



ACHARYA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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BEST PRACTICES-1

1. Title of the Practice

SOCIAL SPACES IN LIBRARY FOR NEW GENERATION USERS

2. Objectives of the Practice

Technology and media have ushered in a new era in library and information services. New technologies and opportunities have thrown open many considerations and concerns to deliver the content and engage users to access the resources. As the information and communication technologies are redefined continually and even the users get required information on their desks and mobile gadgets, the 'Physical Space', the 'Third Space' in the libraries has become more relevant and essential to their clientele. Environment, facilities, content, and access to physical and digital resources, quality of services and staff, specific learning needs and other facilities are the prime concern in present changing scenario.

3. The Context

It is observed that there is a considerable decline in circulation of print materials, reduced use of reference services, falling gate counts in libraries and the New generation users want libraries, a place meant for group interaction/learning, hold meetings, study in groups, use mobiles/laptops/other learning devices, hold discussions over a cup of tea/coffee and a silent place for self study. Librarians are concerned now how physical libraries increasingly serve an important role as a 'social space', reflecting the changing nature of teaching/learning. Thus there is a need for a more "social" approach in academic libraries by expanding group study spaces and developing 'Information Commons' 'Makerspaces' 'Academic Commons' 'Knowledge Commons' 'Creative Commons' space for 'Ideators, Tinkerers and Makers' 'Collaborative Work Spaces' 'Learning Commons' etc.

4. The Practice

To meet the changing needs of the users and learning attitudes the Learning Resource Centre (Central Library) considered introducing following four important spaces.

- a. Social space for Interaction and Knowledge exchange.
- b. Quiet space for contemplation
- c. Makerspace for Innovation
- d. Neutral and trusted space for use and a peaceful place for insightful work.



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After deliberations a few following unique best practices/facilities of Social Spaces have been introduced.

1. Makerspaces, Information Commons, Study Carrel, Creative Commons, Collaborative Workspace to turn the knowledge into action.
2. Group interaction space for social, creativity, brain storming, problem solving, idea generation etc.
3. Internet, Wi-Fi, Power plugs points provided in study carrels, reading/study zones.
4. Support material required for project work, classroom assignments, demos, presentations etc.
5. Multiple User Spaces to explore, learn, and use tools, materials both physical and virtual to develop scientific temper and creativity.
6. Discussion Rooms converted into Ideators, Tinkerers, Makers etc.
7. Users allowed to carry personal Laptops, Cell phones, iPads, Kindle e-readers, Tabs and other gadgets inside the library.
8. Coffee/Tea/Snacks Bar, Relax/Comfort/Casual Reading areas with Newspaper and Magazine zone, separated from main reading/study area to facilitate more social interaction. Library Users can relax, rejuvenate and use their cell phones in this area.
9. 'Ask-the-Librarian – eQuestion Point Service' a complete e-reference management system for increased use of library resources, borrowing, visits to the Library by the users and greater participation in development.
10. Virtual Learning Resource Lab for independent, interactive and self learning. Facilities for data analysis, software for R&D, MOOCS, and Audio/Video lessons have been established. One hundred apple computers have been installed in Virtual Learning Resource Lab, a unique facility as a social space for group learning and independent/interactive learning.
11. Reading Room tables and chairs are specially designed to break monotonousness of continuous sitting. Seating arrangements and Sound Masking (Auditory Masking) in reading hall provide privacy for small group discussions/interactions and possible distractions.



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5. Evidence of Success

The Best Practice ‘Social Space in Library’ has largely contributed in attracting more demanding complex users and offering them new experiences, empathy, learning, activity, contemplation, seriousness in reading/reference etc. The visitors count at the Gate has drastically increased and the Library has emerged as first stop contact point for information and one of the prime learning centers on campus. These new approaches and Best Practice adopted have resulted in receiving “LibTech Award - 2019 for Best Technology Enabled Library” and “TCSiON EdTechReview - Best Use of Technology in Higher Education Award – 2019.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

There is a promising potential in making use of library services in new ways. The new innovative facilities and opportunities at Learning Resource Centre of Acharya Institute of Technology are aimed to support quality education, access to recent technologies and effective teaching/learning. While planning the new facilities following aspects were considered to ensure increased efficiency and greater impact.

