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Creating Learning opportunities in Libraries: a case study

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a case study of Atmiya University Library and Learning Centre. It describes the different learning activities by the Library and its outcomes. The paper will be useful to practicing Librarians and will provide inputs to develop and activities which are relevant to the community and thus contribute directly or indirectly to outcome based education (OBE) activities that are discussed about are Book Talks, Information Literacy Programmes, Foreign Language Club, Service Learning, Makerspace.

Keywords : Library as Learning Centre, Learning Commons, Outcome based education, Graduate Attributes; Learning Commons, Book talks, Makerspace, service learning, Information Literacy Programmes.

Introduction :

This is an exploratory research in which the researcher has done an in-depth investigation at Atmiya Group of Institution and learning centre to increase its usage by trying to create collaborative learning opportunities at the Library. Five case studies of activities and practices namely – Book talks, Research Commons, Earn While you Learn Scheme, Makerspace, Foreign Language club at the Library and Learning Centre have been analyzed in this paper. There is very little research in this area in India and thus stands a good opportunity for practicing Librarians to evolve methods, process and implementation for future trends in redefining Libraries as Learning centres and extended classroom.

1. Outcome based Education :

We now emphasize Outcome-based education to ascertain that Library activities, services, and collection must be in line with the expectation of the OBE system. The OBE system expects us to answer the following questions as per NBA manual:

1. "What the students need to learn?"
2. What the students should demonstrate to the professional world?
3. Accordingly designing both curricula and delivery mechanisms (teaching strategies) to build the required competence." (<http://www.nbaind.org/Files/introduction-to-nba-28-jan-2016.pdf>)

1.1. The Graduate Attributes

As deliberated in the preceding section; Library can also contribute to "Graduate Attributes" through the activities strategized with the Librarian-Faculty collaboration and better understanding of Learning outcomes and its contribution listed attributes by NBA in particular for an Engineering Institution. Graduate attributes that form the student learning outcomes per the NBA accreditation document are: "Engineering knowledge; Problem analysis; Design/development of products; Investigation; Modern tool usage; the engineer and society; Environment and sustainability; Ethics; Individual and team communications; Project management and finance; Life-long learning" (<http://www.nbaind.org/Files/introduction-to-nba-28-jan-2016.pdf>).

As per the expectations articulated in each of these attributes in the NBA accreditation manual we can effortlessly map what activities and services a library should put in preparation to contribute to the "Graduate Attributes". There are several studies on Graduate Attributes and Libraries namely - (Chanock, 2004); (Bruce, 2001); (Bundy, 2004); (Barrie, 2007); (Barron, 2006); (Gansemer-Topf & Schuh, 2006); (Partridge & Munro, 2010); (Mason, 2011); and (Nitecki & Hernon 2000); which focus on the role made by Libraries to cater to Graduate attributes.

1.2. The Gujarat Technological Universities – Student 100 Point activity

"Globally, engineering education systems have continuously evolved, to address the needs of the industry and the industry needs professionals who can work successfully in teams, who have leadership qualities, who are responsive to community needs and who can bring innovation and creativity to their work. Hence, to prepare its students to meet multifarious requirements, GTU has created the unique mechanism. GTU will be able to reap benefits from these activities in time to come. It is expected that by the time GTU's students reach their Final Year, they would have developed themselves both through their studies in the respective technological field and through their active participation in the co-curricular activities that they would be well-prepared for contributing to building India and the world of their dreams." (<http://www.gtu.ac.in/info.com/GTU-100-Activity-Points-Introduction>): "Any B.E. Student of GTU will be conferred upon the B.E. Degree if he/she earns the Minimum 100 Activity Points during his total academic tenure. The points student has earned reflected on

ranscript". This point gives another excellent opportunity to plan activities to help students earn these points

2. Library and Learning Centre at Atmiya :

Library and Learning Centre (LLC) of Atmiya Group of Institutions (AGI) spreads over 3 floors and is at the heart of the Institute, centrally approachable by all the students and faculty members of the AGI. It has plentiful of collections in Print, Digital and Online too. The Library holds a print collection of approx. 75 thousand books along with 290 print periodicals both National and International across disciplines, general reading and also competitive examinations.

