



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN
EFFECTIVE LECTURER: A CASE STUDY IN
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

SUNDARI RAJAN

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA
1999**



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By

SUNDARI RAJAN

**Project Submission in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science in Human Resource Development of
Jabatan Pemajuan Professional & Pendidikan Lanjutan
Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia
April 1999**



Adalah disahkan bahawa saya telah membaca dan menyemak kertas projek ini yang bertajuk "What it takes to be an effective lecturer for graduate students in Universiti Putra Malaysia" oleh Sundari a/p P.T.Rajan. Dengan ini diperakui bahawa kertas projek ini memenuhi syarat dan kelayakan bagi keperluan Izajah Sarjana Sains (Pembangunan Sumber Manusia).

Disahkan Oleh:



Dr. Shamsuddin Ahmad
Jabatan Pemajuan Professional & Pendidikan Lanjutan
Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan
Universiti Putra Malaysia

(Penyelia)

Tarikh : 12/5/99



Dr. Jamilah Othman
Jabatan Pemajuan Professional & Pendidikan Lanjutan
Fakulti Pengajian Pendidikan
Universiti Putra Malaysia

(Pemeriksa)

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Abstract of the research project submitted to the Jabatan Pemajuan Professional dan Pendidikan Lanjutan, Universiti Putra Malaysia in partial fulfillment for the Master of Science in Human Resource Development.

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SUNDARI RAJAN

April 1999

Supervisor: Dr. Shamsuddin Ahmad

Department: Jabatan Pemajuan Professional & Pendidikan Lanjutan

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand what it takes to be an effective lecturer for graduate students in Universiti Putra Malaysia. This was done by examining three research objectives which is 1) to understand who is an effective lecturer, 2) to understand how concept of learning and teaching influences the effectiveness of the lecturer and 3) to find out the factors affecting the effectiveness of the lecturers.

Five lecturers were selected from a list of lecturers who won the award of excellence for the year 1997. All five lecturers were from different faculty and area of specialization. The awards of excellence lecturers are evaluated by the University by using a systematic and standardized form, which focuses on researches, teaching and community services. The lecturers were selected using purposive sampling and data was obtained from interview, other documents and e-mail correspondence.

Findings revealed that an effective lecturer should 1) possess positive personality, have certain qualification, experience, training, skills and be knowledgeable 2) understand the concepts of learning and teaching and how it influences the effectiveness and finally 3) identify the factors that affects the effectiveness of the lecturer.

Three general conclusion can be made based from the findings 1) effective lecturer is someone who has experience, qualification and positive personality 2) understanding learning and teaching is important and it is interrelated and 3) lecturers have barriers and it should be looked at positively. An effective lecturer should be qualified, knowledgeable and have vast experience. Being effective helps the lecturer to impart the knowledge or information more effectively. Lecturer's experience

in teaching or other skills and training moulds the lecturer to be effective. Lecturers believe that training is a must for all lecturers to ensure effective lecturing takes place.

The findings gives practical implication to new and existing lecturers in term of guidelines to follow and to the University as a feedback regarding their lecturers and their effectiveness. This study has also contributed to general knowledge regarding adult education, lecturers, learning and teaching. It has also given good recommendations for further research.

Abstrak penyelidikan yang dikemukakan kepada Jabatan Pemajuan Professional dan Pendidikan Lanjutan, Universiti Putra Malaysiasebagai memenuhi sebahagian daripada kerluan untuk Ijazah Sarjana Sains (Pembangunan Sumber Manusia).

**BAGAIMANA MENJADI SEORANG PENSYARAH YANG
BERWIBAWA : KAJIAN KES DI UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA.**

Oleh

SUNDARI RAJAN

April 1999

Penyelia: Dr.Shamsuddin Ahmad

Jabatan: Jabatan Pemajuan Profesional & Pendidikan Lanjutan

Kajian kes kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk menentukan bagaimana menjadi seorang pensyarah yang berwibawa untuk pelajar-pelajar sarjana di Universiti Putra Malaysia. Kajian ini telah mengkaji tiga objektif iaitu 1) memahami siapa itu pensyarah yang berkesan, 2) untuk mengetahui bagaimana pembelajaran dan pengajaran mempengaruhi keberkesanan seseorang pensyarah

dan 3) menentukan halangan-halangan yang mempengaruhi keberkesanan pensyarah.

