

The Implicit Role of First-Years' Higher Education Faculties

Maurice Abi-Raad
Rabdan Academy, United Arab Emirates

Abstract

The higher education experience is a challenge for first-year students. One of the challenges facing a generation of youth is attaining professional skills, academic experience and occupational training. In order to have a clear picture of the challenges involved in first-year experiences it is important to examine elements impacting first-year students' adjustment to university and in particular on the dual faculty role. This opinion paper posits that higher education faculties play an important role in the successful adjustment of first-year students, not only in facilitating their learning, but in impacting students' well-being and their growth as better citizens. The findings from this paper were drawn from various studies looking at the importance of first-year faculties in higher education, which involved extensive literature reviews and reported interviews with university stakeholders. The paper offers higher education leadership insights into the complex factors at play and the dual role faculties hold.

Keywords: first-year student, higher education, quality teaching

Introduction

Undertaking higher education is an important landmark for newly enrolled students in the period of initial adulthood. The higher education experience is both an opportunity and a challenge for first-year students. If a first-year student cannot adjust to the new university setting swiftly they may encounter difficulties in their learning and psychological progressions (Stirling, 2017). The younger generation today faces the challenges of a multi-dimensional and competitive world of work and exceedingly specific roles. As such, they spend prolonged periods in educational institutions to attain professional skills, academic experiences and occupational training. (Symonds, Schwartz & Ferguson, 2011). Becoming a first-year higher education student after being a final-year student at a secondary school echoes the phenomenon of shifting from the oldest and most influential group of students in the primary school to the newest and least influential group of students in secondary schools (Najdanovic-Visak, 2017). Correspondingly, the progression into a university setting comprises moving to an extended, more equitable or learner-oriented faculty structure, communication with peers from more diverse geographical regions and sometimes more diverse backgrounds. Experience indicates a greater emphasis on academic performance and its evaluation (Radojicic, Milenkovic & Jeremic, 2017).

The university environment also requires the process of creating new social networks, friends, altering existing associations with family members, and adapting to the new learning setting. An effective adaptation to university settings implies an ongoing and flexible process of accepting a new lifecycle in college, appreciating psychological welfare and achieving learning objectives (Najdanovic-Visak, 2017). This means that graduates who can manage a strong, universally competitive economy or transnational corporation perform better compared with their poorly adjusted peers. Joining the university demands more accountability and some students may doubt their competency to be effective at the university level, which may reduce their learning success and can cause an upsurge in their anxiety levels. Scholars suggest that some students adapt well to the university environment while others encounter difficulties with the progression, some dropping out of university altogether (Uttl, White & Gonzalez, 2017). Nevertheless, the elements impacting first-year students' adjustment to university are multifaceted; in such cases, the dual role of the first-year faculty emerges in the sense that educators not only fulfil their teaching role, but also their role as advisors, mentors and supporters of students.

This reflective paper suggests that higher education faculties, particularly those in the first years of student transition, play a significant role not only in the successful transition of students into higher education facilities by way of learning, but also in providing a significant support role, impacting student well-being. The paper first discusses the benefits of higher education and the general transition of students to higher education and the adjustments involved. This is followed by a discussion on the concept of student-centred learning and the dual roles that faculties play during the student transition period: providing not only the foundation for successful learning, but also in supporting students to have a sense of becoming better independent learners.

The Benefits of Higher Education

The benefits and significance of higher education in the past decade have increased, and continue to expand, as examinations by various stakeholders aim to provide more specific results in the higher education field (Noaman, Ragab, Madbouly, Khedra & Fayoumi, 2017).

At present, the opportunity to advance one's studies in higher education institutions is considered a significant privilege, considering the role of the financial factor that is a persistent limitation for some students (Arbel, Bar-El & Tobol, 2017). One of the benefits of higher education is associated with achieving a high level of economic growth and stability (Schendel, McCowan & Oketch, 2014). Therefore, educators promote school reforms across different countries in order to help them improve their existing economic systems (Sriarunrasmee, Techataweewan & Mebusaya, 2015). From this perspective, students have recognized that investing in their higher education is an important and worthwhile precondition for their economic success and the success of society (Blaskova, Blasko, Matuska & Rosak-Szyrocka, 2015). In fact, researchers have assessed the long-term implications of education, which implies that individuals may think from diverse perspectives when it comes to achieving certain educational outcomes (Singh, Misra & Srivastava, 2017).

Another significant benefit of higher education relates to the idea that the respective institutions foster lifelong learning, which is an essential factor in helping students become better persons, leading healthier and meaningful lives (Jarvis, 2017). By improving the personal lives of individuals, higher education improves the entire social system in the sense of contributing to its smooth functioning (Ma, Pender & Welch, 2016). Highly educated people tend to demonstrate an active involvement in different social activities (Griffiths, 2016). The reason why education improves people's well-being is that such individuals apparently realise that the potential and knowledge they have can help them change the world in one way or another (Nolan & Molla, 2017).

