

In Pursuit of Self-Led Wisdom in General Education: Challenges and Implications

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ABSTRAK

Makalah ini menjurus kepada beberapa isu dan masalah pelaksanaan pengajian umum di Malaysia. Penulis melihat bagaimana pengajian umum di pinggirkan dan berdepan dengan pelbagai masalah. Model SDE-Self Development Group yang diterapkan di Universiti Utara Malaysia dapat sedikit sebanyak menangani masalah yang diutarakan.

Keywords: General education--General Studies--Malaysia--Universiti Utara Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

The current practice in nearly every undergraduate degree in Malaysia is to divide each program into three components of learning: general studies (GE), program specialty and the practical component. The GE courses vary marginally among the government funded universities. In these institutions students are required to enroll in three compulsory courses: Islamic and Asian Civilizations, Malaysian Nationhood and Ethnic Relations, besides English proficiency courses, and one or two co-curricular courses. Whereas the former courses are intended to develop awareness and sensitivity to the different values and cultural orientations in the multiethnic Malaysian society, the proficiency courses are designed to prepare students to study and participate effectively in the coursework which are commonly delivered in English. At the Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) which was established in 1984 with a focus on providing education and training to potential entrepreneurs and managers, an additional GE course on basic entrepreneurship is offered. Several other GE category courses such as critical thinking, ethics, literary appreciation, cross-cultural communication etc. are sometimes offered as part of the specialty program. In the final year students are expected to complete a capstone course which as a rule is conducted via a problem-based approach in which students are expected to conduct desk or field

research to address a problem or an issue of interest in the professional sphere which allows them to apply the relevant concepts and disciplinary principles that they have acquired throughout a chosen program of study. Here the graduating students are expected to demonstrate a broad as well as a mature understanding of a topic which calls for an informed synthesis of the findings of the study. The GE courses contribute between 15 to 20 percent of the total undergraduate credit hours which in the UUM varies between 118 to 160 total credits.

The GE courses are meant to develop an awareness of the history, culture, politics and governance, with the goal of inculcating a sense of patriotism and civic consciousness so that graduates, upon graduation, will become educated and responsible citizens in the future. The recent addition of the Ethnic Relations course arose out of the felt need among policymakers that a common understanding of history and interethnic realities in this country is necessary to dampen the threat of ethnic conflicts among the different ethnic groups in Malaysia.

LOOKING FROM OUTSIDE

I am not aware of any serious attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the above courses other than the efforts to review the needs and to redesign the courses with more inclusive syllabi by two groups headed by Prof. Datuk Dr. Shamsul Amri (on ethnic relations) and Prof. Dato' Dr. Osman Bakar (on Islamic and Asian Civilizations - TITAS). As an outsider I have no access to the proceedings of the discourses that culminated in the implementation of the Ethnic Relations and TITAS courses in all government-funded universities. Whether this top-down initiative was brought in after discussion with students is unclear although there were efforts to organize focus group sessions in UKM in the mid 1990s for the purpose of gaining insight into the readiness of lecturers and students to pursue general education on a more firm footing.

So, I must plead ignorance at the outset on the policy process, especially on the origins leading to the installation of the three GE courses to their mandatory status. Having said that I would like to share with you the information I obtained from students and lecturers concerning the current status of GE at UUM, with one qualifier. I have never been directly engaged in policy discussions on general education since I left the UKM General Studies Centre in 1998. To be sure the UKM GE experience convinced me that UUM also needed to review the position of its GE programs. I suggested that a unit or centre be set up to beef up the capacity to deal with GE requirements. Unfortunately my enthusiasm was not shared by others, and I doubt if the majority in UUM or for that matter in any

other Malaysian universities know about the needs for and role of GE. I have never had the chance to reflect on GE since I left the UKM-PPU in 1998. Since then I have not looked back as my career path took me back to geography and shortly afterwards to UUM to help start a tourism management program.

