago. Gender issues in education cannot be considered in isolation. They have to be understood along the axes of class as well as geographical location. It is important to look at women's issues as crosscutting with other disparities and disadvantages. When policy makers avoid the issue of the gender divide and assert that it does not exist, they think primarily of urban, upper middle class women and rarely of the majority of poor, rural women.

Conclusion

While enrollment in the information technology and engineering has been increasing at a rate of 54% in the last 5 years, enrollment in the undergraduate courses has come down by 1% and enrollment in the medical has increased by 30%. India's educational policy should not be geared to only a few sectors like I.T but produce a balanced number of engineers, doctors, scientists, teachers, informed agricultural workers and trained laborers thereby bringing about a diversification of education. Though the XI Plan has earmarked the training of 50 crore people in vocationalisation the drive is neither based on quality assurance nor on market convergence and the demands of Indian home market. Any policy perspective in education must also take into account the problem of brain drain as the best of our brains move out in search of greener pastures and all the investment which the government makes on their education and training goes waste.

The pursuit of quality should not link itself with privilege and should not become inimical to that of quantity. The goals of equality, quality and quantity still remain elusive and it remains to be seen whether the reforms in Higher Education would lead to their attainment. A simultaneous and direct political and economic action to create the new society in which the poorer sections are aware of their rights and are able to come into their own should be implicit in any radical reconstruction of the educational system. (Naik J.P 1982) The two main forces of modernization - education and science and technology, have allied themselves with the elite and improved their standards of living but

have not done the same service to the mass of marginalised and deprived people. Despite many advances for women since Independence, in the 2001 Census 245 million Indian women were still illiterate and 40 per cent of Indian girls less than 14 years of age did not go to school. These figures indicate that nearly half the brain power represented by women in India is not being utilised for the development of the country. The deeply internalised patriarchal notions even among educated women also need to be addressed through gender sensitization which is sadly missing in both the documents. The larger question of educational goals needs to be addressed and discussed. Is the goal of effecting social transformation through education to be totally abandoned to privilege the need to supply recruits for the newly emerging global markets? Surely, innovative education reforms can incorporate both market needs and social ones.

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TRANSFORMING LEARNING : AN ADAPTIVE INTELLIGENCE

DR. SMT. BANU R. DHAKAN*

This paper proposes to study different aspects and methods incorporated in the study of professional and skill-oriented education.

Introduction

In this globalised, tech-savvy society, education and especially higher education has undergone a metamorphosis. The concept of teaching-learning has assumed a more learner-oriented, activity-oriented perspective. In this paradigm shift; conventional aspects & approach in simulated situations has acquired a back seat. Rejuvenation, renewal, redecoration are the buzz words reflecting the new norms, new dimensions leading to the new era, still withholding the basic ingredients of education, in the limelight of disciplined education.

Traditionally, curriculum development for professional; and technical courses assumes assignment. These assignments reflect workplace activities. This paper proposes to study different aspects and methods incorporated in the study of professional and skill oriented education. For discussion, a course in Communications Studies - professional and technical education has been taken into account. It promotes the idea that disciplinary specific classes and multi-disciplinary groupings are preferred than simulated activity system. Given below are the four aspects:

Professional writing contexts: disconnect between the academic preparation and the world of work.

Worlds apart as a paradigm case: distinction between action and operation.

A discipline based model: General habits of the mind that may serve in professional as well as academic world.

A multi –disciplinary model: coherent vision of the activity system, in this view, the varied activities of disciplines are part of a larger activity system dedicated to the making of knowledge.

The course I wish to discuss is pertaining to Communications Studies, Professional and Technical Communication. It is not a part of a full-blown

professional and technical writing program; it is a relatively isolated "service" course. In this course, students from a variety of disciplines, including Engineering, Business, Geography, Computer Science, and Chemistry, are "taught to write" in ways that are, or are imagined to be, appropriate to the workplaces in which they will practice their professions. This type of class presents special problems because students typically do not see themselves as "writers," professional or otherwise. Therefore they do not necessarily identify

professionally with the central activity of the course. Rather, they see it, with some justification, as a sort of bolt-on activity that may help them be successful in some other field such as Engineering; or Business. In such a course it becomes a particular challenge to provide classroom activities that are and are perceived to be relevant to a wide range of professional contexts.

The course could, in principle, administrators and faculties report that they value the opportunity to have their students work outside their disciplinary box and mingle with students from other disciplines. Finally, the heterogeneous audience provides a pedagogical opportunity.

In fact, one of the leitmotifs of the course is the Challenger disaster, a disaster that can be directly traced to the inability of managers and engineers to share the same communicative universe and even commerce students don't appreciate the beauty of the language. These assignments reflect workplace activities. However, as I will discuss later in more detail, this diversity also magnifies the challenge of assigning authentic activities.

