NEW PERSPECTIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

INNOVATIVE AND BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING, LEARNING AND EVALUATION

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Introduction

The demand for globalization of education system during nineties attracted the attention of government of India in this area. It thought of overhauling its conventional higher education system in India through the autonomous institution of UGC called "National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) established at Bangalore on September, 1994. NAAC was assigned the task of performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation of universities and colleges in the country. It has been entrusted with the job of defining and refining the norms of quality higher education and doing the continuous assessment and accreditation of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India on the basis of such norms.

Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC has been entrusted with the most crucial task of evolving a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the performance of educational institutions. It has to play the role of quality circle in the industries rather than becoming yet another hierarchical structure or record keeping exercise in the institution. It should serve as avehicle for ushering in quality through rational policy making and adoption of participative leadership style.

Objective Of The Study

1. To suggest Innovative and Best practices in Teaching.

2. To suggest Innovative and Best practices in Learning.

3. To suggest Innovative and Best practices in Evaluation.

Criteria

The NAAC has identified the following seven criteria to serve as the basis for assessment of affiliated colleges.

1. Curricula Aspects

2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

3. Research, Consultancy and Extension

4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources

5. Student Support and Progression

6. Governance Leadership and Management

7. Innovations and Best Practices

Among the seven criterions, criterion II- Teaching ,learning and Evaluation holds the highest score and is the most indispensable aspect in which lot of efforts are to put by the institution foe scoring good CGPA. This criterion deals with the efforts of an institution to serve students of different backgrounds and abilities, through effective teaching-learning experiences. It also probes into the adequacy, competence as well as the continuous professional development of the faculty who handle the programs of study. The efficiency of the techniques used to continuously evaluate the performance of teachers and students is also a major concern of this criterion. The focus of this criterion is captured in the following Key Aspects:

1. Student Enrolment and Profile

2. Catering to Diverse Needs of Students

3. Teaching-Learning Process

4. Teacher Quality

5. Evaluation Process and Reforms

Innovative and Best Practices in Teaching Learning and Evaluation

The first pre-requisite for the qualitative improvement of education in the colleges and its improved accreditation by NAAC is the establishment of a strong and empowered IQAC cell composed of dynamic academicians cum administrative leaders from institution with participative leadership style. The cell should establish and excellent communication with the principal & management, motivate and mould the attitudes of the staff, students rest of the stakeholders.

Innovative Teaching

An innovative effort of an institution helps in its academic excellence. An innovative practice could be a pathway created to further the interest of the student and the institution, for internal quality assurance, inclusive practices and stakeholder relationships. Nowadays there is democratization of knowledge and the role of the teacher is changing to that of facilitator. We need to have interactive teaching and this changing role of education is inevitable with the introduction of multimediatechnology and the spawning of a technologically-savvy generation of youths. The analysis reveals some of the suggestions that the teaching community can practice in the classrooms.

- Information and Communication Technology has made many innovations in the field of teaching and also made a drastic change from the old paradigm of teaching and learning. In the new example of learning, the role of student is more important than teachers. The concepts of paperless and pen less classroom are emerging as an alternative to the old teaching learning method.

- The teacher can use multimedia to modify the contents of the material. It helps him/her to represent in a more meaningful way, using different media elements. These media elements can be converted into digital form, modified and customized for the final presentation. By incorporating digital media elements into the project, the students are able to learn better since they use multiple sensory modalities, which would make them more motivated to pay more attention to the information presented and retain the information better.

- Students can receive the images as digital files, PCs, compact computers that allow the teacher to write notes directly on the screen with a special pen, replace the archaic projector. Technology allows teachers to make notes on charts and spreadsheets and send them directly to their students' PCs.

- Another innovative teaching method is mind maps, which is a simple technique for drawing information in diagrams, instead of writing it in sentences. These are also very quick to review, as it is easy to refresh information in student's mind just by glancing once. Mind maps can also be effective mnemonics and remembering their shape and structure can provide the cues necessary to remember the information within it. They engage much more of the brain in the process of assimilating and connecting facts than

conventional notes. The key notion behind mind mapping is that student learns and remembers more effectively by using the full range of visual and sensory tools at his/her disposal.

