Two institutional best practices as per NAAC format

Practice - I

Title of the Practice: Compulsory Spoken English and Personality Development Course

The Objective (100 words): Every year, many students who are admitted to our college for various courses come from rural/ semi-urban background where medium of instruction is often in the vernacular. Also, with deteriorating standards of teaching at the secondary level in public schools in rural areas, the students usually have poor communication skills particularly in English which is the language of the market as well as the medium of instruction in many of our courses, particularly those that are professionally inclined. Hence, it was felt that their communication skills be enhanced at the very beginning, so that they can be more at ease in the college academic environment and be better equipped to face market forces.

The Context (150 words): The challenging issue in formulating this practice was reluctance on the part of the teachers on one hand and stiff resistance from a section of students who opposed it as it entailed a slight increase in fee. To make the programme compulsory for all students was a big challenge in itself. Teachers were disinclined to embark on this journey because of their wholesale absorption in teaching regular courses, for which the time-table was too tight to leave any room for additional skill enhancement courses. Then, arranging classes for around 800 students annually was a mighty challenge in itself.

The Practice (400 words): It must be acknowledged that, in general, while a lot of

emphasis is laid on teaching specific subjects across our academic programs, little to no stress is laid on development of communication skills of the students, particularly in the English language which happens to be, fortunately or unfortunately, the language of market and employment in India and elsewhere. We also identified that there was an additional need of soft skills course for our students to enhance their employability, i.e., for them to be able to chart their growth stories/ trajectories specifically in the booming service sector. The Compulsory Spoken English and Personality Development Course, in our estimation, meets the requirement of the service industry. We ensure that in the very first semester of their joining the students learn the nuances of the English language which includes the four skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking. It aims at making students fluent in English, and enabling them through soft-skills, ready for corporate and other employment avenues.

Evidence of Success (200 words): This programme proved to be an instant success, as students thronged in large numbers to get registered for the course. It is not that the course was designed to teach them English, which they had already studied in their secondary classes. In fact, their knowledge was to be brought out in open by practice and by instilling confidence in them and by giving them an opportunity to overcome that sense of guilt in case they erred in public. Once they started reciting in groups, holding hands and enacting plays, soon they developed confidence and started performing well in classes also. Their drop-out rate in the first year of their respective programmes was also reported to be reduced. As the programme was regularly monitored, student feedback has been very encouraging in favour of this programme. Ewing Christian College can claim that we are the only college in Prayagraj which has been able to address this big problem faced by deprived students by arranging successful organization of this skill development programme for its students without any external help and is sustaining it as an essential component of the college academic programme.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required (150 words): Some challenges that were faced by us in the introduction of this programme were as follows: Lack of qualified staff. Lack of infrastructure. Lack of funds.

These problems were overcome in the following manner:

• Lack of qualified staff: A well-known professional trainer of spoken English in the city

was engaged by the college as the director of the programme. He enrolled 30 prospective candidates to be groomed as teachers and they were given intensive training for a month, after which the best 8 were recruited as language teachers.

• Lack of Infrastructure: An abandoned building of the college was renovated and prepared to house Center for Languages, where the programme could be run from 8 am to 5 pm. Additional development was a Language Lab with ten work-stations.

Lack of Funds: Programme was made compulsory for all the newly admitted students, with a nominal fee of Rs. 600 initially.

Practice – II

Title of the Practice: Compulsory Computer Awareness Programme

Objectives of the Practice (100 words): The objective behind adopting this as a practice was to make our students coming from poor background and mostly on the wrong side of the digital divide - whether from Maths stream, or Biology stream or Arts stream, including pupil teachers of B. Ed. Programme – overcome this digital divide by becoming computer literate, so that they may be equipped to learn through the digital medium while they are with us and also after they have graduated.

The Context (150 words): To access digital data which has become an important part of the knowledge ecosystem computer literacy has been understood by us as a necessary academic achievement to make our students better prepared for the digital world.

The Practice (400 words): Though the need and necessity of computer literacy has been identified, many institutions engaged in higher learning have been slow in their response, leaving the job for private operators, who charge exorbitant fee to maximise profits, which was often beyond reach of majority of our students. As such, the issue that was to be addressed was to enhance quality of educational programme through imparting

3

computer literacy without losing sight of equity and access. Adopting this programme as a practice by making it compulsory at the degree level was the unique feature of this practice and it was being done for the first time by any college in the region.

Evidence of Success (200 Words): Computer literacy classes opened up a new world for all the students to access and acquire information and knowledge. One of the first signs was the way they presented lectures arranged on various topics by different departments. Many departments acknowledged the palpable shift in the quality of their presentations. Naturally, an avenue opened up for students to attain knowledge from alternative sources other than classroom teaching and books from the library. Another sign of success was the ease with which information was being shared by final year students searching for options after graduation. Ease in handling the computer and using internet for search, students are able to acquire information about various options and get registered in the entrance level exams in time and prepare adequately for them by downloading previous years' questions papers and other content related to preparation. This has resulted in a fairly good number of students securing admission in prestigious institutions like IITs, IIMs, DU, JNU, BHU and other institutions of higher learning of repute. Some of these graduates have informally shared that computers classes did place them in a better position as compared to their counterparts.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required (150 words): To introduce the programme as a compulsory component of educational programme was a big challenge, because of the sheer number of students to be covered under this scheme. The target group was the senior students, and their number was around 600. Then, it was difficult again to economize on the fee front as this programme was capital intensive. Another problem was to design the programme in such a way that it is just sufficient to initiate the student in the use of the relevant technology in a limited time frame, and then leaving the students hungry to satisfy their curiosity on their own.