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Essential Elements for Optimising the Pedagogical Framework

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ABSTRACT: Pedagogy links theories and beliefs about teaching and learning to teaching practice in a consistent and coherent way. The two broad concepts of teaching and learning have the clearest lines moving to pedagogical applications. To achieve these values, effective teaching must be practiced by having teachers and students work together. Educators must use various teaching methods in order for the students to have the interest to learn and motivated to participate in class. The study aims to achieving an educational pedagogical framework build on educational practice and experiences taken into consideration the feedback and feed-forward obtaining by the students during the course study and after the graduation. To sum up, the framework is a continuous process that should be regularly reviewed and monitored. Staff/student liaison encourages the mechanism of Feedback and feed-forward by obtaining students` feedback and communicating action taken in response to feedback. To ensure validity and enable reliability of assessments, teaching objectives, modules and learning outcomes must be analysed to establish the most appropriate assessment and feedback methods. The HEI should encourage opportunities for staff to build good links with industry, government and employers so that staff can contribute their knowledge to relevant partners in business and industry to benefit from the opportunities of continuing professional development.

KEYWORDS: *Pedagogical framework, effective teaching, feedback, knowledge and skills, students` participation and involvement.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Students learn best when they are directly involved in the learning process and when they are engaged, they are more motivated to learn. They learn best when they can build on their existing knowledge and understanding. Educators play a major role in the formation of students' personal identities by stimulating their development into active members of society [1]. Through the institution of education, teachers expect to transmit a broad body of knowledge to learners. Teachers and students work together and dedicate themselves to the learning process and to their institutions' objectives. Educational Institutions with a clear vision of teaching and learning goals can make students and teachers more productive [2].

Interactions between educators and students recognise the usefulness of teaching and learning method used, and has a positive influence on student ratings of instruction. Thus, student-teachers interaction influences students' perception of teaching and learning effectiveness.
Teachers must have the capacity to know students' needs and respond to them promptly. Responsive teaching implies a capacity to engage in systematic learning from the teaching context and practice and from a more generalised theory of teaching. Educators should not only be sources of knowledge and skills but should also concentrate to their relationships with students. Students prefer teachers who are likeable rather than knowledgeable. In many situations students are more interested in finding out if the proposed lectures are entertaining than accurate and up to date [3].
A survey was conducted in Midkent College Training Services (MKCTS) with 60 student respondents. The results showed that students are most affected by the teacher`s behavior and relations with the students. The findings in the survey shows that about 85% of the students were able to comprehend the module and enjoy the class involvement because of the teacher`s positive behavior and attitude as well as the simple and straightforward ways of teaching.

Teachers have a major influence in molding student values, especially through their instructional approaches. Pedagogical affect refers to students' positive thoughts about or feelings towards the instructional methods used in class. The instructional approach that is in line with students' preferred learning style helps them develop their attitudes towards learning. This is a pedagogical affect. A positive attitude toward teaching style leads to higher achievement and learning performance [4].

Professional ethics and moral values involve the ability to practice high moral standards in professional practices and social interactions. Understanding the difference and importance between Ethical Issues and Moral Issues in a work atmosphere, can lead to a bigger promotion and a much higher success rate. During work hours, knowing the difference in practicing Ethical Issues and Moral Issues can be a life saver, create less tension and make the workplace a more enjoyable and stress free zone [4].

