



St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Mumbai

BEST PRACTICE 2: ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT BEYOND CLASSROOM

Objectives

Teaching and learning is not restricted by syllabus or evaluation. At SXC students have been taught to challenge their limitations as our motto states 'Provocans ad volandum'. This is reflected in the Honours Programme and a tradition of department magazines which inculcates a research culture among students even at the undergraduate level.

Context

The Honours programme motivates students and Faculty to create and curate courses which nudge the student to comprehend the subject in various dynamic ways. The main objective is to offer interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary courses. Students have the freedom to take the courses of their choice.

By encouraging students to contribute to department magazines, the quest for knowledge, a spirit of enquiry and the practical application of research methodology is facilitated.

Practice:

The courses offered in the Honours Programme were made interdisciplinary through the "Hub System" in 2016 (Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Lingua-Humanities). The Honours Programme is meant to complement the curricular courses, broaden, and deepen the education of the student both in terms of academic excellence and social relevance, without diminishing the relevance of the classroom set up and prescribed syllabus. This is evident from the criteria for registration: 75% attendance for regular lectures, CGPA: 3.00/4.00 and 7.00/10.00 at the SY and TY level. At the beginning of the academic year departments send their Activity proposals, highlighting the objective and content of the activity proposed, which are conducted by the faculty having expertise in that area or by an external resource person.

For the department magazines, most departments constitute an editorial board comprising students who are ably guided by a faculty member. Students keeping in mind the contemporary issues decide a theme for the magazine. Sessions on how to collect data, analyse it, how to write a research paper are conducted to inculcate research culture. Some of the writings reflect innovative interdisciplinary collaborations between departments for example the Science departments collaborating with the Heras Institute in the space of Conservation.



Evidence of Success

The success of the Honours programme is in the wide range of activities conducted - 'Understanding the concept of Raag' (Indian Music Group), Forensic Science (Zoology), Subtitling of Hindi Films with French subtitles (French), 'Epigraphy and Numismatics of Ancient India (AIHCA). The success of the programme is also seen in the number of students from the Third year receiving the Honours Certificate after successfully completing the Programme.

2015-16: 84

2016-17: 80

2017-18: 112

2018-19: 103

2019-20: 157

The success of the department magazines is in the diversity of themes of the magazine. Gastronomy (French 2016-17), Exploring Biodiversity (Botany 2018-19), People and Planet: saving the symbiosis (Political Science 2019-20). Two of our department magazines have an ISSN number: Terra, Geology department ISSN no. 2320-298X, Indica, Heras ISSN no.0019 686X.

Problems

After SXC got academic autonomy many of the courses offered in the Honours Programme were integrated in the regular syllabus. But this constraint in fact turned out to be an advantage as the HUB system came in. The other challenge is not to compromise on the quality of the curriculum in the attempt to take the learning beyond the classroom.