



Academic Guidance and Counseling to Enhance Student Performance

Selected Topics

Psychological Adjustment of University Students: An Overview

A. N. K. Perera

Career Counseling for a Safe Future of a Graduate

M. P. Dassanayaka

Resolving Conflicts in Academic Environment Rationally and Effectively

K. G. A. P. K. Amarasinghe

Group Guidance to Enhance Academic Performance

E. Wijesinghe

Mind Preparation Approach As a Counseling Technique to Prepare Students for Effective Learning

J. R. K. C. Jayakody

Coping With Difficult Students Studying Arabic Languages in Sri Lankan Universities

M. S. M. Saleem



Professor of Agribusiness Management and the Director of the Staff Development Center (SDC) of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. Graduated in 1994 with a B.Sc. (Agriculture) [First Class Hons.] degree from the University of Peradeniya followed by a M.Sc. (Agric. Econ.) from the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA) of the same University in 1997. He obtained his PhD (Agric. Econ & Business) from the University of Guelph in Canada in 2004. In addition, he possesses a Postgraduate Diploma in Teacher Training & Education Management (IITM, India), Diploma in Business Management (Scranton, USA) and a Diploma in Mass Media & Communication (DES, Colombo). He completed the Certificate of Teaching in Higher Education (CTHE) course conducted by the University of Colombo, and received the United Kingdom's Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) accreditation in 1999. Besides the academic, research, and career development activities, Prof. Jayasinghe has been involved with activities related to teacher training and consultation, development of teaching technologies and methodologies, curriculum development, and quality assurance in higher education etc. He is a renowned resource person and has conducted many workshops on staff development in both national and private universities around the country together with the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) of the University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka.



Senior Lecturer attached to the Dept. of Livestock & Avian Sciences of the Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries & Nutrition of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. He was also the Director/Career Guidance Unit (CGU) of the University and the Student Counselor and member of the Curriculum Revision Committee of the Faculty. He graduated with a B.Sc. (Agriculture) [Hons.] degree from the University of Peradeniya in 1993, followed by a M.Phil (Animal Science) from the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA) of the same University in 2003. He has obtained the Certificate of Staff Development from the University of Peradeniya in 1996 and the Certificate of Teaching in Higher Education (CTHE) of the University of Colombo in 2002 and was qualified for the United Kingdom's Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) accreditation in 2002. Mr. Jayaweera has been working as the Course Facilitator of the "Certificate Course on Staff Development" conducted by the Staff Development Centre (SDC) of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for the Probationary Lecturers in the national universities in Sri Lanka.

Academic Guidance and Counseling to Enhance Student Performance

Selected Topics

Publisher :

Staff Development Center

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Makandura, Gonawila (NWP)
Sri Lanka
2013

ISBN : 978-955-4709-03-4

Edited by
Udith Jayasinghe, Ph.D
Ajith Jayaweera

Academic Guidance and Counseling to Enhance Student Performance

Selected Topics

**Editors: Udith Jayasinghe, PhD
 Ajith Jayaweera**

**Authors: A. N. K. Perera
 M. P. Dassanayaka
 K. G. A. P. K. Amarasinghe
 E. Wijesinghe
 J. R. K. C. Jayakody
 M. S. M. Saleem**

Staff Development Center
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Makandura, Gonawila (NWP)
Sri Lanka
2013

Academic Guidance and Counselling to Enhance Student Performance

Selected Topics

- Published by : Staff Development Center
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Makandura, Gonawila (NWP)
Sri Lanka
- ISBN : 978-955-4709-03-4
- Cover Page Design & Computer Applications : Kapila D. Ranaraja
Computer Application Assistant
Dept. of Agribusiness Management
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
- Telephone : +94 31 331 5376
- Fax : +94 31 229 9246

**Enhancing Teaching – Learning Environment in
Higher Education: Selected Topics**

Ed. by Udith Jayasinghe and Ajith Jayaweera.

Makandura: Staff Development Center,
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, 2011.

120p.; 21 cm

ISBN 978-955-4709-03-4

i. 378.173 DDC 22

ii. Title

iii. Teaching methods – higher education

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I write this foreword to this publication by the Staff Development Centre (SDC) of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for the 6th Intake of the Certificate Course in Staff Development.

The SDC has made its mark in training all categories of staff of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka and has extended its services to outside institutions as well. The training of newly recruited academic staff members of National Universities including ours has been very effective in the past. The 6th Intake too includes a number of academic staff members from other Universities.

I congratulate the Director, Staff Development Centre and his staff for the active role played in training of academic, administrative and non-academic staff of the University and extending its services to outside institutions.

I wish the SDC of Wayamba University of Sri Lanka and participants of the 6th Intake all success in their future endeavors.

Prof. S. J. B. A. Jayasekara

The Vice Chancellor

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Preface and Acknowledgment

This book contains a selected set of articles covering the broad area of counseling and academic guidance for all stakeholders in higher education. The first article of the book discusses the importance of parents, teachers, schools, and the peers, as well as their expectations and attitudes towards the student help to construct the supporting system needed for the development of a well adjusted healthy personality and self-actualization. Discussing this phenomenon at length, it highlights that, in general students must possess a sound self-adjustment ability, capability to manage stress, a reasonably healthy level of self-expectation, and mature personality to cope with the changes that are unavoidable and inevitable in their day-to-day life.

The cream of the intellectual resources and robust young essence in the country are aggregating to the universities. Extracting the maximum potential out of them is a task that everyone should be eager of. The potential roles of career counseling is essential in facilitating the intra and inter university collaborations, mediating job opportunities, potentials, introducing role models to students and encouraging them to follow their goals which will immensely help to secure the career development and future of graduates. The second article emphasizes on this theme elaborating on the importance of career counseling for a safe future of a graduate.

Conflicts arise due to many reasons. Even though these kinds of conflicts are inevitable in any organization in general and higher education institutes in particular, it is the duty of the management of the organization to study the situation and deal with which in an effective and efficient way. The third article explores numerous ways and means to resolve conflicts in an academic environment rationally and effectively.

Guidance is needed for every person at every stage of development right from the beginning of life till the end. Modern students face many problems during curricular choices, adjustment with peers, skill development etc. which calls for proper guidance. The fourth article discusses at length on the potential ways and means for group guidance to enhance academic performance of students.

The fifth article elaborates on the different mind preparation counseling techniques to prepare a student to face challenges with confidence filling the vacuumed area of student's life which is not addressed by the curriculum. It emphasizes the academic counselor's roles and the essentiality of which to optimize the learning styles for effective learning so that they can continue to pursue their academic excellence and professional employment.

The sixth article articulates a specific, yet, under discussed area of choosing unpopular subjects in Universities using the special case of selecting Arabic as a foreign language to Sri Lankan undergraduates as it is not considered an interesting course of study which is only utilized within academic contexts. This further rolls out in detail how one can cope up with less interesting and difficult subjects during their studentship followed by the use of appropriate, novel tools, techniques and well-structured learning processes for teaching such subjects.

We would like to convey our very special thanks first to, Prof. S. J. B. A. Jayasekara, the Vice Chancellor of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for his continuance guidance and support extended to us throughout his tenure to accomplish this difficult task. Our sincere gratitude is extended to the authors of the six selected articles published in this book for their hard work and commitment. Among many who have supported us throughout the process, we very specifically thank Ms. Menuka Udugama, Ms. Nimhani Perera, Ms. Madhavi Dassanayake, Ms. Dinusha Debarawatta, Ms. Apsara Amarasinghe and Ms. Erandi Wijesinghe – all attached to the

Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management of the WUSL and followed the CCSD at the SDC/WUSL under our guidance – and Mr. Kapila Ranaraja (Computer Application Assistant) of the Dept. of Agribusiness Management / WUSL for their untiring efforts in bringing all articles into one format to produce the book in this fine quality.

Udith Jayasinghe, PhD

Ajith Jayaweera

Staff Development Center (SDC)

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

04th April 2013

List of Content

Psychological Adjustment of University Students: An Overview

A. N. K. Perera 1

Career Counseling for a Safe Future of a Graduate

M. P. Dassanayaka 18

Resolving Conflicts in Academic Environment Rationally and Effectively

K. G. A. P. K. Amarasinghe 34

Group Guidance to Enhance Academic Performance

E. Wijesinghe 48

Mind Preparation Approach As a Counseling Technique to Prepare Students for Effective Learning

J. R. K. C. Jayakody 60

Coping With Difficult Students Studying Arabic Languages in Sri Lankan Universities

M. S. M. Saleem 77

Psychological Adjustment of University Students: An Overview

A. N. K. Perera

*Dept. of Biotechnology
Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Makandura, Gonawila (N^oWP)*

There is only one certainty in life. It is CHANGE. From the moment we are born until the day that we die, we make different changes to our lives. It is also the most unacceptable property of life that most people resist. Change in life is permanent, thus rather than denying change it is more reasonable to accept it, to adjust.

According to *Param Pujya Dadashri*, '**ADJUST EVERYWHERE**' is the ultimate understanding which will enable coping with changing circumstances and ultimately preventing conflicts, leading to peace and happiness.

There are many definitions for adjustment. According to Symonds (1933) "*Adjustment is a satisfactory relation of an organization to its environment*". Ruth Strong (1949) defines adjustment as a process in itself, and not a state.

Crow and Crow (1956) states "*an individual's adjustment is adequate, wholesome or healthful to the extent he has established harmonious relationship*

between himself and the conditions, situations and person who comprise his physical and social environment”.

Shaffer (1961) states that, “*adjustment is a process by which a living organism maintains a balance between its needs and the circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs*” (see, Dunn *et al.*, 2011 for details)¹.

Broadly defined, adjustment refers to the psychological processes through which human beings manage or cope with the demands, challenges, and frustrations of everyday life. A person who is a social outcast and is frustrated may adapt himself to the environment to overcome the feeling of frustration and not belonging. The past experiences and learning ability of the individual will definitely affect the adjustment process.

The needs of the individual and the outside environmental forces are at a tug of war in a continuous cycle. Individual needs and wants change from one person to another. Thus, a person adjusts himself according to the immediate environment, to fulfill his needs.

¹ Dunn, D. S., Hammer, E. Y. and Weiten, W. (2011). Teaching the Psychology of Adjustment.
<http://www.teachpsych.org/ebooks/pse2011/vol2/38.%20Adjustment.pdf>. (Accessed on 15th January 2013).

The Seven Aspects of Adjustment

The adjustment process can be broadly described in seven criteria (Dunn *et al.*, 2011). These criteria are not in any specific order. An individual may possess some or all of these in different levels within themselves.

Integration

When a person is completely free from conflict within himself, he is able to concentrate more clearly and focus his energy to achieve his goal/s. Life is not viewed superficially, but taken into consideration more seriously.