- Reasons for decreasing trend of less of library dependence/usage and identify issues by conducting a survey.
- Introducing multipurpose facilities without losing core focus of information and knowledge provider/delivery.
- Separate space for Internet Wi-Fi, power plug points and informal sitting facilities.
- Attractive interior design, amenities, improved ambiance etc.
- New designs and congenial atmosphere to new breed of users who are impatient, creative, expressive and social.
- Providing social spaces and information in the format that the users community needs.
- Providing a platform for academic events/engagements in library premises.
- Comfortable open-ended venues for participatory activities.
- Critical thinking and stimulate intellectual discussion, creativity, innovative ideas, brain storming, group interaction etc.
- Dealing with and moving away from fixed and rigid framework of rules and regulations.



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7. Conclusion (Notes)

The Best Practice ‘Social Spaces for the New Generation Users’ introduced in Learning Resource Centre (Central Library) is quite innovative and many new approaches have been adopted for information use, delivery and services. The practice adopted would contribute continually towards enhancement of Total Quality, faculty/students eminence and research output, smooth and efficient knowledge transfer in the present digital world. Consider converting, refurbishing, and redesigning the old fashioned interior and library buildings to make the library a place attractive, comfortable, effective, open-ended venue for participatory activities, creative thinking, intellectual activities, innovativeness through group interactions and discussions.

BEST PRACTICES-2

1. Title of the Practice

**USING ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNER TO EFFICIENTLY USE
ALL AVAILABLE RESOURCES ON CAMPUS MORE EFFICIENTLY.**

2. Objectives of the Practice

Acharya Implemented ERP to ease the workload and enhance transparency on resources available and resource management. This way, the flow of work was streamlined and its progress easy to monitor. Every Teaching, non-teaching staff, and student of Acharya has access to their own ERP portal with relevant modules made available to them. The ERP helps keep track of academic progress and acts as a window of report sharing with the parents. Students can keep track of timetable, assignments, dues via the ERP. Students can also address their grievances through the same. What are the objectives / intended outcomes of this “best practice” and what are the underlying principles or concepts of this practice (in about 100 words)?

3. The Context

The flow of data and privacy were the primary concern for the ERP tool that was designed. With several modules from admission to Time table allocation, to Report Cards, Proctorial Reports, Attendance, Finance, etc involved identifying and allowing the appropriate modules to the appropriate person was the next challenge. Training 300+ teaching and non-teaching staff to



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effectively use the software became another mammoth task as we would have to tweak the software to enhance user interface depending on the outcome of the training. Students will then have to be familiarized with the software furthermore to make the complete use of the system. Integration of Payment gateway into ERP is another step that would reduce contact and reduce queues drastically. Furthermore, the team will have to ensure the possibility of easily incorporating future requirements like the addition of modules.

4. The Practice

From the student's perspective, the ERP automatically creates a unique identification number against each admission and along with it a login credential. This is then shared to the official email id of the student. The Unique Identification ID is then used across all relevant tables of data. The Principal has access to create Department and Assign HoDs to each department. Each HoD can assign Create Classrooms and Assign Subjects to each classroom. Further, each Faculty is assigned the subjects they are to teach. Once the allocation is completed the HoD is to create a timetable. Each Student and Faculty are then assigned the classrooms accordingly with the corresponding subject. This information is then pushed on to the online classroom where the allocation is complete and the student can log in at the assigned time.

5. Evidence of Success

The ERP has enabled an easy transition during the time of CoViD as it has helped not just in setting up an online infrastructure for classes but also to effectively track the progress made by each individual. This helps ease the work on the administrative team as all the data remains streamlined.

Besides the details of the timetable, students can also get information such as their marks report, fee dues, proctorial report, upcoming events, alerts, etc., via the ERP.

This will effectively improve transparency and act as a bridge in connecting parents/guardians/sponsors to the student's educational progress.

Students can give real time feedback to teaching methodology and suggestions, they can share their grievances and keep track of actions taken towards resolving the same more efficiently. They can also decrease wait time in several places including fee counters, offices, canteens,



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library, etc. This would reduce wait time significantly and a streamlined process can be established to enhance the efficiency of the college.

From the Administration Point of view, data can be collated with relative ease and can be used to submit reports and keep track of goals set by the Administration. The reports can be then submitted to statutory bodies and other invigilation teams for accreditation and other purposes.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

To come up with relevant modules that would work seamlessly across all platforms for a campus of 15,000 was the first challenge. A team of experts were given the problem and were assigned to develop a method to make the data easy to the eye with emphasis on conveying information relevant to each user. It also was important to ensure that access was given need based and hence division of privileges had to be made according to each department within the campus. The next problem was the potential risk of having a surge of users, this was dealt with upgrading to a more stable server. For students it was important to create an application as the number of mobile users are on the higher end. And hence a team of app developers were assigned the task to do the same.