A major reconstruction of the course offered the opportunity to rethink the curriculum of the course and move it from the parade-of-genres mode in which it had previously been cast, toward a more rhetorically-grounded and inquiry-based course that gave both primary and secondary research activities a place at the centre rather than at the margins of the curriculum.

Further fine-tuned over several succeeding iterations of the course. In the following discussion, the pronoun "we" refers to this shifting team of course

The concept of teaching-learning has assumed a more learner-oriented, activity-oriented perspective. In this paradigm shift; conventional aspects & approach in simulated situations has acquired a back seat. Rejuvenation, renewal, redecoration are the buzz words reflecting the new norms, new dimensions leading to the new era, still withholding the basic ingredients of education, in the limelight of disciplined education.

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developers as we successively developed and refined the details of the course and rearticulated the epistemological assumptions on which these activities were based. As we attempted to refurbish the assignments that we expected students to complete – that is, the fundamental activities of the course – we found ourselves forced to rearticulate our understanding of the activity system in which the course is embedded, and thus to confront some of the implications of Activity Theory itself.

Professional Writing Contexts

When we ask the question, "What should students be doing in a Professional and Technical Communication class," it seems intuitive to answer by referring to what "really" happens in the workplace. For instance, Green and Nolan (1984) begin with the seemingly common-sense statement; "A successful technical communication program should prepare students to perform competently upon entering the profession" begins her survey of technical communication programs with a literature review that outlines "the gap between workplace demands and graduate skills". She notes an earlier survey which found that only 30% of employers were satisfied with their employees' initial preparation in writing skills. There is "a disconnect between the academic preparation of engineers and the world of work that they enter on graduation"

In short, this "Closing the Gap" literature assumes, often as something virtually, self-evident, that post-secondary education should prepare students with skills that translate easily and quickly into the workplace. The result is the familiar, highly generalized list of professional genres that underlies many traditional courses in Professional and Technical Communication.

This assumption, so sensible as to seem self-evident, has recently come under heavy fire from researchers who take a more complex notion of what an "activity" is. Drawing on activity theory, situated cognition and genre theory, researchers such as Russell (1997), Winsor (1999), and Dannels (2003) provide rich ethnographically based examinations of specific classroom and professional contexts. This work focuses not on typical formats (the memo, the letter, the report) or on rhetorical strategies as such (identifying the audience, discovering material), but on systems of activity that transcend these specific actions. The actions are given meaning by the situated activity systems in which they are embedded and the purposes that drive those systems.

These authors, like those who write the "Closing the Gap" literature, note a difference between academic and workplace writing. However, they do not leap from identifying a difference to assuming that this difference is a gap that must be (or can be) bridged. For most of the authors in the activity theory literature, the actions of professionals cannot easily be stripped of context and imported into the classroom – perhaps not at all.

Worlds Apart as a Paradigm Case

Rather than rehearse the countless variants on this argument, I will illustrate this line of reasoning by concentrating on one source that, in my view, takes activity theory and its close cousins such as situated learning to their logical extreme in arguing for the

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difference between the academy and the workplace. This source is Dias, Freedman, Medway and Pare's rich, broad-ranging and in many ways deeply disturbing book, *Worlds Apart: Acting and Writing in Academic and Workplace Contexts* (1999). Dias, Freedman, Medway and Pare argue that writing and learning to write is an intensely situated, context-dependent activity. Like any constellation of knowledge that has passed beyond the purely theoretical, it can be said to truly exist only within communities of practice. It is learned not by observing models or by internalizing explicit precepts – although these call k important learning activities in the proper context. Rather, it is learned by absorbing

through apprenticeship the forms, activities, purposes, and most important, embedded assumptions that comprise rhetorical genres in the complex sense.

Activity theory informs this work by making important distinctions between activities, actions and operations. Activities such as "writing a report" are oriented toward some large-order, long-term goal, such as improving profits for a large corporation. The activity can also be analyzed as the goal of a number of short-range actions such as circulating a draft, consulting with colleagues, and reading other reports. In turn these actions are realized by a vast number of small-order operations such as keyboarding, dialing a telephone, operating a photocopier, and so on. At the other end of the continuum, activities are organized into far-reaching activity systems – for instance, the activity system of a large corporation which brings together a wide range of activities under a master motivation of making profits for shareholders.

An important result is that the "gap" between academic and workplace writing begins to look very different. Indeed, it can be shown that at least some of the actions performed are very similar. Academic and

workplace writers, for instance, must both match their vocabulary with the audience and review and interpret others' rough drafts. But just as the action of "taking a bus" can take on a completely different meaning as part of the activity "picking up the kids at daycare" rather than "going downtown to see a movie," so the actions of writing, though made up of similar operations, can be said to be utterly different when performed as part of the activity system of producing a report in the writing class as opposed to producing a report in XYZ Inc.

A natural corollary is that school genres are so different from workplace genres that the two are simply incommensurate.

