

**Experiences of Implementing
A Foundation Course on Human Values
in
Technical Education**

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This note is about the experience in implementation of A Foundation Course in Human Values & Professional Ethics (RR Gaur, R Sangal, GP Bagaria) at GBTU and MMTU (formerly UPTU) since 2009. This is an experiment on a large scale based on the work done at IIIT-Hyderabad since 2005, IIT-Kanpur since 2006 as well as other educational institutions.

At IIIT Hyderabad, this was introduced as an essential course in 2005. All students do this as an essential workshop, usually in their second year of a typically 4-year program. The human values workshop is run as a dialog over 7 days. Faculty and senior students take the responsibility for conducting it. All year, students meet every week in small groups along with 2 faculty mentors to discuss their questions and share their learning. Students do socially relevant humanities projects, detailed studies, reports or participate in social activities as a part of this course (one example is included in Appendix 1). The medium of instruction is students' mother tongue/language preferred by the student (e.g. in 2010 six workshops were run in parallel – 1 in Telugu, 2 in Hindi and 3 in English).

At GBTU & MMTU this course was introduced as an essential course in all professional colleges, after due process of management approval in 2009. An 8-day Teachers' Orientation Program (TOP) has been developed to prepare teachers. 8 workshops have been conducted since 2009 through which 268 teachers from 172 colleges have attended. This subject is taught in a regular course (28-0-14), i.e. 28 lecture-sessions and 14 tutorials (practice-sessions) spread across any one semester. It has been conducted in about 400 colleges for about 130,000 students since the academic year starting in July 2009. Over 33 short (1 to 3-day) workshops have been conducted in every major city in UP. About 3,000 participants (mostly teachers, members of management and administration) from over 200 colleges have attended these workshops. They have been quite effective in creating awareness. The medium of instruction is English.

Feedback was taken from teachers, students as well as from management during the last 12 months. While the feedback of management is mentioned briefly, the feedback from teachers and students is highlighted with specific examples.

Feedback of Teachers

Since GBTU & MMTU has mostly private colleges and the faculty is salaried, the expectation was that about 10% of the teachers would be interested in taking up this effort seriously. Almost 100% of the teachers who have attended the Teachers' Orientation Program (TOP) have responded. We have collected the feedback from those teachers who have taught this subject as a course or as a workshop and 6 months to 1 year after they completed TOP. They tell us four things:

1. This has had an impact on my personal attitude – it is relevant for me
2. This has had an impact on my personal relationships in my family – it is relevant for my family
3. This had had an impact on my relationship with my students. I feel more responsible toward students. I find it enriching to teach this subject and also other subjects
4. There is a change in the attitude of my students – it is relevant for my students

Raman Kumar teaches management at Sherwood College of Management at Barabanki. He told us “when students made a noise in class, I used to shout at them. Now I know that there is a more responsible way. Now when they make a noise, I stop and think, then look at them and smile. I am surprised that this way they have started to realize their error themselves – they have started to say

that “after this course you are not reacting as you used to... we like it this way... please send all the other teachers for this course”

In this example we can see that Raman is now:

- a. More aware of his thoughts and actions
- b. Is able to respond rather than react

We can also see the students have observed:

- a. When the teacher shouted at them, they used to feel “he also made a mistake – we are equal”
- b. When the teacher smiles, they feel “he is not making a mistake, like us – we need to learn”

Reaction: To act solely on the basis of external inputs

Response: To act on the basis of one’s natural acceptance, regardless of the external inputs

Preeti Srivastava teaches at Sagar Institute of Technology & Management, Barabanki. She said “My younger son used to be afraid of me – lest I express anger or beat him. He used to hide what he did from me, even if what he did was right. After the workshop, I have tried to control my anger. The result is that now my son shares with me even the small things he does, he asks questions... my son is not afraid any more. This is a big change in my life”.