Self-Development

If an individual is well adjusted, he may apply his intellect in constructive pathways to accomplish his goals and find solutions to problems he may face during his life. He will be an efficient and effective worker, find satisfaction in what he does and enthusiastic and take pleasure in his work.

Realistic

A very well adjusted individual has a realistic and broad outlook on life and the world he lives in. He is capable of dealing with life's problems, limitations and capacities.

Responsibility

An individual who is capable of adjusting himself is mature enough to accept and handle responsibilities. He is able to understand and master his own feelings and has a certain amount of freedom of expression as well as self-control.

Sense of security

A sense of security is important and grows within an adjusted individual through his feelings of being desired and belonging, to a certain group. He adjusts his aspirations according to his opportunities and inherent talents. He does not suffer from unnecessary anxiety, disturbing fears or worries.

Curiosity and Spontaneity

Human beings are naturally curious. A well-adjusted person shows natural curiosity and spontaneity in day to day social relationships. The environment is inviting to him. It is warm and receptive with people who are friendly and compassionate. Such a person is optimistic about his choices in life. He is well aware of his limitations. He is not afraid to admit his failures or is depressed by them excessively. He also doesn't magnify his successes. He is capable of finding socially acceptable outlets for pleasure and eliminates self depreciation and injury.

Frustration tolerance

Needs and wants of an individual are not always acceptable. An adjusted person understands this and is able to inhibit his needs when they are not suitable at the given time and to postpone them for a more appropriate situation.

Factors Influence the Degree of Life Adjustment

Over the years, through various researches, it has been found that several factors influence the degree of life adjustment of students. Mainly the way of guidance offered by schools, play a major role in defining the life of school children.

The degree of concerns from teachers towards students during school hours and after is also important. The level of expectation and teaching attitude of both parents and teachers may have a greater impact on the mentality of children that is far too deep to understand.

The inherent abilities of the student himself as well as the degree of self expectation play a vital part in the adjustment process during schooling years as self motivation is a driving factor. The students' ability to manage stress and the capability to adapt to new environments as well as the type of personality he has will determine the way he will adjust and adapt.

Characteristics of Well-Adjusted Students

The psychological adjustment of a person is relative, and differs from culture to culture. As a result, it is extremely difficult to evaluate. The behavior of a student is considered normal to an extent that it is within social and ethical boundaries of his own cultural group.

Many students tend to be adapted to their environments, denying the satisfaction of immediate needs in favor of a goal of greater appeal later. A student also tends to select goals to satisfy his needs by accepting his limitations and maximizing his abilities, while accepting alternate goals in case his attempts fail. His behavior is varied depending on the environment, while accepting and tolerating reasonable amount of frustration and anxiety about the appropriateness of his behavior.

The students seek a variety of goals to satisfy their needs and accept the social and natural outcomes of their behavior. A well adaptive student will always profit from his experiences. He will be able to reevaluate the situation to try different approaches rather than daydreaming or withdrawing. He creates warm and intimate relationships with friends while having a healthy emotional life.

Thus, he is capable of facing any situation without any emotional guilt about past failures, experiences or feelings. He is capable of rationalizing and cooperates with others and strives to work for the benefit of the society.

Adjustment of First Year Students

Today, transitioning of students from secondary education to tertiary or university education incorporates a great deal of stress and challenges. Some consider it as a challenge which will aid their personal growth while many students are overwhelmed by all the changes and tend to experience emotional maladjustment and depression. Adjustment issues and overall development require constant attention of the university professionals. It is highly related to the success of the University.

Students arrive to the university, having vastly different backgrounds and it is very common that complex psychological histories often support emotional maladjustment and depression. These difficulties are often present due to inefficient dealing with familial separation, lack of proper stress and time management, inefficient study techniques, no goal setting, incompatible relationship formation, badly handling emotions, and low self-esteem. Personal, academic, social and professional success depends on the student's ability to manage these aspects of their lives.

Change is always exciting, but not easy to handle. A newly arrived student may be bewildered during the first few days of University life with meeting so many new acquaintances, new things to do, finding the way around the premises *etc.* Students generally feel anxious and lost in such situations. All new students need time to adjust to the transition, and they shouldn't expect too much from themselves.

The First Year in University and the “W Curve”

The “*W curve*” is a common psychological pattern which occurs in any first year university student. It explains the emotional level of the student as well as how he perceives the immediate world he lives in (Anon, 2012 c)². The W curve consists of five stages. Understanding the basic psychology behind each stage will help the students to adjust to university life quickly as well as help the lecturers to have a better teacher - student relationship (Figure 1).

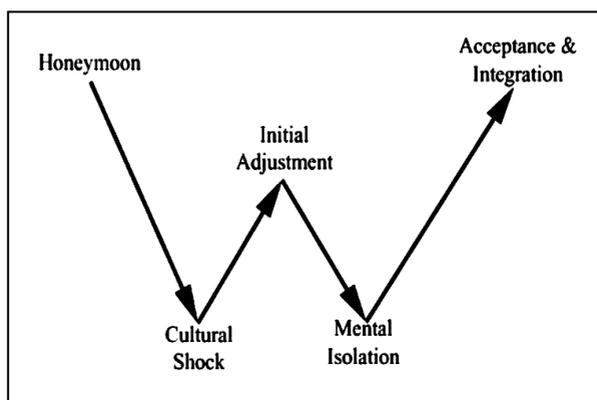


Figure 1 – The W Curve

Source:

*<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/health/problems/adjusting/>
(Accessed on: 20th January 2013)*

² Adjusting to University life. Available from:
<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/health/problems/adjusting/>.
(Accessed on: 20th January 2013).

Honeymoon

Before students enter the university they might experience a certain amount of nervousness and curiosity regarding the unexplained future circumstances, but in general they are in a very relaxed and happy state of mind, having an overall excitement and positive anticipation.

When students first enter the university, during their first week, they experience a warm welcome by the university community which mainly comprise of seniors students and the staff. This initial welcome gives the student an exhilarating feeling of freedom. It is a different environment from what they have experienced so far, away from home for the first time in some cases, no strict adult supervision and the most important feeling is that, they are accepted and recognized as responsible adults. This stage is called the “Honeymoon”. Some students may feel a bit homesick, which is quickly suppressed with the feeling of joy and belonging. They are rejuvenated with a feeling of new beginning, a new culture.

Cultural Shock

The students then initially adjust their psychology to accept that they are in a new environment. They begin to observe and experience the reality of University life. Meeting people coming from different backgrounds is exciting but sharing living areas with them might present unforeseen problems. University life does not have a strict routine on lifestyle.

Students have to make their own decisions on day to day things such as where to shop, where to get a haircut, what type of groceries to buy, when and where to get medical attention etc. Even the most common, mundane household tasks can become challenging responsibilities.

These situations may lead to feelings of frustration and insecurity. Students in their first year try to become self-sufficient and accept responsibility. They may have different personal issues which may interfere with adjusting to their new way of life in addition to focusing on academic studies, establishing new relationships with batch mates and other students and renewing their former relationships with parents and siblings as well as managing conflicts, dealing with familial separation and anxiety.

In general, this is a time filled with changes. Change could be potentially positive in a massive manner, but may also lead to immense personal conflict and angst.

Initial Adjustment

Students adjust themselves to the environmental and other factors gradually. This in turn gives them a feeling of well-being and an improvement of their psychological state due to overcoming and dealing with issues that have come their way. They start to gain confidence in handling the new life in the University and fall in to routine patterns of accomplishing tasks. Various challenges and unforeseen conflicts may present themselves but the student gains a sense of control over his normal lifestyle.

Mental Isolation

Fresh university students tend to make comparisons of their newly formed university life and their usual life at home. They try to compare similarities and find differences in both cultures. Since they are closer to and familiar with their home culture, when they are in the University, they tend to develop strong sense of homesickness.

Students in their first year appear to be caught suddenly between two different cultures, two different worlds. They must adjust their thinking, attitudes and behavior to balance their separate worlds. Even though the university life is exciting, it is still new and not comfortable, although they are linked much more closely to the home environment, now it doesn't seem to be as comfortable and warm as it once was.

Students don't feel homesick as soon as they leave. They start to feel a longing towards home culture after they are relatively stabilized in the university life style. Even, when they actually return home for short time periods, they cannot seem to find the once familiar environment. It doesn't seem to exist. Many minute changes might have taken place at home while the student was away, and he might be displeased for not being there on a daily basis to observe. To the student, home feels strange and new as well.

The student feels frustrated and becomes isolated willingly, to avoid getting hurt from the unknown. He

avoids going home, justifying within him that everything is as it was.

But emotionally he is withdrawn. Not going home to the environment he loves and craves leaves the student feeling more homesick than before. He avoids mingling with peers, to avoid the pain he might suffer by hearing the details of others families. He pretends to be well fit and strong, while he is emotionally isolated and collapsing.

Acceptance, Integration and Connectedness

When the University student realizes that there is no other alternative. He learns to accept whatever circumstances he has to face and the consequences of his actions. He realizes what type of academic performance is expected of him. He begins to feel the freedom and tries to make new connections with the University community.

The student learns to balance and adjust his view of the University life and tries to meet every challenge with an open mind. He gains new experiences and memories. Eventually the student develops a good rapport with his peers and the University community. He is accepted by them and he starts to feel a connectedness, which will strengthen over time. He begins to understand and enjoy his new found life in a realistic manner taking the good and the unpleasant without hesitation to endure any hardship in order to achieve his goals.

Maladjustment

What is Maladjustment?

It is basically the failure to adjust; the lack of harmony with the environment or within ones' self.

According to the World Dictionary (2011), maladjustment is defined as “*a failure to meet the demands of society, such as coping with problems and social relationships: usually reflected in emotional instability*”.

Usually when people are continually in problematic situations and do not have adequate and appropriate outlets for their emotions, the inner tension be converted into conflict which in turn affect decision making. They automatically fail to adjust due to wrong decisions.

The major concern should not be whether a person is maladjusted or not, but the reason behind it. There are many factors which contribute towards maladjustment.

The risks of the maladjusted students include the following:

1. Lacking of good interpersonal ability
2. Inferior with career awareness and decision-making ability
3. Underachievement
4. High test anxiety

Causes of Maladjustment

1. Family

The family of the student plays a key role in shaping the mindset from childhood, in various aspects such as social, economic and psychological.

(a) Social Aspects

The social problems of one generation will lead to the psychological problems of the next generation, according to Gibbon (Dunn *et al.*, 2011) Students having a troubled childhood due to death in the family, divorced parents, separation and desertion find it extremely hard to adapt and adjust to their environment. They are insecure and withdrawn.

Due to the busy nature of modern lifestyle, parents do not spend sufficient time with their children and due to rising population and stressed economies, provision of basic needs of children such as clothing and shelter is difficult for some parents. These factors contribute greatly towards a child feeling isolated and frustrated. They are inevitably maladjusted. Therefore, tend to become either hostile or withdrawn.