For educators developing a Professional and Technical Communication course, then, activity theory as presented by Dias, Freedman, Medway and Pare seems course suggest a highly disturbing double-bind. It argues convincingly against walking students through a parade of professional genres. However, it does not appear to offer much help in deciding what to replace them with.

Activity theory, then, raises a challenge that absolutely needs answering. Is there any way we can teach professional and technical communication within the activity system of the academy, or should we concentrate on providing content knowledge and wait for students to enter the workplace, either as internship students or full-fledged inhabitants of the workplace world, before we can hope that they will learn the appropriate patterns of doing and knowing? Simply put: is there any point in teaching Professional and Technical Communication in the academy at all?

A Discipline-based Model

Smart and Brown do not vigorously pursue the pedagogical implications of their insight that learning may be transformed even if not transferred. Atemeva, Logie and St-Martin (1999) show us more details of how this might be done in a course closely tied to a specific discipline. They agree with Smart and Brown that it is futile to try to import workplace genres wholesale into the academic world. At the same time, they take up the argument (with Dias, Freedman, Medway and Pare) that the academic world forms a different but equally valid network of discourse communities. Their solution to the need for authenticity in learning is to make maximum use of the discourse community in which their students are currently immersed. They describe a communication course that is tightly coupled with the engineering courses that students are taking in their discipline. Their assignments – a formal business letter, proposal, progress report, and completion report – superficially

resemble the parade-of-genres curriculum that has rightly fallen from favor. There is a key difference, however. The tight coupling of the course with disciplinary activities situates these genres in the real discourse community that students will inhabit. Intensive teamwork is introduced to replicate the communal knowledge-building that marks much workplace writing.

Atemeva, Logie and St-Martin assert that these assignments, growing out of the activity system of the academy rather than that of the workplace, will eventually translate to the workplace even if they do not transfer wholesale:

By introducing these assignments, we are attempting to equip students with skills and strategies that can be applied to their other engineering courses and that will facilitate their transition to the workplace.

This assertion might be taken to be a bit faith-based when seen from a strict activity theory viewpoint. However, I argue that work such as that of Atemeva, Logie and St-Martin suggests that if we treat the

By introducing these assignments, we are attempting to equip students with skills and strategies that can be applied to their other engineering courses and that will facilitate their transition to the workplace.

academic world as a valid epistemic universe in its own right, we can equip students with general habits of mind that may serve them in the professional as well as in the academic world.

This perspective frees us as educators from having to decide between simulating workplace genres and choosing activities that have meaning only in the academy – to put it bluntly, between being fake and being irrelevant.

Rather than simulating workplace genres more or less exactly, we can design activities that are authentic now (in the academic activity system) which we hope or students can transform into useful skills later (in the workplace activity system). In doing so, we need not reject the findings of activity theory. Rather, we embrace them but re-conceptualize their implications for pedagogical practice by basing our teaching around the academic activity system rather than attempting to simulate the activity systems of various workplaces.

For our purposes in developing a multidisciplinary course, however, we still had a problem. In order to develop activities that students perceive as being meaningful, do we have to follow Atemeva, Logie and St-Martin in tying instruction closely to a single discipline? Or is there an activity system that transcends disciplinary boundaries, even if only loosely, that could be referred to as the activity system of the academy. In order to develop an effective multidisciplinary service course, this question is clearly crucial.

A Multidisciplinary Model

For the purposes of grounding Communications Studies in a coherent vision of this activity system, we chose

not to be daunted by a vision of the academic world as a network of worlds characterized by largely incommensurate disciplinary discourses. Rather, we referred to literature that considers the epistemological mission of the university from a higher-order perspective in which these highly varied discourse practices are held together by a common vision of "the research university." In this view, the varied activities of disciplines are part of a larger activity system dedicated to the making of knowledge. Taking this approach makes sense only in an institution that characterizes itself as a research university, and may be less relevant to professional and technical writing situated in liberal-arts colleges, two-year colleges, technical institutes, and other types of post-secondary institutions. However, it is appropriate to the context I am discussing here.

This view of the university is perhaps most persuasively argued by the Boyer Report (1998), which claims that research should be the paradigm activity for graduate and undergraduate students alike:

Undergraduates need to become an active part of the audience for research. In a setting in which inquiry is prized, every course in an undergraduate curriculum should provide an opportunity for a student to succeed through, discovery-based methods. Even though advanced research occurs at advanced levels, undergraduates beginning in the freshman year can learn through research.

While the jury is still out on whether these practices can be generalized across research communities, the lofty ideals of the Boyer Report provide a philosophical point of reference for an interdisciplinary course that must address the needs of students from across the campus.

