

# NABA BARRACKPUR PRAFULLA CHANDRA MAHAVIDYALAYA

## BEST PRACTICE I – “CONNECTING OUR LEARNERS”

### 1. Title of the Practice

“Connecting our Learners”

### 2. Objectives of the Practice

The objective of the practice is to develop a collaborative educational practice in the locality where all the educational institutions, families and other stakeholders work together and support each other to achieve the goal of holistic education for the children of the locality. When the schools, colleges and other community groups of a locality band together to support learning through actions and connections, young people achieve more in schools, stay longer in schools, larger number of them go to higher education, better prepared for the job market and moreover they grow up to be responsible citizens of the country.

### 3. The Context

For the last few years, the college has been going through a problem of poor enrolment. To address this issue, apart from rigorous campaigning for the college, several innovative policy initiatives and action plans have been taken and implemented by the IQAC. Through this process, it was realized that a holistic education system can only be achieved through the collective and collaborative effort of the community. In this context, the college has taken several initiatives to develop a collaborative learning environment in the locality. It is crucial that all the educational institutions of a locality work as a community to nurture the learning process of the children and to address the issues they face locally.

#### 4. The Practice

- A seminar was organized on “Role of a Higher Educational Institute in the socio-economic development of the Locality”. All the Heads of the institutions of the schools and colleges were invited and they actively participated in the seminar.
- Before the implementation of the CBCS system, a convention was arranged in the college where Head Masters and Head Mistresses of the schools were invited. The features of the new system CBCS was explained to them in simplified manner.
- The college participated in the local bookfairs and flower shows etc. where our students organized exhibitions and help desks.
- Every year, the college organizes inter-school cultural competition for the students of the neighbouring locality. The young learners of the schools enthusiastically participate in cultural events like dance, drama, recitation, debate etc. This event has been conducted through online mode during the pandemic. This inter-school cultural competition has not only helped the college to get the attention from the local students, but also prepared a forum for the local learners and educators of all levels where they can exchange their views and communicate to each other to resolve the issues they face locally.
- An institution of Higher Education cannot deny its responsibility towards the society or the community, particularly of the locality in which it is situated. The College is located in an area which is economically underprivileged and there are some slums where the poor children do not get the opportunity to cultivate and express their talents. The NSS unit of the College organizes cultural competition for the children from poor and underprivileged section of the locality. The NSS volunteers visit the slum areas adjacent to the College and run a campaign for the cultural competition, talk to the parents and escort the children to the College. The volunteers and the teachers cooperate

to organize the programme successfully and the teachers are assigned the duty of judging the events.

- Students of the local schools are invited to participate in several college programmes like gender sensitization programmes or mental health awareness programmes.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed with the local administrative body – New Barrackpore Municipality to involve the local administration in the process and strengthen the goal of achieving a community-based education model.
- Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) have also been signed with colleges of the neighbourhood area.

## **5. Evidence of Success**

This is an undeniable fact that creating an ecosystem of collaborative community-based education system in a locality is a bit ambitious goal. Nevertheless, in the last few years, there has been significant evidence of success towards the right direction. The success of the practice is evident from the increase of the number of participants in the inter-cultural competition every year. Even during the pandemic years, more than hundred students of the schools of our neighbourhood locality participated in the event. Same goes with the cultural competition for the underprivileged children of the locality. Earlier the number of participants was poor, but now it is increasing day by day. Great motivation and enthusiasm among the students have been created. The students through this practice get the opportunity to interact with the community more closely and social values are inculcated in them. A stronger bond with the society is thus achieved through this practice.

## **6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

The major problem we faced during the practice was paucity of fund to conduct these events and communication programmes. As mentioned earlier, the college is

going through a phase of poor enrolment. As a result, there is a financial crunch and, in this scenario, it is not advisable to bear the expenses of these type of non-academic activities.

## **BEST PRACTICE II – “LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM”**

### **1. Title of the Practice**

“Learning beyond the Classroom”

### **2. Objectives of the Practice**

The objective of “Learning beyond the Classroom” practice is to make academic learning interesting, to extend the boundaries of learning beyond the classroom and to encourage participative and experiential learning among the students. The practice aims to facilitate independent thinking, creative writing, research aptitude and to encourage peer learning and team spirit through group activities. The greater purpose of this practice is to make academic learning shift from theory to “praxis” and to promote an interdisciplinary approach to learning. All of the above objectives are in tandem with the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) which got introduced in 2018.