- The sense of humor can also be an innovative teaching method. Students always like lively and delightful personalities and that's natural. If one teaches whatever he/she wants in a humorous, delightful and entertaining way, he/she can easily achieve target. Humor strengthens the relationship between student and teacher, reduces stress, makes a course more interesting and if relevant to the subject, may even enhance recall of the material. Humor has the ability to relax people, reduce stress and tension, and thereby create an atmosphere conducive for learning and communication.

- There are many devices with the help of which one can teach effectively for e.g. the games like word-antakshari, Spin-a-yarn; Role-Playings etc. are very effective in developing their linguistic competence. If this method is used properly, language-learning becomes more interesting and easy.

- Another innovative teaching method is the mnemonics words. Here the teacher is not supposed to talk on a particular concept for a quite long time. But to make it clear to the students he/she can just go on saying mnemonics or its associated meaning in words. Here he/she goes on saying only words instead of sentence, and once they come to a basic understanding of the meaning of a particular concept, then the teacher will explain in sentences. For example, in teaching language courses this technique can be used as an effective medium by the teacher to develop word power.

Innovative Learning

If learners are actively engaged with a task which they accept is for learning they are not simply follow a prescription or set of rules, but contribute their own thinking to the task.

- The task should be constructed to allow significant elements of choice by the learners so that they can begin to own it and make it meaningful and worthwhile for them—it becomes a task which is not undertaken simply to satisfy the needs of the teacher.

- Learners' experience should be challenged or confronted in some way which allows them to reassess their experience and the assumptions on which they are operating.

- Learners must be obliged to intervene in some way in their own learning process; they have to make choices and follow the consequences of their choices.

- Learners are required to link what is new to them to their existing frameworks of understanding or confront the need to modify these frameworks.

INNOVATIVE EVALUATION

'Evaluating throughout is important; it allows adjustments and improvements to be made.'

The evaluation of teaching and learning, and particularly of teaching and learning innovation, has become a priority of present education. A successful evaluation procedures must begins with in the planning stages, or at least thinking about how one is going to evaluate. This is because it makes evaluation so much easier if one is aware of the need to collect, from the beginning, the type of information which is needed in order to be able to say whether the teaching- learning process 'worked' or not.

- Just as a carpenter has many tools in his toolbox, evaluators also must have numerous tools at their disposal. He has to select the method best suited for the job. There are no hard and fast rules about the methods of evaluating new teaching and learning initiatives but there are, of course, some general approaches which are useful in a range of circumstances. Here are some innovative methods of evaluating different from the each with some brief comments.

- Questionnaires can be used to explore more complex, and perhaps more relevant issues such as what students are learning, what aspects are most useful, what could be improved. Depending on the purpose, questionnaires can be used at almost any time, but they may be particularly useful at the beginning and end of an initiative.

- Asking students to keep a journal of their experiences and their comments about the initiative can often be useful. Journals can be analyzed for changes during the period, for example, increases in confidence and understanding. They can also reveal possible changes which need to be made along the way. In some circumstances, journals can be included as part of student assessment.

- Student interviews are often a valuable means of evaluation, so long as the focus is clear. As interviews are generally time consuming, interviews of a small sample of students may be used in conjunction with other methods of assessing the response of the whole group. Interviews can be done with focus groups of students and these meetings often can provide opportunities to explore group responses in some detail. They can be arranged at appropriate times during the course.

- Informal observation of behavior is useful in some circumstances, as long as your hunches about what it 'means' are followed up in some systematic way. Don't forget that much formative evaluation also occurs simply through informal discussion with students and with staff involved in the program.

- Straight mapping or counting of the number of students who turn up to voluntary sessions can provide some indication of whether students find them useful, although again, this needs to be followed up in more detail. Who comes along? Why? Who doesn't turn up? Why not? What do the sessions provide or not provide?

- Quite sophisticated data on student patterns of usage can be collected during computer based instruction. Software can chart the time spent on various tasks, the areas where help is sought, and so on. An analysis of these files can often provide pointers to further questions about what works and what doesn't, and most importantly, why it works or not, questions which can be followed up through formal interviews or informal discussions with students. Feedback sheets or opportunities to comment can also be built into computer assisted learning units.