Consequently, we decided that it would be foolish even to attempt to simulate closely the precise research practices of a half-dozen disciplines and professional orientations. However, research practices, like all activities, must be situated in some community of practice in order to be meaningful. As practitioners in the field of Rhetoric and Communication, we chose to position students as legitimate peripheral participants (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in the professional discourse of Rhetoric itself. The two research activities that we selected as fundamental to this discourse community were ethnographically based rhetorical research and rhetorical analysis. The course took shape around two major assignments that foregrounded these activities, though these two assignments were in fact drawn out into a variety of cumulative activities including proposals, oral presentations of results and an array of other activities including reading responses, freewrites, peer responses and other supplementary activities.

The first assignment was deceptively simple looking: in pairs, interview a professional in any field who uses

communication as part of his or her daily life and write up the results. This activity, of course, conceals a vast array of tasks, some quite new to the students in the course. They had to develop useful questions and link them explicitly to some of the concepts that had been explored in some of the readings covered to date in the course (that is, learn how to use secondary research to guide primary research). Then they had to conduct the interview, transcribe the data, organize the data thematically so that some coherent general themes emerged from the fine-grained details, develop a thesis based on those themes, and argue the conclusion convincingly based on the data. By the time they wound up the project by making brief oral presentations of their results, the students had spent a considerable length of time as legitimate peripheral participants in a light-duty version of ethnographically based rhetorical research.

The second assignment was designed to build on the first. On its face it was a fairly familiar assignment: find a publicly available document of some kind – an instruction sheet, a brochure, an annual report – and produce a fully featured technical report explaining what could be done to improve the document. Again, the details of the assignment were constructed to embed a variety of other activities important to research culture. Students had to call on their interview skills again in order to track down representatives of the organization that had produced the document and discover what purpose it served in the textual life of the organization. Thus students had to wrestle yet again with the complex concept of organizational culture and the role of various texts that produced it and were produced by it.

They also had to do a formal rhetorical analysis of the document itself to discover, not what was wrong with it, but how it functioned rhetorically: how it evoked its audience, how it presented the ethos of the organization that produced it, what persuasive appeals it used, and why the information was presented a certain way and not others. Students did secondary research in the journals to find out how to describe various aspects of document construction and what the literature recommended as effective ways of presenting information in various contexts. In short, they had to learn, in the context of this one complex assignment, many of the details of document design that we had hitherto tried to teach them in a more explicit but often less satisfactory way. In the process they also had to begin finding their way through the complex discourse community represented by journal articles in the field of professional communication.

Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

Activity theory provides a compelling argument that there is little point in designing a course around an activity

system in which the student is not yet immersed. Since career-oriented professional communication courses are often designed in precisely that way, those who teach such courses can be forgiven for finding this body of research depressing. On the other hand, the positive contribution of activity theory is to direct pedagogy toward students' present activity systems. In contrast to literature that demands that we "close the gap" between the world of university and the world of work, it suggests that curriculum should be designed around the activity systems of the research university in order to take advantage of the context in which students are currently immersed.

This study also suggests an alternative to highly discipline-specific research activities. While studies like that of Atemeva, Logie and St. Martin articulate significant advantages to coupling professional communication courses tightly to specific professional disciplines, students perceive compensating advantages in learning to function in multi-disciplinary groups. They see the advantages predominantly in terms of preparation for a career in which they may have to work with people outside their immediate community of practice. Aside from direct career preparation – a motive that we abandoned in the development of Communications Studies – it is also possible to see the activity of communicating across disciplines as part of the larger but less focused activity learning larger-order skills such as how to "read" a new audience in a rhetorically complex manner. If the key to a successful transition from the academy to the workplace is a broadly conceived set of adaptive skills – an understanding of how to "transform learning" (Smart & Brown, 2002) rather than simply transferring it – then multi-disciplinary groupings may provide an important context for developing this adaptive intelligence.

This study raises many more questions than it answers, of course. It represents a small sample of students from a single experimental course. The question of how the activity system or systems of the university vary across disciplines demands much broader ethnographic study. More specifically, we know very little about how students can best be prepared for the transition to the workplace if we reject the notion of providing them with specifically transferable skill sets. Internship studies provide a particularly promising avenue of investigation if they can be focused on what abilities the interns' academic preparation does provide them, as well as revealing the startling and disturbing extent to which they must re-learn how to function in their new discourse community.

In contrast to literature that demands that we "close the gap" between the world of university and the world of work, it suggests that curriculum should be designed around the activity systems of the research university in order to take advantage of the context in which students are currently immersed.

The widest ranging conclusion of this paper is that activity theory does not have to be taken to imply that teaching Professional and Technical Communication in a school setting is futile. If we as teachers can relax our grip on the notion that we must teach skills that are immediately portable to the workplace, we can begin to refocus our attention from our students' futures to their present. Professional and Technical Communication can be part of the research-based epistemic system in which our students are involved today. Rather than looking forward, we must look sideways at what our students do when they leave our classes and enter those of our colleagues in a variety of disciplines. By thus shifting our attention, we can support our students in the experience of being students. If some of the habits of mind that we teach then today can be usefully reconceived in the workplace tomorrow, that must be seen as a bonus. All these observations lead to the conclusion that if the key to a successful transition from the academy to the workplace is a broadly conceived set of adaptive skills- an understanding of how to "transform learning" rather than simply transferring it- then multi-disciplinary groupings may provide an important context for developing this adaptive intelligence.

