

Think beyond textbooks

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Learning must transcend the four walls of a classroom and the pages of the prescribed syllabus



Learning in B-Schools must focus on knowledge creation, not just knowledge transfer. The object of any learning must aim to build three specific capabilities – rational, emotional, and moral – that make one think critically and creatively, mature in her/his interactions, and take appropriate decisions in life. To that end, Teaching-Learning-Assessment (TLA) must change.

Teaching perceives a student as a passive agent. But learning is democratic, naturally creative, and collaborative. In a B-school, assessment of learning must measure what one has become, not merely what one knows. There should be no exam, but only assessment of learning that happens throughout a course. The method of assessment should not be uniform to all but instead must focus on their area of expertise and skill.

Skill-based

Do students know how to construct arguments on their own, heedless of authority? Can they examine themselves and their lives critically? Do they have the ability see themselves not as citizens of a local group/caste/nation but as human beings bound to others by ties of concern? Can they empathise with those who suffer, and create solutions for their problems? This kind of learning is difficult to achieve with our current curriculum.

The new TLA, drawn on principles of liberal education, creates a unique and valued position for a B-school involving different set of transformative activities in which teachers become facilitators. More than cerebral knowledge, it focuses on experiential and immersive learning that is relevant and innovative. Learning must become application-oriented. If a course is about sales, students must be taught to put their knowledge to practical use, and if he/she fails to achieve the target, he/she must be helped to learn the requisite skills.

Every course must start with mapping student competencies to gauge what they have now and what they aspire to build, so that they become employable. Every course must be guided by assurances of learning/learning outcomes that must be achieved at the end of that course. The assessment is meant to measure students' familiarity with theories, models, concepts, and their application in the real world. They should also be judged based on extracurricular activities for they learn more outside the classroom than indoors.

We need a liberal education system that encourages free-thinking citizens who have ownership of their own thought, speech and actions. This, in turn, produces not just employees but responsible citizens who earn not just for themselves but also make a difference in the lives of people.

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