

Best Practices 2019-2020

Response:

The institution has two distinct best practices that cater to the student well-being both in and off the campus. They strengthen the morale and integrity of the young women in a world of challenges.

Best Practice - I

Title of the practice: Experiential Learning

Objectives of the Practice:

Experiential learning focuses on the idea that the best way to learn things is by actually experiencing it. Those experiences help the students retain information and remember facts. The departments have under taken various measures to enhance the experiential learning features.

- To illustrate the important aspects of plants providing knowledge and skills
- To appreciate the historicity of the region through Spot Study
- To promote integrated work through Field Projects
- To enhance the skills of Artisans and Craftsmanship work through Spot Study
- To inculcate the importance of Professional Ethics
- To impart the importance of Instrumentation

Context of the Practice

Thoothukudi is a semi-urban town located in the eastern coast of Tamil Nadu. About 80% of the students come from the marginalised sections of the society and first-generation learners consisting of fisher folk, labourers, masons and from uneducated background. The rapidly changing society, its demands and inadequacy to adapt to the changes perturb the student's community. Outdoor classroom focuses on practical learning, eco-friendly living and a complete shift from the formal educational system emulates progressive learning space and helps prune various skills, which would trigger their professional interest. Experiential learning motivates the students to attend the classes without walls regularly.

The Practice:

- **To illustrate the important aspects of plants providing knowledge and skills**

Taxonomy and Horticulture classes are taught in the botanical garden of our institution which motivates the students. Students visited various beaches for the collection of Algae and knew about the tidal action of coastal environment. Vermicompost, Biocompost, Organic Oyster

Mushroom Cultivation and the Herbal medicine enrich the nutrients of the soil and greenery landscape, generate income and provide the natural cure for ailments.

- **To appreciate the historicity of the region through Spot Study**

Our institution supports spot study in the historical sites, museums, archives and archaeological sites which enhances the knowledge of the students on the local historicity of their region. Students visit the Archives and recognise the historical facts and learn the skills of artisans and their craftsmanship. Spot study and Heritage walk teaches the students to preserve the antiquities of the past and know the value of the treasure troves of art.

To promote integrated work through Field Projects

Field work and field projects of our students promote their integrated work with different communities and helps in finding out the solutions for the challenges of the society and nation.

- **To inculcate the importance of Professional Ethics**

Students of the Department of BBA visited Indian small and rural BIZ expo and Kannan Devan Hills Plantations PVT Ltd, Munar, to learn the professional skills of marketing and consumers purchasing taste and ability. Students of Microbiology visited Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Trivandrum and AMI-Bioscience Coimbatore and gained knowledge on molecular biology and genetics. Students of Zoology visited centre for Marine Science and Technology, Rajakmangalam and Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mandapam and learnt the techniques of aquaculture farming and basic research techniques. Students of Computer Science were exposed to the actual working environment of Manakkula Vinayagar Digital Network, Pondicherry.

- **To impart the importance of Instrumentation**

Students of the department of Physics visited the Railway station to learn and experience the Doppler effects, Hospitals and BSNL offices to learn about instrumentation, thermal power station to study the conversion and conservation of energy. Students of the department of Chemistry visited Sikri, Karaikudi which promoted scientific learning and internship of students in Sikri.

Evidence of Success

Experiential learning raised the interests, the insights and the curiosity, kindled their thirst for knowledge. Student's could cross check their theory and outdoor classes. It built cooperation and cordial relationship between the students and the faculty, and provided a comfort zone in learning

and teaching process. Field visits created solidarity and they were able to respect their rich heritage of the past and the greatness of their ancestors' intellectual capacity. It also supported and encouraged the self learning among the students. The visual testimony in their concerned subjects induced them to aim higher. It highly motivated the research aptitudes of the students to identify the problems in the research gap and to find solutions for it.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Experiential learning needs modalities of transport at affordable rate. Safety and security of the students in the outdoor class is highly risky in few instances. Sometimes financial shortcomings change the schedule of the outdoor classes and field visits. Concessional fee for the entry of students to the significant places should be considered. Special privileges should be given to the students who opt for spot study and basic amenities should be provided to them.

