

Best Practice - I

Title of the Practice: Hour of Blossoming (HOB)

Objectives of the practice

- To propel youth to reach full potential by nurturing their innate genius in a congenial atmosphere
- To facilitate acquisition of competencies, skills, talents and promote multi disciplinary explorations
- To offer a range of curricular, cocurricular, extracurricular, metacurricular experiences to retrain, reskill and reinvent oneself
- To explore domains that lie beyond cognitive mastery of disciplines
- To help students blossom at their own pace and in their own way without exam threat or fear

Context

The main purpose of higher education is to bring into being a new generation who would establish a new world. Apart from giving importance to talents, specialization, achievement and success, Holy Cross College intends to cultivate an awakening intelligence in students to create a new culture, structure and civilization. Students need to be emotionally intelligent and mentally stable to tackle future challenges and unpredictable situations. So, the concern is to help a future generation blossom to its full potential by engaging in investigating the fundamental reality of life. The one hour which was initially squeezed in to the regular working hours for this practice was later made in to an additional hour directed by the Governing Body based on feedback received from staff and students.

The practice

- This signature programme called 'Hour of Blossoming' (HOB) introduced with a change in time and focus, gives students a lot of flexibility to operate across and beyond disciplines Every day, one hour is added to the regular time table for the overall holistic development of students
- There is no moral policing, supervision, fear of failure or examination threat. But there is a lot of encouragement, motivation and appreciation
- This 'minimally invasive' environment is very conducive for the unfurling of their full potential. Students explore freely, enjoy remedial programmes through interactive

sessions, group discussions, team teaching, visuals, mind maps, peer teaching, games, tactile learning and other visual and aural learning styles

- Through participation in club activities, committees, forums, cultural programmes, eco spiritual practices, sports, library activities, internet browsing etc. students spend time in diverse learning methods and activities mostly in a self organized learning environment
- Students fraternize with nature, expand the green cover, nurture bio-diversity, conduct fairs, hold book reviews, plan programmes, indulge in creative endeavors, interact with mentors, seek help to realize their academic and artistic dreams, make use of the open air dance floor, enact plays, write scripts, shoot doc's, revive folk arts and do whatever is pleasing and rewarding to them
- They harness their own energies in the most optimal way through self learning, collaborative research projects (CRP) and social responsibility projects (SRP)
- They donate blood, conduct medical camps, do peer counseling and visit care homes
- They listen to and practise Ted talks, record the best investments they've made in life, discuss ethics and consumerism, conduct unmanned sales, sell hand made products, practise street plays, listen to motivational speakers, observe nature, do organic gardening, attend sessions in yoga, make use of the library for their academic needs and leisure needs, and do a lot more other useful and engaging activities
- Course counselors are always available to students during this hour
- Pedagogy is used to ally with society. Start-ups have opened doors for entrepreneurship, increased performance and productivity
- Students get groomed in multiple intelligences
- This programme is enjoying a successful run for the past 3 years.

Evidence of Success

- Students act with responsibility, honesty and accountability. Eg. 'Shopping sans shopkeeper' is a tryst with trust
- Their EQ gets developed along with their IQ
- Employers give a good feedback of the outgoing students who are employed in their firms / companies / institutions
- Students carry out 'Swachh Bharat' activities in villages
- International sports stars evolve

- Students give radio talks, awareness programmes, stage street plays, educate illiterates (outside the college) give digital literacy to locals and clear garbage on shorelines
- Students are better equipped to face academic challenges, face interviews with confidence and tackle conflicting situations in peaceful ways
- Attrition rates are minimized
- Discipline is not enforced in the campus. It simply happens with simple reminders
- There is a remarkable growth curve in their curricular, cocurricular and extracurricular activities
- Student led initiatives like ‘Sarakontrai’ (magazine in the vernacular) ‘Freshman flute ‘Crossian Voices’ and other department magazines speak volumes of their growth
- Public feedback through WhatsApp on student activities is very encouraging
- Their research topics are unique, universal and useful
- This has enhanced the quality quotient of the student – teacher relationship and has also strengthened their global quotient

Problems encountered

- The demands of the society to conform to set standards deter students from experimenting with new ventures
- Sometimes they are torn between competitive distinctness and a collaborative and connected learning experience
- Some students are negligent and do not make optimal use of this opportunity
- Continuity is lost during vacation and other breaks
- Material accumulations and memory skills are the important yardsticks to measure success We are still enslaved by knowledge that is limited, finite and fragmentary. So, new initiatives do not get easy recognition

Resources Required

- Resources crunch has put many novel ideas into cold storage. With adequate resources and support, dying arts like lace weaving, folklore, basket weaving, alternate medicines etc. can be revived. Students are interested to learn new things.

Community radio to make heard the cultural political and artistic voices excluded elsewhere be installed

Best Practice - II

Title of the Practice: Crossian Philanthropy or H. Share for an intense participation in Life

The Crossian Philanthropy or H. Share that promotes an intense participation in life was spun off in the year 2006 – 2007 by the Department of Commerce with philanthropic goals that would enable students to live intensely and participate in life with insight and intelligence. The institute is aware that it is bringing into being a new generation that understands its responsibility towards the whole of mankind.