The Library has subscription to a rich collection of online resources to support R&D work such as IEEE (190 titles), Elsevier (ScienceDirect- around 245 titles) and "e-resources under NLIST programme as - American Institute of Physics (18 titles), Annual Reviews (33 titles), Cambridge University Press (224 titles), Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) (1 titles), Indian Journals (180+ titles), Institute of Physics (46 titles), JSTOR (2500+ titles), Oxford University Press (206 titles) , Royal Society of Chemistry (29 titles), H. W. Wilson (3000+ titles) and E-Books collection of Cambridge Books Online (1800 titles), E-brary (125000+ titles) , EBSCOHost-Net Library (936 titles) , Hindustan Book Agency (65+ titles) , Institute of South East Asian Studies (ISEAS) Books (382+ titles) , Oxford Scholarship (1402+ titles) , Springer eBooks (2300 titles) , Sage Publication eBooks (1000 titles) , Taylor Francis eBooks (1800 titles) , Mylibrary-McGraw Hill (1124 titles) , World -ebooks Library (30,00,000 titles), South Asia Archive (though NDL)." (<https://iproxy.inflibnet.ac.in/menu>)

The Library is open on all days including Sundays and Holidays from Morning 6.00am to 0.00hrs. The Library has all the state-of-the-art learning conveniences: to mention a few - the Group study rooms, a bookshop, a coffee shop, A Media Library, separate Staff reading room, Digital Library of Project reports, Dissertations and Faculty publications which is effortlessly be searched in/by Google Scholar; it also has its online presence through the website, a WebOPAC to search the books, and social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The Library has recently also started the Makerspace to bestow upon the space to brilliant and inventive young minds to toil towards integral solutions using an interdisciplinary approach. It is definitely a place worth being for hours exploring one's own varied interests.

The library conducts many programs for User responsiveness and orientation for improved usage of the Resources. As a consequence Library and Learning centre caters to the learning, teaching, and research needs of all the levels of users.

3. Library as Learning Commons/ Centre

"Over the last ten years, various forms of collaboration between student and academic affairs have resulted in opportunities for students to extend their learning beyond the classroom setting" (Engstrom & Tinto, 2000)(Schmidt & Kaufman, 2007).

The Changes and new experiments in the teaching-learning-research methodologies have impacted the Library concept tremendously and as Bennett quotes "move in higher education ways from a teaching culture and towards a culture of learning" (Bennett, 2003).

As Keating and Gabb have referred in their literature review on Learning Commons

"Weimer argues that a learner-centered environment requires five key changes to practice":

- "A change in the balance of power between learner and teacher away from teacher domination towards more democratic approaches;"
- "A reappraisal of the role of content away from 'coverage' towards using content to develop generic skills;"
- "A change in the role of the teacher away from dispensing knowledge towards helping students to learn;"
- "A shift in the responsibility for managing to learn away from the teacher towards the student; and"
- "A change in assessment purposes and processes away from examinations towards assessment that promotes learning, including self-assessment and peer assessment."

(Weimer 2002) (Keating and Gabb, 2005)

"First-year experience programs, leadership initiatives, learning communities, and service learning opportunities are some examples of programs that engage faculty, staff, and students as partners in creating purposeful learning activities. New additions to this list are 'learning commons' initiatives that model effective collaborative partnerships between student affairs and libraries to support learning both inside and outside the classroom." (Schmidt & Kaugman, 2007)

"When the question is asked, how libraries position themselves in this academic climate, it is clear that the changes to user patterns and the availability of new tools require that libraries keep pace. Creating a learning commons is one of how libraries are responding" (Roberts, 2007).

