

1. Title of the Practise

Mentor-Mentee Programme

a). Goal:

Being a college which teaches undergraduate students, majority of the students enrolled are at a vulnerable age where issues like dressing, relationships, use of cell phones and behaviour are sensitive topics. Realizing that for the overall development of the student, improvement in the above mentioned areas are also required, the college introduced the Mentor-Mentee Programme. Therefore this programme was taken up to guide students at a personal level and to monitor not only the academic progress of the students but also to look into the strength and weakness in the personal life of the student and guide him/her. The programme also seeks to improve human interaction on the campus. Therefore active and meaningful Mentor-Mentee interaction founded on mutual respect is sought to help the students get closer to their teachers. Another important aim of this programme is to minimize dropouts by ensuring that the mentee achieves emotional stability and motivation, better discipline, better academic profile and increased participation in all the activities of the college. This programme also aims to provide a personal counseling by lending ears to the mentee's personal problems in complete confidence. Besides the above mentioned objectives, the MentorMentee Programme was taken up to keep the parents/guardians updated on their child's performance. Keeping the overall welfare of the student in mind, this programme offers a corrective to erring students and motivation to others.

b). The Context:

This programme was taken up keeping the welfare of the student in mind. However, as is with any new programme, it had its initial challenges. 'How to go about it' was one overwhelming question that stared us in the face. Another contentious issue was the insufficient number of senior teachers at that time to take up this programme. The introduction of the new programme also meant additional work load for the teachers. As such when the programme first began, time management for the teachers became a pressing issue. Another matter of importance is that, the teacher who was delegated the responsibility of dividing the students/mentees among the teachers had a difficult task with having to take into consideration equal /fair division, teachers and students from the same department and so on. The format for the maintenance of the mentee's profile was also another one such task. Meeting the parents/guardians every semester became another issue as it incurred the resentment of some guardians. Another challenging issue was to involve the supporting staff in the preparation of the Report Card as they already had their designated work and this meant additional task. One more pressing issue which had to be tackled was appointing the dates for calling the parents/guardians as this meant taking some time off from the class hours. Over and above all these, there was the deadlock of making the students comprehend the importance of such a programme, let alone meeting them on time. However, inspite of all the above mentioned challenges, the institution after some initial hiccups have acquired the expertise of handling the programme and has now mentored one cycle of students (1st -6 th Semester) successfully who are now about to graduate.

c). The Practice:

The mentoring programme was taken up to keep a close watch of every student with regard to their development in areas such as academics, attendance performance, behaviour and interpersonal relationships. As per the finalized plan, a total number of 15-20 students are assigned to a senior and experienced teacher as Mentor. A teacher has to complete eight years in teaching experience to be deemed a senior. This automatically meant 'experienced' and thus basing on this criteria, only a teacher who has completed eight years of teaching experience is given the responsibility of mentoring the students. This criteria was felt a necessity since mentoring was done for students of sensitive age group and experience was felt a necessity to handle students of such group. In order to get to know the students more intimately, a profile chart of the students was brought out containing personal details of the student and the academic profile. The mentor call a meeting with the mentees and fill in the necessary information on their mentees. Interaction on a personal level take place at such times. Such interactions are not made to feel very formal and a congenial and open environment is maintained to draw the students out of their shell. Students are also encouraged to come forth with even their personal problems. The mentor highlights on the objectives of the college and at the same time help the student to understand the organizational culture. Through this programme smart students are assigned more responsibility thereby capitalizing on the potential of the students. Whereas slow learners are motivated to enhance and improve their performance. It also helped in identifying potential performers in arts and extracurricular activities. Shy students are encouraged to come out their shell. This programme also facilitates communication between the students and the administration, as when the students hesitate to convey his/her personal problem, the mentor plays the role of a mediator. After much deliberation, it was decided that the mentors would formally meet their mentees in the 1st, 3rd and 5th semesters, but outside the formal structure, would always be available to the mentees. Whereas meetings with the parents/guardians would be conducted in the 2nd, 4th and 6th semesters, which would come to once a year. These meetings with the parents/guardians helps to keep them updated on their ward's performance. These meetings are interactive sessions where parents/guardians are given constructive suggestions for the overall development of the student. Parents/guardians of achievers are advised to encourage their child to pursue higher studies. For the others, the mentor points out areas for development in the student. During such meetings the Report Card containing information on the student's academic performance and attendance percentage is handed out to the parents/guardians. So far the mentors have maintained a good rapport with the parents/guardians of the mentees. Suggestions and inputs from the parents/guardians have acted as feedback and helped in enhancing the teaching learning process of the students. This programme has gone a long way in improving discipline among the students. Students causing problem in the class room is referred to his/her mentor who gives counseling and correctives in an unbiased manner. Reappraisal meetings are held after every meetings with the students and guardians where teachers share experiences and exchange information which has helped teachers gain more knowledge and expertise in handling this programme. The Principal himself takes a keen interest in this best practice of the college by offering his invaluable advices and overseeing all the mentor's activities.

