

## **Creating an Impact through the ‘Bi-factor Academic Strategism’**

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Management teaching requires an extensive knowledge base to be possessed by the faculty member. With my small span but a rich experience of teaching, in India and abroad, I believe that management is neither a science nor an art but an interdisciplinary subject which derives scholarly favor from sciences and humanities alike. Moreover, enhancing student's confidence in your abilities is also an area which deserves an enhanced pedagogical attention. The article touches these two aspects and outlines two broad strategies (Bi-factor Academic Strategism) to be adopted by the management academics for creating an impact:

### **A Multidisciplinary Knowledge Base**

Having taught papers like strategic management, organization & competition and international business, I have always tried to enhance the capabilities of my students through giving them insights into various core disciplines. For instance, I talked about concepts in polymer sciences when they asked me to explain ‘polymerization’, a term which they knew not and which cropped up during a class presentation on strategies of Indian Oil Corporation. At times, I even have to talk about concepts in political science or sociology; and thanks to my inherent interest in both science and humanities, I am able to do it. If we work on enhancing our own knowledge base in multifarious disciplines, the students would find our lecture more informative, interesting and in all probabilities could develop a fascination for self-learning. We should also shun of this monotony that management students do not like history or political science or chemistry. Let us accept with all humility that they do want to know it provided it is delivered to them in a manner which can assure them that they are destined for larger leadership roles in India Inc. and beyond.

### **Student's Confidence in Your Abilities**

The student's expectation from a management academic revolves around two basic aspects:

- The skills of multidisciplinary analysis that you possess, and,
- The student's confidence in your abilities

The former is mandatory while the latter is desired. However, good management teaching culminates from the effort made by the academic to transform the latter into a mandatory aspect by resorting to some of the following ways: a) discussing emerging paradigms of research on topics you teach, b) sharing your own research papers or consulting experience relevant to the lecture theme, c) keeping trust in their abilities to help them perform better, thereby enhancing their acceptance level for you, d) helping them differentiate ‘source of knowledge’ and ‘authentic source of knowledge’ – books and/or journals? This would help them to appreciate your genuine concern as a facilitator, e) designing questions for discussion which enhances their horizon of understanding; in a way that it would not be, for instance, their opinion which would carry marks, but the strength of justification they attach to it. I have experienced that the quality of such question strengthens student's confidence in the academics, f) guiding them on citation of correct references, ways of referencing, preparing draft proposals, doing literature reviews, etc. while working on a summer or winter project. Most MBA students don't know these trivial, yet significant, details and most academics also don't expect them to do it; which is simply an intellectual dishonesty on our part, and, g) helping them to think both rationally as well as radically, because they don't learn unless they develop abilities to criticize some of their own views.