Arriving in UUM-Sintok I had the opportunity to read up on tourism beginning with history of the Grand Tour, while my wife extended her interest in English for hospitality purposes, originally developed as a GE elective for UKM students, which subsequently became a compulsory course for UUM students taking hospitality management program. Essentially the European Grand Tour can be regarded as a GE option for its time when the touring culture was meant to facilitate learning, as it did much earlier among the western explorers and the Arabs during the age of exploration. Ibn Batutta, Lawrence of Arabia, Hugh Clifford, Henri Fauconnier, Skcat, Begbic, Ridley, Munshi Abdullah and so on are some of the names of those who displayed profound specialist knowledge which they commanded beside an impressive breadth and depth of tacit knowledge. In America there is a long list of such names but one that pops up as a philosopher that combined wisdom from the east and the west is Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau is known for his acts of civil disobedience which he attributed to Gandhi. He had chosen not to join Wall Street after a degree from Harvard, but instead sought solitude in the woods surrounding Walden Pond where he devoted most of his life to the study of the natural environment. It appears from these “sons of the road” that when there is no compulsion or pressure, individuals will choose to do things that they like to do and in all likelihood will perform better than those who are compelled to do so. I am not suggesting that there should not be compulsion, for if there were none, not many students will want to go to class, in school or the university, let alone take what they regard as boring GE courses.

My suggestion is that we have to develop a strong awareness which is deep enough for the novice to be appreciative of the value of GE. There has got to be some effort to create the consciousness that will motivate students to take GE seriously and treat it as a priority subject to be studied at all cost. Perhaps this is mission impossible, especially when students learn from the seniors whom they are likely to trust more, that GE is just a spare room or a spare tire, which s/he can afford to neglect. Also, as Harris asserts, “The concern is that one of the core functions of general education, preparing students to be good citizens, is lost in a maze of prestige-seeking and career-advancing students... How can we foster a supportive environment for general education when student consumers are fueled by a desire for vocational training for economic gain?” (Harris 2006: 193). To change attitude, motivation and morale alone is not enough without reviewing the entire parameters of performance. I need not be

reminded that I have said the same thing some twelve years ago when we had the first GE conference at UKM (Abdul Kadir & Mus Chairil 1998: 163-5). This repetition and auto-citation is not something that one can be proud of, although I am more than convinced now that GE administrators have to look at the GE issue in a systemic way. While the equation $E = f(S,C,T,F,M,E...X)$ might look suspicious, depending on one's numeric literacy, it may serve to illustrate the interdependencies between not only the dependent and independent variables but also the possible interaction among all the variables.

From the equation effectiveness of a GE course depends on a host of factors. To begin with are the students aware of the rationale behind the mandatory status of the GE courses? Are the subjects taught familiar to them? How motivated are they in attending mass GE classes. Are there technological aids such as video, internet access, power-point, small discussion room for tutorials and other learning-care facilities available to students and teachers? How mindful are the instructors of position of the student?

E = Effectiveness or efficacy of a general education course.

S = Quality of students at entry point.

C = Curriculum of GE and non-GE courses.

T = Quality of teaching.

F = Facilities.

M = Teaching method.

E = Learning environment.

X = Other situational variables.

In terms of the stature of GE courses, do students value the courses beyond the battle for "A" grades? Is there peer motivation to engage in serious reflection on the role of GE and on how to acquire further knowledge in the subject taught? Is there political motivation or repulsion of the subject matter being studied? Does the academic community, especially the disciplinary gate-keepers appreciate the relevance of GE courses? Do the students see the usefulness or otherwise of the GE courses? The above are some of the questions that can be asked when talking about the effectiveness of a GE course. Student critical awareness is important in drawing positive synergy from all the variables enumerated above. Through their role as active seekers of knowledge students are in the position to evaluate and give feedback to the university administrators on what is needed to make GE program function as the medium which promotes and facilitates the delivery of a balanced, coherent and purposeful educational outcome (on the same issue see Boning 2007, Awbrey 2005).

STUDENT REFLECTIONS ON GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

For the purpose of this address I conducted a short focus group session addressing the status of the GE courses at UUM. It was an exploratory session which lasted over an hour with a focus on three questions: What they thought was the use of GE courses? Were the courses effectively managed? And what can be done to improve the GE program?

