

1. Title of the practice: Creative development periodicals

2. Goal: The initiative aims to tap into creativity of students & let them reap its benefits for their academic & personal development. Creativity will let them to engage with the world without being judgmental. It will give them freedom to take risks, try new things & overcome inhibitions in a healthy way. It will enhance their self-awareness in the sense that self-expression will get better when adequate time & energy are invested in developing one's own ideas. Learning to trust one's instincts will boost their confidence & raise self-esteem. Challenges & obstacles are part & parcel of life. However, creativity will assist them in devising resourceful ways to solve the problems encountered.

3. The Context: In recent times, the job market has evolved in terms of career opportunities and work culture. Employers prefer a creative employee who can come up with innovative ideas for the growth of the company & not just someone with a specific skill set. Jobs that involve creativity skills are also more future-proof as they are difficult to be replaced by robotics or computers.

Creativity is no longer seen as the character trait of artists or musicians, rather it is applicable across domains, from engineering, to biology, to business. It is not just about thinking outside the box; it is exploring the boundary between what one knows & what one has not yet thought about.

Creativity & innovation have become one of the top strategic priorities in organizations. Most of the big companies around the world practice the “20% rule”. They encourage their employees to keep aside 20 % of their daily work schedule to explore new ideas.

4. The Practice: Creativity is innate but it is often ignored or blocked off with curiosity replaced by familiarity, open mindedness with factual understanding, imagination with tried & tested methods and active problem solving with apathy.

St. Thomas College understands the importance of study life balance for students and how a creative outlet can help in building social values & ethics among them. It believes that the very first steps in strengthening creative skills are to recognize them, understand them & celebrate them. Then only, these skills can be practiced & developed.

As someone once said, there is no right way to be creative. Taking this adage into account, the college gives free rein to artist's muse to channel their creative energies unimpeded by writer's block. It publishes an institutional magazine SANTHOMIAN that provides a platform for the budding talents to showcase their creative skills. It lets them voice their opinions & express themselves in a manner that is respectful, thoughtful & impartial.

The editorial team for the magazine includes a student editor who not only coordinates with students interested in getting their creations published but also assists the faculty members in short listing, editing & proofreading the submissions.

The magazine unfolds students' imagination, gives life to their thoughts, thus unleashing a wide spectrum of creative skills which includes not just writing but also sketching, painting & photography. It helps them to refine their skills related to writing, editing, design, layout preparation & photography. It enables them to put skills they learnt in classroom into practical application.

Being involved in magazine work directly or indirectly, they learn the ethical imperatives of editorial activity

like for instance facts are to be distinguished from opinions, voicing an opinion does not equate to belittling someone, evidence is to be weighed before reaching to a conclusion etc. This helps them in understanding the meaning & importance of objectivity. Working along with their teachers, they learn to present their ideas in an unbiased manner & be able to meet deadlines effectively without reeling under the pressure of time constraints.

Exploration & channelization of creative urges of students in the college is not just limited to the annual college magazine. They are let to blossom naturally through other forums as well. Students learn to appreciate diversity, respect differences, value ideas of others & get inspired through wall magazine Boutonniere and newsletter Elite that exhibits artworks also.

Apart from the in-house periodicals, college gives the opportunity to students to share their creative write-ups with Darpan, the quarterly magazine of MGM fraternity.

5. Evidence of success: Creative endeavors give an opportunity to feel intensely, observe keenly, think deeply & express distinctly. Being a part of college magazine as editor or contributor was no different. The students of the college were allowed to make creative & editorial judgements under the guidance of faculty members. This empowered them to challenge the status quo constructively in their writings & also sharpened their skills of decision making.

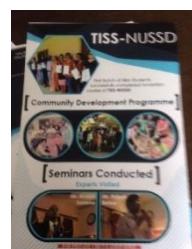
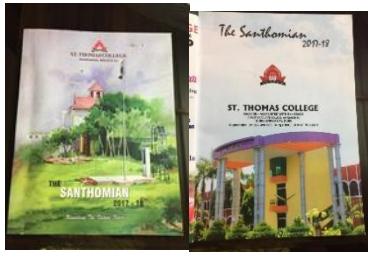
It helped them in divergent thinking that enabled them to ask questions, challenge assumptions, identify problems and seek & justify solutions. This proved particularly useful in debate & extempore competitions wherein the participants are expected to think & communicate under pressure. The creative minds of the college were efficient when it came to ideating, defending one's standpoint and thinking on the feet. Their convincing candour not only impressed the judges but also disarmed their opponents.

Young writers find their first exposure through the medium of college magazines only. Two students of the college have successfully published books of their poems. Their regular submissions not only kept the creative juices flowing but also improved their writing skills. Appraisal by peers & teachers alike inspired them to dip their oars into the turbulent waters of emotions & sail it to the shore of publication.

6. Problems encountered and resources required: The resources required for publishing college magazine include editing software; design software; photo-editing software; printing facility; articles, poems, photos, sketches & paintings; adequate budget to cover printing costs and last but not the least manpower-editors, proofreaders, coordinators & contributors (poets, writers, photographers, painters).

The enthusiastic participation of students every year is proof enough of the success of the college magazine, but it was not without surmounting some obstacles.

