

1. Peer review of our faculty by senior teachers of other institutions

1. Title of the practice:

Peer review of teaching methods and skills of our faculty by senior teachers of other institutions.

2. Goal:

- To offer to the faculty an independent opinion on their teaching skills.
- Offer them advice on methodology, voice modulation, spoken communication skills and presentation.
- To offer advice that is confidential.
- To eliminate bias, appeasement etc. in the review process.
- To do away with complacency.
- To provide a tool for constant improvement.

3. The Context:

It is a general observation that initially when a teacher is appointed, he/she is very enthusiastic and wants to prove oneself. Gradually as time passes, the behavior of the teacher may become complacent and it may develop the attitude of taking the students for granted. Again, there may develop a trait in a teacher where, he may teach less, but give more i.e. give away material relevant to the examination to gain popularity and therefore avoid any attempt by a student complaining. This is detrimental to both, the teacher and the student. For though, the student is happy, after his stint with the institution, he would always recall that teacher who never used to teach but instead, give away examination material. The loss of the student is that he has not really learned anything.

Again, teachers of this kind or those who possess poor communication skills are more prone to such practices.

There are also teachers, who need to be groomed and advised on course correction in their endeavor at improvement.

Initially, it was suggested that senior teachers (Principal, Vice-principal, Head of Departments etc.) should take up peer review of our teachers. However, it was noticed that there was some reluctance on the part of the teachers to accept the idea on the following grounds:

- Does seniority in service years make a good teacher?
- There may be bias on the part of the in-house reviewer, or that the reviewer may be prejudiced.
- No confidentiality.

It was also noticed in informal talks, that per se, our staff was not against peer review, it only wanted it to be constructive and confidential.

Thus, it was decided to introduce peer-review by senior acclaimed teachers of other institutions.

4. The Practice:

- The institution invites senior acclaimed faculty from other institution by requesting the Principal of that institution for reviewing our teacher.
- No name is disclosed to either party nor is any schedule fixed.
- The reviewer enters the class accompanied by the Principal or Vice-principal, and explains to the student the purpose of the exercise (being beneficial to the teacher and student).
- The reviewer notes down his observations and suggestions.
- At the end of the session, after the teacher leaves the class, the reviewer interacts with the students

for a few minutes, to gauge if the students have any comments, suggestions or criticisms about the teachers teaching methods.

- The reviewer then interacts with the teacher who was reviewed, points out his observations on the lacunae (if any), students response and provides his suggestions for improvement.
- This practice is in vogue for all teachers of our institution, including Vice-Principal and Heads of the Departments.

5. Evidence of success:

The following two examples clearly demonstrate how constructive suggestions help improve by making even minor corrections. These examples have cited by the teachers reviewed themselves, otherwise the process is confidential.

- One teacher admitted that she used to spell sh as s. That is, to say Cash, she would say Cas. The students found it amusing. However, she appreciated when the reviewer pointed out to her.
- Another teacher accepted that she used to speak very fast and speedily, till such time as the reviewer pointed out to her that students cannot both, take notes and follow her lecture.

Apart from these two examples, the evidence of success lies in the fact that our faculty has accepted and appreciated this practice. They have also digested the fact that, the practice is

initiated solely for affording the faculty at self-improvement without any ulterior motive. Especially, as it is confidential.

They also appreciate that all teachers who lecture are included, irrespective of the post they hold.

6. Problems encountered and resources required:

Problems encountered:

Initially, there was some opposition in introducing this practice, which is normal, as nobody, generally appreciates a comment on oneself, especially if it is perceived to be negative. However, we are glad that, our faculty has accepted it positively.

The only minor problem is to schedule a convenient time for both the reviewer and the reviewed. Another minor problem is to arrange for a reviewer who is senior in age than the teacher reviewed; this is so because, a reviewer, junior in age offering advice to a senior teacher, may appear to be embarrassing to

both.

Resources required:

Except a token payment to the reviewer, no financial resources are involved in this practice. The reviewer receives conveyance from his institution and a token payment from us.

Luckily, our staff has taken this practice very positively. Realizing the fact that, it is in their own interest and improvement.

This is a glaring example of implementing a practice which costs almost nothing, but is immensely valuable.

7. Notes (optional):

Quality improvement is an on-going and never ending process. The success of this practice of peer-review is a result of the strong belief of the staff that the practice of peer review is actually and truly

intended for their own improvement and it will help them in acceptance by the students as a good teacher. Taking the staff in confidence is primary to introducing such a practice.

2. Tangible and concrete encouragement and motivation provided by our management to the faculty and students for promotion of Research Culture.

1. Title of the Practice:

Encouragement and Motivation from the Management for undertaking Research by the Faculty and the students.

2. Goal:

- To encourage and inculcate a research culture among the faculty and the students.
- To prepare a faculty who have a mature understanding of the subject not limited to the textbooks.
- Faculty should broaden the horizons of their academic knowledge by gaining depth in their field.
- Preparing the faculty to deliver value addition to the students.
- Providing financial aid/grant to cover their expenses on research.
- Encouraging students to take up research to develop their original way of learning rather by rote.
- To provide support and resources to the students for undertaking research.
- Encourage the faculty to publish research papers, attend seminars and conferences and organize such seminars.
- Provide funds for publishing research articles.

3. The Context:

The institution is a totally unaided linguistic minority institution. We receive no funding from any government or private agency for funding research. Also, we do not have an approval for UGC 2(f) and 12(b). Thus, so far as research was concerned, it was felt that there were not many members of the faculty who were keen on taking up research.

This was about five years ago.