(b) Economic Aspects

The economic status of the parents is also a key factor in maladjustment of children. The occupational status / level of the parent will influence the level of comforts they

can provide for the child. Unemployment, underemployment and low economic status tend to breed maladjustment among the young generation.

(c) Psychological Causes

In society, we see over-possessive, highly authoritative parents. They tend to be obsessed with perfecting their child in whatever field they seems fit. Generally the expectation of the parent and the capabilities of the child are incompatible. The overbearing nature of the parent will have an adverse effect on the child's psychology, leading to frustration and development of problematic behavior. Such maladjusted children display acts such as nail biting, lack of self confidence, fear of the dark, etc.

2. Personal Causes

Students who are handicapped visually, physically or mentally usually react to situations in an abnormal manner. They often develop an inferiority complex when they cannot react normally or perform well in everyday situations. Such children isolate themselves willingly from the society and tend to live in their own imaginary world. They indulge themselves in day dreaming.

3. School Related Causes

Growing children are full of energy. They are always charge up. They need to exert that energy regularly, in a meaningful manner, in order to behave normally. Due to various restrictions in the urbanized world, we live in and

the busy lifestyles, most children cannot find an outlet for their excess energy. They keep it bottled up.

When they go out or to school, they are less restricted, and then tend to display maladjusted behavior such as bullying and getting in to fights. They get involved in unwanted, incompatible relationships and friendships. These may lead to drugs and abusive behavior.

4. Teacher Related Causes

If the teachers / lecturers are biased or unfair, if he doesn't involve with the student to some extent, the psychological effect on the student is adverse. The students become withdrawn and develop maladjusted behavior.

5. Peer Group Related Causes

The peer group of a student is a very influential factor on his mentality. The psycho-equilibrium of students is greatly affected by the likes and dislikes of the peer group. The student tries to fit in with the group, sometimes unwillingly committing to certain acts, for the reason that he wants to belong. This can be a major contributor towards maladjustment if the student has an unhealthy relationship with the peers.

There are certain steps a student or any person can take which can help the adjustment in a new environment, including:

1. Taking time for reflection
2. Maximize the chances of finding people you get on with
3. Reflect and appreciate new experiences.
4. Do not beat yourself up
5. Do not be pressurized into doing things you do not want to do
6. Do not bottle up problems
7. Be organized from the start

In general, the students must have good self-adjustment ability, ability to adapt to new environments, capability of stress management, a reasonably healthy level of self-expectation and a mature personality.

Parents, teachers, schools, and the peers, as well as their expectations and attitudes towards the student help to construct the supporting system needed for the development of a well adjusted healthy personality and self-actualization.

Career Counseling for a Safe Future of a Graduate

M. P. Dassanayaka

*Dept. of Biotechnology
Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Maḱandura, Gonawila (NWP)*

People identify *who* they are by *what* they do. People appraise one another by what they are doing for living. Being employed may be a way of earning bread and butter for somebody but others may seek the real purpose of life, self realization and satisfaction out of their work.

Way back in 1900s, people understood work as a task done for the God irrespective of the type. Over the time, perception evolved as the way occupation reflects the rank and the social acceptance of a person. By the 20th century, people were more intense in climbing up the cooperate ladder and securing the long tenure in their career.

Here we are in 21st century with a brand new essence, developing and mastering a specific vocation and moving to a novel area leading to the self-actualization. This is where people became more eager to pick the right career choices for them. Thus in making the correct choices *career counseling* came to the picture.

Career Counseling - What's the Big Deal?

In a nutshell, Career counseling is a service provided by a professional counselor to his client in order to plan, decide, find, and develop a career along with addressing other career issues like conflicts, possibilities and potentials. It caters not merely on decision making process. Even after the decision was made, throughout the lifelong process of career development, a counselor can cooperate a lot.

A career counselor does not tell the counselee what to pick or which career to pursue. He reinforces the autonomous decision of an individual by leading him to make most suitable and realistic occupational choices. This is a systematic approach to bring about the available career opportunities with the preferences and circumstances of the counselee.

Meanwhile, career counseling process can develop the awareness of the current world of work and self competency in effective job hunting. Therefore, Career counseling can alleviate the stress and uncertainty of the school leavers in need of early employment, fresh graduates specialized to a certain field, experienced professionals unsatisfied with the current profession or the working environment, independent self-employers and any career explorer expecting a second person's inspiration for making their occupational choices.

Career counselor will sort out the category of the client by using own means and ways and assist to take the

correct career decisions. In there, he should have Career counseling theories in his toolbox.

Dealing with Counselees: Career Counseling Theories

Knowing about the career counseling theories accommodates understanding the client and thinks in his shoe. As theories are accepted as the proven set of hypothesis it will aid in predicting the present and future behavior of the client. All the career counseling theories come under two categories which are Structural theories and Developmental theories.

Structural Theories

Structural theories basically address the individual personalities in career choices. Once a client turn up for counseling, identifying what he is best at is utter most important. Person will perform best and show higher productivity when the career matches with his passion and aptitude.

This is well elaborated by *Frank Parson's Trait and Factor Theory (1909)*. Frank Parsons (1854-1908) is considered as the father of vocational guidance. He developed a theory based on three elements which are;

1. Understand individual's traits like aptitude and interest.
2. Inquire for job requirements and labor market.
3. Chose a career based on knowledge and logic.

People have different personalities and values. So they are uniquely qualified. Choosing the best fit with one's personality leads to the job success and satisfaction. For identifying this connection, placing the client on the career key is done in career counseling initially.

The career key based on the *Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environment (1985)*. It stated that people are one of six personality types, including: (1) Realistic; (2) Investigative; (3) Artistic; (4) Social. (5) Enterprising, and (6) Conventional.

In real world most people are combination of the six types. In the career there are six basic work environment of the same name. Exact match of personality with the working environment is called congruent, where matches to significant extent will be compatibles. He developed Holland's Hexagon to illustrate his theory (Figure 1).

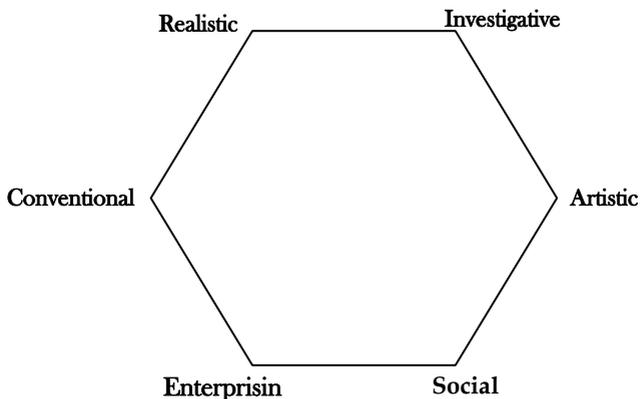


Figure 1 - Holland's Hexagon

Not only traits and personality but other attributes affect on the career choices too. The *Socioeconomic Theory* states those socioeconomic conditions such as culture, family background, social and other outside factors too affecting the overall human identity, education and career goals.

Developmental Theories

Developmental theories focus more on adapting of occupational choices based on the personal and psychological development. People grow and change throughout the life time. Accordingly their values, interests, and decisions change. Hence identifying the developmental stage of the client is a need for an effective counseling.

Donald Super (1957) has aligned vocational maturity with the age by introducing the five staged *Super Theory*. Those five stages are as below;

1. *Growth stage* (birth to 15) - Self conceptualize and develop a general understanding of the world of work.
2. *Exploratory stage* (15-24) - Tentatively make the choices and try them out.
3. *Establishment stage* (25-44) - Stabilize the career choice through working experiences.

4. *Maintenance stage* (45-64) - Advance continuously to climb the cooperate ladder.
5. *Decline stage* (65+) - Reduce work output and get ready for the retirement.

Revealing early interests may expose some important information about the client. Anybody in Exploratory stage will be ready to try out various options to find best for them. But one from the Establishment and Maintenance stages tends to confine to his interest field. Super's theory empowered with the Self-concept. It suggests that own concept on vocation, develops through the time.

When an individual matures he develops his independency in vocational pathway. This is may be by physical and mental growth, inspiration by the working adults, general environment and experiences. Internal and external conditions will broaden the awareness of world of work and mold the self-concept. It is important to know the stage of the client by the career counselor to understand his present condition and predict the future behavior.

Recently counseling more concerns on how people process the information around them and response to them. It has been proved that these capabilities greatly depend on various factors. *Decision-Making Theories discussed* that career development is immensely influenced by the critical point of the decision being

made. This point may be educational choices, internship selection, entry-level job positions, changing jobs, etc.

Ultimately it has reached to the career selection based on the cognition level of an individual. *Cognitive Theories* discussed that career choice of an individual is highly affected by his cognitive capacity to process, integrate and respond for the information. Understanding this helps in career counseling to support the client to develop high level of cognition and improve the decision making process (Perera, 2012)³.

Career Testing

Placing the client in a correct place of the career key is an initial step in counseling procedure. It will give the career option for an individual based on his personality, values and skills. The placement is simply done by facing an aptitude test, or a career test. Among various career testing methods available, Psychometric testing has gained the popularity.

Psychometric Testing

Psychometric in Greek stands for “mental” and “measurement”. Frankly, Psychometric test is an attribution test to measure individual’s intelligence, aptitude and personality. Test runs in two streams;

³ Perera B. M. K. (2012) Career Counseling Theories. Produced at the Workshop for Career Advisors of Sri Lankan Universities 2012.

1. *Aptitude and ability Tests* - Measure your ability to perform in assigned tasks.
2. *Personality and interest questionnaires* - Measure your working strategies and coherence with the environment and colleagues.

Aptitude test has been developed to measure the thinking ability and logical reasoning. It will assess the verbal ability, numerical ability, abstract reasoning, spatial reasoning, mechanical reasoning and data checking.

Personality and interest questionnaires will reflect your personality in terms of interest, attitude and working style. It will inquire about your feelings, opinions and responses. A couple of example questions are as follows;

1. I enjoy taking risks?
A) True B) False
2. I like to be the center of attention?
A) Strongly disagree B) disagree C) neutrals
D) agree E) Strongly agree

There is no pass or fail in this test. Score of Psychometric helps the career counselor to direct the counselee in the correct career pathway.

Correct Approach - Career Counseling Strategies

Any career counseling strategy should be par with the actual need of the counselee and resource availability.

Individual Counseling

This is the most famous counseling service as it carries many benefits for both parties. Maintaining a good relationship by understanding the client's personality, behavior, social and cultural aspects lead to a counseling event a successful one. As well, it can address the gender issue and guarantee the confidence. One client is like one project to the counselor, thus, he will give the matching shoe size based on the size of the feet.