As to be expected, with the exception of two Malay students who thought the three main GE courses (TITAS, Malaysian Nationhood and Ethnic Relations) were relevant for purposes of national integration, the majority found GE courses “a waste of time” because of imbalance in coverage, lack of new knowledge to be gained and that the large classes were ineffectively managed. Most regarded the three purposefully designed GE courses as boring and uninspiring (cf. Harris 2006: 193-195). A few nonetheless took the courses seriously just to score “A” grade so that their CGPA will be improved by the courses which they found to be easy, having already gone through parts of the content during the school days. As regards to content Non-Malay students were critical of the lack of attention given to the Asian Civilization half of TITAS. They were also of the opinion that Malaysian Nationhood and Ethnic Relations did not offer new knowledge that they had not known previously. Much of the history parts of the content of the two courses, like TITAS, were a repeat of what they had learnt in school. Of the seven or eight courses they had to take an overwhelming majority expressed some appreciation with SBLE2102 Process Writing. They felt the course was well organized and taught in small groups which allowed them to learn from the instructors’ corrections. The same sentiment was expressed with respect to BPME1013 Introduction to Entrepreneurship, although for some it was easy to score “A” since this course overlapped to some degree with *Pengajian Perniagaan* which they had taken in school. Furthermore for those who took *Siswaniaga* as a co-curricular option, the coverage also overlapped with Introduction to entrepreneurship. As for English for Communication I & II the syllabi were reminiscent of what they had learnt in school, hence again it was a boring repeat performance. In this respect Professor Tan Sri Dr Anuwar Ali’s opinion is well taken__ that the University should not be burdened by language preparatory courses which should have been properly handled by the school, leaving students to proceed with their knowledge-based “discovery” courses at the tertiary level (Anuwar, 1998: 8).

Students were very critical of the way the three primary GE courses were managed. Students appear to have legitimate grievances when forced to attend “tutorials” early (allegedly 6 a.m.) in the morning. To them there was no real tutelage given that the instructors only read from the book which incidentally

students were expected to buy. One of the students confessed his decision to arrive in class just to swipe in attendance record. He was adamant about the instructors not living up to their teaching duty. On the positive side there is a constructive suggestion that TITAS be made more interesting with a more balanced coverage given to all the major religions of Asia so that Muslim students will be exposed to the tenets of other creeds in the same manner that non-Muslims are expected to learn about Islam. At present the non-Muslim students were certain that there was only lip service given to other civilization outside the Islamic realm. At present TITAS is taught in Malay which is inaccessible to international students from the non-Malay speaking world including Thailand. There was a case of a Somali student who was genuinely interested in following the discourse on Islamic Civilization but could not do so as the 6 a.m. tutelage was conducted in Malay by an instructor who could hardly speak English.

Two students suggested that Malaysian Nationhood and Ethnic Relations can be combined since they overlap considerably. This will allow some space for more electives to be chosen outside the major field. On the coherence of GE, students are largely ignorant of its purpose, but are sensible enough to know what it should be. For example, one student wanted to know why only men go to Friday prayer. This was clearly an expression of interest out of curiosity if not a strong desire to know. To them if TITAS is to function as a space for dialogue between religions then it should address the questions that non-Muslim want to know, not what Muslims have already known. Perhaps a more serious point can be raised on the disconnect between the GE courses and the field of specialization courses. It would seem feasible, at least when conducting tutorials, for the GE subjects to be related to the disciplinary courses. As an example, when one teaches tourism or hospitality, there is scope for exploring hospitality within the study of civilization. This for instance can be in the form of hospitality practices, culinary art, hospitality language, Muslim travels such Ar-Rihla by Ibn Batutta, or description of the Caravanserai during the Ottoman Empire which today are preserved as Muslim heritage in Iran. In this way both the GE and the professional courses complement and reinforce each other.

The above references allude to some of the deficiencies of GE from the students' points of view which suggest that when given the opportunity to voice their assessment of a course they were able to express their perspectives logically and this positive element can be tapped to advantage when reviewing an academic course including a GE course. Unfortunately I have not seen an explicit policy statement which calls for student input into curriculum design, monitoring and evaluation. Many in this hall are familiar with the disconnect between course objectives and learning outcomes. Both these steps in curriculum development must be coherent; learning outcomes must obviously come from

student evaluation of whether or not the objectives are met. As consumers or customers of the courses students have the real experience more than other stakeholders and have arguably better insight into the actual delivery of the courses. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire calls for more input from the target student group whom he also refers as part of the culture circle that informs the design of the content of an instructional program. This contrasts with what he described as banking education where students, like banks, are passive recipients of externally funneled knowledge corpora.