In this example we can see that Preeti has understood:

- a. Anger is not a solution
- b. Anger is an expression of not having a solution

“In class a student (arrogantly) said to me ‘by teaching us this subject, do you think you can change our mentality? This will not happen’. I would have immediately shouted back at him... I have learnt a nice word *jimmedari* (responsibility) – I thought for a moment, then replied ‘I am not trying to change you. One good thing is that now you have started asking questions, that we have a platform to discuss... I feel responsible to answer your queries with responsibility regardless of the way in which you may put your question across’. This student became one of the most responsible students of that class”, says Kushagra Kulshreshta, a teacher at the GLA Group of Institutions, Mathura

In this example, we can see that Kulshreshta has learnt that the responsible way to handle questions/comments is:

- a. To listen to the entire question/comment without reacting
- b. To rephrase the core question/comment
- c. To respond to the core question or to re-state the core of the comment

Atif Salar of Al-Barkaat Institute of Management, Aligarh shared “In my class I felt the students may not be grasping what is being shared. I gave them some projects to do. One group of students made a clip on their mobile about a group of students bothering a man of unsound mind, just outside our college. They simply asked ‘who is of unsound mind’? I am confident that these students will think of their actions”.

In this example we can see that Atif has understood that action depends on thought – if the thought is right, there is a possibility of right action.

Rita Singh Rathode teaches at Apollo Institute of Technology, Sarsol, Kanpur. During the discussion on ‘notions about happiness’ a student shared that she derives satisfaction from beating smaller children... the root of the problem was that the student was lonely, unappreciated and frustrated. Through the course, this student is slowly but surely coming out of her situation and continues with her improved behaviour 6 months after attending the course.

In this example we can see that Rita has been able to facilitate her student's behaviour and she has herself learnt that:

- a. Fulfilment in relationship is a basic human need
- b. When we do not have fulfilment in relationship, we try to fill this gap by some means. The means depends on our level of understanding
- c. To understand, and to become aware is a solution... and that can be facilitated through this introductory course on human values & professional ethics

This is an incident in the human values class being taken by Bhanu Pratap Singh, a teacher at MPEC, Kanpur. He shared that "A student was noticed to be doing work of some other subject during my class. We discussed this & the class agreed that in future if someone indulged in such behaviour, he would leave the class. This happened a few days later and I asked the student to leave the class, as had been decided earlier. A few days later in the same class, we were discussing trust. I said 'we teachers are responsible to facilitate right understanding for our students, not to punish... if two of you take responsibility that you will help this student to pay attention, I will ask him to return'. The whole class accepted this responsibility. The student returned to class. He became a responsible student soon".

Today Bhanu Pratap Singh conducts workshops on human values after hours for students and members of the community (in addition to college responsibilities). He is happy that "students come to me, not only during their stay at MPEC, but whenever they visit Kanpur – long after they have left college. They also want to volunteer for the workshops. It is a big change – before I started teaching this course, hardly any student would return to meet me! I am satisfied that I can facilitate students in right understanding".

Ajay PS Bhaduar is an Assistant Professor at RIET Kanpur is researching how spontaneous self-organization (*vyavastha*) can be an alternative to bureaucracy (*shasan*). Read more about it in Appendix 2.

Feedback of Students

"How effective will the course method be for students" was an important question. There is a significant clarity of thought as well as improving academic performance from the feedback of students who were taught by teachers who had attended TOP. These students tell us four things:

1. I am now more clear about what to do. I.e. about what is right, about my goal
2. My attention has been drawn to relationships, which I had undermined
3. I am able to correctly understanding the need of physical facilities
4. My academic performance has increased on account of this clarity

Shailesh, was a third year student of MPEC, Kanpur when he first attended the workshop on Human Values. He realized the real meaning of happiness. He developed the self-confidence to decide for himself. He said that he had most of the bad habits that are commonly acquired by students on account of peer-pressure – habits like smoking and drinking and that he has resolved most of his 'bad habits' after the workshop. "I wish I had come in contact with this earlier... I could have started working toward the right things earlier", he reflects.

Parul was a student of IPEC, Ghaziabad. In her written feedback, she mentions "My Living was very limited; now I see that I am related to everything around me; I have a broader purpose for myself. I never thought about maintaining good relationship with family members, society, persons around me before the workshop. I was not bothered about things happening around me. I always worked for my happiness, never thought about happiness of others but after the workshop, I am compelled to think about relationship, about society, about nature and most important about happiness of others".

