BEST PRACTICE - V

Title: Digital Literacy and E-Learning

Objectives:

1. Promote wider usage of accessible digital resources
2. Increase awareness regarding the advantages of taking recourse to online learning platforms
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of online teaching versus face-to-face learning in achieving learning outcomes.

The Context:

The outbreak of COVID-19 in the wake of 2020 caused major changes in all aspects of human life. This pandemic and the consequent lockdowns introduced to check its transmission compelled us to re-think and revise many of our mundane habits and lifestyles. One among them was the transition to online study mode in the case of academic organizations. To withstand the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to break with standard procedures and adopt novel ones. Allowing employees to work remotely from home became the new normal for all governmental and private institutions and agencies on an unprecedented scale. The same necessity to embrace these new pandemic-imposed conditions, such as social distancing and a frozen economy, was felt by the higher education sector as well. Both teachers and students had to take recourse to the use of available online resources to continue academic activities and reap benefit from those services. The rapid use of e-learning platforms such as MS Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, etc. during this period initiated and increased general awareness regarding the usefulness and advantages of digitalization. Consequently, digital technology was wholeheartedly adopted by the teaching community of our college to impart quality education to the students in virtual mode during this difficult phase of our lives.

The Practice:

The role of digital technologies in the rise of online education has been universally recognized. Digitalization has given rise to the fourth industrial revolution (World Economic Forum, 2016) and digital transformation (European Commission, 2017); in the context of higher education, they have changed the way we approach teaching and learning. In keeping with the changing times, the faculty members of the various departments of our college have taken the following measures to ensure effective online teaching during the pandemic:

1. Separate WhatsApp groups have been created for every subject by the HODs of the concerned department. Study materials in simplified form are circulated in these groups by the teachers to aid the understanding of their students on relevant topics.
2. Classes have been scheduled on online platforms like Google Meet, Zoom and Skype. The dedicated teachers of our college have taken classes even on holidays to meet the necessity of covering the entire syllabus within the stipulated time.
3. Assignments have been given and assessments have been conducted through these platforms after the delivery of online lectures and the provision of e-resources.
4. The faculty members of some departments have prepared video lectures and uploaded the same for students in their respective YouTube channels so that students can learn at their convenient time and place.

Evidence of Success: Online education is driven by the emergence of new technologies, the widespread adoption of the internet, and the intensifying demand for a skilled workforce for a digital economy. The advances of digital technologies have facilitated a shift from traditional learning to learning embedded into our everyday environment. What used to be limited by time and physical place has been made easily accessible as e-learning guarantees anyone who can use a technological device to gain knowledge. The advancement and use of mobile technologies to support learning (such as smartphones, tablets, and microcomputers) has progressed rapidly among our students. They have begun to discover that online courses can offer a more convenient and flexible way to pursue higher education. The digitalized methods of teaching-learning adopted since 2019 has helped the institution to cope up successfully with the challenges of online education, posed during the pandemic situation, and accordingly, the blended mode of teaching is practiced presently to ensure a student-centric academic mechanism.

Problems Encountered: E-learning has caused certain difficulties for students and teachers alike. Students often became isolated and alienated due to their hesitation to participate in online communicative groups. This may stem from many factors such as individual personality traits, sense of transactional distance in the online environment, lack of confidence and trust in the participants in an online community, lack of nonverbal communication (facial expression, voice tone, etc.), connectivity issues (e.g., low internet speed), poor writing skills or language barriers and lack of access to internet facilities for many first-generation learners. For teachers, preparing for online courses turned out to be much more time-consuming than preparing for face-to-face lectures in a classroom. The issue of intellectual property rights has been a further challenge for the academic community in preparing online courses.

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BEST PRACTICE - VI

Title: Online Counselling to promote mental wellness of the students during COVID 19 pandemic.

Objectives of the Practice: COVID 19 pandemic threw the students to the sea of hopelessness and trauma. It obliterated their aspiration and longing for the time being and replaced them with anxiety and angst. College being closed for unspecified time and physical distancing being implemented everywhere; the students were in utter abyss of fear.

