



# My Experiment with Chess as a B-School Pedagogy

By Raghunath Rudran

Recently, a colleague of mine and I met each other in a duel of chess, organized by an active sports forum at TAPMI in the marketing area and I, from management. I was fortunate to win through the first two rounds with a colleague who dearly wanted an opportunity to play over their professors. It was the highlight in the tournament between faculty members. My colleague went on to win the requisite drama among the students. Being a faculty from the "staid" management area, I dismissed it as "marketing type" marketing type."

I procured a chess-clock for the occasion. The auditorium of the Institute was packed and a "live telecast" was shown. The players were to sit on a raised podium. I did not expect a Grandmaster! A large number of students had assembled to watch. But their presence was enough to ensure that the match was fiercely competitive.

Both of us wanted to win badly. I had a good strategy and launched a quick attack that gave me a lead. For most of the game, I was sure I would win the game. Probably, many of the observers thought so. However, my colleague held on to a sign of resignation! In the end, a blunder on a sensitive stage cost me the game.

Generally in our country, games played by students and grandmasters too, attract limited attention and much less analysis. We were mostly ordinary players. Young people though, have a renewal urge to measure themselves

against seniors. The students delighted at the ability of their faculty to craft masterly, strategic moves, as also their susceptibility to time pressures, fatigue and consequent blunders. They loved playing back the match and discussing the missed opportunities and oversights, even better! A rich discussion took place in a post-mortem analysis that lasted an hour.

It then began to strike me that chess can be a useful pedagogical tool in management education. Chess can be used to experience many basic management concepts. It starts with a toss, the implied message of fair play. The role of a good opening strategy in obtaining a vantage position, is best illustrated by chess. At the same time, it is important to play a good tactical game and be wary of the tactical moves of the opponent. Too much of strategizing can blind one to looming short-term threats, resulting in sudden loss. Good strategy

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and tactics need to be supplemented with a cool mind, patience and tenacity. Despite intense competition, communication barriers between players break down. Games like chess and bridge are under-exploited tools that can promote management education. I believe that these activities are also effective techniques for stress relief. B-Schools should seriously explore the learning opportunities offered by such games and look at ways of inducting these into the curricula.

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