

Chapter 82

A Balanced Approach to Education

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ABSTRACT

This chapter intends to find out answers to a rather complicated question facing almost all universities and business schools in the world: How to have a balanced approach to education. In so doing, this chapter discusses an integrative approach to curriculum development and having a best combination of teaching, research, and continuing education as a source of a balanced approach to education. All these components—curriculum development, teaching, research, and continuing education—are crucial for the existence and growth of higher educational institutions now and in the future. Furthermore, the chapter studies all the various factors that influence the development and implementation of a balanced approach to education in academic institutions and proposes strategies and models to help academic administrators design and implement balanced education approaches.

INTRODUCTION

When we look at the history of the educational institutions of higher education we find that the dilemma of how to have a balanced approach to education has never really been addressed properly by neither the education administrators nor by the policy makers of the institution. Some educational institutions of higher education tend to do more teaching (teaching universities) followed by some research efforts and continuing education. Some other universities (research universities) pay relatively more attention to the research and publication activities and teaching being the secondary function of the institution. Though they do not declare it officially or publically, however, these research universities dedicate their substantial resources (time, faculty, money) to research and publications. There are factors that can cause such strategic decisions and directions of the institutions:

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- The national culture of the country of origin of the university. Some national policies and programs promote research and development activities and initiatives in the country and therefore, provide enough resources to the academic institutions to conduct research and development activities.
- The university culture in itself is one of the critical factors in defining such strategies and directions. Some universities have been able to develop culture, system and process either to focus on teaching or research as the core activity of the institution.
- Public versus private universities have also different approaches to manage their activities and functions. Private universities depend on the tuition as a principal source of income, so they dedicate to teaching. Whereas public or state-run universities receive generous fund from the government to subsidize the tuition fees and develop research activities.
- The level and types of industrial activities and supports services undertaking in a particular country or zone.
- The demand for research programs and job options for graduates in a country or zone.
- Size and the age of the institution.

In this chapter, a balanced approach to education involving curriculum development in addition to integrating teaching, research and continuing education is being discussed.

THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum is considered as the heart and soul of all educational institutions regardless of their sizes, types and origins. All educational institutions and the employers alike are of the view that education should help students to gain knowledge and basic skills (Bounds, 2009). Designing appropriate curriculum is crucial for providing such knowledge and skills. Moreover, there is a growing need for higher education institutions to respond to the changing environment in a positive and learner-centered manner through quality curriculum. Curriculum should help produce graduates who are better prepared for their future management tasks, who have learned to adapt to change and to adapt their abilities to a variety of contexts and situations and who have developed managerial competencies for a turbulent world (Pacheco, 2000, cited in Bounds, 2009). Interestingly the theory and practice of curriculum development in educational institutions have remained hotly debated themes in the academia mainly because there are different definitions and interpretations of the term curriculum, in addition to variations in approaches to design curriculum. Most importantly, the terms “curriculum” and “education” though defined and interpreted differently in theory, nonetheless, these are interrelated and inseparable in practices. Therefore, designing an appropriate curriculum is considered as a foundation stone for high quality education programs and services, regardless of the type of educational programs and educational institutions. Curriculum is the heart of education and it combines thought, action, and purpose (Null, 2011). Though the role of curriculum in providing high quality educational programs and services is critically important, however, ironically there are gaps between how curriculum is developed in reality or in practice and how curriculum is supposed to be developed in theory. This dilemma is further complicated by the fact that there are huge differences between the curriculum published by the educational institutions, the curriculum taught actually by the teachers in their classrooms and the actual knowledge learned by the students (i.e., Krull & Kurm, 1996; Miller & Seller, 1985).

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