- The Socratic Wheel is a deceptively simple and powerfully visual rating tool with multiple applications. It can be used to set priorities or learning goals in light of baseline conditions, monitor progress or evaluate final results using multiple criteria, or compare projects, activities or individual profiles using single criteria.

Best Practices

The departments should be advised to shortlist the scholar students in various subjects and design mechanism to shape their careers through the activities such as extra books through departmental library, career counseling workshops, special coaching, training in competitive examinations, deputation to the events organized by other renounced colleges and management institutions etc.

The admission process of the college should made student friendly and it should be given in the college prospectus and the college website. The college should develop student enrolment profile annually either though the modification in the software used or manually. The profile report should indicate the socio economic and geographic status of the students enrolled for its various academic, professional, certification, add on and other courses. This cumulative record will be very useful for the teachers in proving educational guidance and counseling.

Introduce courses that will fill up the gaps and deficiencies in the university curricula and enrich the employment potential and develop the personality of students. Few examples of such courses are certification course in MS Office, Commercial Correspondence, Manual and Computerized Accounting in Tally ERP, Soft Skills, Communication in English, Health care and fitness, Hindi Speaking, Personality Development, Value Education, Music and Art, Marketing and Salesmanship, Entrepreneurial Skills, pathology etc

Some courses may be designed especially for Girls such as beautician, dress designing, cookery, art of mehndi&rangoli, nursing etc. Proper planning and execution of these courses will not only add to the skills, knowledge and personality development of students and make them employable but bring an academic flexibility in our education system. It will enable our students to accomplish many such courses simultaneously while pursuing their graduation.

Providing Remedial Coaching, NET / SET Coaching, Coaching for entry in services and Career counseling cell. These cells enable the colleges in catering the diverse educational needs of our students coming from different strata of our society and ensuring them a better career and a bright future. Teachers anchoring these courses should work with missionary zeal and they should bedynamic in approach. If feasible, they should sign MOUs with the professional organizations training the students for competitive examinations. But they should come out with tangible results by placing the students on jobs.

The institution should adopt ICT and modern methods of teaching, develop e-learning resources such as LCD, internet, e books, video clips, films, educational CDs, e-notes etc. It should arrange orientation and training camps and workshops for its teachers, students and administrative staff to upgrade their technological skills. It should encourage its staff to prepare their presentations and notes in soft form and keep on their personal and college websites. If their notes are available to the students in soft form the teachers will have adequate time to take up other developmental activities for the college and students such as preparatory and revisionary assignments, students' subject QUIZ, Seminars, PPT presentations, group discussion, mock interviews, Unit tests etc.

Designing own continuous internal evaluation system at the college level. It should contain announced and unannounced test, unit tests, individual and group assignments, PPT competitions, online tests etc.

Quality of teachers is a decisive factor in the qualitative improvement in the education system. In fact the teachers are the spear head if the quality improvement movement in a college. Hence teachers from the various departments should deputed for research fellowships, orientations and refresher courses, international, national and regional seminars and conferences, and such other programs meant for their academic development. College should also encourage the department to organize workshops, seminars and conferences in the college for upgrading the knowledge of the teachers. They must be encouraged to participate in refresher courses.

Organization of workshops, seminar, conferences at college level, national level and international level on themes relevant to the courses offered. Child centered teaching styles like Group discussions, role playing, projects, brain storming, and case study can be followed.
The college should evolve a strong feedback system from all its stakeholders in order to evaluate and improve the operating efficiency of all the activities, functions and sections. Then it should take corrective measures to improve the efficiency of its segments. It should develop the practice of maintaining the proper record of all sorts of activities carried on so as to enable the assessment by NAAC.

Conclusion

Thus, it can be concluded that by following child centered method of teaching –learning based on the innovations the institution and cater to the diverse needs of the students, improve its teaching- learning process. It will also help the institution to improve the student enrollment and their profile. Evaluation process will give the direction in which required changes are to be made. Following all these methods and best practices institution will surely attain better grades.

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