Higher degree of student learning performance leads to a higher level of pedagogical affect. The schematic diagram in fig.1 shows the effectiveness of student–instructor interrelationship, the instructor's receptiveness, course coordination, and the instructor's likeability/issues have varying effects on pedagogical affect, student-motivation, and learning accomplishment, which in turn affect students' perceptions to learning [4].
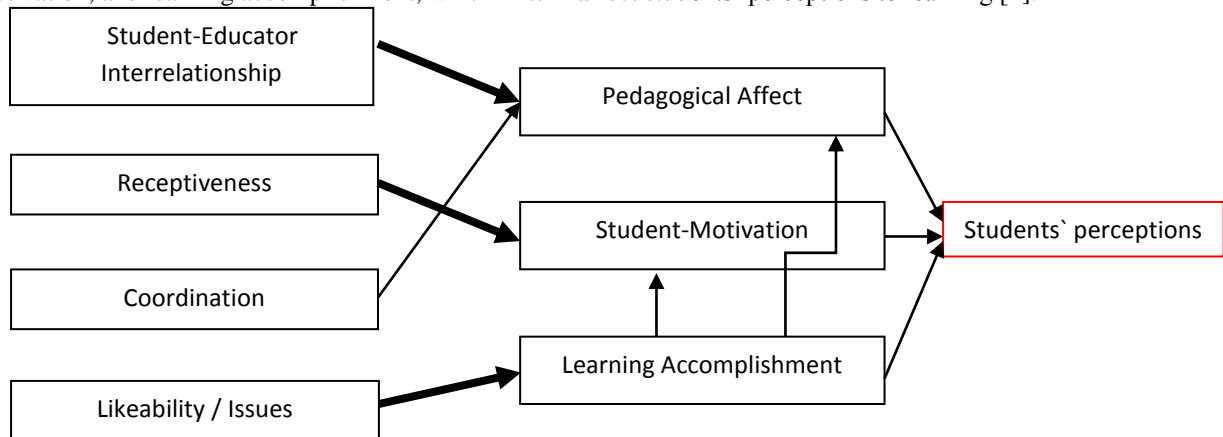

Fig.1. the Effectiveness of student-instructor interaction.

The diagram above shows the correlation between the students` motivations with learning outcomes. It proves that student's perception of course outcomes that helps them to become more knowledgeable and more competent. However, learning outcomes must be updated in line with the current trends as most feedback received from students (focus group interviews and students feedback evaluation on teaching) prefer course outcome that is not only challenging but also interesting in theories and practice. A course outcome when delivered an up-to-date lecture gives interest and motivates students to learn for more.

II.   NATIONAL & COLLEGE STANDARDS

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) is an independent British organisation encouraging excellence in higher education. HEA works in partnership with higher educational institutions and organisations supporting the students' development. Moreover, the Higher Education Academy combines the sector of education within the UK for sharing the same teaching strategies and practice. The British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education (BAC) is the body responsible for the external quality assurance and quality enhancement of higher education Institutions (HEIs – also known as higher education providers (HEPs) and programs in the United Kingdom [5]. The initial version of the quality management system was known as Requirements for Quality Assurance (RQA). The document was issued by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and contained some of the key elements of the national system namely; UK qualifications network, HEI classifications, institutional standards and the institutional and program accreditation processes. These are gradually improved and updated [6, 7].

The first stage in provider accreditation involves each HEI undergoing a Quality Audit Assessment. The emphasis of quality audit is on evaluating the effectiveness of an institution's quality assurance and quality enhancement processes against its stated goals and objectives. The second stage is that each HEI undergoing a Standard`s Assessment which emphasises on empirically measuring whether a HEI has met the institutional quality standards published by the BAC. Standards Assessment involves an Internal Quality Audit Assessment Framework (IAQAF) against the college/university standards. A summary of whether or not that HEI has satisfactorily attended to the affirmations and recommendations in its previous quality audit report which was broadly inspired by the Risk Management Assessment Framework (RMAF) must be presented to the HEI for further constructive steps.

Role of The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is to provide support and advice wherever necessary on matters relating to academic quality and the overall quality of College/University services. QAA's work has aligned with the requirements of both the Home Office and Department for Education [6].

The QAA;
- works closely with the Higher Educational Institutions(HEIs) to develop internal quality systems, through self-evaluation and other strategies,
- conducts workshops in the institutions, according to need,
- monitors the Institution`s performance and compliance with the QA, Bylaws and other Ministry directives,
- assesses progress at each institution in implementing the Strategic Plan, conducts quality audits at regular intervals in all HEIs,
- Produces report for each HEI identifying strengths and making recommendations for change in areas of relative weakness.

The Internal Quality Assurance Committee of HEI is formed in order to make sure that there is ongoing review of effective teaching and learning processes and standards are maintained. The Committee monitors the performance of teaching and learning activities continuously and meets as the need arises. The Internal Quality Assurance Committee in the HEI takes responsibility for working with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education; Responsibilities include [7];
- introducing a comprehensive strategic plan to all departments;
- observing the progress of departments and centres;
- ensuring the availability of student information systems;
- ensuring academic confidentiality;
- ensuring the best utilisation of resources both human and financial;
- following up administrative and academic staff assessment results;
- implementing relevant administrative procedures and regulations;
- ensuring quality of academic programs;
- generalising best practices;
- following up the different stages of self-study (self-assessment);
- upgrading the competitive spirit and the distinguishing values among employees and students in the college;
- Preparing comprehensive and periodic reports on implementing the quality assurance standards of all institution`s activities.