4. Literature Review of Models of Learning studied

Concepts	Contributor	Definition	Components
Service Learning	John Dewey; Jean Piaget; Kurt Lewin; Donald Schon; and David Kolb	“Community engagement pedagogies, often called ‘service learning,’ are ones that combine learning goals and community service in ways that can enhance both student growth and the common good. In the words of the National Service Learning Clearinghouse, it is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”	The four components of Service learning Model are (1) preparation, (2) action, and (3) reflection, (4) assessment”
Learning Commons	Donald Beagle; Scott Bennett	A ‘learning commons’ most broadly defined “is a central facility, usually an academic library, that provides the space, technology and services to support learning. These learning spaces can include areas for group work, individual study spaces, instructional rooms, computer pools, multi-media labs and soft seating areas. Services may include learning, writing, library research, numeracy, and academic advising support for students; instructional development assistance for faculty, and technology and media support services for both students and instructors” (http://canadianlearningcommons.ca/en/).	The four components of a learning commons model are: Virtual space; Physical Spaces; Need of the Learner; Variety of Pedagogy
Makerspace	Dale Dougherty	“A space where kids have the opportunity to make – a place where some tools, materials, and enough expertise can get them started. These places, called makerspaces, share some aspects of the shop class, home economics class, the art studio and science labs. In effect, a makerspace is a physical mash-up of different places that allows makers and projects to integrate these different kinds of skills.” Dale Dougherty, <i>The Maker Mindset</i> , in <i>Design, Make, Play</i>	The Components of a makerspace model are: Space; Equipments, 3D printers; purpose
Information Literacy	“National Commission on Libraries and Information Science by Paul G. Zurkowski, who was at the time president	The American Library Association defines ‘information literacy’- as “a set of abilities requiring individuals to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information”	The five components of Information Literacy are identify, find, evaluate, apply, and acknowledge
	of the Information Industry Association”		

Table 1: Models of Learning in Libraries Studied

5. Learning Opportunities at Atmiya University Library and Learning Centre

Case	Learning opportunities		
	The Users	Type of Learning	Learning Outcomes
Book Talks	Faculty, Students, Administration, Stakeholders, External members	Different Perspective on the same book and thus a more enriched understanding of the content	Presentation Skills, Review, Comprehension, Time management, Story telling, Dialogue, Communication Skills
Research Commons	Faculty, Students, Research Scholars	Topics of research, Research Methodology Guides, Research design tools, Literature survey and review; Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary connections and collaboration opportunities; borrowed theories; Knowing Laboratory facilities on campus; understanding significance of the discipline and the research areas it contributes to	Research Design; understanding theories; writing styles; understanding importance of literature review and conducting one; practical knowledge of use of research tools; Identifying collaborative research areas
Makerspace	Students; Industrial Experts; Alumni, Faculty as mentors; Innovators from the Society and research scholars	Ideating; Brainstroming; Studying alternatives; Design Thinking; Lateral Thinking; Sustainability; Optimal Design; Feasibility; Product development	Product Design Thinking; Communicating Ideas; Validation through Optimization; Relevance to Society; Understanding the concept of Sustainable design; Implementation of Concepts
Earn while you learn	Students	Work with Library Team and understand Library Automation Needs; Library documentation services; Library Website Development; Application of New Technologies to Library marketing, communication and Outreach	Practical Application of Theoretical concepts and learning's in labs in real world
Foreign Language Club	Students; Faculty, External Users	Supporting learning of Languages in a Informal Learning situation	Ease and Confidence of Communication in a Language

