

Best Practices 2015-16

Best Practice-1

1. Title of the Practice

(This title should capture the keywords that describe the Practice.)

Role of Research Academy as a medium for promoting research activities among students

2. Goal

(Describe the aim of the practice followed by the institution. Brief the underlying principles or concepts in about 100 words.)

To provide a platform i. e. Research Academy for inculcating and developing research culture among the students.

Recent trends in education have widened the concept of higher education to include not only study of the curriculum but also appropriate work research work by the student in the subject area. Research work normally includes collection of reliable primary data analyzing and testing of the same methodically against a specified hypothesis and deriving unbiased conclusions.

Students master the curriculum in the normal course of study. However, this knowledge gets a practical touch and test of usefulness only when it is supported by appropriate research work conducted by the student. Thus, academic study of the curriculum and practically oriented research experience have become two important components of higher education.

3. The Context

(Describe any particular contextual feature or challenging issues that have had to be addressed in designing and implementing the Practice in about 150 words.)

Completing the course in the College and acquiring the degree is a short-term goal for the student. In the longer term the graduating student must succeed in getting job placement in a competitive market, must be able to convert his theoretical knowledge into practical utility and thus prepare himself for a successful life in the real world.

For all this the research experience of the student plays a valuable role. Research builds up the ability of the student to observe and identify real life situations and problems, to study the same

scientifically by collecting relevant data to devise appropriate hypothesis, and arrive at accurate conclusions which can be useful for designing workable solutions.

Hence, the College felt it necessary to develop research culture among its students.

4. The Practice

(Describe the Practice and its implementation. Include anything about this practice that may be unique in the Indian higher education. Please also identify constraints or limitations, if any, in about 400 words.)

Indian Higher Education is in the process of active globalization in recent years. The competition in the job market has also been increasing. Students of our College require not only the knowledge and skills available in their regular course or programme of the University, but they also require additional relevant and extra skills to give them a cutting edge. The research has gained great significance in the field of higher education internationally. In this context, it is felt that the Indian scenario needs to be strengthened.

The College has set up the Research Academy as a special body to meet the needs of building up research culture among the students.

Generally it is found that research element is prominent at post-graduate level whereas it is usually negligible at the undergraduate level. Hence, the efforts of the College to supplement the research content among students during their course period are significant.

The implementation of the practice involves the following stages,

- Formation of the Research Academy**
- Appointment of Student Secretary and volunteers**
- Appointment of teacher in-charge and other teacher members of the Academy**
- Orienting the students towards research aptitude**
- Organising research related lectures and programmes**
- To undertake the membership drive for the Academy**
- To inform students of research project which they can reasonably undertake**
- To form student teams for undertaking research activity**
- To keep record of completed projects**
- Provision of research budget**
- Allotment and disbursement out of the budget for specific projects**

Some of the constraints and limitations are as follows:

- Less inclination of students towards research**
- Shortage of time for students whose first preference is examination oriented study**
- It has been experienced that the scope for research, development, patenting and consultancy is very high in Science faculty due to direct connection with manufacturing sector. Comparatively such scope is limited less and limited in Arts and Commerce faculty Colleges.**

5. Evidence of Success

(Provide evidence of success such as performance against targets and benchmarks and review results. What do these results indicate? Describe in about 200 words.)

The following activities were successfully conducted by the Speakers' Academy in last five years,

- Research Project on 'Indian Culture and Heritage' was prepared and presented by the students**
- Survey of students with distinction to understand their working habits, study techniques, etc.**
- A study of pocket money, it's adequacy and utility**
- Study of the features of the websites of the Colleges which secured more than 3.09 CGPA in the NAAC Assessment in 2013-14**
- Lecture on 'Research in Everyday Life'**
- Orientation lecture to students on research culture by the Principal**
- Motivation to students by teachers**
- Students from Research Academy conducted a mini-research project to ascertain the degree of addiction to alcoholic and tobacco products in the neighbourhood**
- The students' research projects were completed and submitted for the 'Avishkar', which is a Research Competition for students and teachers organized by the University of Mumbai**

The efforts of the College in this direction have become particularly relevant and useful in the light of recently introduced new curriculum for BA and BCOM Courses by the University of Mumbai from the academic year 2016-17 onwards. This new batch of students will be required to devote their final Semester VI entirely to research work.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

(Please identify the problems encountered and resources required to implement the practice in about 150 words.)

Problems

Due to increasing number of courses and divisions the College lectures are conducted throughout the day in shifts. Hence, programmes of the Academy are missed by many interested students as the timing clashes with the regular lecture times.

Difficulties in motivating large number of students.

Students are reluctant to devote time and energy for field work required for research.

Resources required include the following,

Access to primary and secondary data

Good library with proper Reference and Research Section

Funds for arranging guest lectures, programmes and other research related activities work

7. Notes (Optional)

(Any other information that may be relevant and important to the reader for adopting/implementing the Best Practice in their institution about 150 words.)

Any institution interested in implementing this Best Practice would be advised to constitute the Research Academy for students consisting of teachers and students. Further, it should provide for sufficient resources required for long periods. Teachers may take steps to motivate students in this direction even through personal advice. Provision of special Research Budget is advisable.

