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NAA C Re-Accredited 'A' Grade

Best Practices

1. Title of the Practice: Students' Seminar

1.1 Objectives:

To train students in public presentation, develop their research skills, work in teams and have access to inter-disciplinary exposure while learning from their peers.

The main concepts of this practice: To teach students independent learning, guide them in literature survey, be familiar with the use of ICT-enabled tools of learning, enhance their communication and presentation skill, introduce them to the methodology of paper writing and research skills, and inculcate a healthy spirit of competition among them.

1.2 The Context:

Our students are mostly rural based and educated in vernacular schools with limited infrastructure and resources. As such, they are often at a disadvantage in terms of exposure, effective communication in the English language and usage of ICT tools. It has been observed that this affects their self-confidence and sense of competence especially in public communication and interaction. This initiative started by the College is a step toward teaching them independent-learning, build up their self-confidence, train them in public speaking, enhance their communication/presentation skills and familiarize them with the use of ICT as a powerful tool of teaching-learning.

The issues that need to be addressed are:

- To help them engage confidently with the English language
- Provide assistance on the use of computers as many of the rural students are not yet computer literate.

1.3 The Practice

The student's seminar is an integral component of the academic activities of the college and has been incorporated into the annual academic calendar. There are two Students' Seminars held each year:

- (i) The Department Seminar - Each department conducts a seminar for their students as per the schedule of the Academic Calendar. The students are divided into groups and each group is

assigned a particular topic related to the syllabus. The topics are chosen by the teacher-in-charge of seminars,, in consultation with the HOD and other faculty of the department. All the teachers of the department are involved in assisting and guiding the different groups in preparing their project. The teacher-in-charge/ HOD chairs the session and the presentations are evaluated and marked by the teachers on the basis of content, research input, skills of presentation, management of time, teamwork and ability to manage discussions. The two best presentations are then selected to represent the department in the Inter-Department Seminar which is held at a later date.

(ii) The Inter-Department Seminar - is conducted separately for the Arts Section and for the Science and Professional Courses respectively. All the presenters are awarded with a memento and a certificate of participation. It is observed that this practice has benefitted the students greatly. Apart from helping them to engage with the topic at a deeper level, it also provides first-hand learning experience on research skills, presentation skills, engaging with the audience confidently, working together as a team, and time-economy. The Inter-Department Seminar with its interdisciplinary approach also helps the students to gain knowledge about topics and subjects other than their own, thereby fostering a wider learning experience.

1.4. Evidence of Success:

- Students were able to articulate themselves better in public talks. **Two students from the College were selected as Radio Jockeys in the All India Radio Shillong Talent Hunt (16th March 2022).**
- Students have become **more comfortable in handling and managing ICT tools.**
- The in-depth research involved and the methodical arrangement of facts and knowledge necessitated in a seminar paper, has helped students **perform better in their studies.** This is one of the factors that has contributed to **better performance and subsequently, a rise in the pass percentage of our students.**
- The robust training in research and writing imbibed through students' seminars is borne testimony in the **publication of two of our V Semester, English Honors students' (B. Khongshun and W. Blah) paper, titled "Teachers' teachings - Implication of Nature on the life of Wordsworth" in International Peer-Reviewed English Journal, Research Journal of English (impact factor: 6.67) Vol-7, Issue-4**
- Many of our students have secured ranks in their higher studies, pursued Ph.D degrees and **won scholarships into universities abroad.** A case in point is Naphirisa Tariang who graduated in 2019, was a rank holder in MA English (NEHU) and received the **Vice Chancellor's International Scholarship in Cardiff University, UK.**

1.5. Problems Encountered :

- Preparation for the seminar can sometimes put an added pressure on students, especially during peak academic sessions because it involves spending time in more in-depth research.
- It is an added pressure for the faculty supervisors as well since they have to guide and supervise the students' preparation
- Extra work is involved in subsequent compiling, printing and binding of the project.

- The printing and binding cost is borne by the College so it does involve financial constraints upon the institution.
- However, the benefits evidenced from the practice far outweigh the problems encountered. Students and faculty alike look forward to the yearly seminar, and it has become an acceptable part of the College calendar.

1.5 Resources Required:

- **Strong internet connectivity to enable easy access of e-materials for research and reference.**
- **availability of more funds to print and bind the projects**
- **resource persons, other than faculty, to guide students in effective seminar presentations.**

1.6 Notes:

To evaluate the pros and cons of this practice, a **students' seminar feedback was conducted** to which there were 328 respondents. On analysis, the responses are as follows:

- 31.1% - the departmental seminar helps to improve communication skills,
- 47.3% - helps in building confidence,
- 33.55 - it helps them in public speaking,
- 20.7% - it helps them to be more fluent with ICT
- 45.7% - it helps them in their research skills and data collection.
- **The seminar feedback form can be accessed in the following website link:**
https://erp.synodcollege.edu.in/uploads/igac/report/SYNOD_COLLEGE_STUDENT_SEMINAR_FEEDBACK_2022.pdf

2. Title of the Practice: Student-Centric Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Skills Practices

2.1 Objectives of the Practice

The objective of this practice is to create a space whereby, side by side with academic education, students will learn crucial life skills beyond the classroom, equip them to work in the real world, and gain practical knowledge and learning to compete efficiently and successfully in a rapidly changing, global job market.

