7.2.1 – Describe at least two institutional best practices

Response:

BEST PRACTICE 1

1. **Title of the Practice:** Implementation of Google Apps for Education

2. **Objectives of the Practice:** Google Apps are a Cloud-Based Messaging & Collaboration Solution from Google Inc. which provides any Educational Institute, an Enterprise Class platform, and Applications on the cloud. The institute implemented Google apps for education in June 2013 with an objective to provide a platform to enable sharing, communication, and collaboration among students and teachers and enhance Institute's Brand Value in the society. It was also envisioned to modernize the academic process and make the education planning & delivery more effective through this platform. All the students and teachers were provided with email IDs with the college domain. This branding not only added credibility to all the internal and external communication but also boosted the faculty, staff, and students' sense of belonging to the Institute.

3. **The Context:** The Institute implemented the Google Apps for Education through Global Talent Track Pvt. Ltd (GTT) who had partnered with Google to promote Google Apps in Universities and Institutions. The implementation began with registering a domain name for the Institute followed by verification of domain ownership. This was verified by uploading an HTML file on the host server, followed by user provisioning and user creation. This included Individual user creation for the admin account and Bulk upload for all the other users. The bulk upload was done with the help of .csv files. The MX records were updated on DNS server to route the email for institute domain. To assure effective and efficient use, GTT provided an admin level and user level training through video conferencing. After successful implementation, the first challenge was to create admin level and user level groups. This was created to facilitate proper communication channel among faculty, staff, and students.

4. **The Practice:** The Indian higher education system has undergone a massive expansion to become the largest in the world enrolling over 70 million students, many of them who would otherwise have no access to university education. Such expansion has been made possible only due to technology-enabled learning.(ICT tools, MOOCs, and online platforms). It is found that most of the higher educational institutions in India have very less utilization of technology in the education delivery, communication and collaboration due to 1. lack of access to cost-effective and easy to use tools 2. lack of access to adequate internet bandwidth 3. lack of awareness and training of staff involved with the educational institutions The Google apps provide a solution to all the above issues. It provides a suite of free productivity tools to help students and teachers interact and collaborate seamlessly and securely across devices. Further with the implementation of an outcome-based model for higher education, (OBE) in India, the focus is now on abilities & skills of the Learners. Also, while deploying technology-driven tools, one has to keep in mind the needs of the whole organization and provide ease of use for everyone in the organization. Google Apps for education came as a solution to all the above-mentioned requirements with a setup and management that is simple and the cloud-based tools scale easily across classrooms. Most of the times, the teachers and students are already familiar with the tools and require very less professional training. The tools encourage collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, and let the teachers work one-on-one or with the whole class from anywhere, anytime, and on any device. Tools like Google Classroom also help free up teachers' time so they can focus on quality teaching. It provides facility to pre-record and upload lecture videos and class notes to be accessed by students at their comfort and enables faculty to have more meaningful classroom sessions through group activities, problem-solving and interactive learning. The online analytics provide faculty with data on the level of understanding of each student, enabling them to provide personalized support to aid student learning outcomes The biggest advantage of G Suite for education is that, it is free for educational institutions and is secure and poses no additional infrastructural requirements which could otherwise be a detrimental factor in the implementation of ICT tools.

5. **Evidence of Success**: Google Apps enables institutes to manage all communication from a central place and keeps the whole college on a single official platform. Firstly all the communication in SIESGST were shifted from traditional notice board method to the Gmail service provided by the Google Apps. This ushered increased professionalism and transparency into the system. Department-wise and class-wise groups for faculty and students further ensured smooth communication. The official email IDs also help in keeping in touch with the students even after they graduated and thus improved connectivity with the alumni. Some of the achievements of Google Apps implementation were use of the following Apps for teaching-learning: Google Drive to upload course contents, various files formats, etc. used as an online storage space. Google Docs, Sheets and Slides used by faculty for easy collaboration among faculty members and student members respectively. Google Forms used by faculty to collect various data, feedback, conduct quiz etc. and by students to collect event-related details etc. Google Classroom used by many faculty members to share the lecture notes, videos, assignments and communicate with students. Google Sites used by faculty members to share the video lectures, learning resources and create their profile page and by students to build event websites. Google Calendar used for every semester is synced with academic and event calendar made available to everyone easily for timely reminders. The implementation of Google apps has reduced the usage of paper and significantly contributed towards Go green initiative.

6. **Problems Encountered and Resources Required**: As there was no major infrastructure required for the implementation, there were no problems encountered from the technological aspect but had few people issues which were addressed by regular training sessions. The institute took several initiatives to overcome this resistance and as a first step, it made it mandatory to use official Gmail ID for all the internal communication by sending all the notices and circulars on official Gmail ID. For every activity/event, an official Gmail ID and Google sites were created to encourage the people to use the tools provided by the Google apps. The faculty was also asked to regularly post online quiz and feedback through Google forms. All the other learning management softwares were also linked to the official Gmail login. All this has led to the integration of technology to pedagogy at the Institute.

BEST PRACTICE 2

1. **Title of the Practice:** Effective Education Planning & Delivery with Faculty Handbook.

