Designing Our Subjects

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ABSTRACT

This article is about considering the essentials when teachers design their students to become well-rounded leaders and managers of the future. It is generally known that leaders are shaped by education and managers are borne out of training. In possibly carrying out the processes for both educational and training programmes, the article briefly features some notable items that explain the two. The former is for life; the latter focuses on goals. They are seen as complementary.

... for I have promises to keep,
and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost

It is an interesting yet no easy task to be a good teacher and earn love, trust and respect from students. From my teachers, not only did I learn schoolwork, extra-curricula activities and the ways of the world, but I learned them as well. I also noticed that we are the subjects our teachers learn in turn. When I became a teacher, I promised to myself also that I would give my best to the teaching-learning society. Besides teaching my subjects (students) in class, I have been learning them since, trying to educate the whole person rather than just a language learner (Lazar 1993:19).

As education creates leaders and training produces managers, to design the brilliant visionary leaders and managers through educational and training programmes, I give below the items that I find useful.

Process – content : The process of learning invites both teachers and students to explore together new fields. Because of this tireless curiosity, we make new discoveries for our short and long term goals. Education directs us to these goals. We also care about solving problems and making decisions. We may not be completely successful in doing so; but we may become confident in trying to do so by having fun and freedom on this journey into the unknown. Needless to say, the students under training are given the precise content in known areas. They would hopefully feel secure with this unquestionable dogma as the product is ensured.

Questions – answers: Most students unfailingly come up with questions on any subject and its related fields. These questions multiply as the search for possible answers progresses. The students would try making connections from them. They learn quickly too when learning offers them the possibility of a better life (Wheatly

2002: 64). For the trainees' satisfaction in training sessions, on the other hand, neat answers have already been provided for the questions that are anticipated.

Ideas – facts: Ideas and imagination are crucial to education. They encourage the students to understand the world better through trial, error and sometimes humour. On the contrary, training turns these ideas and imagination into facts. The vagueness is then transformed into solidity, so the students would be able to easily grasp the essence of the content.

Initiative – direction: Although the students must take initiatives on their educational expeditions, they could readily follow directions once the training begins.

Tentative – firm: The students' need for education changes with their minds, time and place as in all tentative matters. Training is relatively firm and stable, however.

Alternatives – goal: When being educated, the students must have alternative plans to fall back on just in case one or the other does not befit the situation given. Training, in contrast, could narrow things down for them to have very clear goals to work on.

Dynamic – static: To open-mindedly venture out for more worldly education, the students must be dynamic in that they must have boundless energy, new ideas and determination to succeed. They must struggle harder towards greater rewards. Nevertheless, the students could be more static in following the somewhat predictable training programmes. They need not go through hard times adapting themselves often.

Whole brain - left brain: The two halves of the brain think in quite different ways. To be a well-rounded thinker, an educated person, the students need both ways. Using the whole brain helps them become just that. The left brain handles nerve impulses to the right side of the body, and vice versa. It is a splitter, which is best at breaking down thoughts into parts and logical sequences (Sebranek et.al. 1989: 239). This left half of the brain dutifully takes care of all training programmes. Knowing the dominance of each half in the students, we could carefully facilitate them to develop into well-rounded thinkers.

Life – Job: Education is timeless. It is knowing and living our whole life. It is our life which is long term, because there is no real end to what can be done by whom (Friedman 2005: 32). Training for a certain purpose is but short term, temporary, that ends somewhere, sometime. So we find ways to convince our students about lifelong learning.

The above-mentioned two complementary programmes will continue forever in designing our subjects simply due to the ever-increasing demand of world leaders and managers. We must therefore endeavour in making this journey happy, most

interesting, wonderful and successful. It would indeed be a long road to pedagogy (McCourt 2006:9).

I really do not think we would actually stop wanting to learn more even after we have retired from work. But I do think that we would still be involved in the life we have chosen for ourselves and its many commitments. Because we have only one life despite it expressing itself in myriad forms (Chopra 1993: 59), we owe our best to it. Life will inevitably go on, and so will our commitments to life.

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