Group Counseling

Group counseling perhaps offers more feasible and effective supports for a selected group in same caliber. Group counseling can organize for 5-15 members, with optimum of 5-8 members. The counselor can address a specific issue with common interest. It expresses few plus points like peer association and sharing common experiences, sharing the emotional support and making a social network within or between the groups connecting more opportunities.

Online Counseling

In the 21st century people want to skip the traditional face-to-face meeting and switch to online counseling service. They meet their counselor through email, real-time chat and video conferencing. This allows an individual to connect to his counselor in any hour of the day and more frequently.

Researchers suggest that the client will be more open and free to select the best service. Along with the E-counseling many other accessory services like career planning and job hunting can be offered. Many Psychometric testing are online based and many practice tests are available on the World Wide Web. But still it cannot beat the human touch of the traditional sit and talk method.

Some journals too, used as a mean of passing the career related information like new theories, strategies, resources and trends. If naming few, International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, The British Journal of Guidance and Counseling, Journal of Career Development, Australian Journal of Career Development, and Journal of Employment Counseling are in the list.

Essential Competencies of a Career Counselor

Just like a tutor guides his students for higher grades, a competent career counselor supports the clients to convert the outside threats to opportunities and select a suitable career and confront other issues throughout career development process. It's a multirole profession as a teacher, researcher, advisor and good friend. At the moment, career counseling is an unregulated field, but has become a timely needed service and good way of making money.

A career counselor should be educated and trained personnel, possibly with a Master's Degree in counseling,

education or psychology, who shows a greater passion to help people. There are multifarious lists of identified skills and competencies which should be possessed by the professional career counselor, but only few are listed below.

1. Basic Counseling Skills

In order to inspire the internal strength of the client, counselor should be equipped with such skills to understand his client's personal goals and motivate him. Out of many such skills Ali and Graham (1996)⁴ distinguished three skills: active listening, understanding and interpretative skills as core counseling skills. They illustrated these as a three storied pyramid (Figure 2).

Active listening comes as the basement to build the empathy and understand the possible meaning behind the words and other expressions. This understanding develops in the next stage by encouraging the client to review himself by paraphrasing, summarizing, asking open ended or close ended questions.

The interpretation is on the top most level of the pyramid where the counselor gives his own interpretation about the situation may be in a way of challenging, updating or self-disclosure.

⁴ Ali, L. and Graham, B., 1996. *The Counselling Approach to Careers Guidance*. Routledge: London. http://www.faculty.londondeanery.ac.uk/e-learning/careers-advice/core_career_counselling_skills.pdf. (Accessed on 13th February 2013).

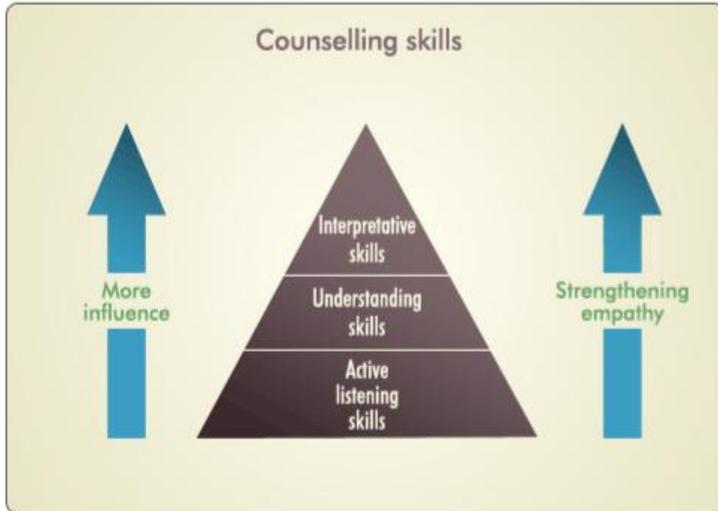


Figure 2 - Ali and Graham's (1996) Model of Core Career Counseling Skills

2. Knowledge on Basic Theories and Associated Techniques

Just like Physiology explains the mental behavior of a person, basic theories aid in understanding the client. Their behaviors are immensely affected by inherent personality, age, gender, education and experience, social and cultural environment and others.

It also helps to predict the growth and development of the career ladder and future decisions. Knowing the theories may allow counselor to use the best strategy to help and guide the client.

3. Assessment Skills

Counselor should be able to select the valid testing standards and evaluation standards to evaluate his client's aptitude, personality, interests and values. He should be able to deliver the computer based assessment measures appropriately. Analyzing the results from the assessment, interpreting the data and directing the client to the correct path are part and parcel of a counselor's role.

4. Researching Skills

Career counselor should stay updated of current job market, new counseling trends and emerging and dying job industries. This skill is truly important to guide the client to a correct place and self professional development.

5. Supervisory Skills

Being a monitor and a mentor to the client is considered as an effective counselor. Showing the supervisory skills at the correct time and seeking the help of other supervisors and colleagues regarding complicated situation renders a good service and aids in own professional development.

6. Ethical and Legal Issues

A good counselor should be aware of related legal and ethical aspects and should guarantee the confidence of sensitive information of the client.

Framework of Career Counseling in the University System of Sri Lanka

Fresh graduates are the driving force of the country. At the same time, they are the group having a lot more anxiety than any other group as they are standing at the entry portal of the world of work.

Sri Lankan University Grant Commission (2006)⁵ initiated a policy and plan on career guidance program within the university system to secure the future of graduates. It aimed in making the undergraduate responsible enough to select their own career as early as possible in their university life.

This is majorly based on re-designing the course work as it fulfills the labor need of the country, providing the opportunity for practicing the skills by aligning the industrial world to the universities via internships, work projects, surveys and research projects.

The framework was planned in three basic levels like department, faculty and university. Appointed Director of Career Guidance with a team of Career advisors has to work at the faculty level cooperating with the professional assistance of the university. As the initiative steps it has proposed few actions like;

⁵ Career Guidance and Industry Internships for University Undergraduates: A Concept Paper for Policy and Programming (2006). University Grant Commission of Sri Lanka.

1. Appointing carder post of Director of Career Guidance, Career Advisors and supportive staff.
2. Set up a Training and Career Planning division for maintaining the career guidance work.
3. Develop and maintain a website for the university system to deliver and update the career information.
4. Provide supportive and quality assurance work for reforming the curricula to increase the capacity of university system to make job oriented labor force.
5. Enlist the vacancies in government organizations and available internship programs.
6. Conducting an awareness program for the government officers on role of university-industry links.

The cream of the intellectual resources and robust young essence in the country are aggregating to the universities. Extracting the maximum potential out of them is a task that everyone should be eager of. The potential is wide in considering the career counseling practices in the university system.

Facilitate the intra and inter university collaborations, mediate the opportunities in the private sector, introducing role models to the university students and make them aware about the diverse world of work,

encourage the student to follow a specific goal right at the entering to the university will be few realistic suggestions that can be planed and organized, which will immensely help to secure the career development and future of graduates.

Resolving Conflicts in Academic Environment Rationally and Effectively

K. G. A. P. K. Amarasinghe

*Dept. of Plantation Management
Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Makandura, Gonawila (NWP)*

Academic Environment as an Organization

University is an organization. Why we are saying like that? According to the Chandan (1997)⁶, “*An organization is a social invention for accomplishing goals through group efforts*”. This definition comes across wide variety of groups such as businesses, government agencies, schools and religious bodies *etc.*, including Universities. Thus, an organization is a collection of individuals with different cultures, views, objectives, capabilities, etc.

Similar to other organizations, the University has a broad vision, a mission and objectives. Success of an organization is depending on whether that particular institute reaches its goals within defined time frame by the management.

To achieve this there should be a peaceful environment within the organizational premises. It

⁶ Chandan J. S. (1997). Organizational Behavior. Vikas Publishing House (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi.

requires flexible relations among all interdependent groups in the organization. When human beings endeavor to work together, their goals and interests will clash eventually resulting in workplace conflict. This is human behavior in nature.

Certo (2008)⁷ defined work place conflict as “*the struggle that results from incompatible or opposing needs, feelings, thoughts or demands within a person or between two people or more people*”. Conflicts arise due to many reasons, such as changes in the organization, struggle for power within the organization, different needs of the people in the organization etc.

Even though these kinds of conflicts are inevitable in the organization it is the duty of the management of the organization to study the situation and deal with it in an effective and efficient way. Conflict resolution is finding an effective solution to reach a good decision to benefit both parties who are responsible for that particular conflict situation within the organization. This should be done after analyzing the situation in the working environment.

Conflicts in Academic Environment

Both public and private universities in Sri Lanka are playing vital role in developing human resources for the country demand. These are the main suppliers of qualified human resources to the country. Therefore, the

⁷ Certo (2008). “Work Place Conflict-Conflict Resolution- Managing Conflict”, <http://poetmel.hubpages.com/hub/Conflicts-in-the-Work-Place> (Accessed on 02nd of February 2013).

prime objective in most of the universities is to provide highly talented and skilled human resources for the national development as well as to meet the demand of the labor markets of the country. These objectives are set to achieve the vision statements of the Universities.

University is a multinational, multi-religious, multicultural organization where ideas and innovation are valued and diverse groups and personalities work and interact together. Therefore, university is said to be a conflict prone environment. Different requirements among the members, different beliefs of people and different views on how things can or should be done may arise within or across University staff and have the potential to lead to conflict.

Conflicts based on academic environment vary from university to university reflect university size, location, student population, mission, specialization, governance and unionization. When conflicts arise in the academic environment, people should be able to engage with it in a healthy and respectful manner as well as be able to consider each other's viewpoints.

If we are able to deal with a conflict in an effective and efficient manner, it leads to develop more inclusive and creative solutions to problems. It also helps to deepen our understanding of issues and learn from others. If the management of the organization mishandled the situation, conflict between people can get worse. Therefore, it is clear that there are both positive and negative aspects in conflict.

Possible Types of Conflicts in an Academic Environment

Saint Mary's College⁸, California has identified four types of conflicts arise within the academic environment.

1. *Conflict Within the Individual*

Conflict within the individual is usually value related. Especially this can happen where the duties and responsibilities expected from the individual are unable to coexist with the values and beliefs held by the individual. Therefore stress, fretfulness and frustration can make worse person's activities.

Conflicts arise within an individual when a person has to choose one alternative from set of equally important alternatives. This often happen within students when they choose their specialization field, because their favorite course modules may included in two specialization area, but they have to select only one specialization area. Such situations create conflicts within the students mind.

2. *Conflict Between "Employer and Employee"*

These types of conflicts can be arising between faculty member and Vice Chancellor, faculty member and dean, and faculty member and the heads of the departments. When introducing new rules, procedures *etc.* to the

⁸ Saint Mary's College, California. Handling Conflict Within an Academic Setting. <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/handling-conflict-within-an-academic-setting> (Accessed on 02nd February 2013).

university, these types of conflicts arise as most of the people try to avoid changes. On the other hand, there is higher possibility of creating conflict between these two parties when a trade union action taken place in the premises.