Best Practice-2

1. Title of the Practice

(This title should capture the keywords that describe the Practice.)

Developing the presentation and oratorical skills of students through Speakers' Academy

2. Goal

(Describe the aim of the practice followed by the institution. Brief the underlying principles or concepts in about 100 words.)

To provide a platform for students for the training and development of various aspects of their communication skills.

It is a prime objective of the Vidya Prasarak Mandal to provide educational facilities to all sections of society and especially those coming from lower socio-economic strata. There is a large section in the College which has studied in vernacular medium and hence, lack the confidence of fluent communication in English. Some students due to their timid nature are not comfortable in expressing themselves before an audience even in other languages such as Marathi and Hindi. Considering the recent advances in communication technology and presentation styles in recent in the corporate and social world, every graduating student has to prepare and equip himself with all these communication skills to succeed in the outer world around. Further, in serious issues they may have to present their opinions in suitable forums and undertake to lead society if required. All these are essentials for building up a knowledge society and a wise nation.

The role of the Speakers' Academy in preparing each and every students along these lines is crucial.

In this background the Speakers' is ideally fitted to fulfill the needs of students.

3. The Context

(Describe any particular contextual feature or challenging issues that have had to be addressed in designing and implementing the Practice in about 150 words.)

Possession of adequate and appropriate communication and presentation skills has become a pre-requisite for any candidate in today's employment market. Industry and employers today expect that their employees should have excellent inter-personal conversational skills, refined

courtesy and etiquette in communications within and outside the organization, ability to analyse situations and form accurate conclusions and present the same at various informal formal audiences at meetings, conferences, etc.

Secondly, such skills are essential as a part of overall personality development.

Moreover, the student community is set to become the young citizens of modern society. They will be required to form their own independent and meaningful opinions on scores of debatable issues coming up from time to time in the world.

4. The Practice

(Describe the Practice and its implementation. Include anything about this practice that may be unique in the Indian higher education. Please also identify constraints or limitations, if any, in about 400 words.)

The practice involves the formation of Speakers' Academy. It is usually composed of students' secretary, student members, teacher in-charge and staff members.

The specific goals of the Speakers' Academy would cover the development of following skills of students,

- Listening skills**
- Reading skills**
- Thinking skills**
- Opinion forming skills**
- Speaking skills**
- Debating skills**
- Logical presentation of arguments**
- Use of technical support for presentations such as Power-Point and other modes of ICT**
- Voice Culture**
- Ability to convince**
- Protocol to be followed by the speakers on various occasions**
- Overcome of stage-fright**

The scope of the Speakers' Academy covers the following activities and responsibilities,

- Inaugural function**
 - Guest lectures by eminent speakers who can be observed by students as models**
 - Debating competitions**
 - Elocution competitions**
 - Guest lectures on specialized aspects of speaking such as voice culture, diction, tone, vocabulary, stress, pronunciation, comparing, oratory, etc.**
 - Holding competitions for students**
 - Sending students to participate in various competitions outside the College**
- The activities of the Speakers' Academy were planned and conducted in the light of the above.**

5. Evidence of Success

(Provide evidence of success such as performance against targets and benchmarks and review results. What do these results indicate? Describe in about 200 words.)

The following activities were successfully conducted by the Speakers' Academy in the last two years,

- Briefing students about benefits of skill development from the Academy**
- Lecture on 'Vitality of Oratory Skills in One's Professional Career'**
- Lecture on 'Voice Culture'**
- Three Day Lecture series on '*Bhashan Kaushslya*' in Marathi, Hindi and English**
- Lecture on Effective Presentation Skills**
- Lecture on 'Nivedanache Tantra' i. e. compering and anchoring skills**
- Essay writing, slogan writing and elocution competitions**
- Extempore competitions**
- Half-day workshop titled '*Bol Bindhaas*' basic skills like handling the mike, stage posture, voice modulation and gestures, etc. in association with the Scholars' Academy**
- Debate on 'Digital India' organized by the Maharashtra Times, a leading Marathi daily**
- Book Review Competition**
- Ten Days Workshop on Voice Culture and Effective PR Skills**

Student members of Speakers' Academy have won various prizes at different levels.

Around 160 students have benefitted from the various activities of the Speakers' Academy. These activities have helped students to improve their overall personality, confidence levels and employability.

The experience of the College in the Placement Cell activities shows that good speakers are preferred candidates for employment.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

(Please identify the problems encountered and resources required to implement the practice in about 150 words.)

Problems

Due to increasing number of courses and divisions the College lectures are conducted throughout the day in shifts. Hence, programmes of the Academy are missed by many interested students as the timing clashes with the regular lecture times.

Difficulties in motivating large number of students.

Resources required include the following,

Auditorium, halls, conference room, etc. for conducting various programees and activities

Audio system

Funds for arranging guest lectures

7. Notes (Optional)

(Any other information that may be relevant and important to the reader for adopting/ implementing the Best Practice in their institution about 150 words.)

Any institution interested in implementing this Best Practice would be advised to constitute the Speakers' Academy consisting of teachers and students. Further, it should provide for sufficient room space and required infrastructure along-with funds. Teachers may take steps to motivate students in this direction even through personal advice.