d). Evidence of Success:

The Mentor-Mentee programme has gone a long way in achieving one of the objectives of the college, that is the all round development of the student. A tremendous improvement has been evidenced in the overall performance of the students. To start with, it has been observed that a desirable improvement in the student's attendance has taken place. Mutual respect among the students and between student-teacher has also been facilitated. This programme has also brought about a humanizing environment on campus and at the same time helped the students to be closer and open to the teachers. It has motivated students to be participatory in the activities conducted by the college. The mentors has been able to motivate the potential performers to consistently do well in studies , if not to do better. This programme has resulted in improved discipline and helped in improving behavioural attitude. As such it has helped to resolve conflict between students-teachers, and decreased the use of cell phones in the campus. Students have opened up and feel that they have some body to turn to in times of trouble. This programme has also helped maintain transparency between parents/guardians and students concerning the student's overall performance. It has increased the confidence of the parents in the teachers and the turn out in the parents-teachers meet is almost cent percent. In fact the parent's appreciation of the programme is evidenced in their commitment to advertise this best practice to their neighbours and to send the siblings of their child to this college, which is promising and a valuable proof of the success this programme is having.

e). Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

As with any new programme, this programme had its share of problems encountered. The very first problem at the initial stage was the initiation of the students into the programme. It took some time to make the students realize the seriousness and depth of this programme. There was the problem of appointing the right time for the mentor-parents meet. Another problem encountered was the resentment of some guardians having to come every semester to meet the mentors of their wards. Some ill-informed parents/guardians could not make it to such meetings and caused a delay in the smooth functioning of the programme. Drop outs who joined the college again got misplaced under another mentor which took some time to resolve. There was also the tendency of the mentees to produce a fake guardian in the initial stage of the programme. The financial resources requirement is for materials like papers, file covers and light refreshment for the meetings, and these are easily managed by the institution. A supporting hand is required from the Head of the institution to formally invite the parents/guardians and address the defaulters, which he sees to. Student volunteers are also mobilized to help out during such meetings with the parents/guardians. The mentoring programme has proved to be fruitful and the institution plans to continue the programme for the benefit of the students/mentees.

2. Title of the practice

Remedial Classes.

a). Goal:

This programme was introduced to target the academically weak students. It aims to motivate and encourage the slow learners by offering remedial classes to enhance and improve their learning. This programme aims to include the slow learners in the institution's endeavour to pursue quality assured education.

b). The Context:

Though the programme is made student-centric, it was not received very well. Many students in fear of being labeled weak in studies did not attend the remedial classes regularly. For some students who had many periods off in between wandered off from the campus. It was also difficult to retain the students attention since the remedial classes were usually taken in the last periods. In spite of the best of intentions, the teachers also found it challenging to put in energy teaching after the day's work. However, the college is in the process of streamlining this programme to get the best out of it so that the students may be benefitted.

c). The Practice:

In keeping with the all inclusive policy of admission, the college gives equal opportunity to third divisioners by giving them admission in the college. As such, some come with poor academic background and find it difficult to catch up with the class lectures. This practice was introduced to give a fair chance and opportunity to the slow learners to enhance and improve their academic profiles. The slow learners are identified after a certain period of time by the concerned teachers and given suggestions to sit for remedial classes. The teachers in order to keep track of the students' regularity also maintain an attendance sheet. These classes are taken on rotation basis among the different departments, and the classes are further divided within the departments. During such classes, previous years question papers as well as expected questions are solved. Students are also encouraged to clarify their doubts. Open text books discussions highlighting on difficult words and references are also carried out. Exercises and practice sessions are also incorporated in this remedial classes. Moreover, such students are also taken to the library and introduced to relevant and recommended books. In order to make the students at ease, these days this remedial classes are incorporated within the normal duty in the form of revision classes. However, the weak students are encouraged to attend regularly. In this way, the students are made to learn and re-learn bridging the knowledge-gap.

d). Evidence of Success:

Students willing to attend such remedial classes enhanced their knowledge and were better equipped to sit for final examinations. It also boosted the students level of confidence. This programme has met with success in the sense that for those who attended, could graduate without back papers. In this way, this programme has also helped achieve one of the objectives of the college, that is to bring out the best in the individual.

e)Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

As stated earlier, this programme could not take off very promisingly as the students had the fear of being labeled weak in studies and thus were not forthcoming in attending such remedial classes. There was also the problem of fixing the classes during the prime time since the course coverage for normal classes was also a matter of concern. The remedial classes taken up by the teachers had to be paid a certain amount of fees for each class as this was an additional work load. Other than this, there is no financial implication for this programme. The teachers divided the classes among themselves and tried to do justice to the topics revised during the remedial classes. Over and above the head of the institution, the Principal, supervises to ensure the smooth functioning of the programme