Given that university students represent one of the most literate sections of the community in terms of current knowledge and the capacity to learn the state of the art, they may be in the position to discuss and debate on GE relevant issues. Students may not have the tacit knowledge which lecturers have accumulated over the years, but they certainly have the immediate experience as consumers of the knowledge-based services. I am suggesting that students should be given more space to co-construct the courses and curriculum that are meant for them. To this end more focus group discussion has to be conducted regularly so that students' voices can eventually be heard within the corridors of the Ministry of Higher Education. Such inclusive canvassing process however can only be effective if students have the skills and technical knowledge to enable them gain access to the round table circle as we have before us today. We now have the MQA procedure which allows students to evaluate a lecturer's performance through an online course evaluation. I am beginning to wonder whether there are many of them who understand what course objectives and learning outcomes are unless efforts are made to make them literate on such mindless template-driven constructs. University administrators will have to think of a way (or solicit one), of getting students to play an effective role as a stakeholder in curriculum development (see Katz 2005: 7; Glynn et al. 2005: 151). One way of getting even this input across is through campus-wide competition, or through a research project for final year thesis, but we will not go further than that here, except to raise the main point of this address, that is, how can we empower students to develop critical awareness of their own abilities and role in determining what should be offered for GE and in what mode of delivery? (compartmentalised or integrated? Embedded? SDG mode?).

To empower students to play a more proactive role I suggest we have to train them in the fundamentals of self-leadership. By self leadership I mean "... the ability to lead oneself and direct one's life in a desired direction... This entails elimination of dysfunctional thought processes, engagement in positive self dialogue, and creation of positive mental imagery whereby clear visions of successfully performing the task, attaining the goal as a result of the focal individuals behavior are created before the focal individual actually performs"

(Garger & Jacques 2007: 1). In the case of GE requirements, student performance matters. Student performance here means more than just achievement of high or low grade, it means their ability to demonstrate the capacity to think through and to hold an argument with respect to their preferred mode of conduct in general education. In other words students have to come up with a constructive review of the current GE program indicating the changes and areas of improvement they wish to make. This should be thoroughly thought through and debated in student corners or other proper public spaces to give legitimacy to the public voice. Once the feedback and recommendations are forwarded and discussed with the academic community, students will have to commit themselves to respect and accept the resolutions as a matter of principle. Whatever grievances they may have can be tabled and responded accordingly, so that the process of improvement can be treated as an ongoing exercise. The bottom line is that both teachers and students should be able to co-construct an agreeable syllabi which both groups can claim ownership. The challenge then is how to ascribe the status of GE at least to be at par with other courses and how to motivate both teachers and students to think in a coherent fashion treating GE as an equally important course if not an indispensable part of their program.

Self leadership should not be confined to curriculum development alone. Students ought to develop their own autonomous learning method which addresses the learning objectives and outcomes (which they agree to subscribe) coherently. Learning GE should reinforce knowledge in the field of specialization, meaning both GE courses and the professional courses ought to be offered coherently one enriching and strengthening the other as much as possible.

THE SDG MODEL OF GENERAL EDUCATION

In UUM the management has introduced a “cooperative” course called Self Development Group (SDG). Each lecturer is assigned between one to three groups of around ten students per group to “groom”. The objective is to engage students in learning and practicing English writing and communication while getting exposure to five modular discussion themes covering critical thinking, personal financial management, entrepreneurship, management ethics and patriotism/volunteerism. The discussion session is conducted in a two-hour weekly meeting, usually in the lecturer’s room or at any other agreed venue. When there is a field trip it has to be properly planned with an appropriate itinerary, discussion sheet and possibly a local guest speaker who is conversant in English. This is not a rigidly enforced program although at the time of writing there is discussion on making an SDG online evaluation a future requirement.

Judging from student feedback and body language, they seemed to enjoy the weekly meetings which allowed them to talk freely on anything, beside the prepared modules which were not expected to be followed rigidly, so long as the goal of developing student proficiency in English is earnestly pursued. Each session usually ends up with a recapitulation and a summary of ideas and lessons learnt. Students are expected to write a note on their “take” for the week which includes a list of some five new words each week in a scrapbook which will be collected at the end of the semester for checking by the mentor lecturer who then awards the students with either a satisfactory or not-satisfactory results which will appear on the transcript. Students do not earn marks, grades or credit hours. From personal observation, perhaps owing to familiarity and group bonding, everyone seemed to have noticeably built confidence in themselves after each semester. They seemed to have developed positive interethnic relationships too. The SDG program is still in its infancy and needs to be reviewed or strengthened considering its potentials in compelling students to develop the habit of practicing their articulation and listening skills. Intellectually, students are repeatedly reminded of the need to stay the course, always observing the decorum of a civil discussion, exposing them to a modicum of philosophy, which includes the wisdom of accepting and respecting difference, the pleasure of sharing experiences (fortunes and misfortunes), debating on current issues based on logical reasoning and so on. There were always something new to talk about, listen to, to learn and to raise questions on. I want to believe that students enjoy the sessions as much as I do.

