

**Teaching
Learning
Assessment &
Skills Development
in Higher Education**

Concepts and Applications

Edited by

Prof. Udith K. Jayasinghe-Mudalige

Ajith Jayaweera



**Staff Development Center
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka**

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Ajith Jayaweera**

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

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**Standing Committee on Staff Development
University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka**

Foreword

Prof. S. J. B. A. Jayasekara

The Vice Chancellor, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Good teachers form the foundation of excellence in higher education institutes, where improving teachers' skills and knowledge is one of the most important investments of time and money that the nation makes on education. Research has shown that educator quality to be the most important influence upon student achievement. High quality professional development is essential to increase educators' knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs so that they may enable all students to learn at desired standards. Professional development that is most effective in improving educator practice is result-oriented, data driven, constructivist in nature and job embedded.

Quality professional development has the power to increase educators' knowledge of academic content and teaching skills while changing the educator's perception of student learning and their interaction with students. Powerful professional development can transform higher education institutes into places where both educators and students are deeply engaged in learning and making meaning of their lives. To be effective in which, professional development must provide teachers with a way to directly apply what they learn to their teaching. Research shows that professional development of teachers leads to better instruction and improved student learning.

The Staff Development Center (SDC) of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka is engaged in professional development activities for all categories of staff, within as well as outside the university, for over 10 years and it has conducted many such programs successfully. Its courses and programs have attracted many staff from other universities, and our own expertise in the SDC is currently serving as resource persons of such programs in other universities and higher education institutes as well.

This book is a collection of articles written by the teachers of higher educational institutes scattered around the country who underwent training at the SDC of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. The articles highlight a diverse collection of themes related to education, enriched with their own experiences which are undoubtedly useful to other educators, administrators and policy makers in the higher education system of Sri Lanka.

I thank all writers for their valuable contributions and congratulate Prof. JMUK Jayasinghe, Director of the SDC and Mr. BPA Jayaweera, Senior Lecturer of Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for their untiring efforts in editing and compiling of these articles into a useful document which can be used by all sectors in the higher education institutes. I wish to thank the Ministry of Higher Education and the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka for supporting the activities of our Staff Development Center and giving us necessary financial support to complete this endeavor successfully.

Message from:

Prof. Gamini Samaranayake

The Chairman, University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka

This is undeniably an interesting time for higher education in Sri Lanka with a stream of initiatives taking place, especially in quality and standards. The pressure on institutions to teach rather effectively and efficiently has intensified the need for skilled individuals in meeting those challenging expectations; thus, proper guidance in this regard is crucial. It is with great pleasure that I pen a message on the occasion of the launch of this book which ideally fills a long felt need for a tailor-made handbook to suit the local higher education context. A text addressing the vital tools and techniques to facilitate the process of teaching and learning in higher education was much called for during the recent past. This effort can be seen as an initiative with the ambitious aim of focus on teaching and learning issues promoting professional development of the academics to support enhancement of university system of the nation. It is both useful and challenging allowing appreciation of underlying concepts and philosophy of education whilst exploring their own development as self directed learners.

It is an evident fact that the excellence in teaching is gained through distinction in innovative teaching and learning which is recognized at all levels from institutional to individual. With this in mind, as acknowledged clearly in the “*Mahinda Chinthana – The Way Forward*”, a considerable facilitation is underway by the Government of Sri Lanka under the leadership of His Excellency the President Mahinda Rajapakshe to enhance the persistent variation in higher education through quality of teaching. In an era of such focus, it is with much contentment that I congratulate Prof. JMUK Jayasinghe, the Director of Staff Development Center of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for the invaluable effort of taking the first step to produce this compilation to gift the university system of the country. It is my belief that this book will undoubtedly inspire knowledgeable and reflective educators who will secure the future of higher education; confident in their core purpose, competent in discharging responsibility and challenge the status quo for an enriched service to the nation.

Message from:

Prof. H. Abeygunawardena

*The Chairman, Standing Committee on Staff Development
University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka*

The University Grants Commission has identified continued education as a key activity that needs to be strengthened and fostered in order to improve the capacity of higher management, academic, executive and technical and support staff. Realizing the importance of staff development, the UGC in 2003 issued a directive (Commission Circular No. 820 of February 2003) to establish Staff Development Centers (SDCs) in all universities. All universities responded positively and today all 15 universities have functional SDCs. Review study conducted by the UGC/WB-HETC in 2010, however revealed that the capacity of SDCs, scope and quality of training programs conducted vary much due to numerous deficiencies and short comings that have constrained the functions of all SDCs. Based on the review report, the UGC Standing Committee on Staff Development developed a comprehensive document on staff development covering the Policy Framework & Guidelines for university sector. Based on this report, the UGC has issued a comprehensive Circular (Circular No. 937 of November 2010) giving directives to all universities to implement far reaching reforms and improvements. Moreover, the UGC has allocated significant amount of money on annual basis, to implement reforms and improvements as prescribed in the Circular and to complement the UGC initiative starting from 2011. The WB-HETC project too has offered the desired assistance.