In terms of major social benefits pertaining to higher education, educated individuals contribute to expanding social unity and trust. In this context, society functions better as a united community, which is possible only through the diverse values promoted by higher education (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015). The feeling of togetherness, along with the emphasis in ongoing cooperation, has helped many people in a positive way by changing their views about society and higher education (Gonondo, 2017). As a result, a substantial number of individuals demonstrate their willingness to work together on finding appropriate solutions to emerging social problems (de Kraker, Dlouhá, Machackova Henderson & Kapitulcinová, 2017; Kellett, & Goldstein, 1999). Being properly educated means that people are most likely to have shared goals in terms of social development and improvement initiatives (Griffiths, 2016).

Therefore, the insights they may share can be quite helpful for further enhancing the role of society in modernity. Higher education has emerged as the prerequisite for shared democratic practices promoting the relevance of freedom, flexibility and creativity in society (Shephard & Brown, 2017). Individuals who are highly educated can have an opportunity to have a successful career, indicating that such people are generally wealthier and more socially stable compared to their uneducated counterparts (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015). Thus, it appears that pursuing higher education is related to both personal and social benefits that can significantly multiply once individuals have recognised the limitless possibilities of learning in today's knowledge-based, digital society. Education is the right answer to all those who may have any doubts regarding their future development as individuals and professionals in a certain field (Linse, 2017). In this way, higher education institutions succeed at preparing people for the challenges they may encounter by giving them the proper knowledge and tools to thrive in modern society.

Student Transition to Higher Education

Scholars frequently utilise the term “transition” as an alternative word for “adjustment”, “integration” and “adaptation” (Uttl et al., 2017). It illustrates an individual’s efforts to endure in their societal and physical setting. Scholars describe the transition process to higher education as a way in which the student tries to deal with anxiety, academic performance and conflict and attain their learning objectives (Najdanovic-Visak, 2017). In this progression, the student also tries to sustain coordinated relationships with the setting, which means that the help of the first-year faculty is crucial in such cases. In the process of transition to higher education, the two key elements are the student and the university environment (classrooms, faculty members, tutors, principal, administrators and student services). Students in higher education typically come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and have diverse customs, norms and ethics (Blaskova et al., 2015). The university and its faculties have their own objectives, standards and principles that educators incorporate into the institution’s aim, vision and core standards (Uttl et al., 2017). Students must fit in with the university setting through altering their own attitudes, vision and activities to the appropriate level of those of the university. The adaptation varies from one student to another depending on the progressive phase of the learner. Newly enrolled university students have little knowledge about course scheduling. For instance, new students have been in secondary school, where teachers arrange or program every activity for them, as well as allocate school-work time – all students have to do is follow the program (Hogan, Fox & Barratt-See, 2017). Therefore, faculty members ought to provide these students with the mentoring and support they need to better adjust to their new university environment.

First-year students join the university with unexpressed and indistinct enquiries about their own personality and the globe – queries that academic institutions and parents never probe (individual personalities) further at the initial stages. They join the college community with an eagerness and passion that may soon become dissatisfaction (Sezer, 2016). During their time in university, students deal with a number of activities, many of which they are encountering for the first time, comprising new settings, friends, class mates, exposure to diverse cultures and a new outlook. Scholars argue that when students are unable to cope with these initial activities they are likely to struggle (Uttl et al., 2017). If first-year students do not experience a feeling of satisfaction or they are not ready to adapt to the new setting of a college campus and faculty they could simply become vulnerable to anxiety and depression.

For most university students, the progression to the university classroom requires an adaptation to academic practices and expectations. They must study efficiently to enhance their learning habits. Classrooms may be larger, tutors have diverse instructing styles and teaching approaches, assignments are extensive and benchmarks are higher (Sezer, 2016). Students need to stabilize their personal and academic priorities. The academic domain, courses and syllabus in higher education turn out to be rather sophisticated and complex for the first-year student. The complexity can be predominantly greater for students coming from ethnic and language backgrounds that are dissimilar to those supporting the foremost principles of higher education organisations (Khoshlessan & Das, 2017). Research demonstrates that educational demands increase with time and new societal relations develop when students join higher-level education, thereby the dual role of the first-year faculty is an important element in supporting students to become not only excellent learners but also better persons (Poorman & Mastorovich, 2017); first-year students are often unclear of their competencies to attain these learning demands.

Social Adjustment

First-year students may also be unable to adapt to the environment due to many social reasons. In some instances, the sole support structure students have encountered prior to joining college was in the home atmosphere; first-year students must encounter the university experience individually, without the security of an accustomed and responsive support system. Subsequently, numerous first-year students discuss feelings of isolation and homesickness as an outcome of their lack of adaptation to the university environment (Uttl et al., 2017). Although these students may establish many social associations, this does not essentially prevent aloneness and homesickness (Blaskova et al., 2015). It is the value of the association that influences students' aloneness in their new university environment. With regards to the progression into university, student social support is the most vital component in decreasing negative outcomes, such as anxiety, depression and loneliness (Baker & Robnett, 2012; Cho & Yu, 2015). Students' social adaptation to college has been related to students' overall transition to higher education (Hogan et al., 2017). The assessment of social adaptation refers to determining how efficiently students react in their environment, demonstrate involvement in social programs and their gratification with several social factors of the college experience (Simmons, Creamer & Yu, 2017; Trolan & Barnhardt, 2017). The university social setting requires flexibility on the part of newly enrolled students. The student union has a strong influence on new students' lives, typically because they have a need to transform family and community networks with student support networks (Sriarunrasmee et al 2015). First-year students, hence, expect others to like and acknowledge them, which contributes to their own satisfaction as being part of the new university environment (Dornan, 2015). First-year faculties can clearly communicate such a need. As stated previously, joining the university often signifies the youth's initial experience in developing and preserving the individual personality outside the home (Blaskova et al., 2015).