This is about a student of Al Barkaat Institute of Management Studies, Aligarh, as told by his teacher. "He said he wanted to share something. He came to the front of the class and said that he felt comfortable to share with the class that the shoes he had bought were for Rs 250. These shoes fit my feet, are comfortable and look quite good. Had it not been for this course, I would have spent Rs 2500 on branded shoes".

From this example, we can see that the student has understood the purposefulness of shoes is to protect the body. He used to associate branded shoes with respect previously, but now he is clear that shoes cannot be a source of respect. This student is able to understand right utilization of physical facilities. Shoes is only one example of this understanding – this student is likely to focus on purposeful or right utilization of physical facilities.

Arjun, a third year B. Tech. student of NIT, Warangal said "I used to think that after college, to get a good job to earn money – that was the main aim... The root cause of crime is not feeling prosperous. If everyone got this knowledge of how much is really required for right utilization, then crime would become much less".

We can see that he has understood that prosperity is having a feeling of more than required physical facilities, i.e. understanding what is required and how much is required for sadupyog (right utilization); and ensuring its availability. Now Arjun is likely to make effort for prosperity rather than for accumulation of physical facilities.

Bal Mukund Meena, graduated in Computer Science from IIT Kanpur. When he was in second year he was under academic probation and almost at the point of expulsion. After attending the workshop on Human Values, he developed confidence in himself – his semester performance index (SPI) shifted from 4 to 7.5 to 6 to 9. He completed his B Tech with a CPI of 6. Today he is working as a senior manager with Reliance, Gurgaon. He actively participates in promoting human values and value-based living.

He says "Without this knowledge, through the workshop and it's follow-up, I don't know where I would have been... My academic performance is a side-effect of being more clear about my purpose".

A student with a biology background wanted to do MBBS. When she was not selected in any MBBS program, she joined B Pharma. She was depressed, unable to study and wanted to leave the college.

In her feedback after attending this course, she shared "I was confused. What I should do was not clear. MBBS was my life goal, I had assumed. Without MBBS, life was useless. Now I know that my goal is not MBBS – my real goal is happiness & prosperity. Now I know that there can be many other ways of reaching my real goal".

This student is no longer depressed. She is able to pay attention to her studies.

Abhishek Kumar has a B.Tech. and M. Tech. in mechanical engineering from IIT Kanpur. He has done well academically. He is involved with value-based production-work, including natural farming and dairy on a 40-acre farm – for the next few years his focus is on developing and sharing a model of natural farming which is cyclic and mutually enriching (avartansheel) and with which a family of 10 people can produce all their requirements in 2-acres of cultivable land.

He says "I was looking for a way of life which is satisfying for me and for my family... currently the model of living promotes insatiable desires and it is full of tension... I am happy with what I am doing now, and this way of living is very satisfying".

Through these examples, we can see that a phenomenal change is observable in the attitude, academic excellence and social concern among the students who have been consistently attending this course/workshop and doing self-study – students have developed a holistic vision towards life and profession; and have enhanced self-confidence. Such individuals become assets to themselves, to their family as well as to the society at large. They perform well academically, do well at their workplaces and at the same time participate for order in society.

Feedback of Management

At the level of management and administration the feedback is encouraging from those colleges where the management has taken a hands-on implementation approach. They tell us four things:

1. Our institution's agenda, academic curriculum, content and teaching methods is becoming increasingly purposeful and meaningful
2. Our institution has started to be managed on the basis of relationship rather than on the basis of *shasan* (opposition). We can observe that life on campus becomes more and more holistic, participative and fulfilling
3. We can observe that students are developing more responsibility, they are doing well academically and becoming more self disciplined. Some of them also participate in efforts for order in society
4. There is sufficient space in the existing system to experiment, changes toward self-organization are accepted and multiplication is possible

Our Learning

From this experience we have learnt and developed teaching assets that can be used in future implementations. These include:

1. Human Values are teachable - they can be communicated precisely and effectively. Specific, universal guidelines have been articulated and comprehensive formal teaching resources have been developed. This includes the syllabus, a teachers' manual, a text book, practice sessions, video of lectures as well as a web-site
2. There is a very significant impact on students, faculty, management, staff, families – the entire community of individuals associated with the institution
3. An 8-day Faculty Development Program for orienting teachers
4. A strong process for implementation and scaling-up

