

Education Through Practice: An Overview of the Diploma in Elementary Education Course

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The Diploma in Elementary Education course is a two-year course devised by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) to provide an opportunity of skill enhancement and honing the level of expertise to the students enrolled. The course was designed in such a way so as to keep it at par with the level of training imparted through the regular course.

Even with a different course structure, the diploma students were provided a training which rendered their skills equivalent to those enrolled in a regular course. The trainees were required to attend classes once a week, either on a Saturday or a Sunday, where they were involved in teaching in a school as part of the course. The trainees were therefore not only coached and their skills upgraded, but were also provided with an opportunity to get practical experience. A balanced synthesis of instructions, trainings and much-needed practical participation enabled the trainees to hone their talents and become well-qualified instructors, both technically and practically.

Syllabus

After several rounds of brainstorming and revisions, the final syllabus was framed to keep it comparable with that in the regular mode. All essential course materials were included in the syllabus and designed specifically to suit the needs of this group. The teaching-learning material was easy-to-understand for the teachers and were designed to be easily inculcated. The emphasis was solely on quality.

Cross-departmental Collaboration

A seamless chain of administrative work was created which linked the trainees with the course instructors, the resource personnel and, further, with the SCERT and the Centre. This helped in building a strong structure which enabled the trainees to receive all course material, workshops and classes well in time. The course structure and the course material were updated to all the links and there was no delay in the trainees being

provided with the course material as a result of departmental inter-linking and communication.

Digitisation and Ease of Access

All the course material, besides being provided in a hard format to the trainees, was also made available online, along with all details of the course schedule and structure. ICT material was used to supplement the teaching-learning material. An optimum use of technology was made during the course where the trainees were also instructed on the proper use of laptops and smartphones for teaching purposes. Videos, etc. were shown to the trainees on CDs intermittently during training workshops. The entire procedure and schedule was regularly updated online.

Registration

A small group of students were registered. The Resource Personnel (RP) organised training workshops for capacity building. These RPs were connected to the core mentor.

Evaluation

The assignments which were given to the trainees comprised of classroom-based practical questions. These answers were to be critically analysed and examined. Assignments were given based on practical experience of the trainees and were designed to be crucial part of the learning process. They were formulated keeping in mind the experience of the trainees in the teaching experience and therefore it required the trainees to make full use of their mental faculties while attempting the assignments. The analysis of the assignment questions was a test of the students' understanding of the learning process and their subjective critical evaluation of the practical experiences, thereby negating any chances of students writing assignments through improper means.

Besides this, spot-checks were often conducted on the campus premises to ensure that the module was properly being imparted as planned.

Learning Plans

The pedagogy or the depth of the knowledge had to be completely child-centred. The aim was to make it flexible enough to reach to the child's level. Special attention was also provided to the learning plans which encompassed a lot of school-based activities. A separate portfolio and register were maintained for the same. Apart from that, the trainees were instructed to maintain a diary of the activities that took place, thereby recording their own performance. These were all part of the school-based action research plan for classroom-based problems. Keen observation and evaluation were the core tasks involved in the entire procedure.

The SCS screening team comprised of 40-50 members. Their task was to support and monitor trainees and provide a detailed report on the same.

The trainees were required to attend workshops on a regular basis under them.

Concluding Remarks

A cumulation of all these different and complementary exercises resulted in a major success of the diploma course training programme which was created with the intention of training the new teachers under the D.El.Ed. programme, while keeping it at par with the regular course module. It was clear, at the end of the programme that the hard work of all involved paid well and the trainees were visibly upscaled with their techniques, skills and their knowledge base enhanced. In retrospect, it may be said that the diploma course turned out to be a successful experiment and ought to be continued.

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