Lima pensyarah telah dipilih daripada senarai pensyarah-pensyarah yang telah memenangi anugerah cemerlang pada tahun 1997. Penilaian keatas pensyarah cemerlang ini dijalankan oleh pihak Universiti dan borang penilaian yang sistematik dan standart digunakan. Borang penilaian ini menilai dari segi penyelidikan, pengajaran dan perkhidmatan masyarakat. Kelima-lima pensyarah ini adalah daripada fakulti-fakulti dan bidang penkhususan yang berlainan. Pensyarah-pensyarah inin telah dipilih secara 'purposive sampling' dan data diperolehi daripada hasil temubual, dokumen dan e-mail.

Penemuan mendedahkan yang seorang pensyarah yang berwibawa mestilah 1) mempunyai personaliti yang positif, mempunyai ciri-ciri yang tertentu, pengalaman, latihan, kemahiran dan berpengetahuan 2) memahami bidang pembelajaran dan pengajaran dan bagaimana ia meempengaruhi keberkesanan pensyarah dan akhir sekali 3) menentukan halangan-halangan yang mempengaruhi keberkesanan pensyarah tersebut.

Tiga rumusan yang umum boleh didapati daripada kajian ini, iaitu 1) pensyarah yang berwibawa adalah seorang yang berpengalaman, mempunyai kelayakan, dan personaliti yang

positif 2) memahami kepentingan pembelajaran dan pengajaran dan perkaitannya dan akhir sekali 3) pensyarah mesti lihat halangan-halangan dari segi yang positif.

Seorang pensyarah yang berwibawa, mestilah mempunyai kelayakan, berpengetahuan dan mempunyai pengalaman yang luas. Jikalau mereka berwibawa, mereka dapat memberi pengetahuan dan informasi kepada pelajar dengan lebih berkesan dan cekap. Pengalaman pensyarah dalam pengajaran atau kemahiran-kemahiran dan latihan dapat membentuk seorang pensyarah yang cekap. Pensyarah mendapati bahawa latihan untuk pensyarah adalah penting dan ia dapat menentukan keberkesanan.

Penemuan ini telah memberi implikasi kepada teori-teori seperti, 'adult education' dan pemebeajaran dewasa. Penemuan ini juga secara praktik berguna kepada pensyarah sebagai peraturan dan tunjukajar manakala untuk pihak University dari segi pengetahuan tentang pensyarah-pensyarah di Universiti ini. Selain daripada itu, penemuan ini juga telah mengemukakan beberapa cadangan untuk kajian seterusnya.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is stepping into the next millennium, and the need for competent and skillful workforce is highly required for the success of this country. In order to achieve this objective, higher institutions are mushrooming to cater these needs. Universiti Putra Malaysia is one of the higher institutions that emphasize in producing highly quality workforce that can adapt to the environment. In order to produce qualified workforce, the University must have competent educators or lecturers. Education is vital for this workforce especially when the country is going into the 21st century.

Education

“Education is light, lack of it is darkness” – Russian Proverb

With this proverb, it is clear that education plays a vital role in human's life and it a continuous process. Education has become one giant department store in which lecturers and facilitators are providers of whatever learners (consumers) believe will make them happy (Brookfield, 1986).

Even Carl Rogers, (1983) said: the goal of education in the modern world is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn. He is also the man who has learned



how to adapt and change. This man also realizes that no knowledge is secured and only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security.

As the nation is going towards the next millenium, the need for highly quality personnel in knowledge, skill or attitude is required. With this in mind, the nation is emphasizing on education and steps are being taken to improve and make people realize the importance of education towards the development of an individual. There is an increase in number of students continuing their education either formally or informally. There is also an increase in the number of Universities and Colleges. In order for them to stay in competition, quality programs and effective educators play a vital role. The Universities today is suppose to mould students to face the current challenges of the outside world which is changing economically, politically and socially. These students are adults, being adults, they are different, and to understand them is difficult.

Adult Learner

In University education, students become the focus and this research focuses on postgraduate students who are pursuing their master's and doctorate program. These adults are matured and self-directed learners. They only learn what they want to learn and only when they are ready to learn. These adults learn for the purpose of self-improvement, knowledge or sometimes even for credentials.

These adults continue their learning in order to function at work, at home and in their communities. The need for new knowledge, for updating old information, for retraining has resulted in multi billion dollar education activities.

Postgraduate students are also known as Continuing Professionals. Continuing Professional Education (CPE) is normally related to adults who are professionals and are continuing their education either formally or informal. This is to improve and change them to be updated and have credentials. These adults learn differently and the approach by the lecturers is not the same as an ordinary adult who wants to gain knowledge. They are normally reflective learners. These students are self-directed, problem oriented, creative and are life long learners. They learn for improvement and learn only when they are ready to learn. So University or College lecturers or educators must use different approach when dealing with these adults. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) support this by saying, adults learn for bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values or skills. In order to bring about these changes to the adult learners, good educators, lecturer or facilitators are required and they are the important agents in developing these adults.