There are some challenges we faced during this implementation. We have overcome some of these. Future implementations can recognize these early and attempt to handle them appropriately. We share our suggestions, as well in the list below:

1. Preparation of management: Setting up clear goals, working out specific activities and facilitating execution
 - a) Motivate the college management to attend the full workshop
 - b) Set success measures & track them regularly
 - c) What not to do is equally important - Avoid activities that are not directly in line with the goals of that step. Eg. At step1, one can keep sharper focus by leaving activities of future steps like distance education programs, collaboration with NGOs, general publications and general conferences
2. Preparation of students: Dealing with prevailing assumptions that this is an "extra" subject and it will increase the workload
 - a) Project it as ESSENTIAL rather than as a compulsory subject
 - b) Conduct short workshops at college level, involving the key people
3. Preparation of teachers. There is a significant difference between teachers who have attended the TOP and those who have not
 - a) Facilitate teachers to complete the TOP before they start teaching
 - b) Keep in regular contact with the teachers, ensure continuous updates

4. Course effectiveness. The response of students who attend the workshop is significant compared to the response of students who attend the course spread across a semester
 - a) Teachers can ensure that they focus on starting the process of self-exploration and experiential validation in their students versus covering the content
 - b) Management can allocate contiguous contact hours and ensure regular interaction in small groups
5. Medium of instruction and examination
 - a) Facilitate use of mother tongue (say Hindi or Punjabi) as medium of instruction. Include relevant local examples and data as far as possible
 - b) Use current language (say English) for the formal portions, like examination until the environment is ready

Future Possibilities

Based on the ideas and experiences of implementation at IIIT, the then president of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam, spoke about this topic in his address to the nation on the eve of Independence Day (15th August) 2006. He said "... being practiced by Prof Ganesh Bagaria, ... Prof Rajeev Sangal... and their teams ... [it] is a 'teachable human value based skill'... This process of imparting self-knowledge would promote a learning atmosphere, where this whole movement of inquiry into knowledge, into oneself, into the possibility of something beyond knowledge would bring about naturally a psychological revolution.. **From this comes inevitably a totally different order in human relationship and therefore society as a whole. The intelligent understanding of this process itself can bring about a profound change in the consciousness of mankind...**"

We feel that excellence in education-sanskar starts with introduction of human values at an appropriate, natural pace – that which can be supported by the existing system ... **and goes on to prepare students participation and practice for Undivided Human Society and Universal Human Order on Earth.**

India has 1/7th of the world's population. Most of the future decision-makers are now students. This work has the possibility of initiating the evolution of harmonious living, in relationship with other human beings as well as with nature; a possibility of your institution as a model for India; a possibility of India as a cradle of transformation for this world.

Appendix 1: Assignment Experience by Wadhwa Shashank Lekhraj (Wadhwa is a student of IIIT-Hyderabad. This article appeared in the student magazine 'Ping' in 2010)

As a part of our human values assignment we were asked to clean one of our friends' room in the presence of one of the housekeeping staff members to guide the exercise. The motive of the task was to learn to empathize with the housekeeping members, but there was lot more to learn in this task which I would like to share with all.

As the task suggested I requested my friend to let me clean his room and he readily agreed (who won't!). I asked him to call me during the lunch break or at a time when I am resting. This is because I have observed many times that people call the housekeeper as and when they like and never keep in mind his requirements.

And the very next day when I was lying in my room after breaking my head at Computer Programming (you all must know how difficult it is for the beginners), my friend called me to clean his room. I had already spoken to the housekeeper to guide me during the task and he obliged to do so. So I called him and he handed me a broom and we went to my friend's room. As soon as I opened the door of his room, the first thought that came to my mind was "this is going to be a Herculean task". The scene that met my eye was that of papers, wrappers and shoe mud all over the place, and moreover the room was stinking badly. Though the stink was quite expected from his room the littering was not so

