

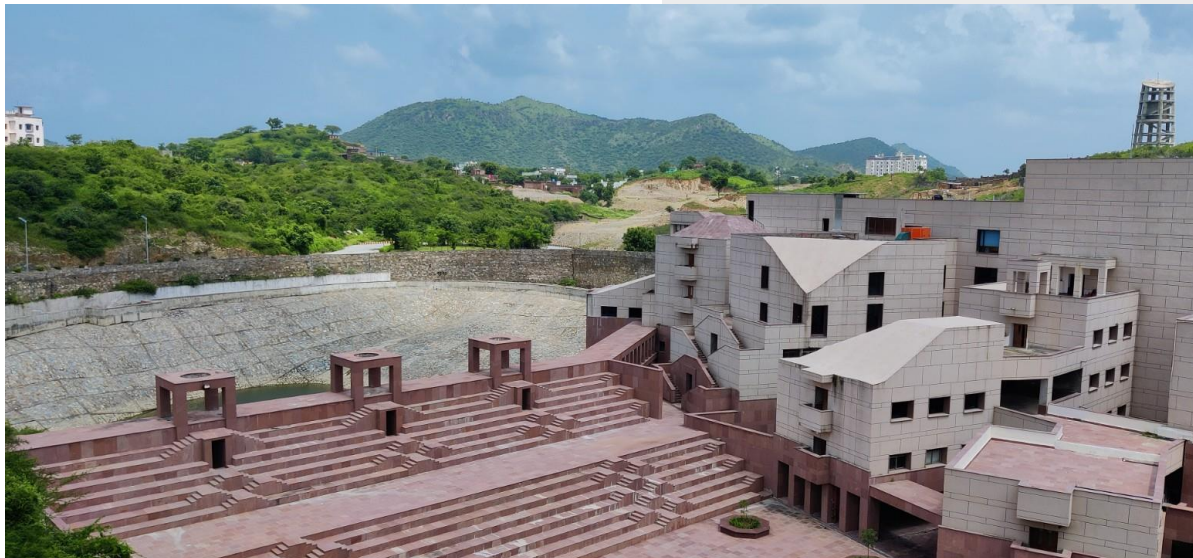
CTL Newsletter

Monthly Newsletter of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at IIM Udaipur



भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान उदयपुर
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Getting started

Vision 2030 for IIM Udaipur clearly identifies student transformation as one part of a two-pronged vision. High quality, engaging teaching is a key ingredient in achieving this vision and the establishment of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) is an important step in this direction.

The mandate for the CTL is to work on improving teaching learning quality. One way to do it is to identify and make adequate resources available to IIMU faculty to build teaching prowess. This newsletter is a step in that direction. Through this monthly newsletter, the CTL will share content and articles from the “scholarship of teaching” that Prof. Sumantra Ghoshal (2005) argued should be moved from the periphery to the mainstream in business education.

In this first edition of the CTL newsletter, I have shared a brief article on teaching style, teaching philosophy and the need for congruence between both.

INSIDE:

TEACHING STYLE AND TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Every teacher is unique and what sets them apart is their teaching philosophy and style. Becoming an excellent teacher is a lifelong pursuit of finding the congruence between these two and the methods that support your style

Teaching style and Teaching Philosophy

Good teachers must live examined lives and try to understand what animates their actions for better or worse.
(Palmer, 1997)

The term teaching style often gets used as a synonym of *teaching method* or *technique* or *instructional style*. Teaching style is a preference for a certain set of teaching behaviors and “the congruence between an educator’s teaching behaviors and teaching beliefs”(Heimlich & Norland, 2002). It is the distinguishing characteristics or qualities of an educator’s behaviors in class that remain the same even when the content or setting of what is being taught changes (Fisher & and Fisher, 1979). The persistent qualities that comprise teaching style go beyond the method and they relate to the entire teaching learning exchange.

Understanding your personal teaching style as a teacher starts with what you hold within you – beliefs, values, attitudes, working philosophy, skills and personality. Every teacher is unique and has their own personal teaching style that is shaped over a lifetime. Style manifests in skills and techniques, but the development and acquisition of style involves a lot more and is a life-long process of learning (Eble, 1980).