3. *Conflict Within Faculty Members*

This is a type of interpersonal conflict which is most common and most recognized conflict in all the universities. Disagreement among the faculty members is the main cause for this.

When designing course modules for the new course, different oppositions can be arise and it leads to conflict. Another reason is scarce resources. For example, when two lecturers want to use incubator for their researches which is the only one available to the faculty, conflict may arise between those two members.

If necessary adjustments are not made, it leads to disappointment, frustration and sometimes migration of the academics to better venues even migration in severe situations. This is the most troublesome kind of conflict and it is difficult to solve. Sometimes it leads to academic warfare.

4. *Conflict between the Faculty and the Students*

In any university this type of conflicts often happens. Especially when new batches of students are recruited to the university, senior students try ragging and the staff

members try to prevent that. This time period is the most difficult time in the university and there is no smooth running within the premises, because of the various disciplinary actions such as suspensions, warnings, protest *etc.*

Positive and Negative Consequences of Conflicts

Conflict is a natural phenomenon, neither inherently good nor bad, but there may be positive or negative outcomes. It is easy to visualize negative effects of conflicts. This depends on the type of the conflict and how people deal with the situation.

Negative Aspects of a Conflict

- Leads to disappointment and stress - related symptoms.
- Absenteeism and lowered productivity.
- Staff resignations.
- Environment becomes confused and characterized by mistrust, suspicion and hostility.
- Time and energy is diverted away from activities to accomplish organizational goals.
- Inappropriate behaviors, disharmony, poor communication.
- Lowered confidence and poor cooperation.
- Reduce motivation and collaboration.

Positive Consequences of a Conflict

According to the Chandan (1997) there are few positive consequences of conflict as follows:

It helps in analytical thinking. Conflict may induce challenge to such views, opinions, rules, policies, goals and plans which would require a critical analysis in order to justify these as they are or they make such changes that may be required.

It helps to increase cohesion. Conflict between other organizations develops loyalty and cohesion within the organization that develop a greater sense of group identity in order to compete with outsiders. It helps in dedication and commitment to organizational and group goals.

Conflict promotes competition and hence it results in increased efforts. Some individuals are highly motivated by conflict and severe competition. As an example a professor who is turned down for a promotion due to conflict within the division may work harder to prove that he is more capable and deserves a promotion.

It serves as a foundation for organizational development. Conflict with the status quo is a pre-requisite to change. Creative and innovative people are always looking for a ground to challenge the situation quo. These challenges lead to search for alternatives to existing patterns which leads to organizational change and development.

Conflict, when expressed can clear the air and reduce tension. Some disagreements if unexpressed can lead to imaginative distortions of truth, sense of frustration and tension, high mental exaggerations and biased opinions resulting in fear and distrust. However, when it is expressed, it may show the cause of conflict to be a minor one resulting in cooperation and compromise.

Resolving Conflict in the Academic Environment

There are five primary strategies have been identified by the Chandan (1997) to deal with the conflict arise in the working environment.

“Avoiding”

In the academic environment, conflict avoidance can be used to uphold or improve effectiveness, because it is symbolized by delegating controversial decisions, accepting default decisions, and not wanting to harm anyone's way of thinking.

It calls for ignoring the problem at hand. However, in many situations this is a weak and ineffective approach to take. But, for minor issues, conflict avoidance can eventually be a winning strategy, either the problem goes away on its own or you avoid the risk of turning something small into a much bigger issue. Therefore, this strategy is suitable for minor, non recurring problems.

“Collaborating”

This plays major role in conflict resolution requires great courage and much consideration and thinking creatively to resolve the problem without concession. Within the academic environment this strategy is useful when you need to bring together a variety of viewpoints to get the best solution or when there have been previous conflicts within the academic environment.

If a conflict arise between two parties of faculty members, the management may try to calm things down by being understanding and supportive to both parties, appealing them for cooperation. In some instances management of the University may ask to join two parties to the same project and give their contribution and collaborative style try to meet the needs of all people involved.

In this type of conflict resolution style people cooperate effectively and acknowledge that everyone is important. It leads to create a win-win situation within the academic environment.

“Compromising”

In this strategy, each party gives up a want and it may create a win-win, lose-lose, or win-lose situation. This is useful technique to be used when two parties have relatively equal power and in a situation where there is time constrains. Within the academic environment this strategy can be used to resolve conflicts arise between two

faculties in the University. This is a big step toward conflict resolution.

Both courage and consideration are used when both parties look for common ground. Considering about characteristics of a compromise involves, make out a solution that meets in the “middle”, Parties involved in the conflict must each give up a little of what they want, People who are involving in the conflict do not need to have a close relationship, can be used quickly, but each person must communicate what is most important in the situation.

“Forcing”

This strategy is rarely used to resolving conflicts within the academic environment as it creates win-lose situation and leads to frustration in the lose party. In certain situation forcing has to be used as a conflict resolution strategy if one party creates lot of problems within the academic environment and it obstruct the smooth running within the premises.

Therefore, this strategy is useful in situation where quick decision is needed and decision is unpopular or when defending against someone who is trying to take advantage of the situation selfishly.

However, it can leave people feeling hurt, disappointed and resentful when used in less urgent situations. If students make troubles in the University unnecessarily for accomplish individual goals in selfish

manner, this can be used to resolve it. As well as when lecturers in the university make conflicts with their respective chairpersons of the departments and not get along well with them, have lost their promotions even. It leads to conflicts within themselves again.

“Accommodating”

Problem solving or accommodating is used to seek the best solution for a problem. In this strategy, much consideration is given to the relationship than the outcome. Therefore, it is appropriate when the issues matter more to the other party, when peace is more valuable than winning.

Problem solving is a better approach to resolve the conflicts arising in the academic environment as it is the place where the cream of the people in the country live in. Without effective problem solving it is difficult to run a university. Government spend considerable amount from the GDP for higher education and if the university systems are not functioning well due to various issues, which can be resolved, it is huge loss to the country.

A Rational Way of Resolving Conflicts

Previously discussed strategies can be used for resolving conflicts in the academic environment. The important thing to consider here is selecting the correct strategy depending on the conflict style, because if a wrong strategy is used to resolve conflict that may be not effective for the situation and it may stimulate the conflict rather

than resolving it. Thus having clear cut understanding about the situation is a must in effective conflict resolution.

There is a model which may help in resolving conflicts rationally and effectively, which consists of six steps (Anon, 2013)⁹.

1. *Identify the Problem*

Have a discussion to understand both sides of the problem. The goal at this initial stage is to say what you want and to listen to what the other person wants. Define the things that you both agree on, as well as the ideas that have caused the disagreement. It is important to listen actively to what the other is saying, use “I” statements and avoid blame.

2. *Come Up With Several Possible Solutions*

This is the brainstorming phase. Drawing on the points that you both agree on and your shared goals generate a list of as many ideas as you can for solving the problem, regardless of how feasible they might be. Aim toward quantity of ideas rather than quality during this phase, and let creativity be your guide.

⁹ Anon (2013). Interpersonal Conflict and Effective Communication. <http://www.drbaalternatives.com/articles/cc2.html> (Accessed on 23rd February 2013).

3. Evaluate These Alternative Solutions

Now go through the list of alternative solutions to the problem, one by one. Consider the pros and cons of the remaining solutions until the list is narrowed down to one or two of the best ways of handling the problem. It is important for each person to be honest in this phase. The solutions might not be ideal for either person and may involve compromise.

4. Decide on the Best Solution

Select the solution that seems mutually acceptable, even if it is not perfect for either party. As long as it seems fair and there is a mutual commitment to work with the decision, the conflict has a chance for resolution.

5. Implement the Solution

It is important to agree on the details of what each party must do, who is responsible for implementing various parts of the agreement, and what to do in case the agreement starts to break down.

6. Continue to Evaluate the Solution

Conflict resolutions should be seen as works in progress. Make it a point to ask the other person from time to time how things are going. Something unexpected might have come up or some aspect of the problem may have been overlooked. Your decisions should be seen as

open to revision, as long as the revisions are agreed upon mutually.

Important Things to Consider as Dealing with Conflicts

- Be aware with the way of thinking and attitudes of faculty members and students.
- Makeup the department in such a way that conflicts can be discussed, and dealt with flexible manner (Flexible environment within the department).
- Always try to deal with the conflict as early as possible.
- Keenly listen to faculty members and students who are engaged in conflict.
- Discuss with both parties together or individually.
- Be sensitive to faculty members who have personal problems especially if those are affecting to the faculty operations.
- Do not be bias in conflicts.
- Do not get involved with the conflict if your involvement is ineffective.
- Resolve conflicts according to the By-laws in particular faculty.

Group Guidance to Enhance Academic Performance

E. Wijesinghe

*Dept. of Horticulture and Landscape Gardening
Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
Makandura, Gonawila (N^oWP)*

Guidance: The Concept and Its Importance

The meaning of the word guidance is “to direct, “to show” or “to point out” the path. According to Mohan (2003)¹⁰, Guidance is a process of assisting the individual in determining, analyzing and understanding his capacities, problems and needs in the light of their knowledge helping him/her to make wise choices and adjustments. This assistance or help rendered by a more experienced person to a less experience person.

Every person needs guidance of others as they are social beings. Parents, teachers and other elders in society guide young people for successful living. Guidance is needed at every stage of development right from the beginning of life till to the end. Every individual will be satisfied in life if properly guided. Guidance is needed whenever person face a particular problem. Therefore, guidance is important to a person for self understanding

¹⁰ Mohan G. A. (2003). Educational Psychology. Sri Vinayaka Art Printers, Hyderabad, India.

and self direction. Through that, person can identify his/her strengths, limitations and resources.

Guidance is an essential part of education and helps in achieving the goals of education. Students' life is getting more complex day by day. Therefore, modern students face lot of problems during curricular choices, adjustment with peers, skill development etc. Earlier guidance was mainly needed to get jobs after leaving Universities or schools. However, it is now concerned with the entire individual in all aspects.

Principles of Guidance

Guidance is based upon few principles as follows.

The Respect for the Dignity of the Individual

This is the basic principle of guidance. The dignity of the individual is supreme. Each individual is the combination of characteristics which provides uniqueness to each person. Guidance is based on this important recognition of individuals because aim of the guidance is to help individual development according to his/her ability or potentials.

Guidance is a Lifelong Process

The individual needs a continuous guidance process from early childhood and throughout adulthood. Therefore, guidance is not limited to particular age group.

As well as guidance has an equal importance for people in general and for those who have specific problems.