Under the new initiative, the capacity of SDCs and scope of staff development programs are expected to be widened to include not only academics, but also non-academic staff. Thus, the training programs are required to cover a wide array of subjects and components such as organizational management, human resource management, education technology (*i.e. curricular development, lesson planning, teaching & training methods, assessment methods, use of ICT tools in education, etc*), student counseling, academic counseling, soft skills, ethics, social and ethnic harmony, personality development, etc.

One of the constraints faced by UGC and Universities in pursuing these reforms is the scarcity of resource persons, training material and resource manuals as staff development is a new discipline, particularly in higher education sphere. Hence, one of the activities initiated by the WB-HETC project is to develop training manuals for well over 75 subjects / topics along with training of trainers drawn from universities. In this regard, the initiative taken by the Staff Development Center of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, and Prof. Udith Jayasinghe-Mudalige and his colleague Mr. Ajith Jayaweera is commendable. This resourceful book covers six broader themes and well over 50 specific topics of education technology that are important for a university teacher to perform his core functions. I have no doubt that this resource will become one of the key texts available on the topic of education technology for academics of all universities. I am sure that there will be more similar contributions from the very same group in time to come.

Message from:

Prof. Colin C. Pieris

*The Director, Quality Assurance & Accreditation Council (QAAC) of
the University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka*

It has become important that both internal and external quality assurance systems be properly functioning to assure the quality of higher education. Institutes worldwide are responding to both these forces and as a result institutes are taking measures to improve the quality of their courses and teaching performance of the academics. Staff development is given key priority in Sri Lanka especially in terms of assuring quality in higher education to encourage educational innovation, tackle problems of rewards and promotion and staff appraisal as quality of education is inextricably linked to service delivery.

This initiation is a commendable effort to design a practical and accessible resource for the reflective professionals. This book can be used successfully as a basic text by anyone interested in improving the quality and relevance of higher education. In keeping with the changes of modernization, this has successfully attempted to cover recent developments in higher education teaching for general application with the focus of practical needs and local issues in particular. It triggers interest helping readers to evaluate their own learning and formulate a personal orientation.

The development of high quality educators depends upon the quality of learning and teaching practice. The government has laid much emphasis on the quality assurance of the higher education system to be in par with the highly competitive and rapidly revolutionizing global education market. This is acknowledged by the increased prominence given to staff development and quality assurance activities underway around the country. This book is arranged in a manner where the readers will be equipped with skills to support change and transform, realizing their personal potential, encouraging them to continually reappraise, identify new approaches and implications for an enhanced professional practice.

I would like to express my gratitude to SDC at Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for their great contribution. I look forward to associate myself closely with the progress and the development of staff development programs in universities and other higher education institutes and take this opportunity to wish all contributors the best of luck in the future.

Message from:

Prof. A. N. F. Perera

The Vice Chancellor / Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (2009 – 2011)

I am pleased to write this message to this publication by the Staff Development Centre (SDC). This publication, entitled *“Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Skills Development in Higher Education - Concepts and Applications”* contains more than 50 articles from academic staff members and would be a useful tool for many an educator since the topics cover a vast area of disciplines.

The service rendered by the SDC to a majority of Universities in Sri Lanka in training the academic staff, especially, the newly recruited staff, is tremendous. Its impact may be seen in the years to come in releasing well balanced citizens to the community through the dissemination of knowledge and skills to the students by staff trained by the SDC. The development of the quality of staff has an immense impact on the students and this effect will be felt by their future employers.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Staff Development Centre for its achievement in teaching and equipping regular batches of academic staff members over the past several years. I wish the SDC all success to attain higher levels of achievement in their future endeavors.

Message from:

Prof. T. S. G. Fonseka

The Vice Chancellor / Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (2006 – 2008)

The *Staff Development Centre* (SDC) of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (WUSL) is actively involved in organizing and providing the training requirements to meet the needs of the academic, administrative and non-academic staff to enhance performance skills of their activities. Since its inception in 2005, the SDC has organized and conducted a large number of short term training programs, workshops and seminars. However, the main focus of the training of SDC is to improve the output of young academic staff in the areas of teaching, assessment, research, curricular development etc. Although the main target group for this is our own Probationary Lecturers, response from other Universities and Higher Educational Institutions for its UGC accredited *Certificate Course of Staff Development* (CCSD) is quite encouraging.