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ONLINE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT : A NOTE

DR. K.K. SHARMA*

This note highlights use of IT in Management of Higher Education

Abstract

Different online measures like online registration, subject/section allotment, time-table, attendance and sessional-marks documentation etc. for the students of university campus as well that of affiliated/associated colleges have been discussed. The creation of webpage for each admitted student works as an inventory of the data-base of the student and is of great advantage for the career counselling of the students by the university.

Introduction

Governance of a university with large network of colleges is a challenging task. The barriers of space, time and distance have been diminished through the application of Information Communication Technology (ICT). The advent of optical fibre, cellular telephony, Internet, Voice-over- Internet etc. have virtually done away with the distances. The ICT has helped a great deal in the management of university system. So far, the institutions of Advanced Studies like IIT's, IIM's, AIIMS and the Central Universities were the beneficiaries. Now the State Universities have also taken the cue.

Different Online Management Processes

A university can implement following online processes:

- Online Registration Process (for students of Campus as well for affiliated Regular and Self Financed Colleges).
- Online Section/Subject allotment
- Online Time Table
- Online Sessional Marks
- Student's Webpage etc.

The online registration system for students whether on campus or in regular or self financed colleges minimizes students and college efforts, reduces travel and time required. Students can apply in several colleges in one go. It eliminates misinformation and minimizes confusions. It is available all the 24x7 hours. It is college friendly too. It gives scope to a large number of candidates across the country even globally. Drawing merit lists category-wise gets much easier. The quality

of students admitted gets improved. The university also accrues great advantages from online registration system. It gets a panoramic view of candidates seeking admission to its campus and affiliated colleges. The correct data base of all the registered candidates is generated and transparency in admission process is ensured. The admission process in the University or the colleges is completed within prescribed time.

As soon as the student's name is ticked on the college Webpage, a separate Webpage for every student who has been so admitted can be opened on the university Web site. The subsequent section/subject allotment, the time table, the attendance, sessional marks are depicted on student's Webpage. This Webpage will be accessible to him/her by entering user name and password which he/she has chosen at the time of registration.

Webpage for student works as his full inventory during his/her stay in the university. University/College can use it for the Career Counselling of the students as well.

Discussion and Conclusion

Abnormally large size of most of the State Universities with affiliating character, always with several lakhs of students and several hundreds of colleges, becomes a great handicap for their governance. The online management system can salvage them out from the morass of mismanagement. The slothful manual working in these universities, right from students' registration to the publishing of results, can be checked by adopting online techniques. Prolonged admission process, nonobservance of university calendar, untimely examination activities, late publishing of results, incomplete and incorrect mark sheets and degrees are common features of these universities. Online techniques will also put a scanner on the teaching and learning activities of the university and the colleges. The wide spread absenteeism of the students from classrooms can also be checked through these measures. A unique identity of the student by giving him a personal Webpage will not only give him the necessary academic information and the status of his attendance, internal assessment and any assignment given to him but will also enable him to receive necessary counseling by the university for his/her career ahead.

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REMEMBERING SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA*

Two worlds there are in which we live, one the external, the other internal. Human progress has been made, from days of yore, almost in parallel lines along both these worlds.

The search began in the external, and man at first wanted to get answers for all the deep problems from outside nature. Man wanted to satisfy his thirst for the beautiful and the sublime from all that surrounded him: he wanted to express himself and all that was within him in the language of the concrete; and grand indeed were the answers he got, more marvelous idea of God and worship, and most rapturous expressions of the beautiful. Sublime idea comes from the external world indeed. But the other, opening out of humanity later, laid out before him a universe yet sublimer, yet more beautiful, and infinitely more expansive. In the karma-kanda portion of the Vedas, we find the most wonderful ideas of religion inculcated, we find the most wonderful ideas about and over ruling creator preserver, and destroyer in the universe presented before us, in language sometimes the most soul-stirring most of you perhaps remember that most wonderful shloka in the Rig-Veda samhita where you get the description of chaos, perhaps the sublimities that has ever been attempted yet. In spite of all this, we find it is only a painting of the sublime outside, we find that yet it gross, that something of matter yet clings to it. Yet we find that it is only an expression of the infinity of the language of matter, in the language of finite of the muscles and not of the mind; it is the infinite of space, and not of thought.

There in the second portion or Jnana-kanda, we find there all together a different procedure. The first was search in the external nature for the truths of the universe; it was an attempt to get the solution of the deep problems of life from the material world, "whose glory these Himalayas declare "these is a grand idea, but yet it was not grand enough for India. The Indian mind had to fall back, and the research took a different direction altogether; from the external to search came to the internal, from matter to mind.

