Best Practices

1. Title of the Practice: Blended Learning

2. Objectives of the Practice:

With the rapidly changing teaching landscapes and their demands, and the avenues created by the advent of new technological opportunities, a novel method of teaching has evolved. The main objectives are to have an increased engagement level of students, increased accountability, and adaptability. Teachers can also foster accountability through blended learning, even in our complicated world where many factors can interfere with students' ability to account for their learning. Implementing blended learning creates an environment where adaptability is inevitably necessary to succeed for both teachers and students.

The evolution of blended learning is a student-centered design. It is a mixture of learning methods that incorporate multiple teaching models–most frequently e-Learning and traditional face-to-face learning. Blended learning is important because it breaks down the traditional walls of teaching, the ones that don't work for all students, and now with access to present-day technologies and resources, we can tailor the learning experience for each student. For each learning objective, an appropriate learning method is adapted to convey the subject matter. Traditional or conventional learning methods alone will not elevate the higher education system globally. Various learning methods are implemented that mitigate the learning process for the student.

3. The Context

Redefining the role of the facilitator

An active and participative instructor can be the key to the success of blended learning, but the fact that blended learning is not an easy ball in everyone's court especially in one's comfort zone of the traditional classroom. It takes more time to prepare for and deliver a blended program. As a result, every part of the program (classroom, self-paced, virtual classroom) is treated as individual sessions, instead of parts of a larger whole. At SKASC, the stakeholders (Faculty/tutors) are ever trained to be technologically sound. All classrooms are equipped with digital boards and all class sessions are encouraged to be based on the slideshow method. The conventional chalk and talk method are dispensed with and sparingly blended to ensure that the teachers are technology-friendly.

Facilitators at SKASC readily come out with a model where the classrooms have visual aids and video lectures. The classroom is followed through dedicated WhatsApp groups where students are considered to be business partners in the digital learning environment.

Managing and monitoring participant progress

Self-paced components are viewed with utmost importance because those are untracked by the teachers. Assessment is one of the critical success factors to overcome this challenge. Assessment results can be monitored, tracked, and used to ascertain that all requirements have been met. Also, facilitators should stay in contact with participants to ensure that their expectations are understood and unfolded.

4. The Practice

Sri Krishna Arts and Science College adopted the combination of texts, audio, and video model that combines online and face-to-face learning spaces and experiences. The facilitators developed unique and engaging content with texts, audio, and video and posted it in the Google classroom. The evaluation is being done through Google forms. Developing **unique** and **engaging** content and creating a productive environment of blended learning, at the students' level, is not always easy and can be quite challenging for many reasons. The development of this learning strategy involves the integration of advanced technology and its basic know-how by both the targeted audience and the content developer. Similarly, such kind of learning platforms cannot be accessed in the absence of adequate and fast bandwidth Wi-Fi or internet access. This is imperative to get complete and easy access to the learning material and to learn in a blended learning environment. In extension to that, blended learning strategy involves the use of the right software tools to develop a more engaging and advanced curriculum which is helpful for the achievement of set learning goals. SKASC has developed a huge reserve of free tools and shared tools available on the web scape for the ready usage of its faculty. The Institution has encouraged faculty members to attend various courses on blended learning and active learning. Sufficient training is provided to the faculty members to enable them and use the right mix of tools.

The strength of SKASC dwells in its strategic design. The whole premises and all its ventures ensure a learning culture. The teaching-learning experience of SKASC is enabled by its LMS named myklassroom.com. This LMS is also available as an Android application. Myklassroom.com provides a platform for all its stakeholders; a fun-filled social media-influenced learning experience. Teachers are encouraged to post learning events, questions and answers, and learning aids. With the magnitude of the learning experience, the attempts from the student's side like and impact indicators are calculated as scores that are aggregated on a monthly online performance basis and add to the credentials of the teacher. This impact factor counts to be imperative in a teacher's appraisal.

Measuring student engagement and evaluation was the major constraint and the constraints were overcome by keeping the following considerations into priority

1. What is the purpose of evaluation? To improve student engagement, resources, or overall course quality?
2. Who should be involved? Lecturers, students, course leaders?
3. How and when should evaluation take place? Methods of data collection; during the course or at the end?
4. What should be evaluated? Teaching, learning, course outcomes, resources, quality of assessment?

5. Evidence of Success

The targets fixed against blended learning were active engagement of students, retention level of students, improving the concentration level of students, preparing students for digital learning, and being technology-friendly during the learning process.

The engagement level of the students was measured through the face-to-face interaction with the students during the online classes and also during the classroom sessions. The retention level of students was measured against the student dropout (or attrition) and persistence. The effectiveness of learning online compared to learning in the traditional classroom was much more effective and it also reduced absenteeism. When compared and analyzed between the traditional and blended learning methods, a fair increase in the retention level of the students was observed.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The primary problem while strategizing an active learning/blended learning environment was adaptability among students and faculty members. This problem was initially accounted as a human resources development imperative and addressed in terms of implementing the right mix of interventions and guiding factors from the Institution at the needy hour. Teachers were systematically trained on the nuances of the blended learning practices and on-the-job training and event-based instruction on the Myklassroom app was given. This system was well received by the faculty members.

The few limitations are high maintenance costs**.** Incorporation of advanced technology in our blended learning projects such as infrastructure setup and devices are at times costly.