much. He later told me that this was done just to annoy me (after all friends will be friends) and to add to my worries he even called many of our friends to come to his room. Nevertheless I entered, and as suggested by the housekeeper, I started from a corner of the room. There was a stinky pair of shoes covered up in mud. I was passing them untouched just when the housekeeper pointed out that I am supposed to lift them, dust them and sweep the mud beneath it. I right away refused and asked my friend to at least lift them up for me and he did so. But then I realized that this was more or less the same scenario that takes place in my room whenever the housekeeper comes to clean and also he has no “friend” there to help him with his work. So with the first lesson learnt, I began to understand the motive behind the task. With the same in mind, I resumed my work. As I was sweeping the room all my friends were simply moving here & there, in & out of the room without even caring about my presence making my work even more tedious. I somehow kept my calm. As and when I was moving closer to finishing the task many thoughts were coming to mind, like when I went close to the bed to sweep, my friend, who was sitting on the bed merely lifted his leg to allow me sweep from beneath and that is when I realized what all the housekeeping staff has to go through without any complaints. Gradually I was beginning to respect them even more. With the room completely swept, the housekeeper guided me to pick up things like paper, wrappers etc. with my hand and collect all the dust and mud and throw it into the dustbin. At first I didn't feel like doing so but I reluctantly did as he said. This is when I realized the commitment that they have towards their work. He then gave me a wiper to wipe the floor. This was or less the same experience as sweeping except that this time I was a bit more composed.

After finishing all this I went to the cleaner and asked him about his experiences that he had had while cleaning people's rooms and even toilets and bathrooms. I wanted to know how people treat him and does he ever get a feeling that this job is not meant for him. At first he was a bit hesitant to speak. The reason behind this, I guess, is the respect he has for all of us and that putting forth his experiences in front of me would in a way mean complaining about me and my friends. But when I assured him that he can speak frankly and tell me everything, he replied “aisa tho kuch nahi hai bhaiya, sab acche se hi baat karte hain; haan bus kabhie-kabhie jab koi galat time par bula leta hai to bura lagta hai. Wo kehte hain ki 'bhaiya jaldi karo khana khane jana hai' aur kabhie yeh nahi sochte ki mujhe bhi to yahi time milta hai khane ke liye”. Hearing this I consoled him and said that I had seen this happening many times myself and I feel really bad about it. As he was describing his feelings, I felt a sense of empathy as it was just what I had experienced while cleaning my friend's room. An addition to his grievances was cleaning the toilets to which he replied “ab kya kare bhaiya kuch to kaam karna padega warna pet(stomach) kaise bharoonga”. This reply truly took me by shock. I realized the helplessness of these people and the wrongful norms that society has created.

To conclude, this task was truly an eye opener. Some of the many things I got to learn after finishing were to respect every person, to not discriminate people by the work they do, to treat everyone alike and last but not the least I got to learn how to sweep my room. Believe it or not, after this incident I never ask the housekeeping staff to clean my room; rather I do it myself.

Appendix 2: Ajay PS Bhaduar's research topic

The word organization is used to denote a collectivity of two or more people who come together for a purpose. A corporation developing and marketing air conditioners, a society innovating and promoting the use of jute, the Kumbh mela disseminating fundamental principles of existence or a family understanding, learning and living together – these are all examples of organization.

The word ‘human resources’ is used in formal organizations like corporations. The word ‘people’ is used in social organizations, and the word ‘family member’ is used in family. We will use the word ‘people’ for all forms of organization.

There is no central or formal organization running the Kumbh mela, which has un-interrupted history of at least 1,50,000 years. People come together in a well organized manner. What drives such a confluence of people? How does the communication and organization take place?

A mother does 120 types of activities for her home, rises before her family and sleeps after them. When the baby wets the bed, she moves him to the dry part of the bed and herself uses the wet portion... Is this behaviour for some 'return' or is it borne out of some deep sense of responsibility in relationship?

The key questions are:

1. What to do – what are worthy objectives?
2. How to do – what to produce (products/services), how to produce and how to organize the people

When we look at the first question, there are various opinions – corporate profit, societal purpose, common understanding of existence or feeling of relationship.

When we look at the second question, we also have at least two types of organization – one based on a command & control structure (*shasan*) – the control is based on reward & punishment; and the other form of organization is based on spontaneous self-organization (*vyavastha*) – there is self-control based on right understanding and right feeling in relationship.

The research is related to the last part of the second question “How to organize the people so that it leads to meeting worthy objectives”. In particular, we want to study this self-organization, and the specific role of right understanding and relationship in management in select Indian organizations.