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Teaching-Learning in Higher Education Institutes with reference to Criterion II of SSR

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Abstract - The concept and perception of teaching-learning in Higher Education has undergone tremendous change during the last two decades. Since the establishment of NAAC in 1994 and quality assurance as its thrust area, the evaluation and measures for enhancing quality in HEIs is being taken seriously. The Assessment and Accreditation process taken by NAAC helps the HEIs realize their goals and also to evaluate themselves for future needs and challenges. The seven criterion system is all comprehensive and out of the seven, second Criterion titled “Teaching, Learning and Evaluation” carries the maximum weightage. This paper takes up the analysis of Criterion II in general with special emphasis on student-centric education and the role of mentoring in teaching-learning in HEIs.

Key Words: Criterion II, Mentoring, Student-Centric Education, Teaching-Learning

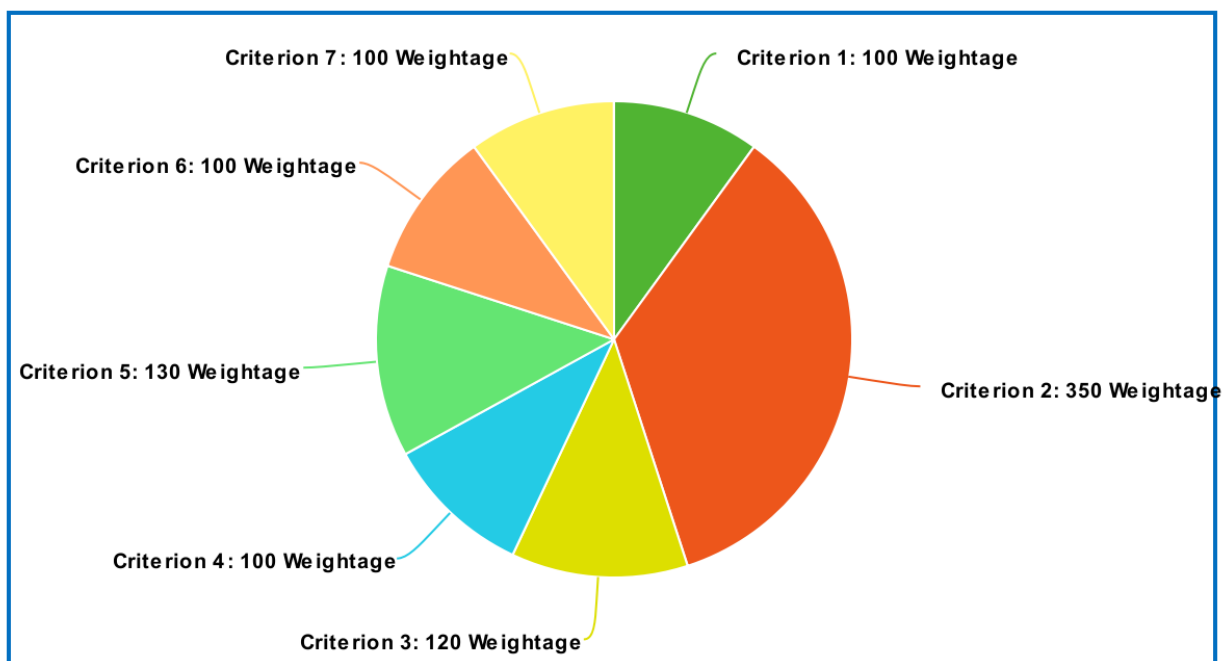
Introduction

The ancient Indian system of education or the Gurukul Parampara emphasized the relationship between the teacher and the learner and holistic approach towards education. There was no limitation of curriculum or subjects and the range varied from science to metaphysics and from humanities to mathematics. With the Macaulay modern school management system, education moved to classrooms and prescribed curricula. With classrooms and changed form of teaching-learning, also came grave challenges for both the teachers and the students. Although the established definitions of education and teaching-learning emphasized the larger interest of students and the application of knowledge, yet prescribed curriculum and its updation remained as the biggest challenge. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, “Teaching can be defined as engagement with learners to enable their understanding and application of knowledge, concepts and processes. It includes design, content selection, delivery, assessment and reflection. Learning

can be defined as the activity or process of gaining knowledge or skill by studying, practicing, being taught, or experiencing something”.¹ Learning is about what students do, not about what we as teachers do.