The Practice: Jatindra Rajendra Mahavidyalaya has organized comprehensive E- Counselling of the students to promote mental health of the students during COVID 19 pandemic. The pandemic has created widespread tension anxiety and stress among students' community. They were in the state of absolute despair and nihilism viewing the deadly sweep of Corona virus both in India and in I international arena. According to the resolution college has formed a core committee of experts who provide the counselling session to the students to foster resilience and mental and emotional support to the students during the crisis. The expert teachers read widely and collected data of the previous global or continental pandemic that were confronted by the mankind in the previous centuries. They armed themselves with vast knowledge about how to fight transmission and covid 19 contagion from World Health Organization's news bulletin and guidelines. We also talked with some virologist to trace behavioral patterns of corona virus and the pros and cons of safety measures. After that we have issues notice to the students with schedules of upcoming E-Counselling and details of who can participate in the counselling and the intake capacity. It was interactive and inter- personal conference and the students were given ample scope to air their concern and their feats and apprehensions. We have conducted around twenty such anxiety and stress management e- counselling session with the active participation of the students. They gave strong response and joined in great numbers which the enthusiasm and fervor. They have asked some common questions like whether we could survive the pandemic, what would happen to them if their family member would become corona positive how would they tackle the situation or would he or she be sent into solitary isolation or quarantine for 14 days. They all informed that they could not focus study due to the prevalent fear and angst. Their money ends were gripped with horror and fear of death. They felt extremely despondent. Their mental health was badly affected.

The expert teachers restored hope and faith in them through kind counselling and listening their concern and problems. The experts primarily highlighted the advantages of rural areas in combating corona pandemic as there are lush green and open fields, and fresh air. People of rural area eat fresh vegetables, fresh and river born fish, fresh eggs and meat. They also work very hard. Considering all these golden rules, they tried to boost their mental power and strengthen their morale. " No catastrophe last long. No how powerful, the pandemic is, man with upped surely vanquish them with his invincible will power " such was the observation of the expert team and they could beautifully convince them with such positive mindset.

Evidence of Success: History testifies man's unbeatable resilience throughout the world civilizations. Catastrophe and calamity came apparently Shaked the world and wrought havoc but when they are gone, man grows wiser, stronger and more resilient. Every single fight leaf behind a great lesson to learn. COVID 19 pandemic is not the exception to the set law of the world. As the same time a genuine human endeavor never can fail. We have noble objectives to providing substantial emotional support to our students during turbulent days of little hope. When we began to offer online classes after the implementation lockdown on our state, the participation of the students in online classes was not very satisfactory. We have given repeated notice to the students inviting them to join in classes. We could elicit little results on this regard. But post counselling situation was a sea change. The attendance of the students suddenly surged and the teachers were quite happy with the active participation of the learners. Owing to digital divide, we could not reach a significant number student. The poor students did not have internet access to avail the benefits of online counselling and classes. Later we have worked on this issue on war footing to bring about significant changes in the scenes of woe.

Problems Encountered and Resource Required: The Best Practice Titles Online Counselling to promote mental wellness of the students during COVID 19 taught us great lessons. We have learnt a lot while ourselves equally facing the horrors of pandemic none the less, we have initiated to render hope and aspiration among the student's community with very little resource and virtually contained within the four walls when the entire world was stalled. Organizing counselling on the stress and anxiety management in the colossally dire time poses plethora of challenges that we successfully tided over by dint of perseverance and hard work and above all unity and integrity of the college staff. We are unified as whole. All members of the college consider as a single family and always assign accountability on our shoulders with spontaneity that lessens the burden of any difficult task. We did not hire any expert for the counselling. On the other hand, we equip ourselves for the job and amasses massive amount of data and information to boost the wealth. On our sides, we faced little hardships. But the students mostly belong to poor and underprivileged families who have no access to internet. When we achieved significant success with the students from the well-off families in outreach and impact, the very success drooped menacingly in regard to the students from poorer families due to digital divide.

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