III. FRAMEWORK DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

As stated before, the aim of this work is to define, analyse and design a pedagogical framework for HEI. Due to the fact that pedagogy reinforces teaching and learning, thus numerous teaching strategies could be produced. However, the study aims to achieving an educational pedagogical framework build on educational practice and experiences taken into consideration the feedback and feed-forward obtaining by the students during their study and after the graduation. The diagram below fig.2 shows the main elements of the pedagogical framework. All these elements should prompt the college values.
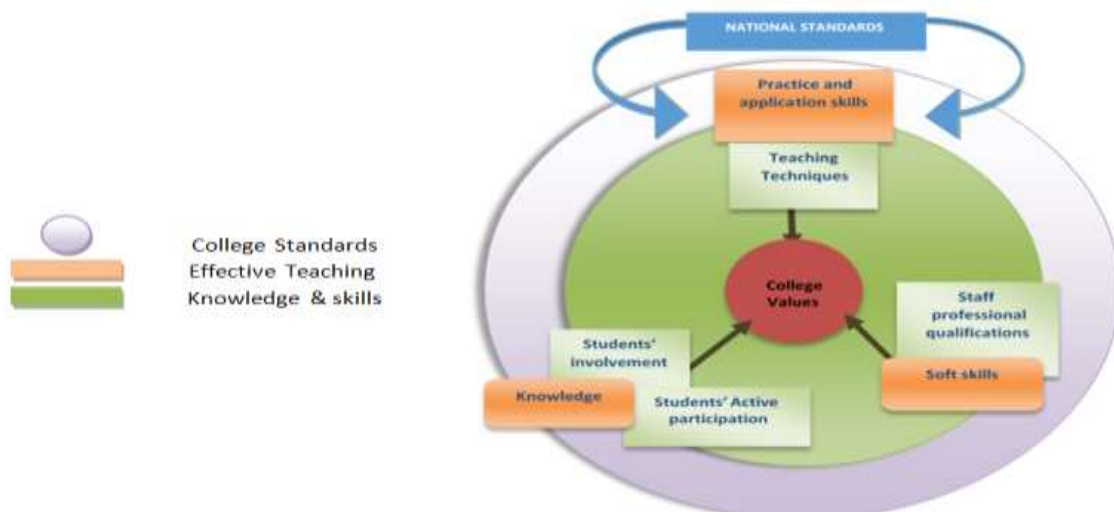

Figure 2: Pedagogical Framework Diagram.

IV. MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

General HEI`s Values

In pursuing the mission of the HEI; the core values are placed in the heart of the pedagogical framework [8, 9]. These values are:

- Respectability – a personal commitment to contribute through hard work to the delivery of high quality student-centered technological education.
- Responsibility – appreciation that the HEI`s staff has a collective liability to students and to the society.
- Adaptability – enthusiasm to learn, improves old skills and develops new, and takes on new responsibilities.
- Inspiration – the value of innovation in all areas of the institution`s work.
- Tolerance and Partnership – readiness to work efficiently with others, regardless of background, and to recognise and welcome cultural diversity.
- Impartation of Knowledge – an obligation to the effective exchange of information (inside and outside the institution) to foster goodwill and support efficiency.

Coherence –fairness and openness to constructive criticism.

The core values are expected to be acquired during the course of student's study. The components of the framework intended for students are based on student's general interest and active participation in class. For the educators, values are based on the teaching techniques and teachers educational background.

A.   Effective Teaching

This circle consists of four components these are:

1.   Teaching Techniques

According to different sources, students today have grown up in an environment that dramatically differs from those of previous generations in the use of ubiquitous technologies [10]. People commonly relate creativity to arts and crafts. In the same source, creativity is defined as an "imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value" [11].

A HEI develops a framework for fostering creativity in lifelong learning settings, this point aims at teaching techniques at that institution are on observing the staff's performance. It is the backbone constituent of education.

Lecturers of the Further Education (FE) are highly motivated towards facilities learners' understanding. Moreover, they have deep knowledge in their specialisations. Educators should have been chosen based on their professional qualifications, achievements and performance in teaching. Likewise, HEI organises different workshops and conferences as well as short training programs to strengthen the pedagogical knowledge of its educators and refine their teaching performance.