Guidance is a Systematic and Organized Service

Guidance is quite different from giving advices or instructions. It helps to produce a better adjusted and fully functional individual. Therefore, process of guidance should be a well organized systemic service.

Guidance is Meant for All

Guidance has become a universal need. Because, modern society is getting more complex day by day and people are in difficulty to find time for gathering information regarding job opportunities, market demand etc. Guidance service can help to individual to find necessary information.

Guidance is a Team Work

It is difficult to handle guidance process by a single person especially with respect to children. Involvement of parents, teachers, administrators and community is important to develop better individual. There must be positive cooperation among each party to make this process success.

Guidance Focuses on Overall Development of Individual

One basic principle of guidance is to assist individuals to develop all-rounded personality. Guidance provides

necessary facilities for self understanding, self direction and self realizing to individuals. Therefore, guidance is provided to make individual more self dependent.

Areas of Guidance

The areas of guidance are very vast. Major areas of guidance are educational, vocational, religious, health and physical activities, personal guidance for home relationships, guidance on leisure and recreation, personal well being, social and civic activities.

Educational Guidance

Educational guidance begins when child enters to the school, and continue till education gets completed. General idea of educational guidance is only related to educational problems. However, in a broader sense educational guidance deals with all those problems which are related to student during entire education span. Problems regarding education may vary with time to time in a student's life.

Educational related problems at primary and secondary level will be different from problems at tertiary level. Educational guidance at the universities must orient students about the purpose and scope of higher studies and helps them to stimulate their studies. Generally, students need educational guidance in following situations.

- Select the curriculum that best fits his/her abilities, interests and future needs. Selection of course is important for each and every student because it determines the future career. Proper selection of course is critical in secondary level and some students could be in confusion, and are unable to select the stream they must choose. Some students face difficulties when deciding which higher education or a professional course should be the choice. Students need proper guidance and information during these situations.
- Educational achievements - Many students fail to obtain higher grades for their subjects. Many reasons are responsible for this such as family problems, wrong studying habits, disorders and examination phobia. In such situations, students need proper guidance to achieve their educational goals.
- Adjustment at institute - When a student admitted to a new educational institute she/he may face lot of problems. Because of he/she has no proper idea about its culture, custom, facilities and co-curriculum activities. This situation leads to develop personal problems such as shyness, loneliness etc.
- Choosing a future profession - Future profession depends on the subject chosen at school level or the University level. Therefore, at the very beginning students have to select courses considering their future vocation. At this stage students are unable to understand their abilities and potentials. Educational

guidance is important to select future profession of students.

Guidance can be given to either individual or groups. Individual guidance can be used to refer to guide, given to a person based on their unique circumstances.

Group Guidance

Group refers to a collection of people, interaction among individuals, development of shared ideas, the development of affective ties and the development of interdependence of roles. According to Jones (1951)¹¹, group guidance can be defined as any group enterprise or activity in which the primary purpose is to assist each individual in the group to solve his problems and to make his/her adjustment.

The content could include educational, vocational, personal or social information. In university or any other educational institute group guidance activities have been planned to provide information in groups or experiences beyond the traditional classroom. On the other hand, group guidance activities have been planned to help in skill building, opportunities for personal growth and development, orientation, provide information and assistance in decision making.

¹¹ Jones, A. J. (1951). Principles of Guidance and Pupil Personnel work, New York, Mi Graw Hill.

Organization of Group Guidance Activities

Planning of group guidance activity may focus the following points:

Need Assessment

The need assessment must be done to find out the common problems of individuals in a particular institution. This can be done by administering questionnaires, problem surveys, checklists and interviews that are provide a factual basis for determining possible group guidance activities. Students face different kind of problems and this assessment provides an opportunity to group them according their needs.

Determining the Suitability of Group Guidance Activities

After determining needs, the guidance counselors must identify those for which group guidance activity would be appropriate for each case. Group guidance activities may be useful to nearly everyone in a specific target group in the university/school.

Small group guidance activities are designed to fulfill specific outcomes of smaller subgroups within the total population of selected target group. These activities may focus on providing information for decision making and planning, activities for personal development and assistance for educational adjustments.

Determining the Characteristics of the Group

Size of the group is an important consideration. Depending upon the group activity the size of the group should be fixed. The size should be approachable and manageable. The size will also have an influence on the format planning includes determining the type of activities of the group, length of the time allocated for each group session, the number of sessions and the setting. Venue should be selected taking in to account the group selected for activity. Role of counselor is also a key factor affecting the success of group activities. Active involvement of counselor will direct group to achieve their final outcomes.

Selection of Members and Role Specifications

The participant selection for group guidance activity is also very important. They may volunteer or they may be invited to participate. First, it is important to select person as a leader considering size of the group. Guidance counselor can act as a leader if it is necessary. Then, the group goals should be clarified by leader to participants. The group leaders must explain the planned activities which will be comfortable for group members.

Monitoring of Activities and Evaluation of Outcomes

The group leaders should take the responsibility for keeping the group on correct path. They have to monitor the progress of group activities and should take the necessary actions or techniques to evaluate them. This

evaluation process is important to identify effectiveness of each group activity.

Techniques of Group Guidance

A number of techniques are used in organizing group guidance as follows:

Group Discussion

Group discussion can be described as a conversation that allows its participants to express their views and opinions and share with other participants. It is a systematic oral exchange of information, views and opinions about a topic, issue, problem or situation among members of a group. When organizing a group activity, it is important to invite an expert/resource person relevant to the particular area.

Then particular person may act as the leader who has a critical role within the discussion group. The group leader starts the discussion and encourages every member to participate in it. Efficiency of the group discussion basically depends on the active involvement of group members. Finally, a conclusion is also done by the group leader.

Problem-Solving

Problem-solving is also a kind of technique that can be used to solve problems within a group. However, the method of problem-solving should be accepted by each

group member. Following steps are the key steps of the problem-solving procedure within a group. At the beginning, problem must be identified precisely.

In this situation, no need to take much attention for first step because group members already gathered due to a certain problem. They have to focus on the root causes of the problem. It is important to find out all possible causes by using suitable techniques. Then, possible solutions must be discussed among group members and evaluate them. Finally, best solution must be selected through the acceptance of majority.

Role Play

Role playing is a method where real life situations are simulated by group members. In small group, role playing can be adopted as a technique of guidance. The students gain an insight into the role without fear of facing failure, because it is not a real life situation. This helps to develop confidence to face real life and also gather new experiences.

The right kind of situations and the appropriate individuals have to be selected to the role play. Otherwise, if actors do not come out with real feelings the purpose of role playing will not be achieved. As first step, situation is selected and makes aware group members regarding the role playing. Then group members are assigned to each role. Audience/other group members should observe intelligently and assess it. Finally, conclusion is presented by the group leader while considering feedback of others.

Class Talk

If a class or small group of students has a common problem regarding subject matters or selection of curriculum, a class talk can be arranged. Class talk is not being longer than normal class period. Students should be given chance to raise questions and it is important to give clarifications whenever necessary. Audio-visual aids such as posters, videos, films etc. can be used to increase efficiency of the class talk.

Benefits of Group Guidance

Student can be given opportunities to learn and understand more about other members of group. They can also acquire information about the external world. These group guidance activities are important in providing learning and understanding not only educational decision making but also career and personal-social adjustments. It is important to provide valuable information to students through an organized manner.

Certain experiences that lead to personal development can be obtained only from the group settings. These experiences include some roles in a group such as group leaders and group followers. Further, students can develop their communication skills through group activities. Group guidance technique can save time and effort of both the counselor and students. Counselor can utilize these saved time to solve more difficult and complex problems of students.

Limitations of Group Guidance

Group guidance is a technique used to guide students. However, individual guidance cannot be substituted with group guidance. It is difficult to apply all the group guidance techniques to educational institutes. Further students may feel hesitant to come out with their personal problems in the group. Therefore, in such cases group guidance cannot help other students.

Even though group guidance activities can save time and effort, counselors may face certain problems during organizing the activities. Lack of cooperation on part of the administration as well as the staff members may also create problems in organizing such activities. Lack of adequate funds is another issue faced by counselors. In universities, most of the time lectures may act as counselors and sometime they may feel this as an additional burden for them.

Mind Preparation Approach As a Counseling Technique to Prepare Students for Effective Learning

J. R. K. C. Jayakody

*Dept. of Computing and Information System
Faculty of Applied Sciences
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Kuliyaipitiya*

Introduction

The primary aim of most of the students is to select a good faculty and good courses. But due to their low results at the Advanced level most of them end up with an unexpected faculty and unexpected courses. Therefore, main aim they had during their school time was diverted completely into different aims determined by their selected faculties. Most of the students are strange to the new aims. Unfortunately until they are enrolled for the courses at a university they are unaware of the aim. Once they get an instant aim, from there onwards they try to achieve it, without bothering of the purpose? What values will I get? How should I achieve it? And so on.

Apart from that their studies are mainly based on exams. Even though there is an urgent need for a revision in respective curriculum to fit to the current needs of the respective sector, fruitful steps have not been taken to modify the prevailing system. Rather than waiting for a revision, in order to achieve the full value of the existing courses offered by faculties to produce elites, as lecturers

we should power up students' minds to achieve their aims with the existing system.

Mind preparation is very important in this circumstance. Sometimes most of the students end up with unexpected faculties due to the low mind preparation to achieve their aim during their school career. Once they enter the university, lecturers give their priority on teaching and neglect the aspect of empowering the students' mind to learn.

If we as counselors dedicate our time to make up the students' mind for effective learning, in return it will produce top quality intellectuals in respective fields. With this, it's easy to achieve the aims of the university, and those of the country.

Different mind preparation counseling techniques to prepare a student Counseling helps to fill the vacuumed area of student's life which is not addressed by the curriculum. Academic counselors should be able to identify different factors that prevent students from achieving the academic expectations.

Counseling is the best technique to optimize the learning styles and embark mind preparation techniques of students so that they can continue to persevere their academic excellence and finally professional employment. Through counseling students can prepare their mind to identify their learning styles and to develop the interest, commitment and the focus to achieve the student's aims.

Different Styles of Learning

Senses

Which of the senses has the learner used mostly? Which of the senses is the one they rely on most? Most common way of gathering information is through eyes ears or the body. Even though there are five common senses some of the senses work effectively in students learning. How do you take in information more effectively? Using eyes, ears or your body? Understanding the mindset of the student's sense which works most will be helpful to select student's learning style.

Learning Style

British psychologist Peter Honey and Alan Mumford (2007) have identified individual's learning style based on how information is dealt with.

They have identified four learning styles such as: (1) activist; (2) reflector; (3) pragmatist, and (4) theorist. With these four they give a realistic and accessible view of student's learning personality.