Technological dependence: To achieve the learning objectives of the blended learning program, the content developers use technological tools and resources that are easy to use, reliable, and up-to-date. Incorporating the learning strategy depends on technological feasibility, and in case of technical issues or inadequate technical accessibility, the objective of this advanced learning strategy is unachievable. So, to achieve the learning objectives in the best possible manner, the teachers or the content developers incorporated the technological and other relevant aspects wisely in the learning materials. Blended learning creates more engagement amongst the

learners, keeps learners more motivated, provides the best learning environment, and facilitates both personal and professional progress.

1. Title of the Practice: PLACEMENT

2. Objectives of the Practice:

1. To plan, execute, and tap opportunities after graduation in terms of Higher education, placements or entrepreneurship.
2. To conceptualize and organize recruitment drives for students.
3. To provide the right and appropriate exposure to the students.
4. To appreciate the right relation with the recruiters.
5. To value the recruiter's expectations by providing the right fit for their company.
6. To organize Placement Training sessions per changing corporate expectations.
7. To plan and organize various placement drives on campus.
8. To find, inform and manage Pool Placement drives.
9. To strengthen the bridge between the industry and academia.

3. The Context

1. Industrial expectations are the primary principles based on which the placement department implements the academic year's plans.
2. Challenges from the Placement are listed below.
3. Training students as per the needs of the changing industry needs.
4. Training students to acquire employment.
5. Training students in knowledge, skill, and attitude.
6. Ensuring a fair selection process for all the students and ensuring that the students who meet the expectations of the Industry sit for the recruitment.
7. Ensuring the interest of both the recruiter and the students are met.
8. Instigating English communication that matches the corporate expectations.

The resources required to cover a broad area such as technology- for an IT company to recruit they require: projector, screen, Wi-Fi/internet connection, systems for coding test with required tools; Infrastructure- A seminar hall for presentation, IT room for a coding test, in case of the written test then papers and arrangements for test. For Logistics- They contact the college placement cell/coordinate with the placement division regarding the list of students, their brief profile, fix the dates, tell the requirements, and arrangements are made as required. The selection procedure, the job profile, and an idea of CTC, which is informed to the students. The company visits the campus on the given date and time and recruitment is conducted. Manpower- For

campus 5-6 coordinators are required. It depends on the company and the strength of the students appearing for the drive.

4. The Practice

The academic year's plan begins with the feedback given by the Department of Placements. The placement department works closely with the Industry to systematically analyze the changing needs of the Industry. The department also runs a systematic industrial analysis to track and project the future needs of the Industry. With this feedback and analysis, we have formulated a Need-Based Attitude Skills Knowledge system in SKASC.

Recruitment on the campus comes under the purview of the placement department and the Placement Officer. The placement officer is assisted by a team of Placement coordinators drawn from each department – one faculty member and two student members. This team plans and coordinates the activities related to placement training.

At the end of the second third year, students are given the choice to opt for campus placement, the other choices being progression to higher studies/ aiming to be an entrepreneur.

The choice of the student is endorsed by the parent/guardian in writing. This choice streamlines the student towards his or her future. The Intensive placement training is offered only to those who have opted for campus recruitment. It is worth mentioning that till the second year all students undergo the common training programs irrespective of the options they may be choosing. Such an approach to the training programs ensures that all students get quipped to employability to a certain extent. A systematic and scientific approach has been developed for effective training of the students towards campus recruitment.

To augment the training given by the faculty of the college resource persons of repute are brought in to enhance the skills of the students. Special sessions for General aptitude training are handled by experts from institutions like Happy Miles, FACE Academy. Online placement tests are taken up by the students regularly to enhance aptitude, mental ability, and reasoning skills. Emphasis on proper and suitable dress codes is being oriented.

5. Evidence of Success

Alongside the year-on-year growth in admissions, SKASC's placement also gallops to cater to the needs of the students as well as the Industries. The number of placed students has a solid growth year on year and the number of offers has a close tie with the number of students. However, the admission strength is taken for all the purposes of calculating the number of placements, while this number includes a considerable number of students who opt to go for higher studies and orient themselves towards innovative and entrepreneurial opportunities. SKASC focuses on the holistic needs of the students. The institute is duty-bound to cater to the

needs of students and shall act as a guiding light to students' entrepreneurial aspirations and higher studies interests. While SKASC promises value to the industries that offer placement opportunities to its students, the institute never opts to compromise on the value proposition towards its students' community.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The institution encountered difficulties in making our academic frontline workers (our teachers) understand the vision. We altered our tutor ward system to ensure that the tutor shall travel along with their children till placement fetched us the fruit. Every faculty who is allotted a class in the first year with the responsibility of tutoring progresses to the second year along with their students. The teacher takes all required steps right from the first year, keeping the placement or entrepreneurship journey of the student. The classes progress holistically.

Apart from this, the dedicated placement department involves the tutors in every step, and handholds whenever the teacher requires any support both in academics and holistic development of the students. The placement department takes some prime responsibilities in terms of interacting with the companies, bringing them to SKASC and exploring new placement opportunities, etc. The placement department also communicates to the respective tutors about their expectations for the right intervention. Responsibility begets accountability at SKASC. The faculty team takes responsibility and ownership at Sri Krishna Arts and Science College.

The recruiters or the industries that offer good numbers of jobs always tend to demand a preferential Day 1 slot. But in the highest notion to promise of value that is proposed to the students, ardent attempts are made to get the industries that offer dream packages on day one or day zero. The preferences of the industries that promise regular/weekend internships are favorably accommodated within the system, however, an internship that spread to two to three months are sometimes deprioritized by the students, given uninterruptable academic schedules and various other reasons that revolve around the difficulties placed by the students in terms of the cyclic distance that they have to commute to the industry and the college, from their residence.