Main Objectives

- To encourage, support, facilitate and execute philanthropic ventures in order to give incubation and support to the underprivileged and the marginalized
- To provide a platform for the wired generation to express their innate goodness and generosity
- To make students have a more integrated, humane and spiritual vision of human life
- To help beneficiaries be self supportive and pick up the lost strands of life
- To move beyond the self-generated boundaries and see the basic connectivity of all things
- To identify suffering communities and offer them a helping hand
- To help students move from fixed mindsets to consciousness

The Context

- We are living in a data driven world that is reeling under the threat of isolation, fragmentation, dependency and despondency
- There are still people who go to bed with hungry stomachs
- There are children who are malnourished, abused, ill-treated and annihilated
- There are areas and people still not touched by the great strides made by technology and science
- There are orphans, the physically challenged, the abandoned, the mentally challenged and destitute in care homes who are pining for love and concern. Though their material needs are partially met, the dismal atmosphere and their emotional trauma are not adequately addressed There are juvenile law breakers who after languishing in reformatory schools, long for some hold to turn on a new leaf

- Different types of sufferings, emotional, physical, mental and spiritual rock the world
- Values and welfare principles are on the wane today

Responsibility of students

- Students learn value education and they must be taught to anchor their actions on values
- As per the vision statement the institution wants its youth to be life sensitive
- Students should have a sense of involvement and know their intrinsic worth to bring about a profound transformation in human beings
- Education at present is not able to reform consciousness and living by covering all the dimensions (thought, behaviour, work, realization, individual, family, society and nature) Education at Holy Cross College aims at addressing the least addressed issues in order to promote harmony within the individual and among human beings
- Students learn that every violent behaviour is a cry for attention and therefore a cry for love

The practice

This practice has had a successful run for more than a decade

Small drops make a mighty ocean. Every student contributes Re. 1/- per week and the money thus pooled (Amount Rs. 4,76,028/-) is siphoned for charitable purposes and to bring about constructive changes in the neighbourhood

Students bring light into the lives of the underprivileged through spot visits, interaction, counseling, physical and moral support, cultural programmes, awareness programmes, medical aid, training to capitalize on their own talents, knowledge dissemination, lending a listening ear to their woes and alleviating their suffering of impoverishment with financial assistance

They distribute stationery and other provisions to school kids and students in government hostels, care homes and orphanages

The different departments, make a study of their situation through surveys, oral interviews and data collected from reliable sources

Students go beyond the hallucination of separate self, visit the targeted group in person, interact with them, learn their expectations, share their woes, give counseling, direct them to appeal for their basic human rights and if need be, take lead roles in getting things done

They open up pathways for children and destitutes to have a dignified life

The manner of visit, time and place vary from department to department. Some departments give technical assistance, yet others enhance their entrepreneurial skills

School kids are taken on picnics and entertained with cultural programmes and games. Most of the schools are adopted

During the Ochi cyclone, representatives from the different departments visited the cyclone hit areas in Kanniyakumari district and offered relief materials

Assistance to construct restrooms and improve other infrastructural facilities are given. Precautionary measures were taken during the outbreak of dengue and nilavembu concoction was distributed

Evidence of success

This practice fraternizes students with their suffering brethren

It helps students think and act beyond their hormones and work for the general welfare of society

They learn values like caring, sharing, honesty, courage, cooperation, commitment, empathy and compassion

They redefine their roles and establish a sort of connectedness with everyone and everything around them

They are able to connect deeply with the fullness of their own self in abundance

They are able to see and do anything and everything with an attitude of gratitude. In turn they find truth, beauty and goodness in their own being

Students are able to align their actions with their highest intentions

When they give love, their own wounds get healed

They learn the art of giving back to the society in return for their own good fortune

Above all, they learn a very important lesson that they should never desert their parents in their old age

The practice is picking up momentum day by day

Students look forward to more such experiences which will help them stay connected, pursue a purposeful destiny and develop their soft skills, thoughtfulness and reflective giving

It strengthens the relationship between the teacher and student, promotes companionship, mutual unconditioning, humility, sensitivity and affection

Problems encountered

Though all the students make this contribution, conveyance constraints prevent some of them from visiting the beneficiaries. Some places of visit also have space constraints, and majority of the students will have to stand outside the homes or other places of visit and take turns. Time constraint is another problem faced by us. Sometimes this amount is not sufficient enough to meet the growing demands from all sides. Already when most of our students come from financially unsound background, raising the amount may be a burden on them. 'However from 2018 onwards the amount has been raised to Rs. 2 per week. Resources Required More resources have to be generated. The institution is planning ways and means to generate funds. Individual departments will think of different possibilities and address this issue creatively in the near future. Feedback from beneficiaries Their dire needs have been met because of this philanthropic drive (toiletries, bed sheets, writing materials, medicines, prosthetics, hearing aids, wheel chairs, benches, aqua purifiers etc.) Page 117/126 02-06-2019 05:17:33 Juvenile law breakers have been able to turn a new leaf. Psychological needs have been met along with financial support. Confectionaries, sweet meats and good food are cherished by children from the disadvantaged section of society. Some are able to bounce back to a normal life through crutches, wheel chairs and walkers. Tools for livelihood like iron spades and gardening tools have enhanced the lives of many. Adopted schools in the neighborhood get regular assistance. Assistance for poultry farming, goat rearing and other small scale industries have picked up and people are able to eke a livelihood. The relationship between the institution (students) and the beneficiaries have become a 'living movement'. Compassion is the essence of the wholeness of life, and the very nature of intelligence is sensitivity. This sensitivity is love says J. Krishnamurti. In Holy Cross College, intelligence

means perceiving the whole through the dogmas, theories, concepts and ideals taught in classroom. The college also has other best practices like earn while you learn scheme, mentor-mentee system, organic gardening, get-togethers, observing days like simplicity day, no nukes day, International yoga day, International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking and shuttle free day.