There arose the cry. "When a man dies, what becomes of him?" etc. "some say that he exists, others, that he is gone; say, O king of Death, what is the truth?" An entirely different procedure we find here. The Indian mind got all that could be had from the external world, but it did not feel satisfy with that. It wanted to

search further, to dive into its own soul, and the final answer came.

The Upanishads, or the Vedanta, or the Aranyakas, or Rahasya, is the name of this portion of the Vedas. Here we find that once that religion has got rid of all external formalities. Here we find at once that spiritual things are told not in the language of matter, but in the language of spirit, the super fine, in the language of superfine. No more any grossness attach to it, no more is there any compromise with things of worldly concern. Bold, brave, beyond the conception of the present day, stand the giant minds of the sages of the Upanishads, declaring the noblest truths that have ever been preached to humanity, without any compromise, without any fear. This is my countrymen; I wanted to lay before you. Even the Jnanakanda of the Vedas, is a vast ocean; many lives are necessary to understand even a little of it. Truly has it been said of the Upanishads by Ramanuja that they form the head, the shoulders, the crest of the Vedas, and surely enough the Upanishads have become the Bibles modern of India. The Hindus have the greatest respect for the Karma-Kanda of the Vedas, but for all

practical purpose, we know that for ages by Shruti have been Upanishads, and the Upanishads alone, we know that all our great philosophers, whether Vyasa, Patanjali, or Gautama, and even the father of all philosophy, the great Kapila himself, whenever they wanted and authority for what they wrote, everyone of them found it in the Upanishads, and nowhere else, for therein are the truths that remain forever.

Sublime idea comes from the external world indeed. But the other, opening out of humanity later, laid out before him a universe yet sublimer, yet more beautiful, and infinitely more expansive.

(*part of lecture delivered by Swami Vivekananda at Lahore on the 12th November 1897) (*Readers are advised to read from Selection from the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Published by Advita Ashram, 5 Dehi Entally Road, Kolkata 700014, PP244-5*)

PENSION BY STATE SYSTEM

World's first pension by state system was introduced in 1889 by Bismarck. He kept retirement age at 70, some twenty-five years beyond Prussian's life expectancy, so it didn't cost much to run. Now attempt is being made to index it with life expectancy. Source: The Economist, March 19-25, 2011, pp 14-15.

Students of Private education providers access loan from Students Loan Company- UK

News report by Rebecca in THN says “Almost 4,000 students at 60 private providers were granted loans by the Student Loans Company in the 2010-11 academic year, including institutions that do not have degree-awarding powers.”

Interestingly courses which are not degree courses such as: Nannies Training at Norland College- an upper crust college students availed loan. Students of other institutions, Delmar Academy- professional make-up school in Ealing and students of Homeopathy and Chinese Medicine and Oriental Medicine had access to loan.

The report states that “also tapping into the system are the education arm of the auction house Christie’s, Wisdom Christian College and the British Ballet Organisation.

Alan Jeffery, principal of the private Wembley-based London School of Science and Technology said “The student loan offers real hope for students wishing to improve their circumstances.”

The other view was “it was “horrifying” that homeopathy students were being subsidised via the SLC.”- David Colquhoun, former A.J. Clark chair of pharmacology at University College London.

The news report state that “ Private providers apply for their courses to be designated by the SLC. Applications are assessed and passed to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills for approval.”

It further states that “The maximum tuition-fee loan available to students studying at private institutions in 2011-12 is £3,375, and eligible students may also apply for maintenance loans and grants.

(Source: Times Higher News by rebecca.attwood@tsleducation.com)

Wharton Business School set to move global and offer free courses to alumni

On 24 March 2011 **Hannah Fearn** reports in Times Higher Education news that Thomas Robertson, dean of Wharton Business School, said reform had become a necessity. “As the financial crisis came along, lecturers couldn’t walk into the classroom and pull out lecture notes from the year before. A lot of change took place all by itself.” He said “We hadn’t revised the curriculum in more than a decade, so it was time to look at it and think about it more fundamentally”.

Wharton Business School, part of the University of Pennsylvania, now flies students around the globe to take part in week-long modules introducing them to global business issues and is offering alumni the chance to return to study for free as part of an overhaul of its curriculum in the wake of the financial crisis.

The report says “Its MBA curriculum offers students the chance to study healthcare in India and European finance in London, while closer to home, issues relating

to technology and entrepreneurship are taught in San Francisco.”

Robertson said that the new curriculum was focused on providing students with skills that the school believes will be necessary to thrive in the new economic environment, as well as encouraging them to think about the social impact of their work.

He further said that “Twenty or 30 years ago the internet didn’t exist, neither did social media, bioinformatics, sustainability or green products. We have to teach a culture of innovation and we have to teach the mentality that nothing’s going to be the same.”