Personal – Emotional Transition to Higher Education

The personal-psychological transition of students to higher education refers to the emotional anxiety and mind symptoms linked with the transition process itself (Gautam, Lowery, Mays & Durant, 2016; Rahat & Ilhan, 2016). First-year students experience concerns of being a stakeholder in the college. They also want to demonstrate themselves to their fellow classmates. It seems that unsteady and distressed students tend to perform less efficiently in their education in proportion to their ability than students who experience better adjustment (Uttl et al., 2017). Failure to comprehend the significance of adjustment at college may be a core factor in certain psychological issues (Nolan & Molla, 2017). Numerous first-year university students encounter various psychological health problems, with higher education institutions determined as “ideal” incubators of psychological health issues (Budescu & Silverman, 2016; Ceyhan, E. & Ceyhan, A. A., 2011). Scholars contend that there are numerous reasons for these health issues such as lack of finance to attain fundamental needs (which is a common situation for college students in developing economies), along with other factors, for example adapting to college life, pressure to achieve success, time management and task completion (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015).

New Models for Quality Teaching in Higher Education

The core transformation in education over the past five decades suggests an upsurge in the demand for non-routine mental and interactive competencies and a fall in the demand for

long-established cognitive and craft competencies, non-skilled labour and tiresome physical roles (Frey & Fisher, 2015). Graduates participate in a world of competitiveness, dominated by greater uncertainty, flexibility, risk, globalisation and cross-cultural communication (Kim, 2016; Onnis & Dyer, 2017). Higher education institutions, and the approach of learning promoted by educators whilst at college, need to help students adapt to such a setting and prepare them with appropriate competencies, insights, principles and qualities to flourish in it (Sriarunasmee et al., 2015). There is a strong determination to develop and boost knowledge, together with comprehending the importance of professional life and restructuring the theory of knowledge in academic situations (Blaskova et al., 2015). Strong connections with occupational life through diverse academic initiatives provide reliable opportunities to acquire both generic and professional competencies, as well as to strengthen networks and job pathways after acquiring an undergraduate qualification. Colleges/universities across the globe face the challenge of discovering ways of demonstrating their quality, not only in the teaching of students but also how they connect to business objectives and industry (Linse, 2017).

Learning entrenched in occupational life could facilitate higher education institutions to understand and react more effectively to the issues of this setting, utilising other types of schooling and learning models such as a project-based approach. Higher education can no longer be preserved by a set of disciplinary specialists who share knowledge with students. Both the difficulty and ambiguity of society and the competitive marketplace will require higher education organisations to incessantly acclimatise while maintaining quality teaching standards (Linse, 2017). Having become the central point of the education approach in many regions of the globe, universities will have to comprehend how to efficiently serve students (Figure 1) (Bhardwaj & Kumar, 2017; Pescaru, 2017).

