Abstract 57

Problematique Analysis of Praxis in ELTU Classrooms to Generate Innovative Teaching

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A serious concern expressed at present is that the English skills of graduates continue to be poor. As such this study intends to refocus on praxis at the ELTU classrooms of the University of Peradeniya. The issue may be diagnosed through problematique (problem situation) analysis. It assumes that the ELTU classroom is a system. Hence, it is purposive; exists in a hierarchy of supra-system and sub-system functions to achieve a purpose; interacts with environment; and has complex problems, each with multiple factors. The method distinguishes between symptoms called subordinate influential factors and root causes called superordinate influential factors within a problematique. Molenda and Di Paulo (1979) cited in Librero (1984) describe the procedure to be adopted in doing a problematique: i. Define the boundaries of interest ii. Define the critical functions that ought to exist iii. Gather evidence and iv. Determine whether critical functions are purposively operating. Through teacher-learner engagement and participation, learning opportunity is created. Thus the classroom is the center of complex forces, time and space bound. The critical functions identified are Instructional Strategies; Design and Production of Instructional Material and Courseware; Evaluation; and Classroom Management. A situation analysis was carried out through a questionnaire survey of 18 ELTU teaching staff members and 73 students in the Medical and Arts faculties. It identified 32 influential factors. In-depth interviews of ESOL professionals, and education administrators based on a master questionnaire enabled to establish their hierarchical relationship in problematique maps. It enabled to see and examine ELTU problem situations in their full complexity, as treating one problem at a time will not have a lasting effect. The study finds it necessary to improve ELTU system with alternate pedagogies; adoption of teaching practices grounded in research; enhancement of professional growth; establishment of a communication platform, etc.

Key words: Critical Functions, Classroom Management, ESOL, Evaluation, Influential Factors, Instructional Materials, Instructional Strategies, Problematique Analysis, Praxis