hteducation
EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS

Beyond classrooms

GOING GLOBAL City colleges are inviting international experts to conduct workshops across streams, for practical, supplementary exposure

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St Andrew's College, Bandra students attending the 'Care of the Earth' symposium.

Taking a step towards multi-faceted education, various city colleges are jointly raising the bar for in-college workshops and talks. Initially only limited to offering a breather from monotonous lectures, these workshops are now going international, with talented personalities from around the world making their way to packed conference halls or auditoriums of colleges. Held in the form of informal interactive talks or elaborate symposiums, these workshops are becoming de-riguer for most colleges, exposing their students to a range of subjects that are not limited to their syllabus.

Colleges are also trying to incorporate them in the course structure through internal marks. Jai Hind College, Churchgate, for instance, uses workshops as an internally-graded class assignment. "Instead of letting the talk fade away from a student's mind as soon as they step out of the hall, we integrate it into our course study through an assignment. This encourages students to go home and read more about the subject too," says Ashok Wadia, principal, Jai Hind College.

Colleges are also collaborating and sharing resources for getting the best speakers to Mumbai. Recently, for film and literature students, KC College, Wilson College and St Andrew's College came together to conduct talks and lectures at all three campuses. "One college handles hospitality, another logistics and the third, certificate allotments. By helping each other, we create a mutual learning environment, beneficial for all our students," says Marie Fernandes, principal, St Andrews College, Bandra.

SPACE ODYSSEY

The Physics circle of St Xavier's College, Fort, invited Alec Boksenberg **(right)**, an astrophysicist from the UK to speak to students from all streams about 'Everything you need to know about the Universe'. Boksenberg, awarded a place in the Royal Society of London, invented the Image Photon Counting System, an image detector extensively used in optical astronomy. He also has an asteroid, 3205 Boksenberg, named after him.

He currently takes sessions on experimental astronomy at the Nehru Planetarium and an eight-module course on the same topic at the University of Mumbai. On January 18, he used his experience of being a lecturer at the Cambridge University to speak to St Xavier's College students about black holes, telescopes and time-travel. The 90-minute session ended with a question round.

In March, St Xavier's will play host to students from Harvard University, under the Harvard College in Asia Programme for 10 days of interdisciplinary workshops on the topic 'Building Sustainable Cities'.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Early January, Jai Hind College students invited Glen Gerreyn, a champion Australian athlete who, at 18, was diagnosed with a life-threatening disease, but did not buckle, and became a motivational speaker instead. Gerreyn has spoken at across the globe, including at the popular inspirational TEDx talks. He runs a company called Oxygen Factory in Australia, through which he speaks to high school children, college youth and parents about personal development and better leadership.

At the Jai Hind College auditorium, Gerreyn spoke to a packed hall about his journey from a nation-level sprinter to a tackling depression and disability, to becoming a community developer and an inspirational speaker. In a talk labelled 'Leaders born or made', he shared anecdotes and personal experiences to inspire the audience about leadership qualities and optimism. The students were able to interact with him personally after the talk.

MINES TO GRAPEVINE

To reflect on the unrestful times we live in and to encourage youngsters to discuss world peace, St Andrew's College conducted an international symposium titled 'Care of the Earth' on January 28. The keynote speaker was Heidi Kuhn, founder and CEO of Roots of Peace from California, USA that works towards turning minefields in strife-torn areas into farmlands.

Kuhn's global initiative called 'Mines to Vines' has replaced mines in areas of Afghanistan, Cambodia and Iraq with grape vines, which are exported to many countries, thereby generating employment and saving hundreds of lives. Kuhn inspired the students to think big and debate issues beyond their country or curriculum.

China's consul-general Liu Youfa, archbishop Felix Machado, humanitarian Heidi Kuhn and professors at the Care of Earth workshop.

Raj Nayak (centre), CEO, Colors, and principal of KC College launched the annual newsletter, Scribe, as part of the media summit.