Activist: The type of person who is quick to roll up your sleeves and get stuck in. They enjoy the immediacy of experiences and are enthusiastic about anything new. Those types of students tend to act first and think later. You love being active and no sooner are you given a problem then you have begun to brainstorm solutions to it. That type of motto is "I'll try anything once".

Reflector: You tend to stand back from experiences; in a meeting you probably take a back seat. You like to absorb a range of data before coming to any decision. You prefer to see the way things are going before offering an opinion of your own. That type of motto is “I’ll need to think about that one”.

Theorist: tend to think things through in a logical sequence until the learner can make it fit into a pattern. They like models, systems and rules. Enjoy being detached and analytical. You can be a useful rigorous thinker and someone who will not budge from an opinion just because it does not fit your worldview. That type of motto is “but how does it fit in with”.

Pragmatist: Always keen to try out ideas. You are always experimenting. You need to get on with things and not sit about taking. Once you have heard something interesting, you want to test it out straight away. That type of motto is “There must be a better way”.

Developing multi intelligence is very important as a learner. First the learner should have a thorough evaluation about him, to find out which intelligence he inherits. From there onwards if something remains to develop they should develop the necessary aspects of intelligence.

Gardner (2008) has revolutionized the concept of intelligence by introducing 10 intelligences. They include: (1) Linguistic; (2) Mathematical; (3) Visual; (4) Physical;

(5) Musical; (6) Emotional; (7) Social; (8) Environmental; (9) Spiritual, and (10) Practical.

Counselor should be able to clearly identify student's senses, styles of information grabbing and intelligence to identify different learning styles of students to select their individual aims.

If it is a degree program, we should be able to show what the students are going to gain at the end. Especially, it is not the "output", but the "outcome". We should show the syllabi by combining with interrelated subjects. Then find out the areas they can specialize based on their skills, senses, intelligence, interest, learning styles and so on.

If the counselor and students do not spend sufficient time, it is difficult to proceed with the course. Then the students do the subject without the final aim. Showing the big picture gives a big value to the learner for his preparation to achieve the aim. Before preparing the goal the learner should answer these questions. What do I need to accomplish? Why do I need to accomplish? What will such a goal do for me? Is it challenging enough to be worth of effort? Is it grounded enough to be accomplished? What possible obstacles might I encounter as I pursue this goal?

When a student has intelligence in music and if he does software engineering syllabus, he can keep his aim to be a music software Engineer. He can develop Music software during his course. Counselor's responsibility is to identify the students' mind set and give necessary instructions to achieve their targets.

Developing the Focus as Mind Preparation Techniques to Achieve Aims

If the aim is clear, learner will concentrate on it. They can develop the focus by developing the interest and motivation. Sometimes they do not have the interest towards the aim that they are going to achieve. Then they should somehow try to develop the interest. The results that they get from the motivational factor are very much important to develop their interest.

Developing the brain functions, Keeping priorities straight, Keeping mindfulness and making some crucial decision from moment to moment can be considered as main activities to gain a good focus.

Developing Brain Functions

In order to develop the focus, one should develop the brain energy beforehand. Laying this foundation is important before learners start other activities to empower their mind. Activities listed in Table 1 may be followed continuously till the aim is achieved. Also, it is a good practice to prepare a checklist and make sure students have done enough to improve their brain functionality every day.

Keep Priorities Straight

Simple way to keep the priority focus is to set a schedule and stick to it. Learner should make sure not to set a rigid schedule that leaves no room for flexibility.

Table 1 – Simple activities to do on a daily basis to boost brain function

Eat a good Diet	Taking a nutritional meal is essential for the proper function of the brain. A healthy diet includes fruits, vegetables, nuts and healthy fats like olive oil.
Take daily vitamins, minerals, and fish oil.	Daily meal should be included with vitamins and minerals. Take a daily fish oil supplement, which can decrease inflammation and boost blood flow to the brain.
Exercise	Boosts blood flow, increases the brain's use of oxygen and improves learner's brain's response to stress.
Get enough sleep	At least seven hours of sleep at night has been shown to help keep learner's brain functioning at optimal levels.
Meditate	Meditation activates the most thoughtful part of the brain, so learner can make better and more intelligent decisions.
Relax	Learning how to counteract stress helps students' brain work better, puts them in a better mood, reduces high blood pressure, and protects from diseases
Practice gratitude	When they focus on what they love, their brain works better, more coordinated, and feel better

Keep Mindfulness

Live at the present. Perfect moment to achieve the goal is not tomorrow. It's now. Students should not waste their time for a perfect condition or perfect opportunity. They never exist. Following a good meditation technique will help up to create the mindfulness of the learner. Still if they can't live at present, ask them to take a piece of paper and answer the following three simple questions. It'll motivate to do the work now. Always imagine you are doing it. Where you are? What you want to do? How you will feel while doing it?

Make Some Crucial Decision from Moment to Moment Time

Students might be tempted by a great television program, cricket match or their specific event that demands some quality time and more. They should make sure not to neglect the other areas of their life to keep a strong focus, in fact doing so is very bad. Instead of doing something like that they should find some non essential activities that they do on daily basis and allocate that time for it.

Commitment Techniques as a Mind Preparation Approach to Achieve Aims

Focus and commitment go hand in hand. Beginning with a very small commitment is a good way to get over the challenge. Then students can gradually push themselves to put in longer periods of time. Till the focus and the interest develop they should be committed themselves to their goals. At the beginning, it might be

difficult. Every time they should look positively. Even though it takes some time to get the final result, we should encourage them not to give up. They should not fool themselves into believing that they can magically and suddenly become keenly focused and interested what they struggled to do in the past. Develop enthusiasm, Narrowing in one thing at a time and Developing the consistency can be considered as main activities to build up the commitment.

Enthusiasm

When they first set a goal, enthusiasm flows naturally and easily. Then they are fired up by excitement and ready to move forward at breakneck speed. Table 2 shows some tactics that can be used to keep the enthusiasm high.

Table 2 - Set of activities to keep the enthusiasm high

Recommit goal in regular basis:	Mentally go over the reason which set the goal in the first place. Remember how you felt when you first conceived the idea.
Pump themselves up:	Asked them to do lot of positive talks. Compliment themselves .Encourage themselves. Inspire them and motivate them.
Asked to get excited about their progress in learning to focus:	Asked them to really congratulate and praise themselves when they stick to their plan. If they focus on something 30 minutes time for the first time celebrate it.

Narrowing in One Thing at a Time

Most difficult thing in achieving aim is to start it. Therefore learner should narrow their goal for the first time. Actually a learner should start in a big way but make the task small. Any aimed learner has a number of portable steps in mind, including;

- Research and expand knowledge
- Form a clear ,detailed plan of action
- Identify small, achievable action steps to take now
- Create a plan to gradually increase the effort. (Best option is to write down few things that the learner hope to do next day).Then at the end of the day evaluate it.
- Consistency:

Learners should commit themselves to keep consistency. Consistency helps to develop the focus further. Due to that recalling power and interest will develop. Consistency, keeps adding power to what is accomplished. Solid foundation is created and then keeps building it. Learners firm with themselves, demand consistency. The power to make and keep commitment to them is the essence of developing basic habit of effectiveness.

Relationship between Aim, Learning Styles, Focus, Interest and Commitment

Aims, learner skills, interest, focus and commitment work interactively till the aim is achieved. For the effectiveness of the above cycle there should be periodic

meetings between the counselor and the students to ensure the proper functioning of the above mind preparation miracle cycle. None of the components will work alone. All need all components to work in the proper interaction. Final focus of the above cycle should be to make a habit to achieve the goal and improve the level of some components to the expected level. (Ex: improve the learning style).

Different Challenges to Overcome of Mind Preparation Approaches to Achieve Aims

Learner should be aware of some of the challenges that cause to break this cycle. Something deeper is happening within learner that prevents them from following something you intended to do (Table 3).

Table 3 - Different challenges of miracle cycle and remedy

Challenge	Description	Remedy
1. Unclear objectives	Most often learner tends to set goals on the surface circumstances that they believe will make them feel happy, rather than focusing on the underlying essence of what they really need.	Learner should answer the following question and get clear about the objectives and aim. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do I want this? • What feeling will these new circumstances or

		<p>experiences provide for me?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are these feelings important to myself? • What deeper needs will they satisfy?
2.Unrelalistic expectations	It is far easier to think about doing something than it is to actually do it. Especially if learners try to achieve something radically different than what they are currently used to.	Set achievable goals. Break down the large goal to smaller goals to start with; lower the learner's expectations of how and when your goal will come to accomplishment.
3.It's too hard	Working toward any goal will seem hard at the beginning, but sometimes we underestimate just how hard. Sometimes it's the result of unrealistic expectation.	Keep pushing yourself until learner reaches the point where it doesn't seem so hard anymore. Start to enjoy the challenge.

4. Not doing the inner work	Sometimes learner doesn't prepare themselves for the new circumstances they are trying to create; they won't be mentally and emotionally ready to handle them.	Consider the qualities you would need to handle the achievement of their goal. Such as confidence, courage, creativity, flexibility.
5. Sacrifice vs. gain	Failing to acknowledge and prepare for the sacrifices can set us up for a rude awakening- and even threaten eventual success.	Learner should know that what they stand to gain is worth the cost of what you will have to give up.
6. Fear of failure	There are many possible ways for a fear of failure to make it known, but learner will usually notice it because of an inner sense of hesitation or dread.	Goal achievement is not a one shot deal. In fact, the only way student can truly fail is if they stop trying.
7. Obstacles	Unexpected obstacles are responsible for many unrealized goals; simply the goal seeker does not have a plan in place to deal with it.	Prepare for obstacles ahead. Go over each of the action steps learner has set to achieve their goal. Then think the possible

		problems and solution for it.
8.Trying to control	Set a goal to accomplish something where much of the outcome was out of control.	Should focus on things that learner can control.
9.Unclear action steps	Not having a good clear detailed action plan.	Clearly prepare the action steps and make those action steps as goals.
10.Conflicting priorities	Cause such a heavy sense of defeat that may be tempted to give up on learner's goals altogether.	Need to clearly decide what's most important from moment to moment.
11.Lack of commitment	If not truly committed to the goal, you simply won't make it a priority.	Make the goal very important. Think about the negative consequences of abandoning learner's goal. Convince to learner that "do or die" when it comes to the goal.
12.Losing motivation	Feel frustrated due to results not seeing right	Take a break. Change the

	<p>away. Student should wonder whether they took a very big goal. They may start doubting their own capabilities.</p>	<p>approach. (Change the action plan steps). Get angry. (take a look at learner's current life circumstances). Build them up. Create a game out of the goal. Develop a challenge with it and go for it.</p>
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Lord Buddha's Approach to Mind Preparation for Effective Learning

When we look into it from a psychological point of view, Buddhism can be identified as philosophies which focus on fine psychological principles. Lord Buddha was the first philosopher who introduced and invented the basic mind preparation principle for effective learning to achieve the aim.