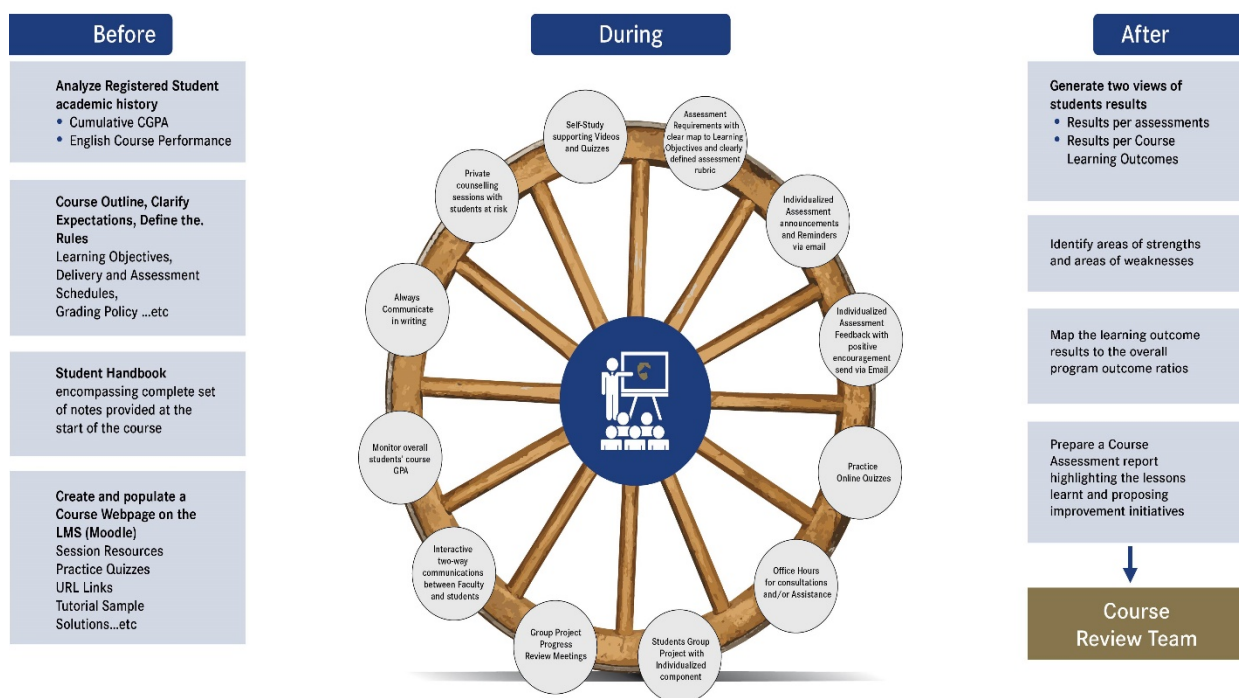


Figure 1: The Explicit Role of First Years' Faculties

Alternatively, students seem to have become more attentive about equality, and demand student-oriented teaching and academic opportunities (Blaskova et al., 2015). They aim to complete their education to get a desirable job and strengthen their social attachment. Students' ability to influence learning quality is immense as they have access to the right services at the time they need them to improve their commitment (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015). Student involvement can take diverse arrangements (on podiums and through classroom presentations, extended student gratification surveys, instantaneous feedback approaches, among others.). Student involvement is mostly influential as a tool of quality instruction when it comprises collaboration and not simply data on the student's learning experience. The implementation of modern teaching approaches, along with an increasingly diverse student base, place the subject of equity at the very core of quality teaching issues (Tweddell, Clark & Nelson, 2016). With this assessment of learning, the responsibility of faculty members and teachers is transforming.

The Student-Oriented Approach of Higher Education: Helping Students to Adjust

Much of the capacity encircling undergraduate education and student learning refers to the two key functions of university or college faculties (departments within the academic institution): schooling and research (Linse, 2017). The parameter of time assigned to these two responsibilities is one of the most prominent issues in higher education (Khan, 2017). It is unfortunate that much of the discussion on the structure of faculty work finds its basis in myth, assessment and prediction. There is a myth, for instance, that how a faculty member teaches and interacts with students in the higher education experience results in improved student knowledge gains (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015). However, it is important to debunk or corroborate such a myth. Hence, evaluating the influence that faculty member behaviours and communications with students in the tutorial room have on classroom experience and student performance is important.

The most vital role of faculty members (tutors, consultants and school administrators) is to improve the student learning experience. Diverse teaching approaches can be found in many institutions to improve student educational achievement, but tutors frequently lack the comprehensive training or the support required to implement those approaches in the classroom. University administrators should decrease the opportunity costs of testing in the tutorial room and permit faculty deans or members to develop unique and effective teaching approaches across various departments (Linse, 2017). The use of faculty members in initial warning systems has become a norm in many universities as they play a crucial role in identifying vulnerable students depending on their adaptability and on their apparent impact (Morales, Grineski & Collins, 2017; Roksa & Whitley, 2017).

Research demonstrates that around 75% of colleges and universities in the United States have created or acquired an early warning framework, but there are certain problems in terms of utilisation (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015). Permitting faculty members to modify academic risk and contribution protocols can facilitate the need to advance the levels of enthusiastic participants. The university chancellor and academic deans must boost the significance of primary warnings among faculties and demonstrate their effect on facilitating students in an appropriate manner (Linse, 2017). Student support programs tend to emphasise the most vulnerable students; however, mentoring programs for students should also take into consideration high-achieving students. If students are unable to establish a considerable connection with their faculty in their first academic year they may experience difficulties as they enter the higher level of education. Focusing faculty mentoring initiatives on groups

such as students who are educationally on track, but who lack involvement in a faculty community or student group, can assist in building extended participation among this decisive group (Byl, Struyven, Meurs, Bieke & Koen, 2016).

Utilising a learner-oriented methodology is an effective mode of designing instructive materials to facilitate first-year students since it aims to encourage students by precisely targeting their individual education needs (Blaskova et al., 2015). In contrast to conventional teaching approaches, where the design of instruction is from the standpoint of the teacher, a learner-oriented approach aims primarily to meet the student's educational needs from the standpoint of the student (Linse, 2017). Internationally, colleges and universities discuss the significance of adopting new student-oriented learning approaches resulting in the growing implementation of non-traditional techniques and strategies by progressive academic institutions (Partanen, 2016). The student-centred methodology comprises more than the pursuit of modern techniques; it involves an incorporated idea of education (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015). Comprehending the knowledge-centred approach to instruction requires an insight into the element of power in the tutorial room. In a learning-oriented setting tutors do not discriminatorily make all the decisions about teaching; rather, they discuss these decisions with their students in order to bring consent.

