

## **Best Practice 1**

**Title of the Practice:** Use of Google Classrooms via G Suite

**Objectives of the Practice:** In the context of unprecedented layoff in higher education due to the pandemic, the objective was to continue teaching-learning in an effective way resembling classroom teaching. The principle was to keep teachers and students engaged in learning as a way to open new avenues of e-learning.

**The Context:** The greatest challenge in implementing the practice was to include and enable all students to use the Google platform effectively . Working with a student community coming from poor families, economic depression due to the pandemic posed the threat of discontinuation in higher education. The college with limited resources was not able to provide adequate economic assistance, and faced the danger of heavy drop-out rates. Many students lacked the electronic device to avail of e-learning, and it was hard to motivate and rope in students from a demoralized state.

**The Practice:** Reacting quickly to the radically altered situation of higher education, the college started online classes via the Zoom platform in April 2020. The authority arranged several online training sessions to equip teachers for the online modes. The four Honours courses and all the Program courses were brought under a weekly class routine, and students were invited to join over social media and taught the ways to use the platform. About two months later, driven by needs of further academically enabling activity, the college Google Inc. for access to the G Suite for Education. After the agreement was complete, teachers and students began to use the Suite since MAY-June 2020, and could perform all regular academic tasks like live online lectures, conducting tests, making surveys and enquiries, assigning projects and providing study material, and assessing student progress with individual care. All this was achieved regular customized activity at a time far ahead of peer institutions in the region, and [receding government initiative or instruction in the matter. At a time when the higher education scene across India was reeling with news of debacle and dystrophy, the college was able to engage at least 85 per cent of Honours and 60 per cent of Program students in regular curricular activity, and keep them abreast of the heavy schedule of semesterized CBCS courses. The limitations faced were mostly economic inability to avail the internet, and these were supplemented by offline coordination.

**Evidence of Success:** The chief evidence of success of this practice is the results of the semester examinations held in blended mode (online and offline) since November 2020. The aims of regular online teaching and assessment were to engage as many students as possible amidst economic uncertainties, dropout tendencies and lack of communication. The results of the semester term-end Honours courses were placed in the first class. Considering the disheveled state of students across the nation, this was no mean achievement. The management was convinced that the early entry to the G Suite and its consistent use had borne good fruit.

**Problems encountered and resources required:** The problems encountered were threefold – to communicate with all students, especially in the Program course, and bring them within the ambit, to equip all with electronic devices and internet services, and to keep them glued to this new and unusual mode. The resources employed to address these problems were – special fee waivers and concessions granted by the Principal, provision of internet data to some needy students, simultaneous use of the college website for providing study material, and surveys, internal assessments and counseling/mentoring by teachers in Google classrooms.

**Notes (optional):**

## **Best Practice 2**

### **Title of the Practice: Creation and expansion of a Herbal Garden**

**Objectives of the Practice:** The objective of the practice was to build a rich stock of medicinal plants for the use of stakeholders and the neighboring community as primary defense against ordinary ailments. Further, the aim was to develop among students knowledge of traditional Indian medicine and foster its use in daily life.

**The Context:** The college is situated in a rural location amongst a green landscape with a rivulet flowing by its rear boundary. As such, the natural conditions were highly favorable for a herbal garden, and the predominance of plant nurseries as an agro-based industry in the area further supported the cause. It was hoped that the use of herbal medicines at no/low cost would be beneficial for the poor population living in the vicinity of the college.

**The Practice:** Initially, a plot of ground (about 500 square feet) was planted with common medicinal plants like tulsi and basak, following a survey among local people. It was maintained with care during 2018-20, but suffered a wither through the pandemic closure. Plants died out and the plot was overgrown with weeds. On reopening in late 2021, it was decided to reframe the garden and extend it. Accordingly, an additional strip of land (approximately 1000 square feet) was prepared and the authorities of the herbal garden at Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Sargachhi, Murshidabad, West Bengal, maintained by Dhanyaganga Krishi Vigyan Kendra, was contacted for aid. IN the monsoon of 2022, about thirty new and rare species were purchased from the Kendra and planted. Today the garden is being readied for development of medicines and as basis of study in Ayurveda, an ancient Indian knowledge system. The limitations in the way are lack of funds and sufficient land.

**Evidence of Success:** The success of the endeavor is found in the interest shown by students in the garden who offer voluntary service in its maintenance, and the frequent visits by neighboring people to collect plant parts for use as medicine.

**Problems encountered and resources required:** The major problems encountered are the dearth of land to add to the garden, and the necessary funding to step into research and development of medicine in collaboration with appropriate agencies/institutions.

**Notes (optional):** The college intends to grow a repertoire of Ayurvedic medicinal knowledge and train students in its basics, on the strength of this garden.