

BEST PRACTICE 1: Mentor-Mentee Programme

1. Title of the Practice: Mentor Mentee Programme

2. Objectives of the Practice:

Mentoring seeks to offer support, guidance, encouragement and assistance to mentees while they endeavour to navigate through difficulties, face challenges and tackle problems. Through concerted initiatives, desired attributes are developed in the mentee.

3. The Context

College students are at a stage in life wherein they face a host of problems related to academics, relationships, health, stress, finance, employment concerns etc. Due to varied reasons, students often do not confide their problems to anyone, which could lead to emotional imbalance, disheartenment and frustration.

This can be remedied through mentoring whereby the students are provided with academic and emotional support. Through their encouragement and guidance, mentors play an important role in nurturing the mentees' aspirations, preparing them for future challenges, building confidence in them, motivating them to undertake challenges and fostering their all-round growth.

4. The Practice

Our Institution has adopted a hierarchical approach wherein the mentees have one of their teachers as their mentor. The following are brief highlights of the programme:

- i) Each faculty member is assigned with the task of mentoring around 20-30 of his/her own students.
- ii) A special time-slot with a designated classroom is allocated to each mentor for a formal monthly interaction with his/her mentees.
- iii) Mentees are required to provide, for the mentor's ready reference, a detailed personal profile listing their contact details, personal strengths and weaknesses, future plans etc.
- iv) During the formal interactions, issues like campus discipline, dress code, punctuality, attendance, examination preparation, non-tolerance of ragging, undesirability of adopting unfair means at examinations sexual harassment at workplace, role and availability of counselors on campus, suicidal tendencies, cyber crime, confidence-building activities etc, are discussed.
- v) Mentees are counseled about road safety, healthy lifestyles, cleanliness, Swacch Bharat campaign, conservation of water and energy, choice of careers. They are also informed about the various facilities and scholarships that are available.
- vi) Mentees are encouraged to regularly interact with their mentors and discuss any issues. Mentors keep track of the academic performance of the mentees and provide the necessary assistance/guidance in the event of poor grades. Buddy groups are often formed within the mentee-group in order to help the academically-weak students.
- vii) Mentors maintain a confidential data sheet about their mentees which details the mentoring activities rendered.

viii) The overall programme is monitored by a committee comprising one coordinator and two faculty members from each stream. The committee assigns the mentees to each mentor and, also, prepares/suggests inputs for each formal session keeping in mind students' needs and relevant current issues.

ix) At the end of each academic year, mentees are required to provide their feedback on the various topics discussed during the formal interactions. Their suggestions are used, wherever possible, to improve the programme.

5. Evidence of success

The following are indicators of the programmes's success:

i) The campus is litter-free. Garbage bins, placed at strategic spots, are used by students/mentees as per directions leading, also, to dry and wet waste segregation.

ii) Students take the initiative to turn/switch off taps, lights and fans when not in use.

iii) Campus discipline and students' dressing sense have tremendously improved.

iv) Student behaviour, self-esteem and confidence have shown further improvement.

v) Academic performance has improved and a larger number of students now pursue higher studies.

vi) A greater number of students now approach the counselors.

vii) Health consciousness of students has improved.

viii) Stronger relationships have been forged amongst students/peers, faculty and parents.

6. Problems encountered and Resources required

The programme faces the following challenges:

i. Due to space constraints, the simultaneous stream-wise conduct of the formal monthly sessions makes it difficult to allocate a separate classroom to each mentor.

ii. Mentoring is a specialized effort. Faculty need requisite training for enhancement of mentoring effectiveness.

iii. The busy schedules and academic pre-occupations of the faculty make it sometimes difficult to devote adequate additional time to the mentees.

7. Notes

Altruistic inclinations of the faculty lead them to take keen interest in guiding and assisting their mentees beyond the normal classroom setting. Mentees enthusiastically participate due to the informal interaction, additional attention, motivation and support arising from the programme. The Mentoring committee has always played a proactive role in the programme's implementation.

