



Curriculum design and development using choice based Credit system.

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Abstract: Credit based system is still rapidly transforming in India and is more prominent in some of our major institutions. This system equally brought the Indian qualifications in line with the systems adapted by major developed countries. People do aspire for higher responsibilities and work abroad. The discrepancies with the value of our qualifications did indeed trigger the necessity to learn further before our professionals landed in their jobs. However, Choice based credit system is never short of its own issues along with the advantages. Choice based Credit system is essence is a system that enables to reward the identified skills in university students that may be based on different parameters such as Student work load, Entrepreneur skills, Analytical abilities, critical thinking skills, innovative approach etc. Students are allowed to learn at their own pace and have more opportunities to innovative thinking and critical analysis. This system also promotes interdisciplinary collaboration and incorporation of additional expertise.

Key words: Innovation, aspiration, Globalisation, collaboration, monitoring, Quality assurance, contextual methodology.

Introduction

Education has evolved rapidly and drastically in the past few years. Demands to produce more skilled professionals has never been to popular. Nowadays just getting a degree does not qualify for a job anymore.

Industries and institutions are aiming for excellence and are only prepared to opt for people who stand out of the crowd with their unique capabilities in their area of expertise. Students at universities are pushed to their limits for their analytical and application skills that were secondary to conceptual learning a few years ago. One of the research groups who have successfully demonstrated the choice based credit system is the Russel Group who made invaluable contributions to the British qualifications education system who recognised the

importance to developing these key skills in the young professional and reward them for their possible contributions to their professional roles in the future to come.

Choice based Credit system:

Every Academic credit systems assess students' progress in their studies. Students are required to earn a certain number of credits in order to be entitled to full-time student status. Each course is worth a certain number of credit points determined by different criteria including student's workload, learning outcome and contact hours. The more work and effort a student is required to put into a course, the more credits that course is worth.

Academic credit can be gained either by successfully completing a study module



or individual study course, depending on university policies. Awards such as degrees are offered only after receiving a fixed number of credits. In some countries, there is no consensus for credit transfer and accumulation and the systems may vary greatly among institutions.

So considering the wide range of subjects on offer, the credit system is based on more general aspects such as

- To provide broad based education.
- To provide students with greater flexibility in choice of courses.
- To provide students multi-disciplinary curriculum.
- To enable students to choose courses at basic/advanced level/inter-disciplinary.
- To enable students to acquire job oriented skills.
- To enable students to progress at their own pace.
- To enable highly motivated students, gain extra credits.
- To Bridge the gap between professional and social exposure to provide a holistic education.

With Choice based system of education, Students have greater options as to choose their own area interest and gain expertise as they learn. This approach is also more student led rather teacher led and completely conceptual.

Curriculum Design and current issues

For far too long the curriculum at university levels remained the same with minimal changes. Students are well trained to achieve great foundation

knowledge however there is much less opportunities for innovation.

- Some of the developed global economies such America, England, Australia and most of the European union nations adapt innovative approach to their curriculum which a dynamic system continuously updated to suit today's industrial requirements. There are specialised courses offered to suit these needs and thus provide better employment opportunities to fresh graduates. Indian curriculum is still playing catch up with its curriculum design and innovation.

- Our style of teaching has also been exclusively teacher led where students are expected to listen and occasionally participate if at all the subject involves practical requirements. This in turn curtails the ability of students to think outside the box and bring their innovations and analysis to the current concepts.

- Monitoring of the curriculum has always seemed to be a second priority to the exam boards and the publishers of academic text books. There isn't a strict set of guidelines set to be adhered to. Students rely far too much on learning the concepts at their core but never expand their understanding with critical analysis.

- Most of the American and the British universities allocate funding to research groups who continuously update the Curriculum with latest innovations and research topics to encourage students in adapting their basic knowledge to professional expertise. One of the largest research group is the Russel group in England which developed its own framework and now is adapted by 24 major universities in England.



- India recognizes that the new global scenario poses unprecedented challenges for the higher education system. The University Grants Commission has appropriately stated that a whole range of skills will be demanded from the graduates of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce, as well as from the various professional disciplines such as agriculture, law, management, medicine or engineering. India can no longer continue the model of general education as it has been persisting in for the large bulk of the student population.

- With the recent developments in India's foreign investments and her role on the bigger stage of academia our education system doesn't have a choice but to innovate and renovate our current practices.

So how can we get there?

Recommendations

- Make quality education available to everyone. The latest statistics suggest that despite the state declaring a 100% literacy rate, only a little over 20% of the population is educated to competitive standards in India. So it is important that more provisions must be made available to educating our vast population.

- This goes all the way to the roots where schools are left with little to no monitoring systems which leads to poor development of analytical minds. So I believe that the curriculum must be continuously monitored for better quality assurance at every stage of education.