Table 2 : Learning Opportunities created at Atmiya University Library

6. Glimpses of the activities

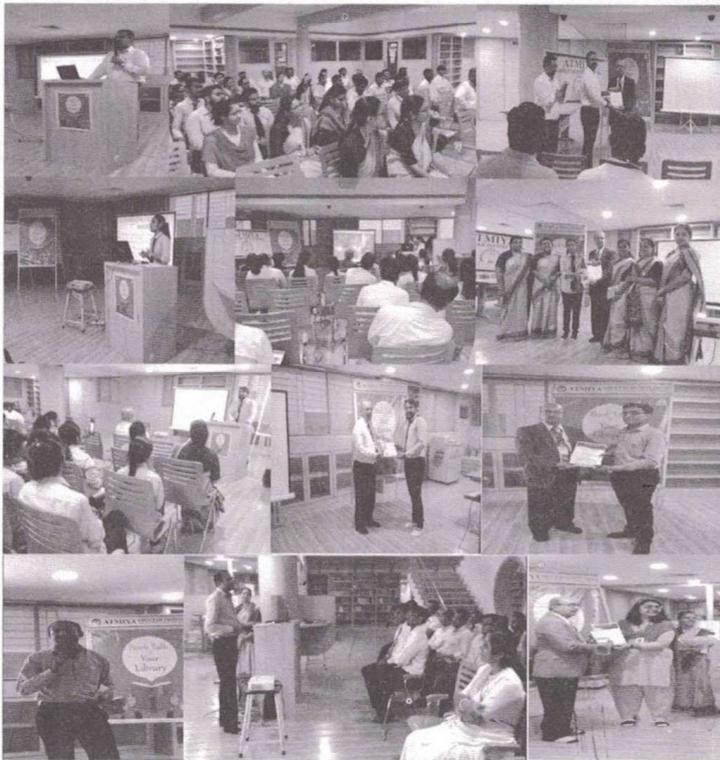


Figure 1 : Book talks (every Saturday except 3rd Saturday)