Each Probationary Lecturer who underwent the recent CCSD of the WUSL prepared an article on various approaches a teacher can take to make the teaching-learning process effective. Amongst the conventional staff development activities are currently being practiced in Sri Lanka, this can be considered a quite novel approach and the Director of the SDC and the Course Facilitator of CCSD have taken a great effort to edit and publish the work of these participants.

I wish to congratulate the SDC of WUSL which has taken a great initiative to improve the CCSD by using new technologies and methodologies which would undoubtedly make this course not only interesting but also very efficient and effective in making teacher training process a success.

Preface and Acknowledgment

This book is intended primarily for the reflective educator: the “faculty” and is designed as a text for lecturers, both new and experienced and for all those who support learning from a conviction that university teachers improve their teaching applying evidence from research and reflection into student learning. Thus, this does not present a series of right teaching techniques to be followed; instead, it helps reader to find their own way through reasoning combined with intuition solutions, tips and techniques on how to teach better.

From the inception of the modern university education system in the country, development of staff has always been a most talked about issue in setting desired standards. Ironically, the lack of proper teaching material to suit the local context with a modern theoretical flavor was a pressing need throughout. This book is the outcome of a process of six long years aimed at filling this long felt need to a greater extent.

Divided into six parts, the book explores articles on diverse areas of higher education. Part 1 specifically looks into the much needed concepts and application for an evolving education system transforming from conventional teaching with reference to theoretical findings and their applications in the real local context towards enhancing the teaching-learning environment. With this view, Part 2 returns to innovative teaching – learning methods and techniques needed to face the challenges in higher education of rising numbers, diversity of student needs, demands in the global education and job markets while optimization the available resources for the best achievements. Part 3 is aimed at exploring the concept of most effective learner assessment techniques for the reflective teacher, learner and researcher to enhance the quality of teaching with reference to the use of modern technological tools in teaching practice. Part 4 explores the applications of teaching - learning assessment which is part and parcel of education emphasizing on obtaining students’ perceptions of the teaching effectiveness and indicators of teaching performance measurement, supervising, evaluation and quality review.

Another crucial theme is looked in to detail in Part 5 on how educators as professionals develop their skills in facing the challenges of higher education. This chapter is aimed at providing teachers with the skills of planning, designing, developing and implementing their knowledge and teaching within the classroom and extending across diverse fields towards national development. Part 6 explores a novel area of higher education teaching: the tools and techniques of facilitating teaching for an effective educator. Teaching undoubtedly goes beyond class room, thus, these articles discuss norms, notions and strategies of professional realization for a modernized teaching environment to aid students in achieving the goals of ‘true education’.

We can only hope to improve teaching in higher education if we understand that the process and outcomes of improvement are worthwhile ends in themselves. Hence, though divided into parts, this book is aimed at providing a holistic approach for the reflective educators as a handbook addressing theories, practical issues and activities for an enhanced student centered learning environment towards producing a complete learner with the right attitude for the society.

We would like to convey our very special thanks first and foremost to, **Prof. S. J. B. A. Jayasekara**, the Vice Chancellor of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka for his support extended to us to complete this book on time. It is extended to former Vice-Chancellors of our university, **Prof. A. N. F. Perera** and **Prof. T. S. G. Fonseka** helped us immensely throughout their tenure to accomplish this difficult task. Our sincere gratitude to **Prof. Gamini Samaranayake**, the Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC), Sri Lanka; **Prof. H. Abeygunawardena**, the Chairman – Standing Committee on Staff Development, UGC and **Prof. Colin Peiris**, the Director – Quality Assurance & Accreditation Council (QAAC), UGC for their generosity and guidance in making this a reality for the Sri Lankan university system.

A very special allusion and thanks extended to the **authors of fifty two selected articles** published in this book for their hard work and commitment. Among many who have supported us throughout the process, we are most thankful to **Ms. Tharanga Herath** (Lecturer - Temporary), **Mr. Kapila Ranaraja** (Computer Application Assistant) and **Ms. Maheshi Anupama** (Technical Assistant) of the Dept. of Agribusiness Management in the WUSL for their untiring efforts to bring all articles into one format to produce the book in this fine quality.

Prof. Udith Jayasinghe-Mudalige
Ajith Jayaweera
Staff Development Center
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka
04th April 2012

About the Editors

Prof. Udith Jayasinghe-Mudalige

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, he 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.

Mr. Ajith Jayaweera

Head / Senior Lecturer of 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.

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