Best Practices-1

BEST PRACTICE [1]		STREAMING SYSTEM IN GENERAL ENGLISH TEACHING
1	Title of the Practice	**Streaming System in General English Teaching**
2	Objectives	➢ To provide encouraging learning environment for slow learners with appropriate curriculum and evaluation ➢ To practice methods simultaneously addressing the needs of advanced learners by giving them a competent learning environment with a suitable curriculum ➢ To enhance the communication skills of students of different social groups
3	The Context	St. Xavier's College has a good number of first generation learners from Tamil medium schooling background. Streaming system caters their needs. Streaming is grouping the students according to their capabilities and training them according to their strength and weakness so that they may acquire language skills effectively. This method gains importance in the context of the college policy which encourages admission of socially and economically disadvantaged students.
4	The Practice	The Streaming System is considered one of the Best Practices by NAAC (*Best Practices in Higher Education*. Ed. Antony Stella. Bangalore: NAAC, 2004. pp. 55-56). The UGC Curriculum Development Centre (1989 & 2004) also recommends a Seven-Tier Structure for teaching of General English. Based on the UGC recommendations, the Dept. of English has been following the Seven-Tier Structure given below: COURSE 7 COURSE 6 A COURSE 5 COURSE 4 B COURSE 3 COURSE 2 C COURSE 1 Students are catergorised as stream 'A', 'B', and 'C' through a diagnostic test. Since a large

		majority of the students hail from disadvantaged communities, the "C" stream syllabus for General English meant for slow learners, has been designed to be remedial in nature. The slow learners are given special training through teaching strategies and remedial classes so as to compete with other students. Stream 'A' and 'B' cater to the needs of the advanced learners and average performers respectively. Gradation of syllabus from easy to difficult level is followed in this streaming system.
5	Evidence of Success	Students coming from various educational backgrounds do not get panic with the General English paper. At the end of the course, the students qualify with necessary standard in English. Pass percentage has increased. Students motivate one another because they possess similar abilities and move ahead at the same pace because there are no major disparities in ability within the stream. The entire class is challenged at a level gauged to be appropriate for the whole group.
6	Problems Encountered and Resources Required	Conduct of Internal Assessment and External Examination was more difficult because more question papers had to be set. The work of the teachers increased. Selection of text materials for each group was difficult. Financial assistance was necessary to conduct remedial classes.

Best Practices -II

Title of the Practice: FOUNDATION COURSE FOR HUMAN EXCELLENCE

Objectives:

- To sensitize the students towards gender equality, environmental sustainability, religious, lingual, communal and social harmony.
- To provide broad and rich curriculum to Value Education.
- To build positive personal attributes such as self-respect and self-worth, courage, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and a sense of justice.
- To instill the character and resilience needed to deal with life's inevitable challenges.
- To facilitate the students to deal with relationships optimistically.
- To signpost the young people to wide opportunities of social action.

Context:

St. Xavier's College as any other institution founded by Christian missionaries reinforced 'moral education' which focused on developing virtues as stable qualities of character. It has a proud tradition of offering moral education to all students since its inception.

SXC considers that character and resilience are as crucial as academic performance for young people's in their future endeavour. The students entering into the College are mostly first generation graduates (80 - 90%) from villages with very low literacy rate and, socially and economically backward society. As a step to actualize the vision of the College-'to serve the poor and oppressed of our nation in truth, justice and love', and to fine-tune the students' personality traits and social dimensions, the moral education course has

been stretched out to Foundation Courses which forms the basis for the success of SXC's curriculum based outreach program-STAND (Student Training and Action for Neighborhood Development) .

This led to the inclusion of foundation courses in the curriculum which serves as "a curriculum of life and experience". The courses initially offered are ethics, personality development and social analysis, along with religion. These courses have been taught right from 1992. As SXC realized that foundation course has huge impact on students' life by which it can attain mass movements towards total liberation of oneself and the society, a separate department to coordinate foundation course has been established. The department of foundation courses constantly restructures the curriculum and implements relevant pedagogy for each course. This department's prime objective is to mould and shape the youngest population of the College (I and II UG students) as soon as they leave the School education and enter into graduate studies.

By undergoing foundation course for first four semesters, along with the services rendered through STAND - outreach program and service oriented activities by other service organizations, the students not only develop their own character and resilience but also make a positive difference to others, and the communities around them.

Practice

As a boon of CBCS and as per the direction given by University Grants Commission, SXC perfectly fitted the foundation courses in its seven tier cafeteria model curriculum structure. The Department of foundation courses recently renamed as 'Department of Human Excellence' initially introduced courses namely **ethics, social analysis and personality development**. Due to periodical revisions and discussions in Board of studies, the department has reached a new horizon with new courses, ICT resources and assessment tools. Courses dealt during the last five years are **ethics, integrated personality development, life skills, human rights and social analysis, environmental studies and skills for employability**. The text books are written by the experienced faculty members of the College. The course content and pedagogy is discussed and amended for current trends. Video lessons and worksheet model questions for examination, ethics diary for personal assessment, viva voce examinations are the innovative practices carried out during the last

five years. Each course is complimented by the community development activities carried out by the students through STAND and other service organizations as a result of three dimensional frameworks established by the department. This department has framework structure which interconnects itself with all the service organizations of the College. The units interlinked and collaboratively working with Department of Human Excellence are STAND, NSS, NCC, All India Catholic University Federation, Women's Forum, Centre for Women's Studies, Consumer Forum, Democracy Forum, Student's Council, Centre for Ambedkar Studies, Red Ribbon Club, Youth Red Cross, Enviro Club and Campus Ministry. The activities and the events conducted constitute the practical aspects of the theory that the students learnt from Foundation Course for Human Excellence.

As a highlight of the pedagogy, speech, motivational talks on first Friday of every month, screening of movies, street play and etc., are organized by Campus Ministry which covers various topics discussed in foundation courses.

Evidence of success

The success of SXC's foundation courses is evident from the national level recognition received from Ford Foundation to include St. Xavier's College as one of the twelve colleges for the project 'Campus Diversity Initiatives'. The faculty members dealing with foundation courses were selected for training for counseling and resolving conflicts and working for reconciliation. These faculty members carried out a case study on communal disharmony and religious clash in the villages Mandikadu of Kanyaumari district and Kodiyankulum of Thoothukudi district.

The impact of undergoing foundation courses is evident by the following facts

- ➢ Students' perspective about the society is changed.
- ➢ Students learnt to voice their concern on social and personal issues.
- ➢ Students internalize human values and professional ethics that pave the way for social and personal development.

Problems encountered and resources required:

The intrinsic feature for the foundation courses leads to the difficulty of having examination based assessment as these courses deal with more of life issues.

The department of human excellence needs some key elements like multimedia facilities to incorporate innovative pedagogy and more reference materials. The courses are taught by the faculty members of various departments who are part of department of human excellence. Foundation courses for human excellence would reach greater heights and new dimensions if the department has faculty members exclusively recruited for the department.