

7.2.1 Best Practices

During the last academic year the institution has adopted several best practices in respect of curriculum, teaching and learning, research, student support services, quality. Among the various best practices adopted the institution would like to identify “Teaching Portfolio” and “Course Delivery Mapping” as the most admirable best practices.

Best Practice 1:

1. Title of the Practice

“Teaching Portfolio”

2. Objectives of the Practice

A teaching portfolio is an organized and systematic collection and compilation of documents used as evidence for teaching performance. A teaching portfolio, thus, consists of a collection of documents and description of lecturers’ roles and responsibilities, contributions, as well as achievements which demonstrate the scope and quality of their teaching. It also acts as an evidence of the various activities carried out in relation to the enhancement of teaching and learning, research and service. Hence, the teaching portfolio provides an opportunity to foster a culture of teaching excellence as it can be used as a source of information and evidence of teaching activities, contributions and achievements.

3. The Context

The teaching responsibility involves face-to-face interaction with students which is also generally termed as stand-up teaching. In carrying out the teaching responsibility, teachers are also engaged in a continuous process of developing and improving the curriculum through the process of implementing and integrating innovation and new teaching strategies to the existing curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to be creative and innovative in applying the various approaches, methods, techniques and strategies in their teaching. They are also encouraged to be creative and flexible in adopting the most appropriate learning taxonomy according to their respective area of specialization in order to achieve the intended learning outcomes. In addition to face-to-face teaching, a teacher is also involved in non face-to-face interactions through online learning such as e-distance learning, blended learning, etc.

Teachers need also to be involved in teaching related activities or non-teaching duties such as curriculum development, course design,

instructional materials development, assessment of students' learning, supervision of students, and be part of academic and non-academic committees, etc. They are also encouraged to promote and share their expertise, new ideas and experiences in teaching and learning related activities such as by presenting papers in seminars and conferences, giving talks and conducting courses in their respective areas.

In addition, teachers are expected to perform community services within and outside the university by engaging in community activities using their expertise and experiences in their areas of specialization. In providing a lifelong experience to the society, they often represent the institution by participating and engaging in community outreach program through various community activities.

Over the years, teachers have amassed a collection of documents and re-cord of their teaching and learning activities, accomplishments, services, contributions, awards, etc. in relation to the three main roles of teaching, research and community service. All the evidences should be compiled and organized in the form of a document which may be treated as a testimony of their continuous development, self enhancement and reflection of their teaching practices.

A teaching portfolio encapsulates the teacher's craft, their contributions and achievements in an organized and a systematic way.

4. The Practice

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The teaching portfolio documents a teacher's professional journey as evident in reflective activities and evaluation of a teacher's work throughout the process of teaching and learning. It may include the following information:

- record of teaching duties and responsibilities in the form of course information, lesson plan, time table, etc.
- record of teaching related duties and responsibilities such as supervision, academic advising, etc.
- description of instructional materials developed and used
- description of assessment methods employed
- samples of students' work

Through the process of continuous reflection and self-evaluation, teachers can keep track of their performance over time.

A teaching portfolio, therefore, is both a product and a process. As a product, it consists of a collection of documents and evidences of teaching performance and accomplishments, and as a process it involves the lecturer describing and reflecting on the teaching and learning activities as well as innovations towards effective teaching.

In addition, a teaching portfolio is a tool that can be used to gauge an individual teacher's performance based on evidence of activities and accomplishments.

- A teaching portfolio generally includes the following information:
- A brief personal profile
- A teaching philosophy which outlines a statement of belief about teaching and learning
- A record of teaching duties and teaching related responsibilities
- A list of activities related to professional development i.e. courses and training attended to develop and enhance teaching and learning performance and effectiveness
- A written description of teaching development process in the form of reflection on teaching and ways to improve teaching and learning.
- A collection of evidence of teaching innovations and creativity in teaching and learning.
- A collection of documents of personal information and accomplishments which is useful as a reference for record of service, confirmation, promotion, extension of service, reappointment, award conferment, etc.

5. Evidence of Success

The success of this practice "teaching portfolio" lies in demonstrating the teacher's teaching credentials and teaching excellence to others in the form of documents and evidences related to

teaching and learning.