Lord Buddha, while teaching his own pupil has shown four methods of learning. When Lord Buddha lived in Wishala Nuwara Chapala Chetiya proclaimed to Ananda Thera that, he had developed Sathara Erdipada named as Chanda, Chithya, Weerya, Weemansa which help himself to realize the truth of world. (It helped Lord Buddha to achieve his aim). Therefore if he had wished,

he could have lived a lifetime or more than that. (Bambarende Siri Seewali Himi,1960)¹².

Chanda Erdipada (චන්ද ඉඳුසධිපාද): Interest to achieve the Nirwana. Lord Buddha's disciples follow this as a technique to attain the Nirwana. Since the interest is there, it is called Chanda. Rathapala thero achieved the Arahath status with this. (Ginadasa Godakanda,2008)¹³.

Chitha Eridipala (චිත්ත ඉඳුසධිපාද): mind should be focused to achieve the aim. Lord Buddha's disciples followed this as a technique to attain Nibbana. Meditation comes under Chitha Eridipada. Samdana thero attained the Arahath status with this. (Ginadasa Godakanda,2008).

Weeriya Erdipada (වීරිය ඉඳුසධිපාද): committed to achieve the aim. Wannu Patha jathakaya, Bojajaneeya jathakaya, are the examples of jathaka stories for Weerya Erdipada. (Pansiya Panas jathaka potha). Sona thero attained nirvana with Weerya. (Ginadasa godakanda, 2008).

Weemansa Erdipada (විමංසා ඉඳුසධිපාද): Recall and look at the aim. Apannaka jathakaya, Nalapana jathakaya, and Dewadarma jathakaya are examples of Weemansa Erdipada jathaka stories. Mogaraja thero attained nirvana with Weemansa Erdipada (Ginadasa godakanda, 2008).

¹² Bambarende Siri Seewali Himi.(1960). Parinirwaya Soothraya. Nugegoda:Ajith Press.

¹³ Ginadasa Godakanda. (2008). Sanuktha Nikayatta Katta. Nugegoda:Ajith Press.

Lord Buddha developed Sathara Erdipada to find the truth of the world. He achieved the first dannaya to newasannnasanna yathanaya and sowan to arahath achieved due to chanda, chitha, weerya, weemansa and Erdipada (Ginadasa Godakanda, 2008).

Coping With Difficult Students Studying Arabic Languages in Sri Lankan Universities

M. S. M. Saleem

*Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies
Faculty of Arts
University of Peradeniya*

Introduction

Modern standard Arabic language which is taught in universities belongs to Semitic language family. Semitic languages have a recorded history running through thousands of years as one of the most extensive archives of documents which belong to any human language group. While the origins of the Semitic language family are presently in dispute among scholars, there is an agreement that they flourished in the Mediterranean Basin area, especially in the Tigris-Euphrates river basin and in the coastal areas of the Levant.

The rise of Arabic to the status of one of the major world languages is intertwined with the rise of Islam as a major world religion. Before the appearance of Islam, Arabic was a minor member of the southern branch of the Semitic language family used by a small number of largely nomadic tribes in the Arabian peninsula, with an extremely poorly documented textual history. Within a hundred years after the death 632CE of Muhammed, the prophet entrusted by God to deliver the message of Islam,

Arabic had become the official language of World Empire whose boundaries stretched from river in central Asia to the Atlantic Ocean, and had even moved northward into Iberian Peninsula of Europe.

Arabic language was becoming a very important language among Muslims since the Holy Quran was revealed and Muslims perform their worships in Arabic. So the Arabic became very famous language among Muslims as well as among others such as Christians and Jews reside with Muslims. The Arabic language is also considered as an important language among Sri Lankans and introduced in higher educational institutions in forties.

This article is intended to serve Arabic teaching educators as a tool in their important task of preparing making them teach Arabic effectively. Teaching Arabic in face to face, traditional class room settings, as well as in language lab settings should be utilized as a part of a well-designed Arabic language program.

Teaching Arabic as a foreign language involves knowledge of complex concepts as well as language teaching skills learned in a teacher preparation program, classroom management and cultural communication skills. This article covers these topics in addition to necessary knowledge and skills required for teachers in Arabic language teaching. In these content readers will discover ways in which the skills and knowledge of Arabic language teacher education are put in to use in specific program and in several different countries.

Difficult Students and Arabic Studies

Even though, the undergraduates possess numerous talents and skills, some of them face difficulties in learning Arabic language and they are in-need of assistance to learn and deal with the obstacles that they face in day to day life. They take time to focus on their studies while they ignore feelings or interests. First of all, we teach them that everyone has feelings and that all feelings pass.

The goal of this coping is to present a perspective on student engagement in learning Arabic language well and eventual academic success. Aligned learning activities seem to offer concrete promise to academic development by specifying the dynamic cycle of context, self, action, and outcomes that are self-stabilizing or self-amplifying, and may underlie the motivation across many universities.

The interactions with competent and supportive social partners (like teachers) are very important because such interactions are very useful for students who face difficulties in learning process and eventually such relationships will lead to develop strategies like problem solving and self-reliance that they can employ in dealing with (or preventing) subsequent stressors.

Languages contribute to the beauty of the world because each one enriches the society. Our languages are not only tools of communication but they carry values and identities. Linguistic diversity broadens the mind and provides the means to build intercultural and inter-religious dialogue based on genuine mutual understanding. In 1945, Arabic language was introduced

as a subject in undergraduate curriculum in the University of Peradeniya.

The Department of Arabic is one of the oldest Departments of the University of Peradeniya. It was established as a Department in the faculty of Oriental Studies in 1945. Islamic Civilization was introduced as a subject of study in the Department of Arabic in 1969. At present, the Department conducts undergraduate programs in Arabic and Islamic Civilization.

Subsequently, the University of Jaffna commenced a course on Islamic studies, while the University of Eastern established a unique Department of Arabic. Later, the University of Colombo created a unit on Islamic Civilization while the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka has set up a faculty on Islamic Civilization and Arabic.

These entities of Sri Lankan universities offer courses in Arabic Language, Arabic Grammar, Arabic Literature, Arabic Linguistics and Translation for undergraduate students.

The Environment to Teach Arabic

Studies have shown that a good support system is very important at overcoming depression, maintaining self-esteem and overcoming loneliness. Teaching languages in traditional classroom settings has different requirements in terms of instructor preparation, competencies, and teaching methods. This case study

focuses on the challenges that the department of Arabic teachers face in teaching Arabic language such as unavailability of language lab and inadequate teaching materials.

Specifically, this provides in depth analysis of the coping strategies of learning management system (LMS) and audio conferencing systems. Analysis of the data revealed several themes. After contrasting and comparing the patterns across the themes, the researcher identified the following three cross themes: Personal Confidence, Training and Believes about learning. Study results show that students cope well with teacher's instruction within the framework of their competencies and skills. However, findings also indicate a strong need for the initial and continued coping in the learning.

We hope that the Arabic teacher will benefit from this guidance and this dialog will create new model for curriculum, course design materials and assessment tool, and ultimately better instructions for Arabic learners in Arabic speaking countries and non Arabic speaking countries around the world. The lack of material for learning Arabic language is still a problem in studying Arabic in the universities. Arabic needs to be taught in a classroom using modern instructive materials with the explicit of teaching allowing students not only to read it but also to write and practice it.

Arabic students should know Arabic grammar and its usefulness and should recognize the sociolinguistic variables, the dialects and socialists. According to

Fergusson, “*The teacher and the student alike must face the fact that there is more to be learned than one language*”.

Technology is a very important object of teaching and learning but in Arabic field, it is still an underestimated tool. There are many Arabic dialects. The Classical Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. An adapted form of this, known as Modern Standard Arabic, is used in books, newspapers, on television and radio, and in conversation between educated from different countries.

Pedagogy and Curriculum Design

Teachers must be responsible for managing and monitoring student learning. They must know how to engage in groups of students in classroom activities to ensure a meaningful and structured learning environment. It is to familiarize themselves with the textbooks and other peripheral materials used at higher and lower levels than the one they are teaching.

We, as teachers, must know how to plan, implement and manage instruction given to them like curriculum design, pedagogy, methodology, assessment and lesson planning. It must be organized according to language functional objectives, tasks, and content.

The best teacher must pay equal attention to the function and form of the language in presentation, practice and application. Teachers must organize instruction to meet the goals set for students. And they

must create, enrich and alter instructional settings to involve the students in the learning process, sustain their interest, and make the most effective use of time.

Teachers must use effective ways to develop all skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing about culture in an integrative approach and in their interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes and dimensions. Teachers must assure comprehensible input at all levels of teaching materials that is not higher than the student's level of performance. Teachers must be at least, knowledgeable about the use of technology, like computer assisted and web based programs, audio, and video and integrate it into their teaching.

Teachers should know how to select, adapt and use authentic materials and know how to move students from one level of proficiency to another via classroom tasks that incorporate functions and text types indicative of the next higher level. Teachers must be prepared to try new instructional techniques that make the language come alive to students and interesting to them. Although text based instruction will continue to take a certain percentage of time, the focus should be on functions and tasks performed through the language. Teachers must have practical goals for language learning such as enabling students to read and listen to the mass media and understand them. Teachers must be cognizant of current outcomes and frameworks such as the national standards for language learning.

We teach Arabic language, its phonology, morphology, syntax, sociolinguistic, cultural dimensions

and theories of language. Arabic linguistics, awareness of modern Arabic literature, awareness of the Arabic dialog situation demonstrated by a thorough understanding of the differences between dialect and standard varieties ideally achieved through extended contact with Arabic in its native environment tasks.

Teachers need skills in evaluating and selecting text books and other materials and in adapting and creating materials appropriate to the needs and interests of learners. We are using all available materials we can find but we are failing to get some materials such as audio, video, recorded materials.

Videotapes of films, creating web sites in Arabic can provide useful opportunities and task based assignment, text of drama written in Arabic are the materials which can be used to facilitate the learning of Arabic language. They can be linguistic, visual, auditory or cassettes, CD-ROM, DVD, etc. They can provide experience of the language in use, they can stimulate language use or they can help learners to make discoveries about the language for themselves.

All in all, Arabic as a foreign language to Sri Lankan undergraduates may not be an interesting course of studies since it has to be utilized only in academic contexts. However, the richness and as a Semitic language, Arabic plays a significant role for the students who really engage in a research exploring comparative languages.

Other than students who focused, research on Arabic, other students have no such an interest to learn and enjoy the beauty of the language. Thus, it is imperative that Arabic, one of the richest languages in the world today, has to be taught by language teachers with proper assistance of modern teaching tools and well-structured learning processes.