The main objective of teaching techniques is to stimulate the creativity of teachers/trainers from different lifelong learning levels, through providing them a context for creating a perceived learning.
Different techniques (aids) that are used at different levels of learning are as follows:

• Visuals	• Dialogues
• Drawings	• Discussions
• Group work	• Projects
• Presentations	• E-learning Activities
• Case studies	• Laboratory /hands on activities
• Practical training	• Brain storming

The above listed points are explained deeply under Knowledge and Skills.

2.   Staff Professional Qualifications

"A major attribute of teachers is their deep representations about teaching and learning. Experts and experienced teachers do not (necessarily) differ in the amount of knowledge they have about curriculum matters or knowledge about teaching strategies. But experts do differ in how they organise and use this content knowledge" [3]. The table below shows how the excellent teachers of the HEIs use their deep knowledge in learning students. The table is based on the staff depth knowledge base and keeping up to date with the latest strategies for effective teaching in their curriculum area(s). Moreover, it represents how to make effective connections between the area of expertise and other areas of the curriculum and issues of significance to students. In addition, the technologies they use to support learning [12].

Draw on deep Knowledge	They have a more integrated knowledge base and can relate their subject knowledge to wider issues, including knowledge in other disciplines. Teachers who demonstrate deep levels of pedagogical content knowledge (the combination of knowledge of their subject area and how best to teach it) make the most difference to the learning of their students.
Make key concepts relevant to students	They understand the key concepts and 'big ideas' of their learning domain and can make connections between these concepts and significant issues for students.
Are adaptable and creative	They recognise that they are working in an environment that is diverse, multifaceted, demanding and subject to rapid change. They work flexibly within system requirements in response to the contexts in which they work and are keen to try innovative approaches, seeing renewal and a sense of adventure as integral to the teaching and learning process.
Solve problems	They seek new information about their subject area and actively try to understand problems that arise in their teaching or in the learning of individual students. They use appropriate technologies to support and enhance learning, e-learning is an example.
Combine challenge and Success	They set challenging goals and use an array of teaching strategies to help students achieve these goals. They help students develop thinking and problem-solving strategies that enable them to experience success.

3. *Student active participation.*

Teachers are the key to student success, there needs to be a strong focus on effective pedagogies. Pedagogy links theories and beliefs about teaching and learning to teaching practice in a consistent and coherent way. The knowledge that teachers have of learners, learning, teaching and assessment and the way they apply this knowledge to effective classroom practice is a complex interaction of theoretical understandings and practical skills [12, 13].

Participation creates a good environment to learn in depth by exchanging ideas and viewpoints. Without dispute participation does not mean to have all the classmates to participate frequently and in the same way. However, instructors should support classroom activities and good dynamics to achieve their goals. Educators should be aware of some students with unlike personalities and learning habits could raise their voices more than others.

According to [13] "many students who frequently volunteer to contribute are active learners, who typically think while they speak. The lecturer's goal is to create conditions that will enable students of different learning preferences and personalities contribute. To reach this goal, lecturers need to take other measures to encourage quiet students to speak up. Occasionally, the more verbose students are requested to hold back from commenting in order to give others a chance".

4. *Students Involvement*

The Student involvement shows their level of active participation in classroom activities and outside. There is a need to develop their initiatives. In classroom participation there is a close connections between teachers and students and between students and students. The activity fosters a high level of energy and creates interest while learning. In addition, student`s representation is also active where the representatives are trained in decision making and become good leaders [14]. In his June-2009 speech in Cairo, U.S. President Barack Obama stated that young people "more than anyone have the ability to re-imagine the world, to remake this world".

Teaching and learning are two sides of the same coin [15]. The curriculum suggests that "the purpose of developing pedagogy is to improve student learning by selecting the most powerful teaching strategies for a specified learning outcome and to support different learners to achieve that outcome. In a sense, it is about knowing how to choose the right tools for the job" [9]. The curriculum in the HEI should be well designed such that the students can build different skills connecting with their specialisations and others like culture; history; world geography and nations; health, safety and environment; international bodies and independent organisations, and an understanding of different political systems. The curriculum designed to meet current and future needs; students have to be well shaped with rounded mentality. Teachers want to see their students change from what they are into to what they can become by their teaching. Teachers build on what students already know and can do. They provide the tools and knowledge for students to connect past and present learning and to generate new skills and understandings by creating a classroom learning culture that is built on a common sense of purpose and enables students with differing interests and capacities to contribute [12, 15].