The concept and perception of teaching-learning in Higher Education has undergone tremendous change during the last two decades. Since the establishment of NAAC in 1994 and quality assurance as its thrust area, the evaluation and measures for enhancing quality in HEIs is being taken seriously. The Assessment and Accreditation process taken by NAAC helps the HEIs realize their goals and also to evaluate themselves for future needs and challenges. The seven criterion system is all comprehensive and out of the seven, second Criterion titled “Teaching, Learning and Evaluation” carries the maximum weightage. This paper takes up the analysis of Criterion II in general with special emphasis on student-centric education and the role of mentoring in teaching-learning in HEIs.

The II Criterion assesses the vision and execution of HEI in catering to diverse needs of learners. Students in any Institute come from various backgrounds in terms of region and abilities. Understanding the economic, social, cultural and mental background of the learners is very significant for teachers. Keeping this diversity and capabilities in mind the teacher regulates and modifies the pedagogy. The aim of administration and teachers of any HEI is to empower the students using efficient and effective strategies. Critical, creative and innovative thinking is the best strategy of an efficient teacher. According to NAAC also, “Interactive instructional techniques that engage students in higher order ‘thinking’ and investigation, through the use of interviews, focused group discussions, debates, projects, presentations, experiments, practicum, internship and application of ICT resources are important considerations.”² Metrics in this Criterion also deal with the measures and their results in the context of student centric pedagogies and methods employed by the teachers. Out of 1000 total weightage, this criterion is given the maximum i.e. 350 as depicted in the pie chart below:



meta-chart.com

Student centric methods, such as experiential learning, participative learning and problem solving methodologies are used for enhancing learning experiences, and mentoring which is one of the most important concepts in teaching- learning is the most significant tool in making the teaching process student centric. Higher education institutes in India has started focusing on mentorship in a new garb since the last two decades. Though earlier the Gurukul system and traditional education atmosphere and pedagogies always had the concept of interpersonal communication for personal and professional development. MHRD and UGC have been constantly working with this concept. The guidelines laid down by UGC for Induction and Mentorship for Teachers of Higher Education wherein the Mentor-Mentee Relation vis-a vis Life Long Learning is divided into three phases³ is planned and designed accordingly:

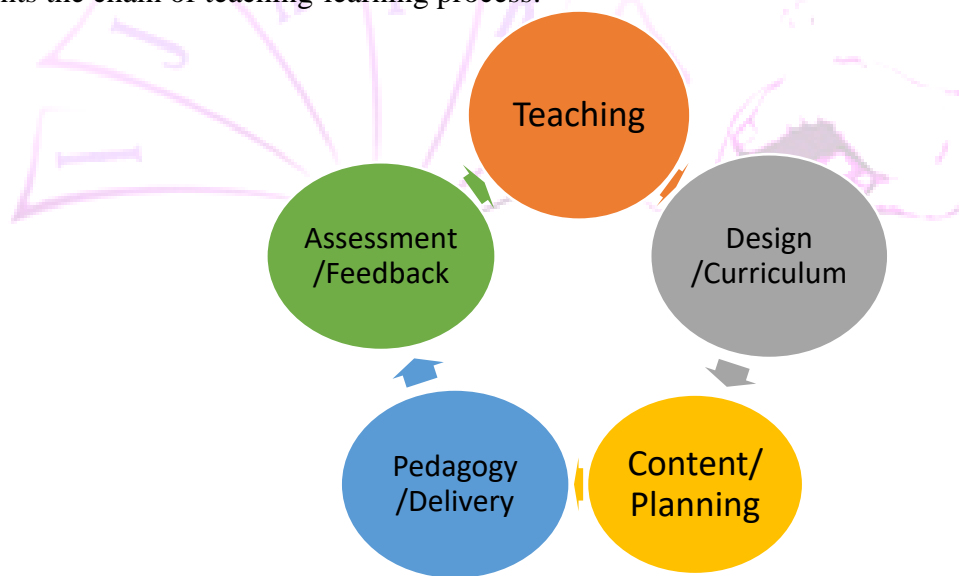
PHASE-1		PHASE-2	PHASE-3
FIRST STAGE	SECOND STAGE	Teacher is no longer reliant on the mentor the discipline specific field training & faculty development programmes for middle / top level academic administrators (blended mode)	Faculty Development Programme /Leadership Development Programme offered by HRDCs excluding Refresher Courses etc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register as Mentor • SWOT analysis with the help of mentor • The Pairing Process • The mentor assists the beginning teacher in accomplishing specific tasks related to their new position and provides modelling of skills, sharing of strategies and observational feedback 	MOOCs Based Faculty Induction Program (FIP) /GURU DAKSHTA Programme in HRDCs or PMMMMNMTT		

