

Attendance Problem in Engineering College in India

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Abstract—The engineering colleges in Gujarat are facing a major problem of low attendance of students in lectures. The factors responsible for absenteeism of students are analyzed in this article. Also, the systems needed to be implemented to overcome this problem are discussed which can be helpful if properly followed.

Keywords— Attendance, Teachers, Lectures, Counseling

Problem definition- Low attendance of students in lectures and labs in engineering college followed by low result

Objective- To find the root cause of absenteeism of students in college and suggest solution for the same by research and survey method

Introduction- College plays a vital role in every students' life to give shape to his future life.

There are still, several various reasons for a student to take admission in college like:

1. to graduate somehow
2. to get engineering degree for social status
3. forced by parents
4. to become an established engineering or businessman
5. to increase self esteem
6. to use degree as a step for going abroad for higher studies
7. to get a good job after graduation
8. to go along with the flow i.e. friends, society, relatives etc.

There are students having all above reasons for taking admission. Students are the raw material of the college which cannot be changed with those whom we expect to be our students.

I recall a famous quote- “Accept the child you have, and not the one whom you would like to have or you would be if you were a child”.

As an educator, our job is not only to pass on the knowledge that we have related to the subject of engineering.

It is still beyond it, nearer to divinity. We must try to mold the students in the best positive shape. With whatever negative perception or target, they have entered the education house(college), they should leave the house considering as their own.

Factors determining students attendance are:

teachers, teachers, teachers, teachers.

After writing teacher as first factor, i could not find another word which would replace teacher. Conventionally, it could

be Principal as next factor but he also is a teacher by rule. Next factor could be Deans, but they are also teachers. Next could be Heads of the Department but they are again teacher fortunately.

Factors responsible for absenteeism of students are:

1. teachers
2. Teaching methods- boring lectures
3. lack of interesting contents
4. less connection between teacher and student
5. part time job/work by students in need of money
6. extra classes for coaching due to dissatisfaction from college teachers
7. family problems
8. students are diverted from studies due to wrong company of friends
9. family upbringing and atmosphere
10. type of school up to 12th standard
11. low self esteem
12. not knowing value of education
13. interested in fields other than engineering
14. extra curricular activities more than needed- improper planning and lack of guidance
15. self respect is hurt by family members/teacher
16. earning from part time job/business

All these factors need to be addressed sincerely to solve the problem of manufacturing defective products(i.e. students) by the machines(i.e. teachers). Fortunately machines are living so “nothing is impossible for a human being” is the motivating factor.

Quality of our product cannot be achieved by establishing a standard which is common for all products because no two products are identical.

It seems simple but is very complicated. Each machine (teacher) has to take care of each raw material (student) given to him, so that outgoing product (graduate) is better than the raw material.

For e.g. there is a competition in schools for making best out of waste. Students are supplied with waste things which seems useless from many aspects. But still, students create something useful from it which is adorable compared to a machine made gadget doing same function.

It is the teacher(machine), who will decide that which process he should use to convert his raw material (student) in a useful product (graduate) for the society.

Failing in the subject is of course a hurdle in this way. Low attendance is also directly leading to failure of students to

pass the subject. Failure creates discouragement to a student to complete the graduation, he gets diverted to other fields, he develops low self esteem, he feels inferior and he tries to avoid college.

The two main systems that can help the students are: 1. creativity in teaching- learning process 2. individual counseling.

1. Creativity in teaching-learning process

If you say, creativity is not everyone's cup of tea, you are wrong because, in college, it is to be used to build relation with students i.e. between two persons. All human beings are expert in it not only since birth but even before birth, since ages, since earth is existing.

The birth of a human is itself a result of relation between his/her parents. The lessons for building relations need to be taught. All have the capability to connect to others provided he desires or wishes to do so. This wish cannot be enforced unfortunately.

But it can be made realized through F DPs, expert lectures, individual counseling of teachers, rewarding in a justifiable manner, creating good work atmosphere, preventing politics to enter the system, focus on achieving ultimate goal.

Recording effective lectures of teachers and using it through INTERNET to motivate other teachers and students to take benefit, is a way to improve students attendance.

Once a desire is triggered in a faculty to give effective lectures, he will search all the tools and techniques to prepare content of his lecture, that will help as a stepping stone towards connecting with the students. Internet is the ultimate guru for quenching the thirst of learning attitude.

2. Individual counseling-

Creativity in teaching and individual counseling are two sides of the same coin. Both are interrelated also. It should be made compulsory to make counseling report of each and every student.

Regular meeting with parents of students will bridge the gap between student and teacher, provided teacher use it smartly. Sometimes, students disconnects due to his parents telling complaints to teacher and vice versa.

Ratio of student tot teacher for counseling must be made wisely so that teacher can breath and do lively counseling and not like a machine.

e.g. total no of students in a college must be divided among total no of faculties in the college.

Due to present system of subject coordinators, course files format is already in record.

If same material of course file is repeated every semester, same energy should not be used every time to recreate same material.

Energy is to be used to create variety of products(students) which will never repeat.

New formats for preparing the counseling files should be given. Lectures are something which is given to mass. One and the same type of teaching is used for students having different learning ability. This creates a hurdle in our way.

One hour lecture is also a must to continue the system of traditional education. Lab hours can be used to bridge this gap.

Of the two hours in laboratory, hardly one hour is used for experiment or hardly 10 out of 10 labs are used to perform experiments. Student teacher ratio is lowest in labs. Teacher should grab this opportunity to find what problem is faced by which student. It can also be used to ask students, to explain what they have learn in lectures. Many students will be found ignorant.

Here they need a support system, to fulfill the goals for which they have taken admission. i.e. either to pass, just pass, score, score very well, get extra knowledge, get encouragement etc.

Systems needed to be started:

1. counseling and mentoring system

- Dean- counseling and mentoring

- regular submission of counseling reports

-separate file for each student- 1 for 4 years of his engineering with his and his parent's signature.

- minimum ratio of student to teacher

- faculty mentor should be given different students semester.

Counseling files would be exchanged to new faculty mentor. This is to ensure that no student gets disadvantage of weaker counselor and all gets advantage of stronger counselor.

Also to create a change to avoid monotonous counseling.

Faculties should be given students, whom they will be teaching in that semester. No rule like subject coordinator cannot be counselor or class coordinator cannot be mentor should be followed.

Counseling should be strictly implemented.

2. Creativity in teaching and learning system:

Teachers willing to record their own lectures will register every week. His recorded lectures should be uploaded on college website so that it is accessible to all students. This would motivate other teachers to improve their lecture and motivate students to increase attendance in that faculty's lecture.

A channel on you tube for the college can be started in which faculties recorded lectures would be uploaded. Material-videos, PPT, innovative learning material- of each subject can be uploaded on website.

Pp Ts made by students can also be uploaded. All can get a chance to earn, to get fame and to be known, to enhance skills. Head for maintaining records of on line material can be appointed.

Present system:

Maintaining record of what is present i.e. students' marks, attendance, no of lectures, syllabus covered.

Future system:

Implementing activities to improve present records, and keep records of improvement, students' improved marks, attendance, and not number but effective quality lectures, syllabus understood.