A student-oriented classroom does not cater to student impulses in a way that decreases academic consistency. As a substitute, it offers strong learning positions, facilitating students to comprehend and apply knowledge. Many universities support their faculties in establishing student-centred tutorial rooms through their instruction, learner centres and student services (Blaskova et al., 2015). Faculties also collaborate with other faculty members in efficiently creating and delivering first-year course outlines (Bryant, 2016). However, faculties frequently encounter challenges in managing the time to join learning workshops or use social media websites to offer tips on boosting accessibility and adaptation for first-year students. Despite the advantages drawn in the literature, educators do not consistently utilise Universal Instructional Design (UID) as the teaching framework (Pliner & Johnson, 2004). Educators face several obstacles in adopting these approaches. Initially, implementing a new teaching structure needs collaboration, joint decision, leadership and administrative assistance (Linse, 2017).

Without assistance, it is complicated for faculty members to acquire training on UID, get access to adequate facilities and modern technologies, or restructure course syllabi. From time to time, universities may consider UID approaches as being too complex to adopt in practice because of suggestions that emphasise the need to integrate modern technology into each tutorial room (Bryant, 2016). Additionally, adverse attitudes from various students about implementing these approaches in undergraduate education may act as an obstacle to utilising UID. Accepting the UID framework requires that one adopt the standpoint that approachability issues exist within conventional teaching methodologies and that this influences the academic performance of all learners (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015). As discussed above, tutors must take into consideration the variations in students' individual learning approaches. Research on learning approaches (e.g. surface vs deep learning), and the 3 Ps model (Pressage-Process-Product) developed to express the interactions between lecturers and students from the point of view of the expectations that both would have of the teaching and learning process, is substantial, with changeable and sometimes inconsistent learning systems (Ak, 2008).

Effective teaching must comprise some reflection on the diverse ways in which students learn, which can help students become better learners and persons over time. Scholars tend to agree that there are specific variations among students that considerably influence the learning process (Sriarunrasmee et al., 2015). With these concepts as support, a rising number of scholars and experts have gradually admitted that conceptualisation has a constructive effect on the academic experience of students (Blaskova et al., 2015). Conceptual teaching and academic activists indicate that, through this approach, students can develop initial knowledge (comprehending specific ideas or notions), process knowledge (the competency to use this knowledge practically), incorporate knowledge (comprehend the associations between the knowledge acquired), and acknowledge their human aspects (the competency to acknowledge one's self), boosting substantial learning by interacting with fellow students at every phase (Linse, 2017). The subject of transferable abilities, or students' abilities to exhibit the capabilities acquired through one framework in another, has become a clearer objective in many contextualised initiatives. From a metacognitive standpoint, transferable abilities reflect the outcome of "learning to learn". In other words, the learner has established themselves as an effective learner by becoming more cognisant and self-oriented, as well as significantly competent in conducting more effective analysis and using that learning approach in other arenas (Singh et al., 2017).

The Critical Roles of First-Year Faculties During the Student Transition Period

Innovation in the teaching and learning process can present certain challenges to higher educational institutions. The dual role of the first-year faculty implies that the focus on different responsibilities may be difficult for educators, as being in the position of a persistent change mode may lead to substantial uncertainty (Abbott-Anderson, Gilmore-Bikovski & Lyles, 2016). The extensive focus on innovative practices in the educational field may bring the opposite results in terms of frightening potential students and faculty staff. Thus, it is important to implement ongoing monitoring mechanisms and strategies in order to address any emerging challenges.

Yet educators should constantly encourage experimentation in various teaching practices, emphasising the distinct role of educators to serve as change agents, mentors, advisors and persons who support and guide students in their transition into higher education (Redmond, 2015). In this way, it is possible to understand the faculty's dual role as reflected in a wide range of activities pertaining to the smooth transition of students into their academic advancement at a later stage in their lives (Nolan & Molla, 2017). Academic educators are those who promote the view that higher educational institutions fulfil their role external and internal roles as learning organisations. From this perspective, faculty responsibilities have been progressively expanded to identify various teaching and learning situations that can facilitate students' transition to higher education (Blaskova et al., 2015). Faculty teachers have the necessary skills and tools to anticipate different challenges during the process of transition. Therefore, faculty teachers have been able to gain the trust of their students who recognise the importance of following certain role models in their respective faculty.

Guiding students throughout their transition to higher education is among the most significant roles of faculty teachers (Redmond, 2015). This means that such educators show substantial dedication to the distinct purpose of education, which refers not only to the idea of teaching students important concepts, but also in the overall understanding that first-year or general education courses represent a relevant stage for learners to build the foundation for lifelong learning. Moreover, such a stage is crucial for students to realise the potential they have to

become better citizens, which means that faculty teachers have complied with the requirements of their social role in education (Blaskova et al., 2015). Faculty educators need to ensure a holistic approach to education, which is the venue in which students can grow in both personal and professional aspects. Such teachers tend to have a solid impact on students' decisions for professional realisation and academic progress (McNickle, 2014; Warr Pedersen, Pharo, Peterson & Clark, 2017).

