

INSTITUTIONAL BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices – I

1. Title of the Practice Learner-devised slip tests for Life Sciences

2. Goal The main aim of the practice is to get UG students to be able to read and understand the syllabus and the content delivered to them. Students will be able to improve their comprehension and thinking skills. It will also empower them as they will be able to design their own test slips for internal tests and pick out topics for assignments to be prepared by them. Students will get an interest in taking the tests and assignments that they have developed. The teacher's role here is validation of the test designed and its administration.

3. The Context The educational setting in our college involves students having to memorise and remember data without really understanding the concepts especially in the life sciences which is closely related to human life. Students were being spoon-fed and did not know really study for the exam and hence showed poor performance. Hence this method was devised : 1. To allow students to be able to set question papers atleast for the internal tests. 2. To make them more conversant with reading and understanding of the syllabus and content provided 3. To make studying interesting as they will now know what to expect in the internal tests 4. To instill a sense of confidence in the students as they design the test and present it to their peers and finally take it themselves

4. The Practice The method called "Learner-devised slip tests for Life Sciences" is a practice that was developed in the Botany Department for conducting internal tests for both UG and PG students. The students have to secure 25 marks every semester in each paper by taking tests and submitting assignments or giving seminars. For these tests it was felt that objective questions would be helpful as the End semester examinations had subjective questions only. Again if these questions were prepared by the learners themselves it would be an added advantage as they will not only be interested in preparing the questions but will eventually master the subject as they have to also prepare the key also. For this students in a class were divided into groups each group including both slow and fast learners. Each group was assigned a topic and had to prepare objective type questions –True or false, Fill in the blanks, one word answers, Multiple choice and so on as many as they could subject to a minimum of 150 questions per unit. The topics would be interchanged so that every group gets to prepare questions in all topics. They

were given a time frame and this group activity was also evaluated as a component of internal test. The questions would be scrutinized by the course teacher and after necessary corrections and removal of overlaps would be made the question bank for forthcoming tests. This practice would be unique in the Indian scenario as teachers consider themselves as the question paper- setters. Using questions prepared by learners for testing the learners themselves is special about this practice. Moreover in our college all questions are set bilingually –both in English and Tamil as we have parallel media of instruction for UG classes. The greatest advantage of this practice is the ease of evaluation which is universal and completely devoid of prejudice or bias that is common while evaluating subjective matter. The biggest limitation of this practice is administration of objective tests as this requires stationery for printing which is difficult to procure from the institution and it is the look out of the course teacher. Also stringent measures are needed to rule out malpractice that is not so rampant while writing subjective tests.

5. Evidence of Success It was implemented during one year 2013-14 and again in 2015-16 and a number of questions were framed with key. The students took the tests very well and scored high in internal tests. The students were able to do well because they had to learn only in points and it was easier to remember.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required Main problem would be one of preparing question papers and controlling malpractice Main resource required would be computer and printer with stationery for printing and scanning documents for preparing questions based diagrams and flowcharts

7. Notes (optional) No other information is required as this is a simple method and can be practiced easily.

Best Practices - II

1. Title of the Practice: Monitoring and Remedial Programme

2. Goal: Department of Economics plans and provides remedial classes for slow learners as per their requirements. This reflects the concern for the development of the students and the existence of student monitoring system in place. Progress of the programme and extent of achievement of the students will be discussed and weaknesses identified will be sorted out. To achieve this, faculties explore better ways of functioning to develop relevant learning material as part of regular practice.

3. The Context: Most of the students are first generation graduates and from poor socio – economic background. Without the learning curve, it becomes difficult for them to navigate the entire college life. It was found that students were at

different levels of familiarity with statistical and mathematical concepts. However, it becomes necessary to tune the students to be in sync with the changes in the economics subject/discipline taught at the college level. Despite elaborate discussion and measures taken, faculties found that students were unable to familiarize with the subject/programme offered to them. All the above led to the practice of remedial programme in the current form.

4. The Practice: Continuous efforts are put forward by the department to cater to the needs of the students. Attendance register is maintained for the remedial classes to monitor the slow learners and periodical tests are conducted to keep an eye on their progress. Department plans and provides additional learning material as per the requirements of the students and submission of assignments in due dates is used as a 'push approach' to improve their performance. Through Economics Association, the department invite eminent speakers and subject experts for enriching and motivating the students. Also, quiz programme is conducted to evoke interest among the students towards the subject.

5. Evidence of Success: This practice of providing remedial classes has resulted in the increase in pass percentage of under graduate students. In fact, final year results were far better in 2018-19 than last few years' results. This has also drastically improved the intake of post graduate students. In the academic year 2019 – 20, 15 students were admitted for the PG programme which is the most in the recent past. Needless to say, except the 3 girls admitted for the programme all others (boys) were products of this institution. The outcome indicates that the enrichments brought into the learning system have positively influenced the achievement of the students and because of the performance betterment development of the department can be witnessed.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required: Generally during the end of the semester, remedial classes were conducted and also, it is not done through any formal well established procedures. It also acts as a hindrance for the faculties to continuously seek improvement in their work. The main resource required is committed staff and adequate infrastructure. To be specific, learning resource centre necessary for implementing the programme should be available and students should be allowed to access it freely. Further, ICT facilities can be upgraded to the meet the growing demands of the learning processes and techniques.
