

THE GLOBAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

A Peer Reviewed International Journal

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Special Issue
Conference Proceedings

EMERGING APPROACHES AND METHODS IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (EAMELT)

Jointly organised by :
Kongu Engineering College, Perundurai
The Global Association of English Studies
All India Network of English Teachers

An official Journal of

**GLOBAL
ASSOCIATION OF
ENGLISH
STUDIES**

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Volume II, Issue 1,
February 2016

BEST PRACTICES IN COLLEGES : AN OVERTURE**Prof. Shirish Shinde**

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The Indian system of higher education has often responded to the challenges of the times. Two decades ago, when the system came under severe criticism that it had allowed the mushrooming of Higher Education Institutions [HEIs], comprising the quality of educational offerings, the Ministry of Human Resource Development [MHRD] and the University Grants Commission [UGC] took initiatives to ensure the standards of higher education. As a result, the National Policy on Education [1986] gave focus on upholding the quality of higher education in India and advocated certain policy initiatives. On the recommendations of the Programme of Action [1992] document that provided the guidelines for the implementation of the National Policy on Education [1986], in 1994, the UGC established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council [NAAC] as an autonomous institution, with its headquarter at Bangalore to assure the quality of HEIs.

Today has become a world of 'Best Practice'. Every college nowadays is emerging with its different Best Practices. But, what after all is a 'Best Practice'? It is nothing but an activity executed by a college in respect of maintaining quality of higher education in the college campus. It is evaluated by considering its context, time and the viewer's perspective. Hence, a Best Practice in an institution may not be seen in other institute. However, it may become guideline to the other institution. Few critics are of the view that the Best Practices are 'borrowed' practices because they stand authenticated in an institutional context. Few intellectuals hesitate and are often in confusion to decide whether an activity they started as a Best Practice would prove to be so. Such people hesitate to share their best practice data. Nevertheless, it is the need of the hour to share our Best practice data by which there will be a good discussion upon the issue and we would meet out the final solution.

NAAC has give more weightage to the following points while imparting a Value Framework among the Higher Education institutions or colleges in our country –

- Contributing to National Development
- Fostering global competencies among students
- Inculcating a Value System in student
- Promoting the use of Technology
- Quest for excellence in Higher Educational Institutions
- To know and implement the Best Practices in our colleges

Thus, to achieve the global excellence is our prime interest. NAAC has often been working as a lighthouse to the Higher Education Institutions. It also has suggested the Best Practices for quality sustenance or enhancement. The benefits of such practices are –

- To inculcate democratic values among the stakeholders;
- To encourage contact between the Students and the Faculty;
- To minimize the gap between the students and faculty;

- To develop reciprocity and cooperation among the students;
- To make the complicated process of feedback easier and friendly
- Communicate high expectations and knowledge output
- Respect diverse talents and ways of learning
- To implement Best Practices in a democratic way

In other words, there should be a friendly and rejoicing atmosphere to enhance the Best Practices and its results in our higher educational institutions or colleges. Broadly speaking, quality management, fundamental development and consistency in improving the education institutions should be the purpose of Best Practices. Though Best Practices are not new and foreign things, identification or hunting them is the need of hour. Maintenance of quality through Best Practices is a long process that depends upon consistent hard work. Application of Best Practice along with Quality works on many ground such as identification, implementation, institutionalization, internalization and dissemination of Best Practices.

The actual best practices implemented in our colleges are shown in the power point presentation. They come under the Criteria i.e. Curricular Aspects and Research and Fostering Global Competencies among the Students.

On the whole, while implementing Best Practices, the college teachers should first understand an ever-evolving definition of what constitutes Best Practices in this amorphous and complex endeavor. It is nothing but ‘the practice which is best-in-class achievement and becomes a recognized standard of excellence’. Best Practice can be started in any routine activity of a college with the analysis on aspects like How good it is? And compared to What? Thus, it is very important to concentrate on the best practice for the maintenance of quality in higher education.

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