- The education department must play a major role in funding and monitoring the curriculum and research.

- Interdisciplinary collaboration must be encouraged so the students are

able to apply their key skills in developed their own ideology to detailed research analysis.

- The government must allocate funding for more research opportunities and specifically encourage major universities and educational institutions to buy latest equipment.

- Teaching styles must be switched from conceptual approach to contextual methodology.

- Students should be given more opportunities to think and critically analyse their basic understanding.

- More private and public sector research facilities have to be made available so as to attract foreign investments in Research and development.

- The education department must allocate a monitoring system checking on excellence in classroom practice and promotion of student led lessons within the class. Education to students doesn't stop in the class. So it is also important to monitor how the teachers are promoting independent learning and thinking skills in students.

- The monitoring system and the governing bodies must be able to provide reports on individual educational institutions and regulate their performance against set guidelines in teaching and learning practices. Inspectors must be efficient at their advice and critical in their impartial judgements and provide mandatory recommendations for further improvement. It is also important that the changes are implemented immediately to prevent the gap in educating the youth of today.



- In my opinion I believe that the barriers between teachers and students distinguishing the hierarchy must be reasonable so that the students feel valued and free to express their views and understanding.
- Teaching strategies must be made innovative and allowed to use examples of latest technologies both theoretically and practically.
- Students must be assigned with tasks and assignments that are crucial to current industrial practices. Research and development must be continuously encouraged and promoted even at graduate levels. Some universities in Europe and the western countries do offer interim course such as Masters of Research which sets base for a detailed fully funded research eventually. It would be a good practice if such facilities are made available in our country.
- Teacher and lecturers must be encouraged to undergo developmental courses and training to keep up with current industrial demands.
- Students must be encouraged to do their higher education in our country and provide multidisciplinary courses that can prepare them to broader choices
- Our curriculum must be continuously analysed against the leading nations and be able to bring that innovation to our home land so we are able to retain our talented graduates for job opportunities in our country. It is also imperative that the government should invest in research development of curriculum and leave open ends so there are opportunities for latest innovations.
- For far too long graduates from major universities do stock qualifications such as BCom and BSc offered and then eventually shift their disciplines into skills on demand such as IT. This has seriously crippled our socio economic development and literally made our economy a slave to a foreign need. Universities could address this by incorporating these innovations in Science and technology so that there are areas of explorations available within our own facilities.
- More and more funding must be made available to research and development even if it means privatisation at higher education levels which I believe is a necessity given the vast size of our economy.
- Collaboration with foreign universities and sharing the research practices and facilities must be improved and built with latest technological advancements introduced in teaching practice.
- Students must be able to participate in global classroom where they could be heard and learn from scholars across the globe. Indian curriculum must now be able to operate and educate its students on par with foreign universities. Our students should not feel that they have to learn more to enter the global job market.
- India has recently been a major player in the world market and has pioneered in attracting foreign investment. This has indeed retained some of our raw talent to serve the development of our nation's business infrastructure. So it is important to explore this arena and invest our own capital in research and development.
- Our current education system must also consider the improvement of managerial and public relation skills within our graduates. This should leave



the students open to progression in their fields of expertise when employed. There should also be elements of Human resource management incorporated in the curriculum as a mandatory subject.

- While respecting the ethical values and good practices, students must be allowed to express their creativity which leads to innovation. More student forums discussing the current implementations of technology and use of hitech equipment must be funded and made available.

Conclusion:

Education has always been the foundation to any global developed economy. India is only a stone throw away from achieving this status but has remains stagnant as only a developing country. Unless there are serious reforms in the system of education there will always be a continuous loss of home talent to foreign nations who offer more attractive opportunities in education. It is in many ways an open secret that our curriculum in desperate need for a full revamp but is ignored to remain the same.

Privatization of higher education has been a key success in some of the major developed countries. The Indian education must start to open up even broader opportunities for private investment in education.

Monitoring our education strategies, practices and curriculum development somehow has never been nationally effective with lack of descriptive guidelines that must be adhered to by the educational institutions. This must be prioritised and implemented to standardize our system of education and be competitively placed with global nations. We as a nation stand a great

chance to explore the horizons of reason and analysis with great minds being born every day. It is only sensible to provide our younger generation the opportunity to soar these heights with the right tools of analysis and inventive thinking.

This reformation must occur from the roots of curriculum at schools to teach the key skills and allow the higher education to pick up on the innovations. It is also important to provide wider choices and multidisciplinary courses at universities along with research facilities and opportunities.

Finally, it will all melt down to what happens in a classroom. So the time spent by the teacher in front of the students makes all the difference and the ability to inspire every student equally to be more critical analytical and innovative.

“You can never be too spoilt for choices.”

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