Lecturer

One of the major factor in determining the adults gather the education that is required by them is, having qualified and effective providers (lecturer, facilitator, counselor). In United States, the National Governor's Association,

(1989), pointed out that inadequate teacher preparation in global education and international studies as major obstacle in the ability of the United States to meet the economic, political and social challenges of today's world. This is also true in Malaysian context because the quality of teachers or lecturers are in question and act as a barrier in achieving our Education minister's vision. His speech on reformation in education states that education for the 21st. Century will produce new generation of Malaysians who are able to acquire knowledge, skills, intellectually competent, scientifically minded, emotionally stable, morally upright and socially adaptable.

The minister's mission statement is to develop a world class quality education which is flexible and innovative and in turn will make Malaysia a regional education hub and center for education as we approach the next millennium.

This objective can be achieved by having qualified and professional educators who can carry out these responsibilities. Their effort will ensure that a new generation of competent Malaysian is produced. It will ensure that Malaysia will be a center for education and have qualified personnel that Malaysia can be proud of.

Lecturers are someone who has to cope with the changes in the environment, learn how to teach adults and understand their behavior. In industries or business settings, these sorts of people are normally referred to as trainer but their functions are the same. They are all concern with releasing human potential through learning experience as said by Miller and Verduin (1979).

Lecturers take different roles because they are dealing with adults and each adult learns differently. Lecturers blend skills of writer, producer, scholar, actor and educator in a way that effectively contribute to students learning. These lecturer do not attend training on how to teach before they teach adults because it is assumed that since they are qualified, they can teach.

According to one of the registrar of UPM, a teacher must be knowledgeable, know his or her subject matter and understand how adults learn, and create an environment that is conducive towards learning. In the University, a lecturer is responsible for teaching, conducting tutorial, supervise students, conduct research, produce publication, and be involved in community services. They are also encouraged to develop and arrange programs in order to attract more number of students for the University. Literature states that a lecturer is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating the learning that takes place.

The registrar added that lecturer's of Universiti Putra Malaysia is selected based on their area of specification, their detail results and qualifications either a Masters or Doctorate. Working experience is an added criterion for selection but it is not compulsory. Lecturers should show enthusiasm and love towards the subject matter and the students they teach. They should also know the proper method of delivering so that maximum learning or transfer of knowledge can take place. Sometimes, these educators face some constrain that force them to behave in such a criticizing manner and act more of an authoritarian where they feel they have the power

to control the whole learning process. This behavior might be due to the students themselves, where they demand the lecturers to “put more of them” into the learning process. Learning is a complex process and needs a lot of attention and guidance for it to be transferred to the individual students.

Learning

According to Winston Churchill as in Pont (1991), learning is a life-long process and the understanding of knowledge in adults is increasing currently. Learning is a personal process and a continuous one and it happens anywhere. Learning in a formal setting takes place under the direction of an educator or trainer who takes the role of mediating the ways in which people approach their learning.

As Kidd (1973) observed, “The Schools and the Universities have...standardized the ways in which learning is carried on and said learning only happens where there are...students and one teacher (p.242). In transferring learning effectively, a lecturer or trainer needs to deliver the knowledge to the students in an effective manner so that it is understood and retained. The learning will be more meaningful, if the educators are creative in delivering the subject matter.

Teaching

There is a difference in what the educators know or believe when it comes to teaching adults and what they actually practice in the real world. This

might be due to some of constrain faced by lecturers either in the University or personally. The trend is moving towards teaching, (from tutor to learners) and the focus is on teaching method and efficient tutor who can transfer maximum knowledge to an adult.

Lecturing is the most common method and it is a norm or habitual. This method is criticized in literature and given negative feedback especially if it is practiced in adult learning. According to Barr, Roberts and Tagg (1995), in traditional classroom, the potential for lecture-instructor and learner-learner is very high and lecturing method is predominant method of instruction. In virtual classroom, technology supports collaborating learning, heterogeneous grouping, problem solving and higher order thinking skills are educational process that a lecture format cannot facilitate.

Proper training on techniques or methods that can be used when dealing with adults, what a lecturer should and should not do, should be practiced so that the lecturers who take this as their career, will perform in their job. There should be training centers that provide such training, so that the lecturers who teach will be more effective. By having effective lecturers, the learning process will be more effective and the University will gain its popularity and be able to sell the programs offered more easily.