Subsequently, our management decided to give this essential pursuit by the faculty a great boost. It decided to establish a Research Cell consisting of members of the faculty and the Principal, with the following intentions:

- To investigate as to how the faculty can be motivated to take up research?
- Identifying the obstacles.
- To identify how management can play the role of a facilitator for the faculty in taking up research.
- How to involve students to take up research by motivating them and providing them necessary resources for the same.
- To create an atmosphere in the institution where each member of the faculty is constantly involved in some academic pursuit.

After a lot of deliberations and discussion with the faculty of ours and of other institutions, the research cell came to the following conclusions:

- It was a wrong belief that the faculty is not interested in taking up research. However, certain

obstacles were identified.

- a) In Mumbai, almost all working people have to commute for long hours to reach their work place. In many cases, it takes about 3 to 4 hours (to and fro). Most people commute through local trains which are jam packed and overcrowded. Thus, teachers are physically so exhausted that they have little inclination or capacity for undertaking research.
- b) Being an expensive city to live in, financial resource crunch is another impediment.
- c) The red-tapesim in the University and long time period for accepting the proposal, interview by the DRE, availability of the guide and final registration at times takes about two years.
- d) Taking up Ph.D. from other universities requires travelling and stay (for course-work). Since in most cases both, the teacher and his/her spouse are working, it is a difficult prospect. Although, a special leave is granted by the institution for it, it entails staying away from home which is an obstacle, especially for female teachers.

The Practice:

On the basis of the findings of the Research Committee, the IQAC discussed these issues with the management. The following decisions were taken by the management and on that basis the following practices were formalized:

- **Management agreed to provide a financial grant of Rs. 50,000 to any member of the faculty who registers for Ph.D.**

- In case, the actual expenditure (on registration fees, travel, survey etc.) exceeds the offered grant. The management agreed to consider sanctioning such amount on a case to case basis.

- Full reimbursement to the faculty towards fees to be paid for attending seminars and conferences.
- Duty leaves for attending such seminars and conferences.
- Full reimbursement towards cost of books purchased by the faculty for their research (to be returned to the library after use).
- Leave to be sanctioned for attending course-work if so required, when a faculty member registers for Ph.D. with other universities.
- Provide facility of computers, internet, e-resources, printing etc. for teachers engaged in research.
- Publishing of a research journal and provide funding for it.
- Allowing students all the resources available with the institution (computers, internet, reprographic facility etc.) if they take some research project.
- Allowing students to select books for purchase by the library (during book fair that the institutions library organizes every year)
- Relaxation in duty hours to the faculty for attending work related to research.

4. Evidence of success:

The effect and impact of the above practices to inculcate a Research Culture among the faculty and students can be seen by the following data:

- Seven teachers have since then, taken up PhD. out of which two has already been awarded her Ph. D. Two are awaiting registration. Two teachers have also completed M.Phil.
- All of the above teachers have benefitted by the grant of Rs. 50,000 offered by the management.

- Faculty members now come forward to recommend books to be purchased and also buy many books by themselves.
- Students also come forward to request certain books to be purchased during the annual book fair.
- Additional internet-enabled computers have been acquired and a special E-Corner has been set up in the library with four computers (with internet) exclusively for students.
- The faculty now involves themselves in preparing research articles; attend conferences, seminars and workshops. There has been a quantum jump in these activities.
- Since many are seen engaged in research, others are motivated too.
- Availability of e-resources i.e. N-LIST.
- Students of B.Com, who do not have to mandatorily prepare projects are encouraged and motivated to take simple research projects.

Since last four years, these students have taken up five such survey based research projects:

- (i) Reasons for absenteeism amongst students. [sample size: 75]
- (ii) Subjects liked by students of T.Y.B.Com and why? [sample size; 70]
- (iii) Economic and financial awareness amongst students [sample size: 100]
- (iv) Smoking / drinking habits amongst students. [sample size: 150]
- (v) Average daily earning of an auto rickshaw driver (who is not the owner. [sample size: 50]

- The institution has been publishing an annual research journal since last two years i.e. *International journal of inter-disciplinary knowledge*. This is a peer-reviewed journal with an ISSN number.
- Since the last five years 20 members have in all published more than 90 research papers. Five faculty members have either authored or co-authored books.

5. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Problems encountered:

- Being a totally unaided institution, the main constraint is the lack of adequate financial resources.
- The institution does not have enough space to provide separate enclosures for each faculty.
- Time available for undertaking research (after engaging all lectures) is limited. Again, commuting in Mumbai from the workplace to ones place of stay consumes a lot of time.
- Being an UG college, very few students get motivated or feel any need to take up research. Again in Mumbai, almost all students are attending private coaching classes for pursuing professional courses like, C.A, C.S, Fashion designing etc. Many students also work.

Resources Required:

- Financial support from some agency. If private businesses finance research as per their needs through the colleges, the problem can not only be resolved but the research would also be more meaningful.
- Lectures/teaching hours should be reduced for those who register for PhD. for say, one or two years.
- Approval of the proposal of the research project and final registration process takes unreasonably long time at Mumbai University. At times, it takes 1.5 to 2 years. This must come down.
- Constant motivation and encouragement is continuously required to be provided to researchers. If not financially, other areas should be explored to offer them some respite.

- **Notes (optional):**

Interest of the management in the faculty taking up research in order to provide better services to the students has been taken very positively by the faculty. Particularly, the wonderful gesture on the part of the Management to offer financial aid for research has been highly appreciated. Though resources are limited, the Principal and the Management always encourage all endeavors for research.