He added, “When you talk to alumni 10 to 15 years out, they say they wish they’d had more in the way of (lessons on) leadership and communication, and how you deal with people”.

“Any kind of disruption or downturn creates wonderful opportunities. There’s a lot of wonderful hype right now about India and China, and the notion that China is the second most powerful economy in the world and will overtake the US within 20 years. Maybe it will, maybe not - probably not,” he said.

(Source: Times Higher Education news report by - hannah.fearn@tsleducation.com)

Cloud Computing- Scholars need to learn technology and share it

Hannah Fearn reports that “Cloud computing allows users to access servers or applications remotely, with the result that universities can share services rather than having to invest in technology separately.

But most providers, including Google and Microsoft, offer very basic cloud computing services, and these require a high level of technical skill to adapt for academic use...” Report states that “... if universities invested in providing the facilities researchers needed to exploit the benefits offered by cloud computing, they would improve their research capacity and save large sums over time”.

Paul Watson, professor of computer science at Newcastle University, speaking in Liverpool last week at Jisc’s annual conference, said that “universities must change to realise the huge benefits of the technology. They would have to invest in it as a way to encourage research innovation, not simply as a cost-saving measure.”

However, Phil Richards, director of IT at Loughborough University, said the typical academic was holding back the introduction of cloud computing in higher education. He said, “If we want to make big savings by cloud, we need to get universities to change their behavior on quite a large scale.”

He agreed with Professor Watson that “if universities could convince academics to use public platforms, it would leave “more money to do genuinely beneficial things”.

(Source – THE News 24th March, 11 by Hannah Fearn-hannah.fearn@tsleducation.co)

EMERGING ENTERPRISES AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES- A NOTE BASED ON: PHIL SIMON

“The Next Wave Technologies- opportunities in chaos” published by John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey 2010.

World is entering into enterprise 2.0 era. Technology is entering into cloud computing, Software as services SaaS, social networking, business intelligence (BI), Enterprise Search and Retrieval (ESR) and Open Source (OS).

The beginning was very humble. We started with centralized computing in the form of 1640 and moved on to 386 and its advance version. This era was exploration for some and for others it was a magic wand which processed enormous data in very short period. This scenario remained until computing moved from centralised main frame to desk top PC. Wherein, this magic wand become basic tool of data and word processing, storage and retrieval with flick of mouse.

Computing entered in another era with sharing of data from a long distance. I recall an international conference in Seoul, South Korea some time in late seventies. In this conference a bright scholar demonstrated sharing food security data from USA on a desk top in Seoul conference room. It sounded again as a magic wand.

There is comment by a distinguished author of a book Profiles of the Future, Arthur C. Clarke. He termed it, as Clarke’s third law. The law states that “Any sufficiently advanced technology is undistinguishable from magic.” That was the beginning of era of internet – a system of communication which revolutionised the way people communicate today. It also bridged the gap in sharing of knowledge, information and culture, which was caused by distances and time taken to cover the distances.

The Zero (Sunya) which became fundamental computing and scientific analysis tool took a long time to travel from India to Arab and from Arab to France and then to whole world. Finally it culminated to become key figure to the entire subsequent technology development in the world. Information and communication technology owe a lot to this valueless valuable figure, which if stand alone has no value and if added to other figure(s) its power is raised to infinity.

The journey has not been smooth. Every development and technology development, which changed the course of history and lives of people, has its own difficulty. This is well known to all those who are

students of science, social science and philosophy. There is always a resistance when new idea, approach and technology are introduced. History of societal and technology development is full of such rough patches. Take the cases of Galileo, Aristotle, Write Brothers and MK Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi was able to capture this truth. Let me quote him “First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.” Those who are engaged in development and technology development should be well aware of this truth and get all strength to do innovative things by getting inspired by this quote.

The new developments in technology are moving back to centralized computing in the form of Cloud Computing and other technologies mentioned above. They are also moving from key pad to touch technology and from touch technology to gesture technology. Our understanding about how mind works and how it can be put into a programming language has enormously increased leading to understanding by a machine way we communicate by nodding.

Let me share with you what are the implications of this centralized data processing. One of the eminent authors of Cloud Computing is Amy Wohl. Let me quote her to highlight this concept of centralized computing. To quote “ In the past few years, as the cost of a unit of compute power has continued to decrease –but the cost of humans with the skills to implement and manage computer systems has not- the vision of centralized computing has returned. It has taken several turns. Some computer scientist have suggested (and experimented with) a vast grid of computers, attached via the Internet, whose power can be combined for large-scale tasks when needed. In some cases very large computing systems can be part of these grids for specialised tasks. Others have suggested computing utility that would provide just as much computing power as an organization needs, on an on-demand basis, much like electricity.”

The example of electricity would immediately drive at home the power of Cloud Computing. Some body is producing electricity and distributing throughout city, region and nation and you have it with a push of a button that too instantly. In time of shortage it draws supply from another grid.