2. **Objectives of the Practice:** The concept of Faculty Handbook was born when SIESGST was certified with ISO 9001:2001 Quality Management System for continual improvement in the year 2005. The objective of the handbook was: 1.To have a single point record keeping of the education planning &delivery and attendance monitoring. 2.To assist in taking remedial actions in cases where the plans have not been successfully worked out. 3.To have a ready reckoner of the progress of different courses / syllabus completion, consolidated marks summary of the students, and result analysis. 4.To help in taking up remedial classes / coaching based on result analysis. 5.To record the teachers' participation in Institute activities and their own professional development.

3. **The Context:** The context of developing this handbook was when faculty had to maintain individual attendance sheets of every lecture from the different courses they were teaching. In addition to this teaching session plans were not standardized, and the result analysis sheets were maintained in physical files, which were difficult to handle and tedious refer to. With the handbook, all the above problems were sorted and included in one single booklet. It became the very heart of Academics in SIESGST. A faculty had every activity of his/her connected around the handbook either for information inclusion or information retrieval. The following points were considered during design & implementation: 1.The design of the handbook had to be such that it is easy to handle and taken along with the teacher to the classroom. 2.The quality of the handbook had to be durable to withstand all the handling by students & teachers for one full semester.

4. **The Practice**: The faculty handbook forms a very significant part of the India Higher education. This is because Higher Education Teachers are not only supposed to deliver regular lectures, but these lectures are expected to be interactive, by engaging learners with case studies, utilizing ICT tools, including practical demonstrations, conducting field trips or industrial visits and much more. With the inclusion of Academic Performance Indicators (API) now being made mandatory in appraisal systems of various institutes in India, it becomes even more important to record these activities in a suitable single point booklet. This is where handbook assists the faculty. From a point where the Faculty handbooks were merely used to record regular activities of faculty like attending conferences/seminars/workshops, publishing research papers, etc., it has now progressed to a format for recording these activities based on the APIs. If it is significant for the teachers, it is equally indispensable for students today to maintain balance in their Academics and Co & Extracurricular activities. It is here that the handbook helps them in keeping regular track of their attendance, with their signatures taken at regular intervals. With India adopting Outcome Based Education System (OBE), it has also become necessary to continuously assess the students learning and grade them, which gives input to the faculty on the probable actions that can be taken. Handbook helps this way in continuous assessment of the students. With handbooks initially consisting of session plans having only topics planned with date of conduction; today it has come to a stage where the session plan includes, the topics planned, their cognitive levels, the instructional strategy and the mappings with the expected course outcomes, in addition to the planned & conducted dates. This is inline with the OBE system where student-centric teaching-learning methods have been adopted. The handbook is also instrumental in terms of attendance monitoring and recording of defaulters with their assigned tasks / action taken. The students' seminars / mini-projects / final year projects / professional internships are all recorded in the handbook for regular tracking. Overall result analysis and consolidate marks are fed into the handbook for easing the process of internal assessment and awarding the termwork marks. Essentially the Faculty Handbook also includes the Individual Faculty Timetable, and the Academic Calendar, to plan their schedules and make the most of their time. The effectiveness of the handbook is maintained with its fortnightly reviewed by the Departmental Heads (HoDs) and monthly reviews by the Principal. The handbooks over the years have become leaner with reduction in number of pages and has been instrumental in helping the Faculty to be inline with the Vision & Mission of the Institute and always be aware of their roles and responsibilities as Academicians.

5. **Evidence of Success:** The handbook has been instrumental in: 1.Taking up Quality Objectives for result improvement based on result analysis. 2.Conducting extra / additional lectures based on shortcomings recorded. 3.Continuous Internal Evaluation of the students for laboratory practical / tutorial sessions and project / seminars. 4.Planning the academic schedule, guest lectures and conducting extra theory/practical/tutorial sessions based on the Academic Calendar and Individual faculty timetable. 5.Mapping COs with lecture sessions and associating topics with various Cognitive levels. 6.Maintaining the defaulters lists and recording the action taken. 7.Performing the result analysis to get an insight into the performance of the students. This can be used to compare against earlier analysis of the same courses and may give insight to take up quality objectives or conduct remedial classes. 8.Regular attendance monitoring and signed by students. 9.Regular monitoring of the education planning and delivery process by HoDs and the Principal to take corrective / preventive actions, if and when required. 10.Track the activities in which various faculty members are involved. 11.Track the leave details of faculty members. 12.Record keeping for future reference and improvement.

6. **Problems Encountered and Resources Required:** Some of the problems which were encountered in implementation of the faculty handbooks were: 1.Irregularity in maintaining the data in Handbook, which was addressed through the HoDs or in certain cases with a comment by the Principal in the handbook. 2.Designing of the handbook and making revisions were a difficult task. To overcome this, it was successfully taken by the Printing & Packaging Technology department. 3.Revisions are made only once in the beginning of the Academic Year and quantity of handbooks printed are for two semesters. 4.Initially the student signatures were taken after every 10 lectures for theory which was cumbersome. This has been addressed by equally spacing out the signatures page wise typically after 12, 25, 38 and 56 lectures. With this arrangement, a 2 lectures/week course will require only 2 signatures, a 3 lectures/week course will require only 3 signatures and 4& 5 lectures/week course will require only 4 signatures.

7. **Notes (Optional):** A faculty Handbook is a must for every Higher Education Institute to keep pace with continuously evolving teaching-learning mechanism, to have an efficient education planning and delivery process, to monitor attendance/defaulters and take timely action, to analyse results periodically and to develop an invaluable record for the future academic years. A Faculty Handbook can be considered an indispensable anchor to the OBE system.