All teaching-learning events have five elements – teacher, learner, group, content, and the environment. Understanding these elements and the teaching learning exchange is important to observe and reflect on your own behavior. A teacher also needs to know their own philosophy-their beliefs and values regarding the teaching learning exchange and all its constituent elements. To understand their teaching style, they need to go one step further and examine the match between their philosophy and their behavior when they are engaged in teaching. This reflective process of

finding congruence between the two is the key to understanding teaching style (Brookfield, 1990). This is a lifelong process of reflection, self-awareness, learning and adaptation.

Teaching philosophy is a teacher’s beliefs and values regarding the teaching learning exchange. In many institutions, PhD scholars and teachers-in-training are required to write a teaching philosophy statement (TPS) – where you describe your holistic views about and concept of teaching and learning, your perceptions of the roles of teacher and student, beliefs about the goals and values of education, and include a rationale for your teaching methods (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). The TPS serves as an important tool for professional development of teachers. Revising a TPS periodically requires deep reflection which is sometimes more important than the actual content of the revised statement itself. The resulting self-awareness and ability to bring one’s identity and integrity into the classroom is essential for a good teacher (Palmer, 1997).

Achieving congruence between your teaching philosophy and behavior can be achieved in one of 3 ways – (1) Change teaching behaviors, (2) Change of beliefs, or (3) Change in both or neither. There are many ways in which behaviors can be changed to align with beliefs. Inclusion of students and belief about degree of control is a fertile ground for behavior change. A teacher may profess a belief that students should control the content. In practice, they may consider giving students an opportunity to ask questions at some point of time as equivalent to giving control while they use predetermined objectives and outline of content



that leaves students no choice. Some teachers profess a belief that learning should be interactive and individual, yet in practice, they need to have a quiet, attentive group listening without much scope for discussion (Heimlich & Norland, 2002). Use of technology is another area where congruence can be enhanced. Use of technology does not change one's teaching style – Whether or not technology is used - is a question of teaching style (Zisow, 2000). A deeper reflection is required on whether the teacher's methods match with their beliefs and if not, what alternative methods can be used which are more closely aligned with beliefs.

Changing beliefs: Often changing beliefs requires one to move away from a rigid, social perception of a belief towards a more personal and expansive interpretation. For example, two educators can be learner-centered in dramatically different ways – one may be high control, low sensitivity and still be empathetic and keyed-in to the needs of the learner. Another may involve students in setting learning goals, organize activities and guide the learning process and be just as learner-centered as the earlier one. The way a teaching belief translates into behavior may be unique to every teacher. Thus a more nuanced understanding and interpretation of a belief is one form of changing belief. Every individual has a set of core beliefs that are difficult to change and a set of professed beliefs that may be largely acquired which are relatively easier to negotiate and change. Contradictory beliefs exist in all people, and it is possible for such beliefs to be integrated into the individual's self-understanding (Heimlich & Norland, 2002). External factors may also cause a change in philosophy. The philosophical orientation of an institution may influence, and over time, cause a shift in the teaching philosophy of individual teachers. Eventually, this would impact teaching style. Colleagues, administrators, coordinators, and leaders who act on teachers may influence their teaching style or beliefs about education (Kovacevic, 2012).

Changing beliefs and behavior both, or neither: This may at times be the most difficult option, or

the easiest. When a teacher finds that their professed belief is different from what they truly believe, and their behavior also does not match their true belief, they can change both, or neither. Changing both requires intense reflection for a new teacher and is a significant opportunity for growth. On the other hand, sometimes, despite realizing the incongruence, a teacher may decide not to change. This may be because change is difficult, resources are not available, or because they have other priorities at that point in their career (Heimlich & Norland, 2002).

Appreciating teaching style is acknowledging that each teacher is unique, and each can use his or her personal style to be an effective educator (Heimlich & Norland, 2002).

- Joel Xavier

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