

Purpose of Education

by Steve Dennis

A good education offers employability skills over memorized bookish knowledge-based marks and grades because some employers might check the name on your college transcript, most care far more about your track record in the field, basic communication and problem-solving skills, and attitude and work ethic you bring to the table.

The purpose of getting educated in a university is to gain employability. In other words, the university must make you employable. Employability refers to your ability to gain initial employment, and maintain it. employment, and obtain new employment if required. In simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work.

“Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding, and personal attributes.

If you are already employed and studying in a university for a higher degree then you should expect your university to equip you with a higher degree of employability skills mixed with life skills that will ensure your professional and personal growth.

Spending a few precious years of your life in the university after spending a lot of money one of the most important learning you must receive toward achieving your greatest potential in life is to learn to monitor your attitude and its impact on your work performance, relationships, and everyone around you.

A good university is not about how good the university building is and how is its ambiance or how luxurious classrooms are, and good education is also not about the bookish lectures inside the classrooms or the qualifications of the faculty members on papers and their number of research papers.

It is often said that world-class universities thrive in an environment that fosters competitiveness, unrestrained scientific inquiry, critical thinking, innovation, and creativity. Institutions that have complete autonomy are also more agile because they aren't bound by clunky bureaucracies and externally imposed standards but most institutions fail to do so in most countries.

A country like Afghanistan which is ranked 163rd in the world for its quality and standard of education out of 180 countries is also frequently termed as a resource-poor and poverty-prone country. Still, the country has tremendous potential if we transform its vast population into human resources. These human resources can give the nation a new generation of entrepreneurs, doctors, engineers, scientists, business leaders, intelligent workers, and so on. In Afghanistan, the potential for development lies in its population not merely as exportable unskilled or semi-skilled cheap labor but as a skilled and creative force to compete in the global market. Such vast potentials are still being untapped to a great extent due to the failure of the country in transforming unskilled into skilled manpower.

Currently, Afghanistan is earning more a negligible amount mostly an unskilled labor force. Neighboring countries from their skilled and unskilled labor force exports earning a very large amount contributing to the economy and personal wealth. Among the South Asian neighbors, India with USD 89 billion is the top labor force earner in the world, while Pakistan receives USD 29.4 billion and Bangladesh USD 22 billion, respectively. Afghanistan could have been earning several billions of dollars by exporting skilled manpower which is lacking at the moment even to meet our domestic needs. Our educational institutions, particularly universities, should play a vital role in this regard which they don't.

“The objective of education is to transfer the appropriate knowledge and skills to the students so that they can perform up to their best potential. This objective cannot be achieved with outdated knowledge using backdated textbooks having little or no relevance to the current needs of society. The knowledge cannot be transferred properly with backdated teaching methods and copying curricula, programs, and courses from foreign universities. Indeed it is an alarming situation that threatens the future of higher education in Afghanistan. It is to be kept in mind that today's students are very much goal-oriented. They do not want to learn anything which they cannot apply, develop themselves and materialize their aim in life. The course curricula must be updated to meet the felt need of the learners and to address the changing socio-cultural context of there. The university must provide world-class education with unhindered access to knowledge and modern technology which is its backbone. To ensure world-class education we need proper faculty members, motivated and talented students with the right kind of attitude, and appropriate academic leadership and management skills and facilities.”

Lately, University rankings by QS, Times Higher Education, etc. are something universities and B-schools boast about while most countries have media houses and private and public bodies ranking higher education institutions with far from realities. Ranking systems generally use data that are easy to gather, not necessarily data that are the most meaningful, and thus do not reflect the institution's true capacities and standards. There is no evidence that students' learning will suffer for attending a less selective college rather alumni of lesser-known Indian colleges have done much better than Ivy League institutions holding CEO-level roles in top global organizations like Google, Microsoft, Chanel, Twitter, Adobe, IBM, etc. to name a few.

While a few brilliant faculty members and academic leaders can make a great difference to the institutions commonly managed by the owner, friends and family members full with below-average faculty members the same way differences are driven by individual students, not by the quality of the student body as a whole or the institutions themselves. However, institutions and their management should be serious about the quality, effectiveness, and outcomes of education delivery with growth and sustainability perspectives.

A degree from a prestigious university might look great on the wall, but does it offer any real advantage in life? The answer to that question might once have seemed obvious. More recently, though, researchers have begun to take a serious look at the evidence, with some surprising results.

Consider, for example, the 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index, which surveyed nearly 30,000 graduates on how they were faring in their careers and the rest of their lives. The report's conclusion: "It's not 'where' you go to college, but 'how' you go to college."

Next, in 2015, came to a widely discussed book with a similar title and message, *Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania*, by The New York Times columnist Frank Bruni.

Now surely you know what to expect from your university education whether it is in Afghanistan or anywhere else in the world.