In addition, a teaching portfolio consists of a collection and description of a teacher's strengths and teaching achievements to suggest the scope and quality of teaching achievements and effectiveness.

The teaching portfolio, therefore, enables teachers to be:

- creative in their teaching approaches, methods and strategies
- critical about their teaching practices
- creative in developing and utilizing instructional materials
- flexible in their assessment practices
- resourceful by sharing teaching innovations with others
- current in their teaching and learning activities by sharing, discussing, and disseminating information with colleagues and others

A teaching portfolio, therefore, serves the following purposes:

- A collection, compilation and a source of evidence about teaching activities and achievements.
- A ready and available comprehensive source of information and evidence of teaching performance and accomplishment.
- A document to demonstrate a variety of teaching and teaching related activities.
- An opportunity to reflect and evaluate own teaching as a means to continually improve teaching and learning and promoting self-improvement
- A source of information on teaching and learning accomplishments for purposes of exchanging ideas and knowledge sharing with colleague, supervisors and others.
- An opportunity to foster a culture of teaching excellence.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

While adopting this best practice we have not encountered with any of the problems which may affect the adoption of this practice. The adoption of this best practice does not require any other special resources expect the dedication and commitment on the part of the teachers.

Best Practice 2

1. Title of the Practice

“Course Delivery Mapping”

2. Objectives of the Practice

Course Delivery Mapping should be carried continuously throughout the semester. The purpose of Course Delivery Mapping is as follows:

- to provide Departments with qualitative and quantitative information as a tool for the good management of the units for which they are responsible
- to identify any indicators of good practice in the delivery of the course contents
- to identify individual courses in which the proportions of students who pass or fail are seen as atypical either in the context of related courses or in the subject area to which it belongs; to initiate enquiry as to the reasons for atypical performance and to take prompt action as deemed necessary
- to identify courses in which there is a trend over a period of time showing a marked difference in the performance of course delivery and to identify the reasons for such differences, and to take remedial action as necessary
- to address course specific issues, if any, with regard to prompt and effective delivery of courses
- to identify actions to undertake before the next delivery of similar courses in view of the experience of delivering the courses over a period of time and specifically the last delivery.

3. The Context

Course delivery plan is very essential for a teacher and it is responsible for increasing the success rate of the students. Without proper course delivery plan a teacher cannot convincingly deliver the course to the students up to their satisfaction. Some of the inexperienced teachers use to consume more contact hours for delivering first few units of the course content in a lethargic manner, whereas they used to rush up the delivery of course contents pertaining to last few units of the syllabus. In such cases the slow learners of the class may not be able to properly understand the concepts that are involved in those last few units where in which the teacher has simply rushed up the delivery of the course content. In such cases, the teacher may not find time to revise the syllabi which may be very much essential for slow learners to complete the course successfully. That is why, nowadays, the teachers are expected to have a course delivery plan before handling any course in a semester. The Deans and HODs

used to monitor the phase of course delivery for various courses university. Hence, the institution feels that it is very essential to develop an effective course delivery monitoring systems.

4. The Practice

The university Software Development Cell has developed software to map the course delivery process. At the beginning of every semester, each teacher is bound to submit his/her course delivery plans for each course planned to be handled by him/her in the semester. The content of the course delivery plan will be fed in to the software to get the “planned course delivery graph”. Subsequently, the Head of the Department is used to collect information from the student with regard to actual covering of syllabi in that course. The details of actual covering of syllabi will be fed into the software by the Head of the Department to get the “actual course delivery graph”. These details may be as well viewed by the Dean/Vice Chancellor so as to get complete information with regard to the pace of course delivery in that course.

5. Evidence of Success

Because of this system, the institution observes that covering of syllabi in almost all courses are going on as per the course delivery plan submitted by the teachers at the beginning of the semester. Moreover, nowadays, the institution is not getting any negative feedback with regard to course delivery by the teachers.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The institution has not so far encountered with any problem while adopting this best practice. As necessary software used in this system was developed by the university software development cell, no external resource is required for adopting this best practice.