- (i) Though prior notice was circulated for magazine submissions & every possible care was taken by the editorial team to incorporate them all in the final draft, late submitters complained of being left out.
- (ii) Some students considered editor's suggestions for changes to be judgemental.
- (iii) Some hesitated to share their creative ideas with others.
- (iv) Some reacted negatively when they were enquired about the originality of their submissions.



2. Title:Communicative English Course

2. Goal: The primary goal of this short-term certificate course is to enable the students attain & enhance competence in the four main language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading & writing. It seeks to make them proficient in English language so that they will be able to communicate confidently & effectively in everyday situations. It will help them to develop their skills in vocabulary, grammar, presentation & interaction, thus ensuring that any shortcomings in aptitude or practice will not hinder effective communication. It will give them ample scope to internalize English so that they will be able to overcome their inhibitions & embrace their second language as their native one.

3. The Context: It is impossible to deny the global presence & importance of English language. It is used extensively in all the essential fields like business, commerce, judiciary, journalism, broadcasting, science, technology, politics & education system. As it's a part of the school curriculum, students generally study it just to pass their exams but they are not committed to its mastery. Familiarity with the theoretical part is never enough to guarantee success in learning of a language. Inadequate practice of the concepts learnt in class impedes their understanding of the nuances of English& inconsistency in its orthography. Sometimes mother tongue also interferes in English language learning with students facing syntactic, phonological, semantic &/or morphological problems when they transfer the skills acquired in native language to English. The lab addresses all the above-mentioned issues by providing a strong platform for supportive interactive learning without time constraint wherein students are exposed to usage of functional English.

4. The Practice: The onus of enhancing English knowledge skills among the learners lies with the institution. Keeping this in consideration, a well-equipped ETNL laboratory was set up in the college. It provides a three months training to both undergraduate and postgraduate students based on the ETNL module. The module includes topics of phonetics, parts of speech, letter writing, group discussion & public speaking. The registered students also get valuable tips for preparation of various competitive exams like IELTS, TOEFL, GMAT etc. The theoretical & practical aspects of all these topics are covered in the duration of 120 hours.

The entire course can be broken down into the following parts:

1. Introducing Communicative English - The first part of the course includes a brief introduction about course & its contents, the inherent challenges and the learning outcomes. Then the students are familiarized with the modules they have to complete in order to pass the course.
2. Learning through real life examples - The students are exposed to real life videos so that they can know how people converse with each other in their daily lives. They are then instructed to imitate & analyze those conversations.
3. Learning through real life scenarios- Groups are formed among the students and some real-life scenario is given to them on random basis. They are told to enact it using the concepts learnt in previous sessions. They can also made to participate in impromptu group discussions, presentations, debates & speeches to make them confident in English usage.

The course promotes structured learning using an unambiguous pedagogy with individualized instruction & immediate evaluation thus taking conversational skills of the students to the next level. It develops listening skill that was the most neglected in the traditional English class though listening accounts for about 45% of the time people spend communicating followed by speaking (about 30 percent). Listening well helps students in non-linear processing of English thereby enhancing their comprehension. They are also acquainted with phonetics to develop their speaking skills which was also a neglected aspect in traditional English teaching. Grammar was practiced only in writing but not in speaking. The language lab helps in building a good vocabulary and enables the learners to pronounce properly. It also improves their writing skills thus helping them to apply their knowledge practically by writing in a simple & logical way. They can understand the degrees of comparison, reporting in passive, use of modal auxiliaries & implied meanings in literature.

5. Evidence of success: The psychological privacy provided by the microphone promoted the speaking ability of students. The anonymous nature of lab system took away the pressure and they were more open towards learning from their mistakes. Given the self -guided learning, they were able to grasp concepts at their own pace& practice regularly. The language lab is learner centric with visual stimulus & selective audio materials keeping them active for longer periods of time. This increased the attention span of the students and their concentration in the classroom teaching was improved. Private conversations of teachers with students on individual basis kept objectionable behaviour&/or disturbances in check in the lab and this in turn improved the

discipline in the regular classes. Greater class participation was seen among students who didn't hesitate to give answers to questions asked by the teachers or discuss their doubts. They were able to overcome their fear of public speaking and were able to express their opinions with more clarity. Their PowerPoint presentations also became more refined as they were equipped with language skills & knowledge of kinesics. They voluntarily participated in college level quiz, elocution, & essay competitions to sharpen their newly acquired skills. Some went on to bring laurels for their alma mater by outstanding performances at university & state level competitions.

6. Problems encountered and resources required: The language lab is set up in a computer room having the resources of 16-20 soundproof compartments called cubicles (or hearing booths) with table & seat for learners, microphone, headphone, recorder, console (or instructor's booth), master tapes, monitoring equipment, distribution switches to direct programme to learners, monitoring switches to listen to learners, intercom switches for two way communication, group call switch (general instructions), all call switch (for announcements) and control room (containing records, tapes & other equipment).

Despite the successful implementation & positive outcome of the course, some problems were encountered.

- (i) Transition from mother tongue to English took time & tutor had to personally explain the instructions.
- (ii) Tutor had to start from the basic level & move on to next level included in the module for students coming from rural background.
- (iii) Often conversation during the role play sessions was quite slow as many students first framed the sentences in their mother tongue & then translated it in English.