This brings us to one interesting saying by Jane Tompkins: "teaching is like sex to me". Teaching is something that you weren't suppose to talk about or focus in any way but that you were suppose to be able to do properly when time came. Consequently, people rarely talk about what the experience is really like for them, partly because there is no vocabulary for articulating the

experience and no institutionalized format for doing so. Teaching adults are a difficult task and a challenging one. If the teaching is carried out professionally, then the reward is enormously satisfying and stimulating. Since teaching influences the effectiveness of the lecturer, University should focus more on teaching.

Universiti Putra Malaysia

University is an educational organization for adult learners. It is a knowledge center, which belongs to everyone. In this researcher, lecturers from Universiti Putra Malaysia are taken as a case study. UPM is also known as the 21st. Century University. UPM is a proactive University and is consistent in producing graduates of the highest caliber where service is greatly sought after. It emphasizes on three functions, which are research, teaching and service. UPM should be developing a spirit of entrepreneurship through coursework and extra curricular activities to better prepare them for job market.

The University should play a more effective role in the production of highly skilled and motivated, as well as in generating more industrially cum economically useful research. UPM's philosophy of providing total education goes beyond its traditional boundaries of lecturing. Future curriculum of UPM expects students to be multi-skilled, information technology literate, computer competent and acquires communicational and leadership skill.

UPM has eight hundred and seventy nine lecturers in total. Two hundred and sixty five of them are females, and six hundred and twenty one

are males. In total there are eleven graduate programs offered at Masters and Doctoral level. Postgraduate's courses comprise of two thousand eight hundred and seventy three students in total. Since the number of students is huge, the need for qualified, experienced and competent lecturers is vital and this will then help the University to increase its popularity and productivity.

This statement is supported in the UPM 's mission statement. The mission statement is "to be a leading center of learning and research, contributing not only towards human advancement and creation of knowledge but also to the creation of wealth and nation building" (Syed Jalalludin, 1997).

In order to achieve this objective, UPM believes towards:

1. Excellent profession, discovery, integration and assimilation of knowledge.
2. Intellectual, energetic, and harmonious environment which is suitable for learning and self-development of students and staffs.
3. Good facilities to enhance learning, research and communication.
4. Development of human resources to build capable, responsible and dedicated personnel.
5. Finally, to strengthen the relationship towards industries.

UPM evaluates lecturers through an assessment, which is done yearly. A lecturer is required to fill an assessment form regarding their teaching hours, research and community services. The head of department or dean of the faculty, evaluates the form and further evaluated by a selection committee. The final selected candidate is given the "award of excellence". Some lecturer's get the awards only once but some of them are winners of

the awards for more than a year. According to the Vice Chancellor of UPM, the winners of the “award of excellence”:

1. Play an efficient and active role and act as a role model in developing excellent work culture.
2. Should ensure that UPM, which is going through a vast transformational process, can exist as a leading center of learning and research that not only contributes towards human advancement and creation of knowledge but also to develop human and material formation.
3. To ensure change, by making sure the staffs need have thinking skills in order for strengthening, and improvising academic programs, researches, counseling and support systems.
4. Ensure these staffs are intellectual, highly qualified in their field so that they can bring about change towards the University to ensure all services provided can fulfill the need of the client of UPM. This ensures that the existence of UPM is parallel with the changes and development of the country.
5. Are people who are creative, innovative, disciplined, competent, have good communicational and computer skills, dedicated, capable in strengthening the achievement of the University in all the fields of specialization.

In this research, the researcher finds that the award of excellence's winners are the best selection as respondents because they are capable,

competent and effective lecturers and they would be able to answer the research problem of the researcher.

Problem Statement

A University is a knowledge center, which belongs to everyone. The University can sustain in the future environment if it disseminates knowledge and information globally (NST, 1997). The product of a well-trained tertiary education is knowledgeable and skillful workforce (Syed Jalaludin, 1997). This statement proves that a University plays a major role in producing a knowledgeable and skillful workforce and furthermore can adapt themselves to the ever changing and challenging environment. In order to achieve this objective, a well-trained personnel is needed. This means the lecturers must be well trained and effective but what does an effective lecturer means is what needs to be explored.

There is a famous saying by Weimer, (1990): "If you know it, you can teach". This is the assumption made of lecturers, in which a lecturer who knows their subject matter is assumed able to teach. According to Ryan and Cooper (1972), a teacher must not only know his or her subject matter or be knowledgeable but must know something about how adults learn and how to create a conducive environment for learning to take place. Lecturers in the University hold various job functions but the core job function is to lecture. Literature states that, the lecturer who lecturer, must love and show enthusiasm towards the subject matter and students. So this brings to the question, what are the characteristics an effective lecturer should possess?