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INNOVATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION - TEACHING & LEARNING

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Introduction

Higher education is a change-resistant enterprise. Academic culture, faculty governance and an unusual bureaucracy all work together to slow down evolution. In part, this has contributed to enormous survival success of old branded higher education institutions. in order to improve the quality of higher education institutions have to think beyond presently adopted credit based systems By adding competency to the students and the system through innovations and best practices, the institutions can add value to the education system to address large social And economic challenges that began about a decade ago and are in full swing now. this include rapidly rising costs of tuitions, a growing need for more and repeated education for employment, global market competition challenges etc. Competency-based education provides the flexibility student's need, focuses on assessing learning mastery needed to be a well-functioning, and is affordable because it is scalable in ways that create efficiencies.

Science and technology are growing alarmingly and consequently the knowledge base of all disciplines is fast expanding. The educational system is invested with the responsibility of absorbing, assimilating and delivering the new knowledge to its incumbents. Higher education therefore has become competitive. It not only matters how much in terms of quantity but how good in terms of quality that it delivers the knowledge Student centric focus is gradually shifting to student friendly approaches, and innovations and best practices are adopted to add value and get more mileage in the knowledge delivery, Changes in culture, aspiration and levels of skills required in securing employment for students and cost of providing the service, force higher education institutions today to rework on their educational models and add value at each and every aspect in their service. This has become a high priority for institutions either struggling for existence or striving for excellence.

Key Words : Higher Education, Innovations, Best Practices, Teaching & Learning

Objectives of the study

1. To identify Innovative and Best practices in Teaching.
2. To study Innovative and Best practices in Learning.
3. To suggest institutional and individual level Innovative and Best practices

Methodology

Exploratory research methodology is used here to analyses the data.. Data was collected from multiple sources such as journals, books and blogs to understand the innovative and best practices. . In this paper, we have referred previous research articles. Apart from this, we have referred different websites and professional magazines.

Innovations and Best Practices.

Student retention rates But this is a very complex process, which has to deal with Student-centered active learning, all-institution involvement and "Belonging Engagement-Retention" model are some of the most important strategies that higher education institutions around the world are implementing to improve their student retention rates. but this is very complex process which has deals with several variables that have to be followed measured from freshman year to graduation day and even further student retention strategies are long-term processes, so their results can be viewed only after several years of implementation.

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How do we know if this process is going in the right direction? Here is where best practices appear as the right answer because they consist of easy-to-implement actions that deliver concrete and measurable results that can help to visualize how the strategy is doing.
The following best practices stand out in the higher education environment because they are easy to implement and are fully student-oriented.

Institutional Innovative and Best Practices

1. Admission – The first come first serve model of the institution provides equal opportunity for students irrespective of caste, religion, nationality, gender and poor academic performance.
2. Fees – Admission to backward communities is supported by the University approved fee in selected courses. help students from backward community to access the education.
3. Attendance – The "Save a Year" programme of the institute enables students with marginal attendance to recover the requirement by attending additional classes to avoid losing a year.
4. Earnings – The Earn while Learn programme of the college encourages and provides opportunity to students to support themselves by taking part-time jobs along with studies.
5. Teaching–Entry test and summarization of the class is used as a teaching technique.
6. Performance – The college conducts mentorship programmes to support students, faculty serve as mentors.
7. Skill building – Skill development programmes have been introduced to build job-specific skills.
8. Motivation-Best project of the year is awarded with prize annually, to encourage the quality of research and projects by the students.
9. Student Involvements – Student developed software is used for computerization of college library and related information system.
10. Collective Learning – Subscription of business newspapers and regular weekly news review in groups encourages collective learning**.**
11. Developing Service Mindedness – The institution encourages social service programmes involving students through its NGO.
12. Learning Teaching Plan and Study -Materials are prepared according to the syllabus with chapter-end assignments in all courses and subjects.
13. Extended Facility – Library and computer facility are kept open for extended hours till late evening and holidays.
14. Feedback – Student feedback is treated as a valuable output and is collected through a variety of ways such as feedback form, suggestion box, open door policy, etc**.**
15. Monitoring – Comprehensive performance management system for self-evaluation and rating of faculty by students.
16. Ensuring Transparency – Faculty members are involved in the admission process. Internal assessment of students is based on explicit criteria.
17. Welfare – Locker facility is provided to the students to make the classrooms mobile-free and safe keeping of personal belongings.
18. Concern – Ramp and lift facility are shared with physically handicapped students**.**
19. Information Dissemination – The College has a best practice of providing comprehensive information on each of the courses through a handbook.
20. Learning Community – In relation to the previous best practice, "learning communities" build a sense of academic and social community and increase engagement among students and faculty, all of which lead to a variety of positive outcomes. These may include improved academic achievement, credits earned and self-reported learning.

II. Individual Innovative Best Practices

1. Entry Test – Summarization Teaching Model – This model developed by Prof. Aithal.
2. Contextualization – Making meaning by connecting curriculum to teaching and students' experiences and skills. The concept of contextualization involves applying various theories and concepts to everyday context in the student's life.