Figure 2 : Research Commons

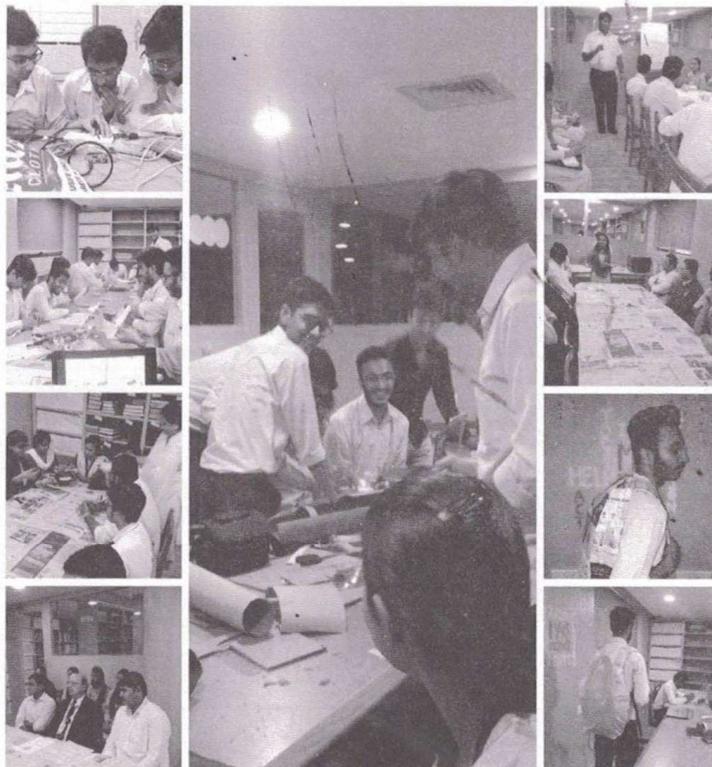


Figure 4 : Makerspace Activities

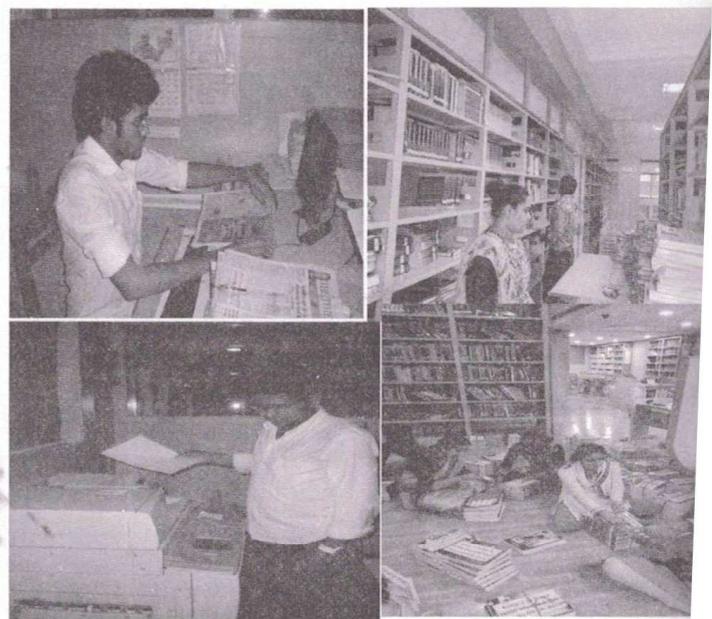


Figure 5 : Earn While you learn scheme

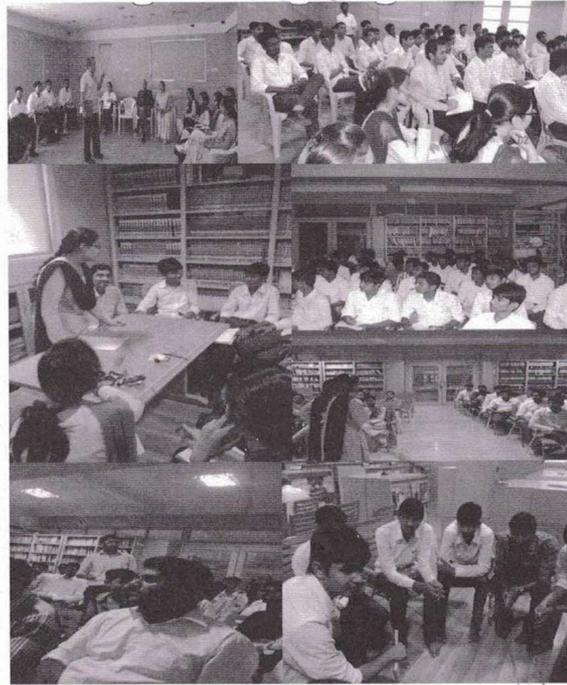


Figure 6: Foreign Language Club

7. The Outcomes of the activities

Case	Outcome	
	Graduate Attribute	GTU 100 Activities
Book Talks	“Modern tool usage; The engineer and society; Communications “	Life Skills, Student skill development, Hobby Club Activities / ECell / Placement Cell / Media Club, etc. (2,3,6=11 marks)
Research Commons	“Problem analysis , Modern tool usage, The engineer and society, Environment and sustainability, Ethics, Individual and team work, Communications”	Paper Presentation, Project (Non Curricular), GTU Innovation Club / S4 Extension Centre (6, 3,6= 15 marks)
Makerspace	ALL	Learning Engineering, Workshop, Project (Non Curricular), High Customer Review for Creative Products, Legally Registered a Start-up Company, Filed a Patent, Completed Prototype Development, User / Industry Implementing the Innovation developed by Student, Significant Value Addition / Augmentation of Grassroots / Social Innovation, GTU Innovation Club / S4 Extension Centre (2,3, 6,10, 15, 15, 20, 20, 15, 15, 10 = 60 Marks)
Earn while you learn	“Design/development of solutions, Investigation, Modern tool usage, The engineer and society, Ethics, Individual and team work, Project management and finance”	Training / Internship / Professional Certification, Project (Non Curricular), Consultancy Projects (6, 6, 6 = 18 marks)
Foreign Language Club	“Individual and team work Communications”	Group Discussion, Student skill development, Hobby Club Activities / ECell / Placement Cell / Media Club, etc. (3,3, 6 = 12 Marks)

Table 3 : Case Analysis based on the Outcome

Conclusion :

The case study discussed above gives an idea of how a Library can work proactively towards learning activities that are relevant and outcome based. There are many common learning needs that can be catered by the library with a good Faculty-Librarian collaboration on various learning opportunities and needs. At Atmiya we have been constantly striving to look for opportunities to create learning need, space, expertise and collaborative platforms to fulfil learning needs on campus itself. These efforts are helping us redefine our Library as a Learning Centre too.

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