The brief experience I have had with the SDG classes tells me that when students are invited to co-construct the learning process, with collective decision on the subject to be self regulated, they can put the hearts and minds into wanting to develop their language and intellectual abilities. To be sure not everyone benefited from such Freirian conscientisation process, but the majority evidently did. It might have been my own optimism that convinced me of the group’s desire to build a *kiasu* disposition to learning and in developing themselves. I was constantly wishful that everyone in the two groups had acquired the critical awareness of the need to develop themselves as intellectuals who will soon graduate from the university. Such awareness will conceivably imbibe in themselves the spirit of lifelong learning about the ‘other’ and the curiosity of so many unknowns surrounding their living and working environments.

Clearly I am confident that properly exposed to the logic of self-led wisdom of wanting to always learn, these students will strive to attain what Giddens calls the “ontological security” that will make them comfortable in any situation they are in (personal, social, professional and especially cross-cultural). The first challenge is to build the critical awareness that it is the individual him/herself

that sets the tone, chart the path to a productive and enjoyable life. Once of the qualities of self-leadership is developed s/he will be in the position to come to terms with his strength, weaknesses and resources at his disposal however modest (Garger & Jacques 2007: 4). One quality associated with such critical awareness is the capacity to always be positive, knowing that being negative does not pay. Students with such attitude will be able to face GE courses with the ability to treat them at worst as tasks to be completed to the best of their ability. At best these courses are to be enjoyed beyond the boundary of the course outlines, indeed s/he can even deconstruct the meaning, and even if s/he is suspicious of the hidden agenda, s/he will still be in the position to view the challenge of GE courses constructively. It may even lead him/herself to explore the subject further, extending to cover proximate areas adjacent to the inner confines of their elective subject areas. This positive approach can only come from autonomous thought which does not surrender to the dominance of “groupthink”.

As pointed out earlier students tend to rely more on their seniors when making decision on the future of their studies. Their initial awareness must be strong enough to overcome the tendency to bow to peer pressure.

TOWARDS SELF-LED GENERAL EDUCATION: THE CHALLENGES

I have suggested that students’ intellectual orientation needs to be transformed to one that is coherent with the goals of GE. This calls for a freshie orientation program which focuses on self-leadership as the “...process of motivation and influencing oneself towards achieving superb personal and organizational goals” (Adalat 2008). Such orientation, properly executed, will work towards harmonizing the felt needs of the student with those of the university management. It also means through mutual consultation both parties will agree on the importance of GE to undergraduate program. If there are misperceptions which are attributable to deficiencies in implementation, a special task force could be formed to study and recommend measures for improvement. The first challenge is one of productive communication. What is the best way to discuss and come to an agreement on the kinds of GE courses to be offered and a delivery mechanism that is effective. Students must be convinced of the relevance of GE to the academic excellence of their program of choice. This critical awareness is essential if they were to be expected to claim ownership and responsibility over its quality. If there is such a thing as a pedagogy of the docile, it must be tried in order to get students out of their cocoon so that they can participate in the co-construction of their own learning objectives and outcomes.

In multiethnic Malaysia GE courses that are instituted to help integrate students or their thinking can be counter-productive as there seems to be a certain “underdog mentality” which rejects anything that comes from the authority. Thus the “authority-defined” GE curriculum developers must be sensitive to this. They have to solicit input from students, however critical it may be. The idea is to shift ownership and responsibility to students to co-construct their own essential GE subject areas. Such “democratization” of roles does not imply a sure path to anarchy. The vision, goals and hence course objectives and learning outcomes have to be rationalized and debated with students as stakeholders. Unless properly monitored the simple task of curriculum development can be interpreted as symptomatic of racial domination which is a tendentious feature in public discourse in this country.