The cloud delivery models include all the three aspects namely, Infrastructure as Service (IaaS), Software as Service (SaaS) and Platform as a Service (Paas). All Cloud provides:

On demand self-service, Network access, location independent resource pooling , Rapid elasticity , pay per use and multi tenancy. There are vendors who offer Cloud Computing. They are : Amazon, Google, IBM, Microsoft, OpSource and Red Hat.

Let us move from cloud computing to concept of enterprise 2.0. The author of this concept is Phil Simon. It is very difficulty to define enterprise 2.0. Best method

(* This is part of key note address delivered at DAV College , Amritsar, Punjab in an International Conference on IT. It is not a book review in strict sense of the term. It highlights some of the important parts of the book.)

could be differentiating between enterprises 2.0 from enterprises 1.0. According to Phil Simon “Enterprises 1.0 represented the first technology wave that allowed organization to do the following:

- Increase the level of enterprise integration
- Allow employees to access information away from traditional mainframes
- Begin to knock down organizations’ information silos
- Embrace email and Internet
- Dabble with different communication and collaboration tools.

Conversely, Enterprise 2.0 represents the next wave of technologies. — Enterprise 2.0 as organizations’ efforts to deploy and utilize emerging technologies, systems, applications, platforms, social media and software development methodologies. Example of these technologies includes Cloud Computing, Social Networking, Business Intelligence (BI), Software as Service (SaaS), Enterprise Search and Retrieval (ESR) and Open Source (OS) applications.”

In a globally competitive world, if you stick to old wave of technologies like ERP or these ones stated above, chances are that your competitors would apply emerging technologies (which may be more faster, comprehensive and enhancing business out reach with relatively low cost) and surpass you in the business. Therefore, it is important to study new and emerging technologies, their relevance and usefulness and resource implications and return on investment. Having analysed this intelligently, apply new and emerging technologies to enterprise 2.0. It is said “It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” Charles Darwin.

Let me share with you that it is the teamwork which has in the past helped development of IT technologies. It is the team work which is going to help us in development of technologies of future. Pat Riley one said “Great teamwork is the only way we create the breakthroughs that define our careers”

When we are working in team on a new& emerging technologies and new ideas, there is possibility that lot of doubts and questions would be raised. Level of doubts and questions would be, at times so serious that these may cause fear in our mind about feasibility and possibility of success of the projects. Let us not entertain these fears. Fear is worst enemy of human endeavours for change and development. Some time we succeed and some time we fail. Every failure has a lesson built into it. This will then take us forward to newer steps and newer solutions. Please do not forget a statement made by Napoleon Bonaparte that “He who fears being conquered is sure of defeat”.

In technology we moved from simple abacus to facit machines and from facit machine to electronic calculator and from electronic calculator to mainframe computer from low speed to high speed and from mainframe to

desk top, lap top and palm top to mobile. Every change has facilitated human endeavours to address the problems of mankind through research and innovations. Yet we are far from solving a large number of problems. Hence our efforts should be to embrace the change. Many people stay put and do not respond to change. Often they resist the change. As change is difficult and has its own cost. But if you build walls when winds of change are blowing, there is strong possibility that the wall may get demolished. Therefore, better way is to think and use winds of change to generate energy through windmills rather than resist it through building walls.

Today every one is conscious of environment. Therefore, every one is talking of green buildings, green technologies. As technologies do have their impact on environment. When we are working on new and emerging technologies we should always remember that it is likely to impact environment both positively and negatively. Therefore, while evolving new technologies, particularly IT technologies their impact on environment may be carefully examined for our sustainable development. Computers consume lot of energy. One estimates show that many technologies are used for 90 percent of time, but servers are used only for 15% of time, but the idle server consume lot of energy. It is therefore, important to move from do yourself to share your spare resources to save energy. We have to move from computer as devises to computers “ in devices” which save lot of energy and helps moving towards sustainable development. Presently lot of computers as in devices are used in several machines and industries. One software technology expert I met whose research was to increase life of mobile phone’s battery by suspending energy use when the phone is idle. Such devices help you save energy. Imagine billions of mobile phones have to use .1 percent less energy than what they otherwise use owing to such device. You can imagine how much saving we would do in energy use while charging battery of mobile phone. You can also imagine how much less natural resources we will use to generate energy.

This would ultimately help us to move towards sustainable development. Therefore our efforts should be to move towards green field technologies.

In communication technology we have advanced very significantly and speedily. Yet, we are far from developing technology to view and communicate through mind as in epic of Mahabharata “Sanjay” viewed and communicated happening of battle field through mind. If this is true, we have enormous challenges before us, if it is a fiction, yet we have lot of challenges before us, as several science fictions had thrown challenges and some of them were turned into realities. Every challenge throws an opportunity. We should, therefore, see every challenge as an opportunity to develop new and innovative technology.



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