2.2 The Context

Synod College was started with the vision of imparting quality and holistic education to the student community, particularly those from 'economically disadvantaged' backgrounds, preparing them for a life of purpose, service and leadership. The student profile of the college shows that almost 90% of the students hail from such backgrounds. One means of empowering the students, therefore, is by imparting real-world skills that will help them to be self-reliant and self-supporting individuals. Simultaneously, these vocational-oriented courses will help students who are not too academically

inclined to explore other means and avenues of livelihood after graduation. But since the college is affiliated to a University and has to follow the prescribed curriculum which is mainstream academic in nature, the challenge that needs to be addressed is to design an internal/extra curricula that will provide life skills and entrepreneurship-focused programs in addition to the main academic curriculum.

2.3. The Practice

To support its objective of providing entrepreneurial and life skills education, the College conducts and collaborates with external agencies who have the required resources and expertise, to implement the following programs:

- **Short term training/workshops on entrepreneurial and market-oriented skills** that are contextually relevant and practical in nature. Keeping in view the agricultural/rural background of a large number of our students, workshops organized include, (i) **‘Vegetable and Fruit Processing’ ‘Entrepreneurship and Marketing’** (December 2020), done in collaboration with Department of Horticulture and Meghalaya Industrial Development Corporation. (ii) **‘Beekeeping and Candle Making,’** to train students in Apiculture and candle making, harnessing natural resources as a means of sustainable livelihood. (iii) Sending 19 students on **Two days training on “Planning and Implementation of income generating project”**, organized by IATC, Dept of Agriculture, Govt of Meghalaya (29th and 30th June 2022) (iv) **Add-on Courses/ Certificate Courses:** To cater to the varied backgrounds and needs of students, a number of diverse Add-on Courses of three to four months duration were conducted. In the last five years, 10 certificate courses and 1 short term course were conducted. These include ICT-related Courses to impart digital skills to negotiate the contemporary job market; Tailoring and Fashion Design; Soft Skills and Facing interviews; Hospitality and Tourism to explore the tourism industry potential of the state and region; Baking -as-therapy; Data Analysis, and Statistics to coach students on preparing for entry into services.
- All these courses are conducted after class hours three to four times a week, to enable students to join without hindering their regular classes. The fee collected is highly subsidized to allow economically weak students to avail of the same. For differently abled students and those coming from BPL background, the college undertakes to sponsor them, or charge concessional rates.
- Resource persons are highly trained, certified professionals with years of experience and expertise in their fields:
 - The two Baking class teachers have their own Bakery outlets - IINGSHET and NACOBAKES located in Shillong city.
 - The resource person for Fashion design owns an apparel and clothing studio - EGILINE BOUTIQUE.
 - In the process, in addition to these practical skills, students learnt other skills such as micro business management and entrepreneurship.
 - In 2022, the **‘Student with Potential Award’** was instituted to provide micro entrepreneurial support for highest scoring students in these Courses:

(i) **Kutmon Lamin (Fashion Design) got a Sewing Machine**

(ii) **Sanaphisha Kynru (Baking) got an Oven**

2.4 Evidence of Success

- Empowering a generation of **self-reliant and independent individuals who are job creators rather than job seekers.**
- Some of the students from the ICT courses (2020-21) were placed **in reputed IT industries such as TCS and iMerit** and have become more digitally competent.
- Some students could **support themselves educationally through stipends and salaries** earned from these online/part time employment.
- Similarly, students who have received training in the tailoring course were able to **earn an additional living** from the sale of tailoring goods such as dresses and masks, especially during the pandemic.
- The Fruit and Vegetable Processing workshop helped students not only to learn this essential skill but to **start micro businesses in their own villages and localities. Rural based students could impart their knowledge to others through Self-Help Groups (SHG)** in their villages.
- **Students who have started their own businesses:**
 - **Saphishisha Tron (2021 Batch) opened a small, home-grown bakery.**
 - **Kyntiewful Nongsiej (2021 trainee) has successfully made and sold her own candles.**
- The success stories that came out of these training have encouraged the College to plan more such courses that will cater to the needs of the students and produce skilled graduates able to serve themselves and society.

2.5 Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- **These student-centric livelihood courses are not yet part of the prescribed curriculum of the affiliating University** and cannot be implemented on a bigger scale.
- The pressure of completing the regular syllabus, leaves **limited time for students to join the courses.** Classes could only be conducted after regular class hours.
- **Space constraint** is a major challenge. More classrooms and practical rooms are needed to conduct the courses.
- **Need for more funding:** These courses are college-funded, generated through highly subsidized fees paid by students who enrolled. The resource persons recruited are highly trained, certified professionals. More funding is needed to pay for honorarium and other requirements.
- Designed for all students, but mostly, to empower economically disadvantaged students, the Course fees are highly subsidized, hence, financial assistance is required. Previously, the College has availed RUSA funding, yet, assistance is needed if such programs are to be conducted on a long term basis.

2.6 Notes:

The success of these trainings and courses is seen through the testimonials and feedback of students who have cracked in/off campus interviews and secured jobs for themselves in the Hospitality and soft skills sector as a result of the training received:

- (i) Golda Mary Lyngdoh (2022 batch) placed in IT Firm Medusind, Shillong
- (ii) Melody Marwein (2022) in Medusind, Shillong
- (iii) Naniverity Kharsyntiew (2022) in Medusind, Shillong
- (iv) Wanpli Nongrum (2022) in Sa-I-Mika Park, Cherrapunjee