

## **Managing Priorities and Time in B Schools**

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It was the start of a busy week and Prof. D.C. Shukla was avidly perusing an article published in Education Times by Indiashiksha.com, the official website of India Shiksha network launched by Microsoft to develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century information and communication technology skills for teachers and students. This fascinating article on Time management techniques completely diverted the learned professor's attention from the spectacular cover story which included among other things viz. heart rending pictures of the victims of the recent Mehrauli bomb explosion which had made front page news in the Media.

Soon after arrival at his workplace, he discussed the article with his colleagues, who to his surprise were not aware of the latest in management literature and were busy preparing presentations, quizzes and case studies to be used for teaching the current batch of students in the Executive Programme recently launched by their Centre. While accepting that none of them had the privilege of a driver which permitted reading while commuting to work, Shukla was disappointed also due to the lack of studiousness and awareness of his juniors. He recalled a similar experience while discussing a paper on the High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) concept introduced by the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) for sharpening cognitive skills of students.

Prof. Shukla remembered that the young teachers who had joined the Institute last year used to love discussing new management concepts with him, but now were pre-occupied (like their senior colleagues) with mundane duties, as batch coordinators or managing extra curricular events while struggling with their lectures and presentations. Additionally there was the implicit pressure for providing the desired research output, which, however was forced to take a back seat to the pressure of routine.

Being the head of the Faculty Development Cell, he initiated and conducted a 25 minute session with each of his juniors. Over a cup of hot coffee and in a cool informal environment, they discussed elaborately on the following points.

1. Good Practices and Innovative Learning Technique that they were using with their students
2. Which employable skills they were imparting to students?
3. Was there a need for Teacher Training?

There were also some questions focused on their career development, succession planning, time management, and work life balance which the subordinates were not expecting from the Head Faculty Development Cell, and which pleasantly surprised them.

After a week of these informal meetings and discussions, the professor decided to call his counterparts in the other Institutes who he considered comparable in terms of faculty strength,, quality of teaching, culture and environment, student intake, expectations of internal and external customers, and finally reputation in the 'job market'.

He realized that the Institutions enjoying a better reputation and a competitive advantage in the fields of research and conduct of Executive programmes were those whose faculty practiced better time management and were allowed to prioritize research over more routine activities. The faculties at these institutes were also more successful in balancing their roles as educators, teachers, mentors and researchers.

Prof. Shukla came to the realization that a prime cause for high attrition rates at mediocre Institutes was a lack of priority for research unlike the situation at the good Institutes. It is important for the educators to understand that their research interest and orientation, pays handsomely in the form of better opportunities for academic excellence,

work satisfaction and a sense of achievement and contribution to their organizations. However, the prevailing priority with the lesser institutes was proliferation of courses and programmes offered and optimization of revenues from ever increasing student and participant population, at the clear expense of academic rigor and quality.

Prof. Shukla pondered over the results of his enquiries. He had to introspect and to arrive at a serious directional change if he wanted his own Institute to occupy a place at the high table of Academic Excellence. He had to restart the journey as he realized that this way the Institute was not going to reach the desired destination.