Educators in the role of change agents clearly understand their institutional contexts (Redmond, 2015). In this way, they present appropriate change initiatives that actively involve students. Faculty teachers are responsible not only for making change happen in their field but also for emphasising the relevance of students taking individual responsibility for their own actions (Willegems, Consuegra, Struyven & Engels, 2017). Moreover, faculty teachers may need comprehensive support structures, which show their distinct approach towards the teaching and learning process as a whole. As a result, students will feel more confident in undertaking the next stage of their academic growth and development (Blaskova et al., 2015). Learners tend to feel empowered after they encounter highly responsible, creative and inspiring faculty teachers who provide them with the right model for transition to the higher education environment (Davies & Gonzalez, 2017; Del Gandio, 2017). In this way, those students find it possible to rethink and even improve their approach towards education, which is a multifaceted phenomenon that can bring about substantial change in people's lives (Nolan & Molla, 2017).

In discussing the two paradigms pertaining to the dual role of first-year faculties, the support expected by teachers at this time is crucial in facilitating students' transition into higher education. It is important to reconsider the dimensions of traditional faculty appraisal/evaluation as a way to optimise the teaching and learning process (Orland-Barak, 2014). The focus on conducting regular performance appraisals of faculty members implies that educators undertake significant measures to improve the quality of instruction and guidance demonstrated to students. In addition, teachers can enhance different aspects of scholarship and research after carrying out specific performance appraisals (Blaskova et al., 2015). The most important aspect is to ensure quality, integrity and flexibility of the entire educational system. The role of self-assessment is that of a useful tool in emphasizing the job requirements and responsibilities of faculty members. However, some educational evaluation systems often ignore the critical role of "faculty as life coach". This highlights the fact that the role of life coach has important implications for students' professional lives at a later stage and, as a faculty, we should aim to help students become better people (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen & Bergen, 2008).

Academic success is multidimensional, and the role of faculties in helping students become successful in their lives is fundamental. In fact, educators need to assist students to have an optimal college/university experience, implying that faculty members should demonstrate dedication to student development and success (Nolan & Molla, 2017). As a result, students can experience relevant opportunities to build life and leadership skills. At the same time, in the role of life coach, faculties can help students create sufficient balance and manage stress effectively, irrespective of the challenges they may encounter. Students' self-confidence can significantly increase, which can further motivate them to pursue their goals for the future (Fazel, 2013).

Conclusion

This paper explored two essential paradigms about the role of first-year faculties or general education in undergraduate degrees in higher education institutions. The first paradigm indicates that the first-year is crucial in setting the foundation for certain degree courses in which students can develop their learning potential (Blaskova et al., 2015). In fact, educators can guide students through the ongoing process of building a foundation of knowledge on a wide range of specialisation topics that can further help them refine their choice for professional realisation in their lives.

The second paradigm discussed in this paper is related to the belief that educators should design general education courses in such a way as to help students become better persons (Fazel, 2013). As illustrated, these two paradigms reflect the dual role of first-year faculties. On the one hand, teachers extensively focus on using optimal faculty practices to help students obtain relevant knowledge of different educational concepts and ideas; on the other, the intrinsic role of the faculty is to guide, support and assist in the student's academic transformation to becoming a university student, irrespective of the major they pursue (Nolan & Molla, 2017). In this way, first-year faculty members are the unacknowledged change agents who play the role of transition catalysts in the life of many students. As a result, students successfully adapt to their professional learning environment later in their lives (Blaskova et al., 2015). Educators also assist and guide students in becoming better persons who can serve others with adequate self-confidence, empathy and understanding (Audrey, 2017; Elias, 2010; Stanford, 2014).

It is clear that first-year faculties play an important role not only in the successful transition of students to the university environment but in assisting them to become better citizens. Future research should therefore further explore the dual role of first-year faculties to determine the most successful intervention strategies to positively impact students' lives.

References

- Abbott-Anderson, K., Gilmore-Bykovskiy, A., & Lyles, A. A. (2016). The value of preparing PhD students as research mentors: Application of Kram's temporal mentoring model. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 32(6), 421–429. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2016.02.004>
- Ak, S. (2008). A conceptual analysis on the approaches to learning. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, 8(3), 707–720.
- Arbel, Y., Bar-El, R., & Tobol, Y. (2017). *Equal opportunity through higher education: Theory and evidence on privilege and ability*. IZA Discussion Paper (No. 10564). Germany: Institute of Labor Economics, IZA DP.
- Audrey, W. J. (2017, January 15). How to cultivate faculty leaders. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Baker, C. N., & Robnett, B. (2012). Race, social support and college student retention: A case study. *Journal of College Student Development*, 53(2), 325–335. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2012.0025>
- Bhardwaj, G. N., & Kumar, S. (2017). What makes teaching an effective teaching? A conceptual study on academic environment. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 7(3), 236–241. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2017.7.3.872>
- Blaskova, M., Blasko, R., Matuska, E., & Rosak-Szyrocka, J. (2015). Development of key competences of university teachers and managers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 182, 187–196. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.755>
- Bryant, S. G. (2016). First-year students as first responders: Initiating their first code. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 11(2), 74–78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2016.01.001>
- Budescu, M., & Silverman, L. R. (2016). Kinship support and academic efficacy among college students: A cross-sectional examination. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25(6), 1789–1801. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0359-z>
- Byl, E., Struyven, K., Meurs, P., Bieke, A., & Koen, L. (2016). The value of peer learning for first-year postgraduate university students' social and academic integration. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 228, 299–304. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.07.044>
- Carpintero, S. (2015). Qualities that mentors in the university setting should have. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 197, 255–258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.132>
- Ceyhan, E., & Ceyhan, A. A. (2011). Loneliness and depression levels of the students applying the university counseling center. *Egitim Ve Bilim*, 36(160), 81.
- Chemers, M. M., Hu, L.-t., & Garcia, B. F. (2001). Academic self-efficacy and first year college student performance and adjustment. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(1), 55–64. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-0663.93.1.55>
- Cho, J., & Yu, H. (2015). Roles of university support for international students in the United States: Analysis of a systematic model of university identification, university support, and psychological well-being. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 19(1), 11–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315314533606>