Liu Youfa, counsel general of the Republic of China, expressed environmental concerns while talking about the degradation of Himalayas. Other speakers at the symposium included Francis D'Britto, founder of Harit Vasai Movement, which fought builders in Vasai to prevent illegal commercialisation of land; Zeenat Ali, founder director, Wisdom Foundation, Mumbai; and other eminent speakers from religious communities such as Parsi and Sikh. "The Care for the Earth talk made me more aware about my responsibility as a citizen of the world," says Donna Marie D'Souza, third-year English student, who attended the symposium.

FORGING CONNECTIONS

The department of mass media at KC College, Churchgate, organised a summit centred on media, and brought industry bulwarks to the college with the theme 'Media and globalisation'. The two-day summit concluded on February 21 with Raj Nayak, CEO, Colors; Indira Parikh, president, FLAME institute of Media Studies, Pune; and Srinivasan Jain, bureau head, NDTV Mumbai, as the speakers. Workshops and panel discussion on topics such as the growth of digital media and social networking had students participating from several city colleges.

expertspeak

"Such workshops and interactive talks broaden students' horizons and raise their curiosity. Listening to eminent and successful personalities motivates them to do something great themselves. I have seen them full of questions and emboldened enough to share their thoughts with the audience. Students learn more from such activities and interactions than they would in a lecture hall."

MARIE FERNANDES, principal, St Andrew's College, Bandra

studentspeak

"Talks held in our college, especially ones with international speakers open up uncharted territories for us. By attending such workshops, we are introduced to many more aspects of a subject, in a fun manner. Even though such talks are not very long, we get to know about many new things and can follow this up with additional research."

SHUBHAM KANODIA, second year physics student, St Xavier's College, Fort

"Occupied with the class routine, we overlook aspects such as humanity and peace. The Care for the Earth talk made me aware about my responsibility as a citizen of the world. Though not all students attend workshops in the right spirit — a few are there only to bunk lectures — but even they take home substantial knowledge from such talks."

DONNA MARIE D'SOUZA, third year English student, St Andrew's College, Bandra

Edu Buzz Hindustan Times Media Marketing Initiative

'MET Utsav' celebrated

15 institutes, 4000 students (school and college), 500 faculty & staff celebrated MET's intra-collegiate annual grand festival - MET Utsav 2014 amidst great splendor and zeal recently. Metizens (MET staff, students, faculty, admin, technical and non-academic staff) truly brought their talent to the fore with overwhelming power-packed performances in dance, music, drama, fashion show and more.

ICFL in strategic alliance with Ideal Education

ICICIdirect Centre for Financial Learning (ICFL) today announced a strategic alliance with Ideal Education Private Ltd along with EDU Vista enterprise for promoting various financial training and certification courses. Through this alliance, ICFL and Ideal Education will offer training programmes for reputed international certifications to learners in the domain of financial planning, wealth management, securities market and other aspects of finance. The training programmes will be delivered by an expert faculty from a studio in Mumbai and will be broadcast live across around 70 locations where Ideal Education has a satellite class set up. The students can interact and seek clarifications from the faculty, an experience similar to the physical classrooms.

Prof Walawalkar, Founder and Chairman, Ideal Education said "Ideal Education has been coaching students for over two decades and have trained over 200,000 students in different domains. We have seen an increasing demand from our students for International Certifications in finance. We believe that our association with ICICIdirect Centre for Financial Learning will help us expand our offerings to our students."

Speaking on the occasion Neeraj Joshi, Head - ICFL, ICICI Securities Ltd said "Providing easy and simple access to quality financial education is the goal of ICFL. The association with Ideal Education will enable us reach out to interested students across many tier2 and 3 Indian cities where access to financial education is limited, thus helping us in our mission of financial literacy. We are launching this initiative by offering CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER (CFPCM) certification through this mode and hope that this would help bridge skill-gaps among learners at these locations."