B.   Knowledge and Skills
This circle consists of three components they are:
1.   Practice and Application Skills
In order to realise the vision of providing quality technology education, all departments, English Learning Centre (ELC), Information Technology (IT), Business Studies (BS), Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) are committed to improving its educational resources and media to support student learning effectively.

E-learning System (MOODLE) is utilised that helps the students to enhance their skills in technical, information, humanities, business, management and engineering. Moreover, MOODLE is benefits from cost-effective as it is free, open source platform which means it is accessible to all and finally it is simple interface designed based on HTML5 that means you can access the MOODLE from any mobile device. Provision of fully equipped and latest laboratories, this depends on the specialisations available on that institution. As a general rule, most technical colleges are equipped with TV Room, Multimedia and Speech Room, CISCO, Networking, Project office, Computer Hardware, Mechanical, Electronics, Communications, Electrical and Construction workshops, Physics, Chemistry and Biology laboratories. Equipment facilitates the students on their technological skill and enables them to practice and apply their knowledge in their specialisations. Computer laboratories provide Internet facility for the students to use as a source of information for their course assignments and projects. Trainings and short courses programs are also provided to ensure Information Technology literacy for all teachers and students. Most academic departments, e.g (IT, BS and STEM), also include Industry visits activities to students to keep them abreast of the latest trends in the industry [16].

The teachers conceive their own best practices with technology – a framework that is based on student needs, goals, and classrooms essentials. To make best use of the technology's benefits, educators cultivate and develop a progressive view of technology to determine its importance in using in the classroom [16].

2.   Knowledge
The knowledge is a primary component of the pedagogical framework for all HEIs [9, 14]. The delivery and assessment of academic programs give teachers and students opportunities for creativity, critical thinking, learning and testing skills while extra-curricular activities such as guest lectures and series of workshops promote creative thoughts and innovations. Activities in the classrooms like problem-solving and solution alternatives, brainstorming to find solutions to stated problems, and games, are some of the strategies of the lecturers which will encourage creative thinking to all students [9, 16 and 17].

Learning a skill is Critical thinking [11]. All HEIs supposed to follow learner-centred approach. All courses require asking questions to understand problems/issues where critical thinking is required to analyse the situation and come-up with probable solutions with their own consequences. As an example, in the specialisation department, lecturers have individual level and group level case studies activities for the students. After analysis of the case or situations, students will report in class and discussion will take place among the students. Inputs from the students are taken and at the end of the discussion, the lecturer explains the consequences of each analysis.

For instant, At ELC, students with different language learning abilities and aptitudes are guided in attaining the knowledge and skills.

According to different sources, e.g the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), there are eight steps for critical thinking:
1.   Process – work out the information accurately.
2.   Comprehend - Understand the key points, opportunities, opinions and evidence presented.
3.   Analyse - Study how these elements integrate and link to each other.
4.   Compare - Discover the differences and similarities between the concepts you are dealing with.
5.   Synthesise – Combine different resources to serve an idea you are constructing. Make logical connections that help and support the ideas.
6.   Assess- Evaluate the worth of the knowledge in terms of its relevance to the reality and needs.
7.   Apply - Translate the understanding which has been gained from the critical assessment and use in response to difficulties and questions.
8.   Justify – Prove through a critical thinking the way to improve arguments, identify consequences and predict conclusions.

To develop the learning and testing skills of the students, study skills and positive attitude towards learning and testing are emphasised in the teaching of courses. The students are candidates of testing, whether it is formal or informal test. Teachers are responsible to equip the students to be ready and be prepared for taking tests in various forms. Relying on [18] stated that "Classroom assessment plays a very important role in education and there are mainly four reasons why to assess students:

1.   to compare students with each other
2.   to see if students meet a particular standard
3.   to help the student's learning
4.   to check if the teaching programme is doing its job"

Throughout the course delivery, students are reminded and taught of different testing skills namely test preparation, test time management, approach of dealing different types of issues, information retrieval, and creative application of previous knowledge and experience to solve problems [17]. In addition, utilising the E-learning system (MOODLE), it helps the students how to be independent learner, be a life-long learner and teaching them how to learn.