- Davies, D. K., & Gonzalez, S. (2017). Empowering learners: A win-win solution for students and educators. *New Directions for Student Services*, 158, 23–35. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20217>
- de Kraker, J., Dlouhá, J., Machackova Henderson, L., & Kapitulcinová, D. (2017). The European virtual seminar on sustainable development as an opportunity for staff ESD competence development within university curricula. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 18(5), 758–771. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-03-2016-0040>
- Del Gandio, J. (2017). More than solutions: Empowering students to think strategically and tactically. *Communication Teacher*, 31(2), 63–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2017.1285415>
- Dornan, E. L. (2015). *Identifying characteristics that influence first-time, full-time freshmen persistence and exploring effective and strategic retention initiatives for an at-risk student population*. (Unpublished dissertation, University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1708664923?accountid=188854>
- Elias, M. (2010). Character education: Better students better people. *The Education Digest*, 75(7), 47–49.
- Fazel, P. (2013). Teacher-coach-student coaching model: A vehicle to improve efficiency of adult institution. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 97, 384–391. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.249>
- Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2015). Beyond academics. *Principal Leadership*, 15(8), 57–59.
- Gautam, C., Lowery, C. L., Mays, C., & Durant, D. (2016). Challenges for global learners: A qualitative study of the concerns and difficulties of international students. *Journal of International Students*, 6(2), 501–526.
- Gonondo, J. (2017). Africa and China higher education cooperation: Establishing knowledge sharing partnership between students. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(10), 17–28.
- Griffiths, B. (2016). A faculty's approach to distance learning standardization. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 11(4), 157–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2016.04.004>
- Hennissen, P., Crasborn, F., Brouwer, N., Korthagen, F., & Bergen, T. (2008). Mapping mentor teachers' roles in mentoring dialogues. *Educational Research Review*, 3(2), 168–186. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2008.01.001>
- Hogan, R., Fox, D., & Barratt-See, G. (2017). Peer to peer mentoring: Outcomes of third-year midwifery students mentoring first-year students. *Women and Birth*, 30(3), 206–213. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2017.03.004>
- Jared, D., Oloko, M., & Oraw, G. (2015). The relationship between dynamic curriculum capabilities and competitive advantage of technical, vocational and entrepreneurship training institutions in Western Kenya Region. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 4(3), 12–23.
- Jarvis D. H., (2017). Universities and engagement: International perspectives on higher education and lifelong learning (Book review). *International Review of Education*, 63(1), 123–128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-016-9582-5>

- Kellett, C. E., & Goldstein, A. E. (1999). Transformation in the university and the community: The benefits and barriers of collaboration. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 91(2), 31–35.
- Khan, M. A. (2017). Achieving an appropriate balance between teaching and research in institutions of higher education: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 7(5), 341–349.
<https://doi.org/10.18178/ijiet.2017.7.5.892>
- Khoshlessan, R., & Das, K. P. (2017). Analyzing international students' study anxiety in higher education. *Journal of International Students*, 7(2), 311–328.
- Kim, J. (2016). Development of a global lifelong learning index for future education. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 17(3), 439–463.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-016-9445-6>
- Lieberman, D. (2016). How to select a mentor as a trainee and junior faculty. *Gastroenterology*, 151(1), 17–19. <https://doi.org/10.1053/j.gastro.2016.05.014>
- Linse, A. R. (2017). Interpreting and using student ratings data: Guidance for faculty serving as administrators and on evaluation committees. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 54, 94–106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2016.12.004>
- Ma, J., Pender, M., & Welch, M. (2016). *Education pays 2016: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society. Trends in higher education series*. New York, NY: The College Board.
- Maria-Monica, P. M., & Alina, M. C. (2014). Students-teacher perspectives on the quality of mentor-teachers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 3559–3563.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.802>
- McNickle, C. P. (2014). *Approaching a more holistic education*. (Unpublished dissertation, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC). Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1652500578?accountid=188854>
- Morales, D. X., Grineski, S. E., & Collins, T. W. (2017). Faculty motivation to mentor students through undergraduate research programs: A study of enabling and constraining factors. *Research in Higher Education*, 58(5), 520–544.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-016-9435-x>
- Najdanovic-Visak, V. (2017). Team-based learning for first-year engineering students. *Education for Chemical Engineers*, 18, 26–34.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ece.2016.09.001>
- Noaman, A. Y., Ragab, A. H. M., Madbouly, A. I., Khedra, A. M., & Fayoumi, A. G. (2017). Higher education quality assessment model: Towards achieving educational quality standard. *Studies in Higher Education*, 42(1), 23–46.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2015.1034262>
- Nolan, A., & Molla, T. (2017). Teacher confidence and professional capital. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 62, 10–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.11.004>
- Onnis, L. L., & Dyer, G. (2017). Maintaining hope: The intrinsic role of professional support. *The Journal of Mental Health Training, Education, and Practice*, 12(1), 13–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JMHTEP-04-2015-0014>