Best Practice II

Title of the Practice:

Adopt to Adapt- Community Development Programme (CDP) TOUCH

St. Mary's college orients its mission in educating youngsters to contribute to social progress. It believes in instilling the worth of every human being in each. The curriculum extension interface has educational values; Motto of the programme is 'Serve While You Learn'. This aspect of education emphasizes Social services integrated with curriculum. The extension activities help students serve, reflect and learn

Objectives

- To construct a mutual link with the students and society
- To generate conscious collective living
- To instil human and social concern
- To bring transformation for social betterment
- To adopt and adapt for good living

The Context

The younger generation, though 80% of them categorically belong to the underprivileged section lives in a world of competition and by strenuous efforts tries to win the race. There is little awareness or rather an attitude of indifference towards the social circumstances and there is a huge difference between the haves and the have-nots. It is essential to make them realize the hardcore

reality of life based on the concern for the other which can enhance sustainable life. Outreach programmes for the welfare of the society is part of the learning process.

The Practice

Our institution works towards the upliftment of rural areas and thereby elevating their social and economic status. Community development programme encompasses the human values, the concepts, the practices and the issues of different communities and help the students learn solutions to the issues in a community group. This programme shapes the students as community volunteers to learn about the challenges and benefits brought about by the inclusion of minorities in a community development programme. It extends to the adopted villages of Korampallam, Maravanmadam, Palayakayal, Servaikaranmadam and Tharuvaikulam. Various development schemes such as Terrace gardening, Water conservation, Rain water harvesting, Tree plantations, Soft skills Training and self-employment development schemes such as tailoring, fashion designing, were implemented. Our college offers different training programmes and hands on training for the rural women to meet their basic financial, economic and social needs. It sponsored eco-friendly programmes on water harvesting, roof garden, pond cleaning and making cloth bag.

- Socio-economic surveys undertaken to assess the standards of the community.
- Three awareness programmes were organised on society related issues like water conservation, Dengu and Prohibition of plastic
- Sponsored Nila Vembu Kasayam to the adopted villages
- Organise a free Dental camp
- Distribution of cloth bags, seeds, tree and medicinal herb saplings.
- Hands on training programmes on vermicomposting, Tailoring, paper bag making, soap making, Palm leaf craft and Roof gardening.
- Computer literacy programmes, and digital literacy programmes skills for school children.
- Planting of saplings and awareness in ecological concerns promoted.
- Promoting Self Help Groups and aiding them to organize sales of products

- Relief camp at calamity affected areas was undertaken. Enthusiastic response of students in involving in CDP, Regularity in periodical conduct of welfare activities and sensitisation to issues of the marginalised have created a humanitarian impact.
- Our institution sponsored training programme on palm leaf craft to 1190 women in Korampallam village. It provided tailoring machines and offered three months training programme to help the women earn on their own.

Evidence of Success

The CDP has led the transformation of the college community as well as the adopted villages. Involvement of the faculty and the students in the service of the rural poor has created a positive impact on the quality of life, empowering the self and the society. Students realize their responsibility towards the social progress of the society. Appreciation of service by the people and the NGOs has added credibility to the programme. It has emerged as a participatory, holistic and inclusive practice that leads to a positive development both to the students and the society. Students are able to restore the health and hygiene of the self and the natural environment. Measures to reduce poverty through imparting knowledge for self-employment and availability of government schemes have created positive response.

The hands on training on the preparation of Handworks, paper bag, soap and vermicompost, Health Awareness programme on the importance of Medical plants and eradication of Dengue, and the Academic enlightenment to young under privileged students help the people. Eco-consciousness programmes on water conservation, seeds distribution, Area cleaning and Ban on plastic were the progressive measures which empower the rural people and empower the needy.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Problems encountered are overcome with the willingness to extend activities of social concern. However, the common constraints of time and distance are crucial. The time allotted for students visits is restricted. Sometimes continual follow up measures are not under taken. Implementation of long term welfare schemes becomes hampered. 'TOUCH' touches 'Self' and 'Society'. Modalities of transport and financial status of few students was a hurdle to the programme. Stray incidents expose the reluctance of the people to participate in the programme during their leisure hours. Financial allotment through Government Schemes will help promote more number of Programmes for the progress of the society. It also instils social responsibility in every student to serve for the betterment of the society and the nation.