The second challenge is to make GE not only realistic, but also relevant. It has to be seen to be relevant to tertiary education. Students must be briefed on the rationale for having GE courses, they must know what they are doing why they are doing it. As it is for instance, the UUM Academic Guide 2009/2010 does not offer any elaboration on GE requirements in its 300-page guide. The idea of making students well-rounded in character through GE must be communicated to them. The relevance of GE ought to be seen and felt by the learners. I have suggested that GE offerings can be tweaked to fit into the professional programs, so that GE will be seen as not just an unrelated course to their future career but as part and parcel of their professional development. Students must be constantly reminded that soft skills such as computer literacy, geographic literacy, history, philosophy etc are enriching and has direct relevance to their respective fields of specialization. Every field for instance has their ‘history of thought’ to reflect upon. Thus the present disconnect between GE and program courses has to be reconnected.

The third challenge is to create critical awareness of GE among the lecturers themselves. At present, very few seem to be aware or care about GE which has become relegated to the status of no man’s land. The concept of embedded learning is worthy of consideration here, so that the disconnect between the GE sphere and the professional sphere can be bridged. For example, one can teach about *bermusaffir*, pilgrimage and tourism in Muslim countries in the TITAS course for tourism students, and teach Bedouin hospitality, Arabic culinary delights and the Bangkok Halal enclave in the GE for the hospitality students. The same can be said of the Tamadun Asia half of TITAS, there is so much to learn about travel and hospitality practices among peoples of the world.

Another important challenge to address is the need to develop self-leadership to facilitate “discovery” of knowledge which is what undergraduate program is all about. This contrasts with the situation in school where everything is laid out for the student. Students have to be taught to lead oneself. They have

to find out how to use the library, how to stick to bus schedule so that they won't be late for class, submit assignments before deadlines, and dozens of other chores to take care of. Self-leadership allows one to create vision, mission and hence goals to be pursued. It requires self evaluation, critical thinking and constant proactive and positive attitude to life as a student. In this context students are expected to know what, why, where, when, how, who and so on as they pertain to GE courses as they do in many other domains in the student's life on campus. The three GE courses (TITAS, Malaysian Nationhood, Ethnic Relations) call for student' consciousness that they are citizens of Malaysia who are expected to be responsible and law abiding, to be sensitive to religious values of all groups, and to privilege diversity while embracing difference. All these moral call are not obvious to the young mind, they have to be studied and reflected upon. This requires both critical and positive thinking. The challenge of late is to walk the talk about the 1Malaysia concept. The campus has been a scene of ethnic segregation since the 1960s when Alvin Rabushka conducted his study. Unfortunately, the scenario has not changed very much and I stand to be corrected on this. In the canteen students eat together with their ethnic fraternity, and I regret to say that this natural tendency spills into the classroom where co-ethnics not only sit together, they will always get together to form project groups with members from the same ethnic groups. GE will develop values that allows for cross-cultural interaction, and some might argue that diversity is enriching, to be with others is more rewarding intellectually, variety is the spice of life so to speak.

CONCLUSION

General education is a difficult area to manage worldwide partly because of its marginal status in the undergraduate program. In Malaysia this problem is compounded by political undercurrents which reflect the ethnic cleavage so that whatever designs that come from the authority, however benevolent and constructive in the long run will still be seen in a negative light. This paper suggests that in a divided society the intellectual has to rise above parochial self-serving values to uphold the national aspiration for a united society. The current leadership is very clear on the concept of national unity under the new slogan 1Malaysia. Because the three GE courses are intricately linked to this concept there will always be contestations surrounding interpretation of history, justice, constitutional provisions pertaining ethnic rights, and even the motive behind slogans such a 1Malaysia. In such an adversarial situation it is necessary to develop the intellectual capacity to think and reason out in a civil way. It is here that the GE cluster of courses can contribute, especially toward critical thinking

which includes self reflection and appraisal. Self-leadership can be taught and the goal is to free the student from the inhibitions posed by unreasonable sentiments in favor of rationalized values. Self-leadership can be negative if it leads to passive/avoidant behavior. It is thus important to create critical awareness of wanting to be a good citizen while at the same time to excel in studies and student activities on campus. By training student to acquire self-leadership skills, skills that are based on critical thinking, students may find it less intimidating to steer away from herd mentality, the stereotypical position of groupthink, to feel free to think independently for the common good.

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