- Orland-Barak, L. (2014). Mediation in mentoring: A synthesis of studies in teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *44*, 180–188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.07.011>
- Partanen, L. (2016). Student oriented approaches in the teaching of thermodynamics at universities – developing an effective course structure. *Chemistry Education Research and Practice*, *17*(4), 766–787. <https://doi.org/10.1039/C6RP00049E>
- Pescaru (Marinescu) T-G. (2017). Analysis of the main factors influencing student satisfaction towards the university environment. *Journal of Educational Sciences and Psychology*, *Ii*(lxix) 1.
- Pliner, S. M., & Johnson, J. R. (2004). Historical, theoretical, and foundational principles of universal instructional design in higher education. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, *37*(2), 105–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680490453913>
- Poorman, S. G., & Mastorovich, M. L. (2017). Promoting faculty competence, satisfaction and retention: Faculty stories supporting the crucial need for mentoring when evaluating nursing students. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, *12*(3), 183–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.teln.2017.01.006>
- Radojicic, A. Milenkovic, M. J., & Jeremic, V. (2017). Academic performance vs academic reputation: What comes first – how well you perform and how others see your performance. In *World University Ranking and the future of Higher Education, Chapter 2, IGI Global Book series, Advances in Educational Marketing, Administration and Leadership (AEMAL)*.
- Rahat, E., & Ilhan, T. (2016). Coping styles, social support, relational self-construal, and resilience in predicting students' adjustment to university life. *Kuram Ve Uygulamada Egitim Bilimleri*, *16*(1), 187–208. <https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2016.1.0058>
- Redmond, P. (2015). Discipline specific online mentoring for secondary pre-service teachers. *Computers & Education*, *90*, 95–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.08.018>
- Roksa, J., & Whitley, S. E. (2017). Fostering academic success of first-year students: Exploring the roles of motivation, race, and faculty. *Journal of College Student Development*, *58*(3), 333–348. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0026>
- Sezer, B. (2016). Faculty of medicine students' attitudes towards electronic learning and their opinion for an example of distance learning application. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *55*, 932–939. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.10.018>
- Schendel, R., McCowan, T., & Oketch, M. (2014). Global: The economic and noneconomic benefits of tertiary education in low-income contexts. *International Higher Education*, *Fall*(77), 6–8, <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2014.77.5673>
- Shephard, K., & Brown, K. (2017). How democratic is higher education for sustainable development? *Discourse*, *38*(5), 755–767. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2016.1150254>
- Simmons, D. R., Creamer, E. G., & Yu, R. (2017). Involvement in out-of-class activities: A mixed research synthesis examining outcomes with a focus on engineering students. *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research*, *18*(2), 10–16.
- Singh, S., Misra, R., & Srivastava, S. (2017). An empirical investigation of student's motivation towards learning quantitative courses. *The International Journal of Management Education*, *15*(2), 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2017.05.001>

- Sriarunrasmee, J., Techataweewan, W., & Mebusaya, R. P. (2015). Blended learning supporting self-directed learning and communication skills of Srinakharinwirot University's first-year students. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 197, 1564–1569. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.111>
- Stanford, C. (2014, Nov 26). Feel better, work better, be better. *University Wire*. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1627842145?accountid=188854>
- Stirling, B. V. (2017). Results of a study assessing teaching methods of faculty after measuring student learning style preference. *Nurse Education Today*, 55, 107–111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2017.05.012>
- Svojanovsky, P. (2017). Supporting student teachers' reflection as a paradigm shift process. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66, 338–348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.05.001>
- Symonds, W. C., Schwartz, R., & Ferguson, R. F. (2011). *Pathways to prosperity: Meeting the challenge of preparing young Americans for the 21st century*. Cambridge, MA: Pathways to Prosperity Project, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.
- Trolian, T. L., & Barnhardt, C. L. (2017). Shaping students' civic commitments: The influence of college cocurricular involvement. *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(2), 141–158. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0012>
- Tweddell, S., Clark, D., & Nelson, M. (2016). Team-based learning in pharmacy: The faculty experience. *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning*, 8(1), 7–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2015.09.008>
- Uttl, B., White, C. A., & Gonzalez, D. W. (2017). Meta-analysis of faculty's teaching effectiveness: Student evaluation of teaching ratings and student learning are not related. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 54, 22–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2016.08.007>
- Warr Pedersen, K., Pharo, E., Peterson, C., & Clark, G. A. (2017). Wheels of change in higher education. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 18(2), 171–184. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-10-2015-0172>
- Willegems, V., Consuegra, E., Struyven, K., & Engels, N. (2017). Teachers and pre-service teachers as partners in collaborative teacher research: A systematic literature review. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 64, 230–245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.02.014>

Corresponding Author: Maurice Abi-Raad

Contact Email: mabiraad@ra.ac.ae

