LAXMINARAYAN COLLEGE, JHARSUGUDA

BEST PRACTICES 2020-21

BEST PRACTICE: 1

Title of the Practice: Blended learning in and around Covid-19 situation

1. Goal: During COVID-19 situation, throughout the 2020-21 academic session, academics suffered a lot. Since countries all over the world have gone into lockdowns due to Covid-19, educational institutes have been no exception. Educational institutions adopted smart solutions to overcome the pandemic crisis by adopting the online mode of education. Not only online mode, but also blended mode of learning was adopted, so that students could understand the need of self-learning with the help of teachers' assistance. Blended Learning is a pedagogical approach that means a mixture of face-to-face and online activities and the integration of synchronous and asynchronous learning tools, thus providing an optimal possibility for the arrangement of effective learning processes.

During the period of lockdown and in the post-COVID situation, Laxminarayan College, Jharsuguda adopted both online and blended mode of learning. It had set out to achieve three major goals. They are as follows:

• Progress in Course Delivery: To engage students actively with online and offline lectures, providing study materials, tests, and assignments.

• Extra Support for Learning: To encourage students to self-study

• Face to face Doubt clearing and Counselling: To constantly communicate with the students to understand the lessons and familiarize themselves with the new method

2. The Context: 'Blended Learning' is a meaningful blend of Online and On-campus (Face-to-face) learning environments. UGC encourages higher education teachers in India to create such Blended Learning environments for at least some or else for all courses being taught in the HEIs. The Department of Higher Education, Government of Odisha has also issued guidelines for the practice of Blended Learning in HEIs of the state. Laxminarayan College, Jharsuguda has adopted it as a best practice by ear-marking the second unit of each paper of each subject to teach

in blended mode. The College has developed an Online Teaching and Learning Strategy framework as well as a self-learning model for providing an active and personalized education for all the students to complete the University curriculum planned for this academic session.

3. The Practice: To achieve the goals set up, the Blended Teaching and Learning Strategy framework was developed which involved:

· Various methods were adopted for teaching different theory-based courses as well as lab-based courses by the faculty members of all the departments in the College.

· Online platforms like Google Meet have been used for the optimum utilization of online teaching.

· Program and course-wise whatsapp groups have been created for doubt clearing session and for sharing notes and study materials.

· PPTS are prepared based on the texts and lectures shared to facilitate critical explanations.

· In the introductory class students were told about the concerned unit of the paper.

· Study materials were shared to students and they were encouraged to have self-study.

· After that some doubt-clearing classes were held as per the needs of the students.

· Internal evaluations were conducted by the concerned teachers. Assignments were given both as objective and essay-type questions. Students had to upload pdf files of their handwritten answers after the completion of the examination.

4. Evidence of success: During this time of crisis, the online teaching and learning as well as blended learning experience enabled much flexibility in issues of time and place for both teachers as well as students. Both teachers and students got the opportunity to explore new and innovative online resources. Online classroom platforms were found to be effective in giving assignments and sharing study materials. For the laboratory courses, students got to learn about some of the advanced instruments. Students tried to be self-learners. The audio-visual as well as library materials helped them a lot.

As the teachers became the facilitators and the method was learners-centred, both the teachers and students learnt the use of modern technology to access the online

resources. After receiving feedback from both teachers and students and assessing the students' performances in the evaluations, it was understood that a blended mode of teaching learning would be successful in the long run.

5. Problems encountered and resource required:

As blended learning expects students to do much of self-learning, the students being habituated to traditional methods of feeding by the teachers didn't get complete benefit out of it. Not all the students have the necessary knowledge and skills to use the online resources. The teachers also need proper orientation to help the students. There must be a support mechanism for digital literacy for students and facilitators. Training should be provided to teachers as well as students to make the best use of various online platforms and ICT tools used for Blended Learning.

Best Practices-2

<u>Increasing On-time Graduation Rates through Students Retention and Students Engagement</u>

1. Goal: The main goal of Laxminarayan College, Jharsuguda is to increase the on (one)-time graduation rate of the students in undergraduate degree programs through student retention and student engagement in improved teaching and learning experiences. The key objective of our institution is to provide better learning experiences to the students to check their drop-out rates, control regular absence and provide quality education by giving exposure to beyond classroom activities also. The goal is to help students pass in the first instance without failing in any of the semesters.

2. The Context: In India, especially in Odisha, one time students' success rate in Higher Education, has always been a distant dream. No doubt success depends upon several criteria- teaching quality, study atmosphere, teaching learning tools and materials and, most especially, students' quality and motivation. In our context, on the one hand the rural background hinders students' success. On the other hand, a large number of students, belonging to the business community of the locality, do not attend classes regularly. The second serious issue is that the majority of the students coming from vernacular backgrounds face difficulties in understanding the subjects while taught in English. In this context, while designing and implementing the above practice some important steps have been taken to address the above challenges.

3. The Practice: As the mission of our College is to provide proper education and help each student to exit from here with a pass certificate so that she/he can get a job or make herself/himself self-employed, we have adopted the above practice. The plan is to achieve a target of one-time graduation rate for all the students within five years by increasing the rate every year through the following implementation strategy:

• Analysis of the previous situations (already done)

• Problems shared and discussed with the faculty members

• Proctorial (mentoring) system was strengthened

• Parents-teachers meetings were convened and the problems discussed

• Reasons for students' irregular attendance were sorted out

• The weaker students were segregated and remedial classes arranged

• Counselling and guidance service system was strengthened

• Application of ICT in Teaching Learning was given more emphasis

• Question answers discussed and regular assessment was done

• Participation of students in departmental seminars was made compulsory

• Communicative English classes were introduced

4. Evidence of Success: As the Practice has been adopted since last year the IQAC had taken the initiative of implementing the mentoring of students. Mentoring has long been considered a developmental and retention strategy for undergraduate education. In this system students are divided into groups. Each group is assigned a teacher-mentor who would perform mentoring duties. The mentors are playing an important role in offering guidance and counselling to the students. It is the practice of mentors to meet students individually or in groups. In some cases parents are called for counselling/special meetings with the mentors. If a student is identified as having weakness in a particular subject, the mentor has to apprise the concerned subject teacher and thus the students are gradually showing interest in studies. The remedial and tutorial classes have been arranged to enhance the learning quality of students. Emphasis on making 75 attendance compulsory for each and every student is showing good results. As the IQAC is verifying the cumulative growth of students, it found that there is a hike in student's success rate. Educationally weaker students

have started showing interest in attending the classes. Economically poor students have also been identified and are given proper attention. The drop-out rates seem to be minimised in this way.

5. Problems encountered and resource required: Due to the lack of residential facilities for students, the problem we encounter in the retention of the students from far-off places. However, the problem is going to be sorted out very shortly as a boys' hostel from the World Bank fund is under construction.