### **3. The Context**

One of the main challenges faced by the college during the past few years has been poor attendance. An allied issue was to make learning interesting, innovative and participative in order to motivate the students to come to the college regularly. As an attempt to address these twin issues, the “Learning beyond the Classroom” practice was initiated which has become a huge success over the years. The following were the challenging issues that needed to be addressed in designing and implementing this practice

- Understanding the needs of the first-generation learners and streamlining the practice according to their requirements.
- Designing the activities in a way that would involve a better intra student and inter student-teacher bonding.

- Building self-confidence among the students.
- Helping the students identify their weaknesses and to work towards overcoming them.
- Dealing with reluctance, shyness, and fear of performance among the students.
- To emphasize the importance of participating rather than winning.

#### **4. The Practice**

The college encourages participative and experiential learning among the students by conducting “Learning beyond the Classroom” activities. A wide range of programmes and activities are organized where each and every student can participate and get an opportunity to explore the wider horizons of knowledge which lie beyond the confines of the classroom.

- An interdisciplinary students’ seminar is organized every year where students from all departments deliver power point presentations on topics of common interest. The presentations are judged by external experts who are invited as judges. A question answer session is conducted at the end of each presentation where the paper presenters have to answer questions asked by the judges and the members of the audience. These presentations hone the research aptitude, interdisciplinary approach and independent thinking of the students. All students who present their papers are given participation certificates and prizes are awarded to the rank holders. This helps in building a healthy competitive spirit among the students.
- A story-writing competition is held where the students are divided into groups of two and are given a topic on which they have to write a story. This promotes the skill of creative writing, thinking and team spirit among the students. They are encouraged to extend the boundaries of their thought and imagination beyond the confines of their academic curriculum. The students have to read their self-written stories at the end of the contest and the best ones are awarded prizes by the judges.
- The college has a movie club named “NBPCM Cine Club” which arranges for regular movie-screening sessions for the students where they are shown different kinds of movies, documentaries etc. that are relevant to their syllabus so that they can gain an

audio-visual experience which goes a long way in enhancing their understanding of the curriculum. Cinema also helps the students in acquiring an understanding of the interdisciplinary approach whereby the medium of the text gets translated into the medium of the cinema. Since interdisciplinarity is an important component of the CBCS curriculum, exposure to such a practice enhances the ability of the students to discern the connecting link between the various disciplines.

- The college also organizes regular visits to the bookfair where the college faculty accompany the students to help them get a real-life experience of the way books gets written, printed, published and sold. This exposes the students to the other side of learning and academics as they get confronted with the materialistic aspect of the book publishing business. Besides this, the teachers also help the students identify the different editions of a text which are available in the market by taking them around the book stalls of the different publication houses. These visits are indeed an extension of learning beyond the classroom as the students get an exposure to world of books in way that is not possible within the limits of the classroom.

The “Learning beyond the Classroom” practice occupies a unique place in the context of Indian higher education through its emphasis on participative, experiential, interdisciplinary and peer learning—all of which are the cornerstones of the CBCS curriculum. Through this practice, students no longer remain mere receivers of knowledge but are encouraged to become independent, creative thinkers as well as participants in the knowledge formation. They learn through doing practical things and by exploring the avenues that lie beyond the classroom and not just by reading theory. The shift from theory to praxis is the keynote of modern higher education in India where there is paradigm shift in the way knowledge gets imparted. When the learners become the doers, learning definitely becomes much more creative, interesting and enriching.

## **5. Evidence of Success**

The evidence of success lies in the increasing number of participants each succeeding year. There is a huge excitement among the students to participate in the various events as it provides them a platform to showcase their academic talent and an opportunity to garner

new experiences. This practise was initiated with a view to empower the students by inculcating within them the power of independent thinking which can equip them for challenges in the future and to expose them to new pedagogical techniques. The students have admitted that participation in these activities has enabled them to become better thinkers and it has also helped them to adopt a more holistic approach towards academics. Besides this, it has also helped them adopt an interdisciplinary approach towards learning. The college is for them not just a centre for learning but also a place where they have undergone a significant transformation from passive receivers of knowledge to active participants in the process of learning. Another very crucial evidence of success is the very close student-teacher bonding that has developed as a result of this practice. Since the students constantly interact with the teachers during these activities to seek their support, guidance and suggestions, it leads to a very amicable and cordial bonding between the students and the teachers.

#### **6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

The foremost problem was to motivate the students to participate in these activities and to help them overcome their fear of performance and exposure. Since most of the students are first generation learners, it was quite natural for them to feel reluctant, uncomfortable and shy to participate. The most important resource through which these problems were overcome were the mentor-mentee system and the psychological counselling cell of the college. The mentors played a crucial role in helping their mentees overcome their lack of confidence and the psychological counselling cell conducted counselling sessions for the students to encourage them to participate. The faculty of the college also conducted guardian meetings to convince them of the effectiveness of these alternative pedagogical techniques.