BEST PRACTICE 2: Value Education Programme

Title of the Practice: Value Education Programme

Objectives of the Practice:

In keeping with its vision of 'Formation for Transformation', the Institution has introduced and regularly conducts value-based educational sessions. The sessions are considered an indispensable component of the curriculum.

The main objectives of this practice are:

- i) The inculcation of human, social and moral values.
- ii) The building of the character of students.
- iii) Development of well-balanced, socially-responsible and well-rounded individuals in order to make society more democratic and cohesive.
- iv) The empowerment of students so as to achieve personal fulfilment and, success in life and at work
- v) The development of respect for the dignity of individuals irrespective of caste, creed and gender.
- vi) The instillation, in students, of the values of love, empathy, caring, sharing and compassion leading to harmonious and humane relationships.

3. The Context

Value education is a tool to bring about the adjustment that needs to be made in order to form well-rounded individuals. It is imperative, therefore, for value education to be included as an intrinsic component of the curriculum. This necessity arises from the fact education is the main agency for individual transformation and social change. Inputs provided by an Institution therefore have a bearing in ensuring strong foundations for society. A sound value education programme would be beneficial to students in comprehending and imbibing values to guide daily lives and thereby ensuring their holistic growth and assisting them in meeting the challenges of contemporary society. Such sessions should be treated as 'empowering tools' rather than media for the dissemination of theoretical concepts.

Though the instillation of value systems is primarily a parental and familial responsibility, St. Xavier's College, in keeping with its Vision and Mission, has always strived to impart value education to its students.

4. The Practice

- i) Apart from the informal modes through which values are imparted, a dedicated time-slot is allotted every week (i.e. on Tuesdays) for formal Value Education sessions. Classrooms are specially earmarked for this exercise in the Institutional timetable.
- ii) A well-defined curriculum has been drawn up for the sessions through a conscious, well thought-out and deliberate process.

iii) The Resource Persons are carefully chosen, for their expertise, from external sources and, sometimes, from amongst the faculty too.

iv) During the sessions, emphasis is laid on aspects of positive living and humane behavioural traits.

v) The programme also has sessions on addictive habits, manners and etiquette, stress and anger management, gender equality, problems of adolescence, nation building, good governance, forgiveness, integrity and humility.

vi) The Institution also collaborates with Kripa Foundation – an N.G.O. working for youth welfare – to conduct awareness drives on issues related to addictions.

vii) The Value Education sessions are supplemented through Workshops on ‘Personality Development’, street plays etc.

5. Evidence of success

ix) Parents and students have always appreciated the efforts of the Institution in conducting the Value Education sessions. The high levels of attendance for the sessions are evidence of the importance attached by the student community towards this endeavour.

x) Positive changes in the discipline, behaviour and attitudes of students have been continually observed. Such changes are especially visible during the cultural, and other, programmes organized at the Institution.

xi) Alumni, during their interactions, always emphasize the important role played by the Value Education sessions in developing self-confidence and a holistic vision towards life and profession. They attribute their success in life and at the workplace, in a large part, to the inputs gathered through the programme.

6. Problems encountered and Resources required

The success of the programme is dependent on the judicious symbiosis of many factors. It is the fruit of consistent efforts aimed at developing well-rounded human beings. Some of the constraints faced are:

1. The Institution generally avails of the expertise of competent Resource Persons from external sources for the conduct of Value Education sessions. When, due to unavoidable reasons, the Resource Persons are occasionally unable to visit the Institution, in-house faculty need to substitute them at very short notice.

2. Students need to be divided into fresh divisions for Value Education sessions. This is especially seen in the case of the Arts and Science streams where students are, otherwise, divided subject-wise.

3. Non-availability of adequate classrooms leads to larger student strength in individual divisions for the Value Education sessions resulting in diminished personal interactions between the Resource Person and students.