These three phases deal with the empowerment of the student via teacher. The concept of mentoring and teaching-learning herein is built with the concept of developing models, programs and strategies that enhance the efficiency and growth of the teacher primarily. Its thrust is on inculcating and developing leadership qualities among both the teachers and the students. Skill development and professional grooming happens with the in-built structure of stages with upward mobility and growth. Holistic development and meaningful learning is and should be the motto of HEI which can be made possible through an atmosphere of support and students-teacher interaction. Every effort must be made towards the active involvement of students in the whole process of teaching and learning. Other than traditional classroom teaching, the teaching-learning process must strongly focus on enhancing skills, experience and knowledge, by:

- Providing a conducive and opportune teaching-learning environment
- Extending an atmosphere for nurturing values, skills, and critical /creative thinking
- Activity Learning through Educational Tours and Excursions: Field trips, excursions, educational tours
- Role plays, games and interactive sessions in the classroom also initiate participatory learning
- Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities should be undertaken with an aim to move beyond the realm of formal learning and foster creative and critical thinking.

- Activities like debates, quiz, poetry recitation, skits, drama, song, and dance competitions
- Other platforms that focus on participative learning can include publication of college magazine, news- letter, Language Club, Creations Club, Film Club, etc.
- Guest/extension lectures by experts
- Departmental Libraries
- Case Studies, Communication skills training, Project-based learning
- And Mentoring

Mentoring plays a very important role in student centric teaching-learning. The value of mentoring is known to all, even in social behavior mentoring plays a very significant role in fostering, nurturing and guiding to help us grow personally and professionally. In the context of HEIs, to achieve the real meaning of ‘education ‘a student centric flexible and blended approach should be the vision and mission. The teaching process involves designing of the curriculum, planning of the content to meet the requirements of the learners in the best possible ways, delivery and implementation of the curriculum by innovative pedagogies and techniques and finally assessing the learning outcomes through feedback and evaluation. The below diagram represents the chain of teaching-learning process:



Upgrade of knowledge and modifying the strategies is essential to both the teachers and learners. Mentoring and student centric environment is the backbone of Higher Education Institutions which not only ensures better outputs and high employability for the students but also ensures high enrolment ratio. What is important is to understand and analyse what teachers and HEI must do to improve the quality of education is to thoroughly understand the psychology of learning and the exposure of the learners to subject and teaching strategies. A holistic approach to ethical values and its value in the general process is very important. Regular trainings and orientation of teachers in developing a well-organized systematic plan of delivery

with the help of latest ICT tools and resources is also significant. Last but not the least, an awareness of eco-system, community responsibilities and dynamic needs of learners from diverse backgrounds is also essential.

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