



Reviewing needs of the mediocre in classrooms: A subtle approach

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Abstract

Classroom teaching has undergone a paradigm shift in terms of its approach, in testimony to which a number of comprehensive evaluation systems have evolved. However a special reference needs to be made regarding the mediocre lot who form a major portion of every classroom session, yet with very little attention being paid to their progress. The present study highlights some core features of a mediocre through a fourfold mechanism, and also emphasizes on their betterment in each stage.

Keywords: classroom, mediocre, fourfold mechanism, evaluation

1. Introduction

The word mediocre is primarily an adjective which is used to represent the term "just adequate". Hence it is prudent to decipher that mediocre students may be taken to understand the comprehensive portion of students who range from being fair to middling zones. Mediocre students in other words can be described by either of the terms, "not very good", or "none the worse". In a competitive era where personalized attention and customized training are taken to be the need of the hour, mediocre students fall into a grey area, making it difficult for optimization for techniques channelized for betterment of the teaching sessions at the individual and group levels.

Failure of the forced distribution method in handling the mediocre

As per the forced distribution method, every organization through its performance appraisal is left with no other option but to ensure that a defined proportion of its employees fall under a specific category, and the least contributors may fall under the poor category despite the best of their efforts to remain mediocre, owing to the edge achieved by their peers. This strategy fails in a classroom environment where low performers may still possess enormous potential.

Limitations of the linear ranking and paired comparison method:

While the straight line method finds it cumbersome to identify every characteristic feature of all elements in a survey, the paired comparison method may create an environment of animosity, through direct attribution of features which are not absolute but relative.

Both of these methods are advantageous to a small portion of the population to be studied namely the proficient layer, as they are inspired to perform even better. The system also does not impair the status of the below average, as rectification of this group needs an altogether different approach, and largely affected sector are the mediocre lot, who are prone to either of the other two areas. At the outset, there is an absolute need to study some salient features of the mediocre in terms of identification, evaluation, dissemination and follow up of the mediocre.

2. Review of literature and research design

Review of literature

1. An Action Plan for Improving Mediocre or Stagnant Student Achievement Kimberley B. Redmond Walden University (2011)

The primary purpose of this study was to bring in a positive social change by means of demonstrating how school improvement occurs and by way of providing a comprehensive research-based plan that can help bring in a shift in the existing status of the static moderate achievement levels in the model school taken for study and the target school system. The findings suggested multiple stakeholder opinions on measurement of academic performance.

2. Towards improving the Performance of the Weak Students through Identification and Effective Implementation of Tasks by the Quality Circle (Dr. UM Daivagna, SB Yapalaparvi, DN Inaamadar, NK Honnagoudar)

This paper employed Pareto analysis in identifying weak students, the treatment of whom is undertaken through the establishment of a quality circle, in regular meetings of which strategies are discussed periodically. The study concluded with meaningful tips given to students in terms of both regular academic sessions and examination sessions.

Research methodology

The present research paper is purely descriptive in nature, and its prime focus is to throw light on some salient features of a mediocre student, and tries offering some crucial suggestions as to improve the existing conditions of the mediocre in a typical Indian educational scenario.

The data sources used are purely secondary in nature, already published articles and dissertation works are used for reference.

The paper focuses on the improvement process in a four-fold stage namely

- A. identification
- B. evaluation
- C. dissemination
- D. follow up.

3. The four fold stage in improving the mediocre

The steps involved in terms of academic enlargement and enrichment for a mediocre student are quite comprehensive. In order to facilitate the job of a teacher at a typical classroom level, in particular the undergraduate level, the entire process is broadly classified into 4 stages:

1. Identification-this stage involves the following as its crucial components
 - a. Proportion- the teacher's primary duty is to first assimilate as regards the proportion of mediocre as compared to the totality of the students in a typical session. This gives a fair idea about the intensity of remedial measures to be taken.
 - b. Financial background- very little can normally be done if a mediocre is from an aristocratic background. For this purpose, those in dire need of skills and are coupled with an ordinary background need to be prioritized.
 - c. Areas of interest- a fair idea needs to be conceived with respect to the affinity of a student through his behavior in his area of interest.
 - d. Untapped potential- every mediocre is one with untapped potential, which if leveraged effectively can result in tremendous potential, and this needs to be borne in mind by every teacher.

2. Evaluation criteria

Evaluating a mediocre can be quite puzzling and perplexing as well at times to a teacher. To arrive at the right measurement system and uniformity, the following are to be taken as fundamentals:

- A. confidentiality- a mediocre student in general shies away from the limelight. He may grow averse to the evaluation system in itself. This is the prime reason for most evaluators keeping the system confidential
- b. eliminating ambiguity- an evaluator needs utmost clarity and quantify every feature of attribute that needs to be studied. Uniformity and comparability form the basis of elimination of this ambiguity.
- c. response to stimulus- an observation of the extent to which a student responds to the attempts made by the teacher in the form of a cooperative reciprocation determines the change in frequency and intensity in their efforts.

3. Dissemination

The most sensitive part of improving a mediocre is to ensure that subtle balance has been used in terms of approach to communicate the end results of the periodical evaluation. It may take the form of marks or grades. The balance is needed to overcome both overconfidence and under confidence.

4. Follow up

Follow up strategies essentially involve counseling a mediocre regarding his untapped potential and carefully try to assess the impact of the new evaluation methodology. Assuming the system to be successful, there would be no additional methodologies required. If the system fails to make a mark, the reasons for deviations are to be assessed.

4. Summary of findings, suggestions, and conclusion

- Understanding a mediocre is far challenging as compared to their peers who are toppers or are below

average.

- The mediocre are the most stagnant in terms of their transition to excellence, or even minimal improvement.
- The mediocre have enormous untapped potential, the prime reason being lack of impetus in this regard.
- Improving the mediocre is a complex and challenging 4 fold processes ranging from identification to follow up.
- Quantification plays a major role in eliminating out ambiguity involved in the betterment of a mediocre.
- Confidentiality must be preserved at all costs so as to ensure that limelight-averse students are in a better comfort-zone.

To conclude, the success of any classroom is largely determined by means of the effectiveness and efficiency through which the prime focus of a teacher is towards a large mediocre chunk, apart from the stereotypical preference given to rank holders. At the same time, ensuring that they are not branded as mediocre forms a vital part of the success quotient of the same.

5. References

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