
How to become happy - provide students with the skills they need

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Abstract

As Aristotle said: "Happiness is the meaning and the purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence." In modern times, the thing that will bring an individual the most happiness is the ability to be an active member of society by contributing the best that they have to offer. Every person possesses a set of unique gifts and talents but not every person is aware of what they possess. Our task and purpose, as educators, is to help to reveal and hone the gifts and talents that our students possess so that they can become the best members of society that they can be.

The purpose of this article is to identify and share the different ways in which educators are able to assist students in discovering their gifts, talents, and abilities. Things as simple as course assignments, interdisciplinary team projects, and student research can help educators pinpoint the unique skill sets of their students. Co-curricular activities, such as team projects, lectures, contents, and student professional clubs, are particularly good at guiding students in self-discovery through the use of team work and leadership.

When an individual's skill set is properly identified, they can be taught efficiently and practically. With proper guidance everyone should be able to grow their unique talents and optimize their abilities. This will make them more attractive to potential employers and ease their transition into society and ultimately make them happier.

1. Introduction

Getting to know their profession is one of the most important events in a student's life. A student's profession will largely determine their surroundings, values, norms, rules and lifestyle. An enthusiastic specialist will never be left without work.

Two of the specific issues that the 2014 and 2018 Global Risks Reports of the World Economic Forum highlighted were youth unemployment and the weak links between education and work. It was pointed out that the role of higher education is not only to produce graduates with specific skills for the labor market, but to also better society by creating graduates with strong analytical skills "who can engage in informed and thoughtful discussions of values and norms."

Students who are willing to pursue an academic degree want, and deserve, to have a comfortable and challenging learning environment. In order to prepare freshmen for academic success, it is very important to give them proper guidance and steer them in the right direction from the beginning. The first step is the most challenging, for both students and professors. Professors' attitudes are crucial to students' self esteem, particularly in their early years. When professors provide acceptance and help, students receive a solid foundation for self confidence. It is important for professors to recognize their students' accomplishments and provide positive reinforcement.

Professors endeavor to provide their students with a profound knowledge of the subject matter and to furnish them with the tools and methods that will help them develop their professional expertise in their chosen field. We feel that exposing students to the current methods and tools used in their discipline, be they ideas, hardware, or software, will give them a competitive edge and their best chance to achieve a successful career in this ever-changing field.

2. Information technology and its role in modern business organizations

Business organizations are typically comprised of a set of main departments such as production, research and development, purchasing, marketing, human resource management, and accounting and finance. Information technology has become a vital and integral part of every business department. Information technology benefits the business world by allowing organizations to work more efficiently and to maximize productivity.

Information technology has implications for every type of business. It is involved in, and enhances, accurate business planning and efficient communication between departments, systematic management and real time monitoring, electronic storage and the protection of records, effective marketing and global sales, security, and automation of day to day operations. By using information technology, departments ensure that the information they are giving to other departments in the organization is reliable and helps improve operational efficiency. Information technology has become the heart of today's businesses and has helped them achieve high levels of online shopping, digital marketing, social networking, digital communication, and cloud computing.

In 2015 the World Economic Forum considered the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and how technological changes can alter our personal, work, and business lives. Emerging technologies are developing rapidly, and rapid technological change is the biggest challenge to global business. "It's clear that keeping up with the rate of digital advancement - for example automation, harnessing big data, emerging technologies and cyber security - will pose significant challenges for future leaders, including our own graduates, and will add a whole new layer of complexity as they try to stay ahead of competitors and innovate. The challenge for business schools is to ensure that their programs prepare graduates to deal with these challenges," said Roland Siegers, CEMS executive director.

Business owners should hire professionals if they are unsure how to implement new technology and how it benefits their businesses specifically. Since computer applications are so widely used, information technology departments have been incorporated into many business organizations. The primary job of universities and professors is to make sure that they are producing information technology professionals who are prepared to deal with the ever changing challenges of this field.

3. Business major job requirements

Business degrees are currently among the most popular and widely known in the world. Training in the field of Business assumes that its graduate possesses deep knowledge of economic theory and awareness of the social responsibility of business. Business majors can apply their skills to organizations in almost any industry to make them function efficiently.

Although there is a common business model, each enterprise has its own business features and its own job requirements for employees of different categories. Within each category there are different levels, which reflect increasing levels of responsibilities and requirements

Requirements for open positions of different categories could differ from "Working knowledge of accounting area preferred (for example, investments and insurance products)" to "Solid computer knowledge, including databases" to "Strong analytical skills and attention to detail to assess the problem and find a solution."

We reviewed a hundred descriptions for open positions in Accounting, Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, Economics and Finance, and Public Administration and identified those requirements that are not major-specific skills (e.g. the ability to balance a balance sheet) but common skills (leadership, team work, initiative, etc...). We believe that an emphasis needs to be placed on improving students' common skills through co-curricular activities to help set our students apart.

	Job Requirements
1	Must have strong work ethics with a positive attitude
2	Must have strong organizational and time management skills
3	Behavioral and leadership competencies
4	A high level of integrity, accuracy, dependability, enthusiasm, and confidentiality
5	Self-starter, self-directed learner, willing to try different approaches
6	Proactive and takes initiative; anticipates needs of the team
7	Professional, with excellent communication and interpersonal skills Ability to work both independently and as part of a team
8	Strong relationship skills, with customers and co-workers Can work well with people at all levels both in and out of the organization.
9	Proven ability to work in a cross-functional and diverse team environment and with all levels of leadership and demonstrated sensitivity to cultural and geographical differences when interacting with others, including international.

