



MARIS STELLA COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), VIJAYAWADA
A College with Potential for Excellence
NAAC Accredited & ISO 9001:2015 Certified

Best Practices: 2020-21

1. Facilitating Blended Teaching Learning Evaluation

Objectives and Context of the Practice:

A significant practice initiated in 2020 is the blended mode of teaching, learning and evaluation. The practice had two objectives. The first arose out of the need to find a way to continue the teaching-learning process despite the constraints on movement placed by the pandemic. The second objective was to be in alignment with global practices.

The Practice:

There were several preparatory steps to be taken before implementation. Faculty and students had to be oriented to the new approach. Faculty needed re-training, students had to be guided to adapt to the new mode. Necessary infrastructure had to be created.

Nine faculty development programmes were held during the academic year to equip faculty with a deeper understanding of emerging concepts in teaching, learning and evaluation and to impart requisite skills.

Students were given necessary inputs by their mentors who also addressed their individual constraints in participating in the blended mode. Parents were contacted to explain the new mode and to facilitate participation by their wards by sharing if only one smart device is available in the family and by creating a suitable environment for the classes at home.

Evaluation practices were also modified to suit the blended mode. Online examinations were introduced in a phased manner. Initially, continuous assessment tests were offered online with multiple choice questions. In the next stage, semester end proctored examinations were offered online for I & II years. Mock examinations were held before this step to iron out problems and

glitches. Those who could not take the examinations for lack of facilities at home or because of Covid-related health issues in the family, were given the opportunity of taking the examinations later, on the campus.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

The practice was not without problems. Funds had to be found for re-training faculty. Fortunately, the United Board accepted the college proposals for retraining faculty and sanctioned sufficient funds to organize seven faculty training programmes. A new computer lab was set up in the summer of 2019 with funds provided by Sun Foundation, Chennai, which came in very handy for the blended mode of teaching-learning. With part of the 2cr grant from RUSA 2.0, equipment for three Virtual Classrooms, one Digital cum Virtual Classroom and one Digital Lab were set up. Loans on easy terms were arranged for faculty to buy laptops for use when working from home. College laptops were lent to those who could not avail this facility.

Another challenge was in overcoming the initial resistance to the practice from faculty set in traditional modes of instruction. Training had to be imparted also in allied activities such as online attendance and maintenance of soft copies of academic records.

Evidence of Success:

Together with retraining, confidence-building exercises were also undertaken. Adoption of the blended mode is now smooth, the academic calendar has gradually been normalized, an increasing number of extra-curricular activities are being conducted online and assessment and evaluation are being completed satisfactorily. There are no significant grievances from stakeholders. The practice has now come to stay.

2. Environmental Protection

Objectives:

Protection and preservation of the environment is a core value of the institution. The college is committed to sensitizing the campus community to the need to protect the environment, encouraging sustainable practices and developing a pro-active attitude among students.

Context of the Practice:

An audit of the campus practices revealed that much needed to be done to meet current expectations for environmental protection. It was decided to involve the whole community in a multi-pronged plan to transform the college into a green campus.

The Practice:

The first step was registration with the Green Campus Programme of the Climate Reality Project, India, which enables schools and colleges to conserve natural resources, use less water, optimize energy efficiency, generate less waste, teach climate change and sustainable education and addresses the well-being of students and their environment. The programme is executed in three stages: Awareness, Action and Award. The college is now in the action stage. After a pre-audit survey, five teams were set up in the five thrust areas of the programme: air quality, bio-diversity, water and energy conservation and waste management. Each team drew up an action plan which is being implemented. The college hopes to be ready for an audit and award by September, 2022.

Simultaneously, a team has been set up under the moderation of Ray Kancharla, Climate Activist & Researcher, Humanitarian & Development Strategic Planner, to accompany students on their journey towards environmental activism. A hands-on and practice-oriented certificate programme of **Eco Ambassadors** has been launched to capacitate student participants, on completion of the course, to become young women Eco Ambassadors. 232 students have completed the course and have been certified.

The **departments** too have been working in sync with the core values of the institution.

The **Dept. of Botany** undertook a Plantation Programme between 29th July and 15th Oct. 2020. 100 saplings were planted in the college campus. Together with the Eco Club, the department undertook a Clean and Green programme on the campus on 10th Sept.2020. 100 students participated.

The department also organized an Awareness Programme on Eco-Friendly Celebration of Ganesh Chaturdhi on 21st Sept. 2020 and Vinayaka Pooja Patri were distributed to the faculty.

The **Dept. of Commerce & Management Studies** organized a National Webinar on 'Green Accounting Practices in India' on 26th March 2021.

The **Dept. of Chemistry** held a Drawing & Painting Competition on 'Water Consumption and Management/ Water Conservation Methods' on 22nd March 2021 in which 15 students competed. This was followed by an Awareness Programme on 'Safe Drinking Water' on the same day. Mr. Krishna Mohan Mullapudi, DEE, R&B, Retd. Civil Engineer was the resource person for the awareness programme. There were 300 student participants.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

Funding the measures for greening the campus, making time for the activities amidst the constraints of a pandemic and involving the entire campus community are some of the problems being encountered.