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BEST PRACTICES

Best Practice 1

Title: Mentoring the Mentor Programme (MMP)

Objectives: MMP is a practice initiated by IQAC : firstly, to train the teachers to become mentors , secondly, to equip the teachers with some information on the identified theme from subject experts. Thirdly to ensure uniformity of information imparted on crucial issues identified after serious deliberations. This practice serves the dual purpose of one it helps the mentors to think and disseminate information in a focused and structured manner. Two all the teachers in the institution are addressing a pre identified theme in a similar manner.

Context: Mentoring is now recognized as an important part of teaching learning process because of the various distractions and stress experienced by students. Youth now a days are extremely conscious of social relations, peer pressure, career pressure and image consciousness. All of these contribute to stress and distractions which not only hinder the teaching learning process, but the students feel alienated and do not know whom to turn to for guidance. Faculty members rose to the occasion and recognized the responsibility of their role as mentors in the changing scenario of higher education. However, a need for a focused theme-based mentoring was felt by the teachers when they experienced some difficulties, in the initial mentoring sessions, to effectively answer the questions of students spanning over varied issues and concerns.

The Practice: The role of teachers in higher educational system has evolved and diversified in recent times. Besides knowledge transfer through formal curriculum delivery mechanisms, providing learners a platform for sharing and resolving their academic and other stress-related issues; giving guidance, motivation, emotional support; and helping them explore careers, setting goals, and identifying resources falls in the domain of teachers' defined duties and responsibilities. Realizing the need for effective mentoring, and with a view to enhance the existing knowledge and experience of faculty members and to ensure uniformity in the understanding of the subject, lectures by expert resource persons are organised. Through these sessions the faculty members acquire information on the identified theme and tips on how to engage and reach out to students on sensitive issues in order to ensure effective mentoring. Students are assigned a mentor for all the three years of their stay in college. The mentor engages with the students formally through the mentoring sessions for which provision in the time table has been made. During the mentoring sessions students' attendance is taken and the teacher ensures that the students fill in the feedback form. A mentee can also reach out to the mentor as and when the need arises for assistance and guidance.

Evidence of Success: The feedback of the students on theme-based mentoring is very encouraging. Theme based mentoring sessions and the themes identified were greatly appreciated and well received by the students. Student's active engagement during the sessions

with the mentor reveals the relevance and success of these sessions. The fruitfulness of these sessions is also evident from the fact that students have asked for continuation of mentoring sessions and suggested sessions on career guidance and stress management. Faculty is enthusiastically involved in attending the MMP sessions and then mentoring the students in an informed manner.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: MMP activities do take time as first teachers are mentored and then they become mentors. When MMP programme was first initiated there were some complaints that it disturbs the conduct of classes and teachers who are hard pressed to complete their courses complain against this loss of time. But College takes these mentoring sessions very seriously and soon mentoring period was incorporated in the Time -Table itself. Another difficulty that is encountered is that of identification of subject expert who can address the specific needs. This problem has been addressed to a large extent by the Mentoring committee adding a detailed note of the purpose of the talk to the request sent to the resource person.

Best Practice 2

Title: Collaborative Learning and Online Skill Enhancement (CLOSE)

Objectives: CLOSE was conceptualized with the objective to ensure continuity of the Teaching Learning process during the Lockdown in 2020. It was an attempt to make good use of time, turning adversity into an opportunity by acquiring new skills online to keep the faculty members abreast with the need of the time -use of technology. In 2021 this initiative was extended to students also with the objective of helping them make good use of their time by acquiring new skills.

Context: With the sudden imposition of Lockdown due to Covid19 face to face interaction with students and colleagues was disrupted, but the teaching learning process had to continue. Along with online classes extended learning had to continue. Now that the constraint of time was not a limitation the challenge was to acquire resources for enhancement of knowledge. Reaching out to colleagues far and near led to collaborating effort and resources. Internet had become everyone's lifeline, and the possibility of exploring resources online gave rise to the idea of Webinars. In 2021 College decided to offer Add on Courses also online and once again collaborative efforts with other Delhi University colleges and outside institutions showed good results. Collaborations are a good medium of prompt availability of expertise.

The Practice: CLOSE is undertaken to collaboratively organize webinars, courses and Faculty Development Programmes for the benefit of students and faculty. Few broad areas for focus such as Gender, Mentoring, Quality Assurance, IQAC functioning, use of ICT tools, Add On Courses and FDPs were identified. The list reveals that care is taken to ensure that needs of all stakeholders were catered to, and they felt connected and involved. Collaborative exercises are formalized, and MOUs signed with some institutes with the purpose of sharing knowledge and expertise.

The commonality of need and purpose brought together three institutes, Anand School of Social Work, Bhopal School of Social Sciences and Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College to sign a MOU to collaborate in Research activities, student exchange programmes, skill development programmes and placement activities. E-FDP on Blended Learning was organized to upgrade faculty skills in ICT. It also helps in identifying subject experts in collaborating institutes. Number of Webinars were organized.

MOUs were signed with Ram Lal Anand College and Guru Angad Dev Teaching Learning

Centre at SGTB Khalsa College under which Faculty Development Programmes were organized and executed.

Online Add on Courses of 30 Hours were conducted that upgraded students' skills in translation in collaboration with Bhartiya Anuvad Parishad. Holistic Fitness Wellness Learning Add on course was conducted in collaboration with Mata Sundri College for Women, DU.

Each institute benefitted from the collaborative nature of the webinars. It facilitated resource identification, division of labour and most importantly interdisciplinary approach to topic identification and the discussions that followed.

CLOSE has also contributed to resource generation, though in an indirect manner, as most of the Resource Persons in the webinars were persuaded to render the service pro bono. Online Add on Course and one FDP had a fee associated with it out of which expenses were incurred. The audience reach out was large and cost to the institutions negligible.

MOU with Diaspora Research and Resource Centre has led to a research project titled "Indian Diaspora: Analysis of Pacific Region".

Evidence of Success: Collaboration helped in expanding network, collective learning, access to expertise. Evidence of expanding network is in the reach out to Resource Persons across varied subject areas. The discussions and the content delivered in the E FDP contributed to collective learning. 100+ participants in FDP: The Road Ahead also reveals the success of CLOSE initiatives. Number of Add on Courses and the number of students enrolling for the courses shows that collaborative work increases productivity, shares workload, and widens the teaching learning horizon. Feedback received from participants abundantly reveal the success of these initiatives.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

1. Reliability of internet facility at both ends Resource Person's and participants is a major concern.
2. Access and affordability as some of the ventures have a fee associated.
3. Identification of time slot suitable to most.
4. It being a one-way communication Resource Person cannot access the participants involvement and grasp.
5. Since the delivery was online and in the absence of visible audience the passion of delivery is possibly compromised.
6. Convincing the target audience of the usefulness and relevance of the course/FDP.



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