Students and professionals in various locations would be trained on reputed International Certifications in the finance domain through a web-cam model. This is the first-of-its-kind training initiative offered by any financial services firm in India.

Eco-friendly Sports Day by Kidzee, Navi Mumbai

Kidzee, India's largest pre-school chain, celebrated its annual sports day at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, Navi Mumbai, today. To highlight the theme of the day, "eco-friendly," Mr. Kingston Dsouza, General Manager, Academics Zee Learn Ltd. planted a sapling during the inauguration ceremony.

300 children and teachers from Kidzee's centre at Airoli and Sanpada participated in the event. The opening activity saw students and teachers parade with them carrying a 'Go Green' placards. The rest of the event reiterated the theme with activities being termed as "Be Healthy", "Nurturing of plants", "Keep clean", "Healthy environment", etc. The activities saw every student of Kidzee participate with great enthusiasm.

While addressing the students and parents, Mr. Kingston Dsouza, said, "We thank all parents for encouraging their children to participate in the sports day. Since these are the formative years of a child, we wanted to ensure that we have a good theme to inculcate good values in children. And hence, the "Eco-friendly" themed sports day."

The road to med-school abroad

STUDY ABROAD

KIMBERLY DIXIT

I get a lot of questions about medical studies abroad. Whether it is for residencies or questions about undergraduate medicine courses, the fact is that these are difficult to answer because the system of medical education in India is, in many ways, very different from the rest of the world.

In the US, for example, a medical doctor must first complete four years of undergraduate studies in a subject related to medicine (eg biology, or in some colleges, pre-medical studies), but students cannot earn medical degrees at the undergraduate level. After graduation, a student then must take the MCAT exam and apply for medical school, usually four-year programmes that include courses in basic medical sciences (eg anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, etc) and clinical rotation through hospitals with senior physicians. After these four years, the student receives an MD degree and is then required to complete a residency before practicing medicine. Those who want to pursue specialty areas of medicine must do subsequent years.

While some medical requirements may be similar to India, in the US, after completing Class 12, students are looking at a minimum of nine years (some estimates up to 11 years if you count studying for MCAT, US Medical Licensing exams (USMLE) and state licensing exams) before becoming a full-fledged doctor.

Besides the lengthy and multiple courses of study, the bottom line is that medical schools in the US are extremely competitive, and there are barely any spots for international medical students (according to the 'US Med Schools for International Students' blog, less than half of the medical schools in the US even accept applications from foreign students).

And international students must show ability to pay for four years, and in some cases, put the total amount of money into escrow until medical studies are completed. Ultimately if you don't hold a four-year bachelor's degree from the US (if you studied in India), getting admitted is nearly impossible. A lot of Indian MBBS graduates go to the US for their residency, and there are ways to make this work, but you have to be willing to study for the USMLE exams and live without an income and without guarantees for some time — you also have to find a way to get yourself to the US legally so that you can sit for the exams.

If your passion is health care, why not look at some other, non-MD options? For example careers as physiotherapists, physician's assistants, nurses, public health administrators, hospital administrators, etc., deal with important aspects of patient care and can sometimes even be more satisfying than clinical work, depending on your personality and strengths.

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Of course the best programmes in these fields are competitive, but there are an abundance of opportunities at smaller, lesser-known colleges, from which well-trained professionals will be sought after. Furthermore, if you look into these programmes in countries with friendly work visa policies (like Canada), you can get valuable experience after completing your education.

As I said in the beginning, I am really no expert on medical education. If you are interested in pursuing studies in health services outside India, medicine tends to be an industry that is highly regulated by most governments, so the education of its practitioners is as variable as such state-run health care systems. Be careful of agents who promise to lead you down this path. Nothing is guaranteed, yet everything is expensive—so try and find free government resources of the host countries to help navigate the process.

The author is a study abroad advisor and co-founder of The Red Pen. Email your study abroad queries to htspecialprojects@hindustantimes.com

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