3.   *Soft Skills*

Educators emphasise that education is experiential learning. The primary role of the educational Institution is to build a solid foundation and equip the candidates to meet the market needs and expectations. The job market expects the graduates to have good in communication skill, with high emotional intelligence, self-motivated and can easily adapt to changes and diversity in the environment [16].

The course materials should be well-planned towards improving communication skills of the learners. The main focus areas in ELC, Humanities and Social Sciences are both written and verbal communication. In IT, Business, Science and Engineering departments, students are encouraged to speak by the way of asking questions, discussions, build arguments and provide evidence to support it. Communication skills are given weight age when evaluating students assignments, projects/ presentations.

Developing Emotional Intelligence (EI) facilitates effective teaching, learning, personal growth, adjustment and building relationships. To improve EI competencies, analytical thinking and problem solving activities are integrated in all course delivery plans. For some courses during the students study, more of the assessment`s percentage is given to practical aspect and less on theory at least 60% in Practical and 40% in Theory [19].

In self- regulation and management, there is student advising and course project guidance, students are guided and monitored on how to adapt to changing circumstances and helping students on how to manage their time, organise their work according to plan in achieving their academic goals.

For positive outlook and motivation, students are rewarded and given recognitions. Rewards and recognitions are in the form of Certificates or Trophies. Those students with academic needs are counseled by advisors and lecturers for motivation and improvement. Social skills and relationship management is develop by having a team building exercises and group activities that are integrated in all course delivery plans [2, 7].

For diversity, educators and learners understand and appreciate the individual differences of each student. Educators constantly assess the different learning styles of the students. They assist them in identifying their own learning styles. Lecturers use various methods in teaching catered to students with different learning styles to ensure that each of them will understand the lesson. This is a combine effort made by both students and lecturers to achieve the common goal of quality and fair accessibility of education [14].

In motivation and development, learners are encouraged to make continuous efforts to meet the challenges of the information age and stay current in their specialisations. Motivation is perceived as the driving force for development. Through effective motivational methods the best talent and hidden capabilities can be mentioned to attain the right objectives and goals of the institution.

V.   IMPACT OF PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The diagrammatic representation shows how the transformation takes place in the teaching/learning process using varied techniques to meet the needs of the learner.
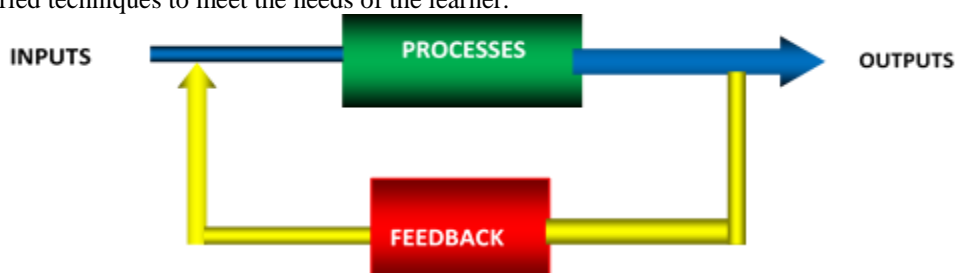

Figure 3: Diagrammatic representation of pedagogical framework.

A.   Inputs:

The inputs are the teacher and student characteristics that go through learning processes in the classroom and workshops. Different techniques, strategies and methods are adopted to meet the teaching and learning objectives. The transformation takes place in the students' cognitive areas where the learners are active participants in the learning process. The support provided by the administration and the resources of the college.

The inputs determine techniques and technologies to enhance learning abilities of the students.

B.   Processes:

Technological pedagogical knowledge is an understanding of how teaching and learning can change when technologies are used in various ways. Creative, open minded and forward looking technology which advances students' learning and understanding is used. Educators develop new ways of applying what they know, in the classrooms to integrate technology into the curriculum. Teaching process also include, hands on training on computers, machines and equipment, visits to industries, lectures and seminars and college activities.

For example, using language actively in classroom exercises and reflecting on language use will develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Next to the first example, is the attachment or apprenticeship which enables the students to develop their theoretical, practical as well as moral and ethical skills.

