

Best Practices: Two institutional best practices successfully implemented by Maynaguri College noted as per NAAC format

Best Practice I: Student Friendly Practices

Goal: Streamlining the academic and the administrative practices to make them easily accessible for the students. This has been done by using:

- Online admission process.
- Online payment of fees.
- To nurture a wide range of students' talents and skills and to promote their participation in the various co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, a large number of clubs and committees have been created in the college.
- Value education classes for students.
- Bridge Courses for students.
- Student Mentoring system.
- Two-tier students' feedback mechanism.
- Introduction of an LMS (G Suite) for the students to facilitate a smooth transition to the online Teaching, Learning and Evaluation system due to the Pandemic and Lockdown situations.

Context: Before digitization, the admission process and payment of fees was a time consuming process for students and the college administration. To make the entire procedure transparent, speedy, efficient and stake-holder-friendly, both the online admission process and online fee payment have been of great help.

There exists a vast gap between the curriculum followed in school and the ones that the students are expected to learn when they enter college. Some students find it difficult to follow the class lectures when they enter into college, as a result of which they lag behind their peers. In many instances, their inability to follow class lectures result in their lack of interest in the course. As a result of which hence drop out seem to be the only option left for them. This is where bridge courses come handy.

An educational institution, not only imparts knowledge but among its many tasks, building responsible citizens for the future is also a primary responsibility. Since, students in our college come from diverse backgrounds and have been schooled in diverse curriculum, value education classes have been designed to inculcate in them irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds, the values of community feeling, social responsibility, and leadership qualities so as to enable them to contribute to the society to where they belong.

Student feedback ensures that the stakeholders' concerns are taken into consideration in the proper functioning of the institution. Two tier students' feedback ensures that departmental as well as institutional concerns raised by the students are addressed.

During the Pandemic and Lockdown days, it was the need of the hour to adopt a student friendly online platform that could continue the Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Processes uninterrupted. Upon much deliberation, it was decided that G Suite (which the college was already in the process of

adopting for other reasons in the pre-Pandemic days) was the online platform which was the most convenient and safe one for the students.

Practice: The admission process has been computerized by the affiliating university. The online admission portal is made available to the students more than two months before the academic session begins. The portal can be accessed by students from anywhere thereby, making the process of admission much smoother. Similarly, the online fee payment through SBI e-pay system promotes transparency and ease of access both for the students and their parents. The college also has a helpline for those students who are not technologically savvy to assist them in the online admission process.

To encourage skill enhancement and refine students' talents, there are a number of clubs, cells and committees for co-curricular activities that range from Cultural Committee, Sports Committee, Study Circle, Readers' Club, Eco Club, etc. Keeping in mind the welfare and all round personality development of the students, our college has instituted a number of other committees like, Students' Welfare Committee, Career Counselling Cell, Counselling for Students' Cell, Grievance Redressal Cell, Spoken English classes, Remedial Coaching, Anti-Ragging Committee, Prevention of Sexual Harassment Cell, Equal Opportunity Cell.

Once it was decided that Google Classrooms are safe and convenient for the students, within one month of the declaration of the country wide Lockdown in March, 2020, the college had, by the end of April, 2020, successfully adopted the Google Classrooms and shifted all the Honours students to there. Within June, 2020, the College had applied for and granted a G Suite domain to continue with this platform on the Institutional level.

Evidence of Success: Admission process and the online fee payment have become streamlined, systematic and hassle-free. The admission portal of our college being user-friendly, students can apply for admission with a lot of ease. Since the admission process is done through software, chances of error are almost nil. It has also made the entire process more transparent.

As a result of the initiatives of the various Clubs and Committees, students have been able to develop their latent talents and skills, which have enabled many of our students to win prizes and awards in various district, state and national level competitions in both the sports and the cultural categories.

As it appears, the coverage of the Honours students in the Institutional LMS is almost one hundred percent as far as Teaching, Learning and Evaluation are concerned. The students have also grown proficient with this platform. But, by the end of 2020, this LMS has started to appear as a great student friendly practice to continue not only with the Teaching, Learning and Evaluation mechanisms, but also with the Co Curricular and Extra Curricular activities of the students. Now a lot of these activities are being conducted through this LMS.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required: Because of the locational disadvantage of the college, being situated in a rural area, problems encountered are primarily about the servers crashing during the admissions leading to an obstruction of admission process and fee payment due to heavy online traffic. At the same time, since a majority of the students being first generation learners, they find it difficult to keep themselves updated of the latest information which is available in our college website. Records are sometimes inaccessible and not error-free due to technical glitches. At times, stakeholders are not well versed in using online modes and need to be trained to use technology efficiently.