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3. Modified Brainstorming – Brain storming is an effective technique for ensuring participation in the learning process. But almost everybody is afraid to use it because of the difficulty in managing complex and diverse ideas which come in the process.

4. Oral Storytelling (OST) – We have a profound need to tell and hear stories. It is how we share experience, understand each other, and create community. Every conversation is full of personal anecdotes; every effort to explain shared customs and values needs a tale; every bit of wisdom is best expressed by a story.

5. Exploding the Syllabus – For topic-based assignments the lecturer has to explode the syllabus of the subject which he teaches, to smaller topics. Each of these topics can be given to the students as assignment to cover all the aspects related to the topic, which becomes a knowledge bank on that subject.

6. Business Practice Simulation – Virtual trading is a practice used for teaching finance and management to students to show how online platforms can be used to replicate the real market scenarios so as to make the students aware of the nuances of stock market**.**

7. Corporate Lessons & Concepts (CLC Model) – This is a method by which the faculty familiarizes certain ways of the corporate world such as language, style of working and jargons used by them, explained by means of story. The students are then asked to find out the latest concepts in the industry of their choice and share the same in the class.

8. Teach the Teacher – Today's students belong to a much smarter generation technologically and otherwise. It is indeed a challenge for the teacher to keep them engaged and engrossed in the classroom discussions and ensure that there is continued involvement and assimilation of the concepts taught ideas shared learning imparted and skill development.

9. Idea Tracking Enablement Method – It is essential that teachers have to be effective speakers because the idea is the talking. In order to voice the idea best, it is essential that preparation be done before going to the class.

10. Summarization and Clarification – Towards the end of each session ask two or three students to summarize the session which was discussed in the class. This will help the students to recollect the points and clarify or supplement once again if they missed any points. This will also make the students more alert and teacher will get the feedback as well. This will also help the teachers to control the disturbing students in the class.

11. Hands-On Investigation and Analysis – Hands-on investigation and analysis of technical questions is done by guiding students in active and extended scientific inquiry and discussion through understanding the technical concepts and use of simulators.

12. **Concept to Mind Map** – This approach attempts to explain the application part of a particular concept first and explain the effects of such applications through mind mapping. They are much quicker to make much easier to remember and review because of their visual quality and application is solving real world problems

13. Group Study

Main objective of this is to encourage everyone as members of a group and groups as teams to gain expertise in a battery of aptitude test. Fixing responsibility for individual students in group study encourages accountability.

14. Virtual Reality

The best practice called Virtual Reality means "Viewing an unseen". The major challenge for the teacher who teaches technical papers is that they find the subject difficult for teaching because the concepts are purely theory which cannot be visualised. Animated slide based teaching clearly gives the idea about the subjects.

15. Programming Champ

The aim of the practice is to facilitate learning through working in teams especially in the lab sessions. The practice is to group the students into a team of five or six members. Make one student the leader of the team. The leader should plan the work together with the members, make sure that he finishes his work and then help all his team members to finish their work within the stipulated time.

16. Surprise Tests

Surprise tests are tests typically held for a small duration at the end of a class. These are tests typically held for a small duration at the end of a class to ensure that students do not lag behind as the subject is covered. The questions should ideally be attemptable by a regular, attentive student without preparation.

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17. Active Learning

Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. Active Learning is defined as any strategy that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing. They must talk about what they are learning, write reflectively about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives.

18. Open Book Exams

Open book exams are tests typically held for a small duration at the end of each chapter. This ensures that students keep pace with the subject as it progresses. The questions should ideally enable a regular attentive student to answer without preparation ahead. By allowing students to consult the books, students get rid of fear for examinations and develop book reading habit.

19. Exhibit Reality

It is a simulation exercise aimed at showing the practicality of the subject learnt, which enables students in understanding the concepts better. Students are divided into groups and are made to exhibit various products or services. They would be going to various locations to learn and collect information.

20. Divide and Learn Method

This is a method of dividing an entire concept into smaller topics in order to make the students understand the concepts. Simple problems are given to be worked out until students understand the concepts and then move to difficult problems. Making students understand practically is easier way of changing the mind set of students regarding the subject of study.

21. Each One Teach One

The present day students are more techno-based rather than study-based. Therefore, they are disinterested in listening classes as passive recipients. Through this practice, students interest in studies is enhanced by assigning opportunity to fellow students to learn from each other under the supervision of the teacher.

Conclusion

Higher education is the fast growing service industry exposed to the 'liberalization, privatization and globalization' processes in the recent times. In order to attract students and to cater to their and needs aspirations, higher education providers have been actively involved in the process of understanding students' expectations and their perceptions about quality in the system. They are expected to adopt techniques of measuring quality of the inputs and process of education just like any other business sector. Measuring quality of the services is, therefore, an important task to provide feedback on the dimensions of quality that needs to be taken care of, in the future so innovative and best practices must be implemented effectively and efficiently.

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