C.   Outputs:

The results or outputs are measured through various methods to evaluate and assess of the students' learning. The outputs include the number of student graduates per batch, the number of students sent to higher degree, and the number of students per batch who are employed in some ways of assessing the effectiveness of the framework used.

D.   Feedback:

The feedback is an effective system to transfer results oriented learning in order to review what the market needs and to produce professional and skilled personnel. Feedback is taken from the employers and Industry who assess the graduates. Other stakeholders include the alumni, community and the government hub. The HEI should establish its effective and reliable system for sustaining constructive relationships with alumni. This system could be, for example, electronic communication and networking activities, staff/alumni meetings, newsletter, fundraising and a cooperative alumni database.

The feedback on the results obtained give a clear picture on the effectiveness of the higher educational institution`s program. The feedback of students' achievements, the teachers can evaluate the learning drawbacks and accordingly plan different strategies to meet the requirements.

VI.   SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this work is to define, analyse and design a pedagogical framework of the HEI. The system of the pedagogy in education is complex. To empower this system different channels and steps should be taken. Both the educators and the students with the support of the HEA by developing a chain of discussions for better practices in addition to guidance for best pedagogical system. Also, the HEA and QAA could support each other to develop a brief document on pedagogical matters with the help of the students` feedback. Based on that the HEA could use the document for establishing a reliable pedagogy system aligns with previous benchmarking frameworks taking in consideration the students` feedback and their attainments. The HEA could explore appropriate methods in future to boost the pedagogical framework in respect with the Professional Standards Framework. To ensure validity and enable reliability of assessments, teaching objectives, modules and learning outcomes must be analysed to establish the most appropriate assessment and feedback methods. The quality of teaching, challenge and the inspiration which can come from educators` commitment and enthusiasm– will be critical to achieving the aspirations for all students. Staff/student liaison encourages the mechanism of Feedback and feed-forward by obtaining students` feedback and communicating action taken in response to feedback. Educators should also be more open to feedback from their students. It reflects the fact of where they are and where they have got it wrong [7]. The HEI should establish a reliable system for sustaining constructive relationships with alumni. This system could be, for example, electronic communication and networking activities, staff/alumni meetings, newsletter, fundraising and a cooperative alumni database. Finally the diagrammatic representation shows how the transformation takes place in the teaching/learning process using varied techniques to meet the needs of the learners. The diagram shows that the feedback plays the dominant role for empowering the pedagogical framework of the HEI. Moreover, the HEI pursues to ensure that there are always opportunities for staff to build solid links with industry, government and employers so that staff can contribute their knowledge to relevant partners in business and industry to profit from the opportunities of continuing professional development.
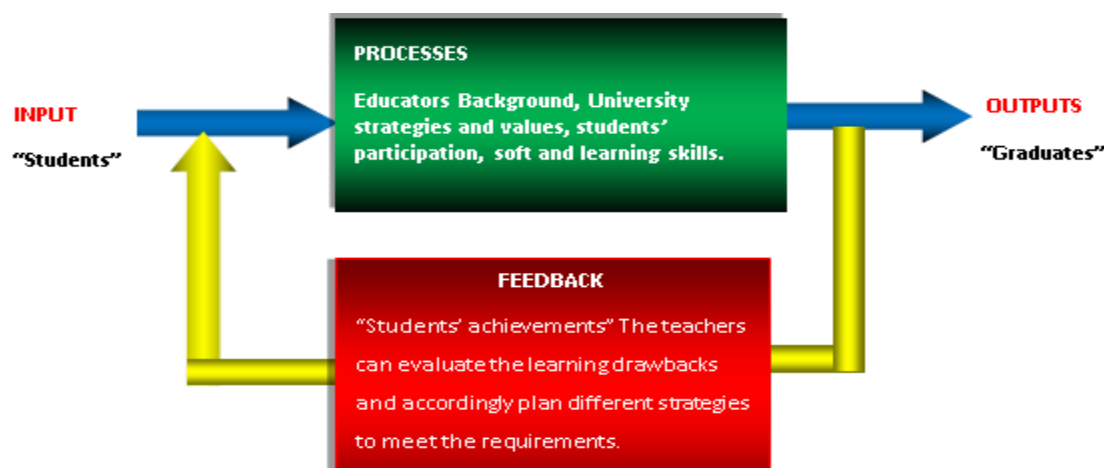
Fig.4 simplified pedagogical framework.

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