For the same reasons as described above, adoption of an online platform has also appeared to be a challenge for the students of this college, who mostly come from the rural areas. As the Pandemic started, this digital divide was most clearly observed among the students. However, as the Honours students are more strictly academically oriented and usually plan to move to further studies, it has been possible for the departmental teachers to encourage them to continue with their classes online. But, a significant number of the Programme course students could not be accommodated within this online platform. As it was felt, the lack of android phones or internet was a dominant factor for a lot of Programme Course students to be unable to join this online platform.

Best Practice II: Contribution to environmental awareness/protection:

- Rain Water Harvesting System.
- Maintaining a sprawling college ground, garden and a Herbal garden.
- Plastic free campus.
- Segregation of the Bio-degradable and non-bio degradable wastes.
- Encouraging the TS, NTS and the students to use cycle instead of cars and bikes.
- Gradually switching to LED lights in the whole campus.
- Active and vibrant Eco Club.
- Adoption of an LMS to reduce use of paper

Context: The College is located in a rich eco-biodiversity zone in North Bengal area with its unique flora and fauna, which must be preserved. The institution acknowledges its responsibility in educating its students in conserving the environment. Environmental education prepares the students to be responsible and environmentally conscious citizens in the future. They are made aware as to how their actions affect the environment on a daily basis and how they could address complex global environmental problems locally through communitarian initiatives.

Practice: Our college has an active and vibrant Eco Club, which has been engaged in conducting awareness programmes in the neighbouring area playing a communitarian leadership role. The campus is a plastic-free zone and has considerably reduced its consumption of single use plastic. The college canteen uses paper straws, cups and plates instead of plastic ones. The College garden has been set up in the college with the help of NSS students and the college Eco Club. NSS, NCC and Eco club students were also responsible for creating awareness on environmental issues and dangers of using plastic by organizing special lectures, posters and participating in *Swachh Bharat Mission* initiatives. Further, Herbal garden has been set up by the department of Geography and Eco Club, Maynaguri College. Switching to LED lights have greatly helped to reduce the electricity bill and also helped in less heat emission, a universally accepted environment-friendly practice. We also have a water harvesting mechanism at the very basic level. After the introduction of CBCS in 2018-2019 session, it was discovered that the students used a huge amount of papers to submit their Internal Evaluation assignments. So, the Eco club proposed to introduce the online project submission system for the Internal Evaluations of the Programme Course students. Accordingly, the system was introduced, while IQAC, in consultation with the Eco Club, also started a strategy to implement Google Classrooms to reduce the use of paper for Teaching, Learning and Evaluation system.

Evidence of Success: Due to the persistent and continuously innovative practices of Eco Club, recently the College is witnessing a cleaner and greener campus. The Green Audits are also done from

time to time. Students also appear to be genuinely interested to join the various activities initiated to make the campus an Eco friendly zone.

Problems Encountered and resources required: Our college is located in an area that is ecologically rich in terms of both the flora and the fauna. Problems encountered have primarily been with regard to the response surrounding the development-environment debate. Even though the local populace exhibit a genuine affinity towards saving the green, yet they have been rendered visibly helpless in the face of the goliath like structure of the issues of Development, which are apparent in the form of building flyovers, roads at the cost of unimaginable and irreversible damages done to the environment in the surrounding areas. This rapid destruction of the natural habitat of the animals in the nearby forests has resulted in the spiralling rise in the incidences of man-animal conflicts. This has been an important issue that we have been grappling with and accordingly we are designing our campaigns for environmental awareness. Also, while shifting to online mode for the Evaluating purpose to reduce the use of paper, it was observed that a great number of students, and also a few teachers, lacked the infrastructure and the knowledge to use this mode efficiently. While the teachers were being trained successfully in this regard, it still remains a challenge, especially in the Pandemic situation to ensure a better infrastructure and training for the students concerned.