Table 1 Business major job requirements

4. How to help students acquire skills that employers want

Extracurricular activities are a wonderful way to help students cultivate, and improve on, various marketable skills. We will discuss two specific extracurricular activities that help students improve their professional level: student clubs and involvement in the teaching process.

4.1. Co-curricular activities in student clubs

One of the most important student co-curricular activities is a student club. It is imperative that we provide all members of our Business Club at Medgar Evers College an opportunity to gain hands-on and practical experience through many activities, such as:

1. Student conferences
2. Student lectures
3. Programming contest
4. Tutoring
5. Interdisciplinary Projects
6. Un-paid Internships / Volunteer at Medgar Evers College
7. Computer certification workshops / study groups
8. Current & Upcoming Exams (Civil Service Exam Applications)
9. Career Development
10. Center for Entrepreneurship + Innovation

Career oriented, open minded individuals are necessary for The Business Club to be successful and beneficial to all. Each new member is provided with a skills development questionnaire to help us better understand their abilities and interests. The questionnaire is used to assess a member's needs and offer information, materials and assistance to help them achieve those skills. We will raise awareness about the benefits of obtaining a library card and encourage all members to apply for the New York Public Library or the Brooklyn Library. Members will utilize free resources such as free technology courses, and free self-paced courses such as lynda.com as long as their schedules permit. We are strong supporters of gaining knowledge and we will request all members to commit to reading at least one, career oriented, leadership self-help book each month. In addition, our members will actively participate in team oriented interdisciplinary activities and will develop their skills through volunteer and internships opportunities at CUNY, Medgar Evers College.

The Business Club will not only give all members the chance to bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge they have gained from their completed courses and the practical skills

employers look for but will also allow members to cultivate common skills that the classroom setting cannot. Students will be able to tell potential employers about the leadership, teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills that they acquired and mastered through the Business Club. Although career opportunities are extremely competitive, it is important that our members stand out from their competition and become enthusiastic and confident in their careers post-graduation.

4.2. Developing teaching and learning materials - student approach

Teaching in this day and age has many difficulties, specifically within the field of information technology, ranging from generational gaps to the lack of resources in order to facilitate a proper learning environment. Through experience we have seen that certain textbooks, and their corresponding lab activities, are difficult to follow. Introductory textbooks seem to start at a higher level, and are more advanced in nature, than what is suitable for an introductory course. These textbooks cater to students who have previous experience from high school or work and/or internships. But for the majority of students in introductory courses, who have no prior knowledge or experience of the topic, these textbooks cause a lot of struggle and confusion. The overly advanced nature of the books force students to ask a lot more questions than a book of the proper level would, causing a significant slowdown of the class as a whole.

In order to mitigate this, the text books could be supplemented with online resources, preferably official sources or ones that have been reviewed in order to get the best results. Professors and students who have already taken the course could work together to create online resources, guides, and tutorials. This would not only help future students in the learning process, but it would also help form stronger bonds between faculty and students. These collaborative efforts would help close the generational gap between students and professors. Professors would gain a stronger insight into the topics and areas in which students have the most difficulties in and be able to address them in a targeted manner for future students. This could even go as far as Medgar Evers College providing web pages that offer these utilities, whether they are accessible to the public or only to our college students. These will allow students to express why they do not understand portions of the textbook while allowing the ones that do to give insight on how to create instructions. Having these two ways of discovering the end product, the professors' way, and the students' way, will allow students to choose which one makes more sense to them and is easier for them to follow-allowing them to learn more efficiently.

Some problems that may arise when trying to integrate students into the process could be the level of engagement that students have and the amount of effort they're willing to put in. Students might try to take short cuts to get to the end point without actually understanding the steps that are required to get there. This can be mitigated if the reading material is more engaging, like an interactive website or short and concise tutorials instead of the traditional daunting task that reading through text book chapters brings.

To summarize, the constraints of using just a text book are numerous and not having adequate resources available is the biggest stumbling block to learning within the required courses, but these problems can be solved by the involvement of students within the learning process and the addition of regulated external materials, or specifically created resources to assist in a student's endeavors.

5. Summary

There are a number of different teaching methods available. Students learn material in different ways and at different paces. It is important to teach students how to independently evaluate and assess their own work. Doing so helps students avoid the constant sense of confusion that comes from relying exclusively on the estimation of others.

The learning process is most effective when it is supplemented with a carefully thought-out program of classroom instruction and extracurricular student activities.

To encourage student activity outside of the classroom, we have to create and offer extracurricular student activities that include membership and participation in student professional societies and clubs such as the ACM student Chapter, Programming Club, Business Club, Computer Programmers' Consortium, and Theme Houses. We can also encourage and organize students to participate and compete in contests such as the Greater New York Regional Competition of the ACM International Collegiate Programming Contests as well as college-wide programming contests. All such co-curricula student activities help students gain hands-on and practical experience to increase their chances of achieving a successful career.

6. Future Research

Since this study examines the impact of co-curricula activities on a student's chances of getting a job, future research can explore the association between employer requirements and skills obtained from co-curricula activities. Future studies may also extend the given research by examining the results of students' interviews and adjusting co-curricula activities.

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