

PRACTICE TEACHING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Practice Teaching is one of the most important components of all pre-service teacher education programs. Practice teaching provides an opportunity to pupil teachers to put their theoretical studies into practice. It prepares pupil teachers to face future challenges through acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills through practical works such as micro-teaching, mega teaching simulated teaching, observational teaching and discussion lesson plans etc. Practice teaching enables pupil teachers to get mastery in teaching skills by conducting microteaching. Questioning, probing questions, explanation, illustration, reinforcement and stimulus variation etc. are some of the important skills required for being an excellent teachers which can be developed by microteaching. Practice teaching acknowledge the students with theoretical concepts of the educational psychology, management of classroom, teacher taught relationship and various philosophies dealing with education in a practical way. Teachers can apply all learned concepts successfully in real life situations. Thus, Practice Teaching gives a sense of accomplishment to pupil teachers. Above all, the teacher –taught interaction and the communication skill get improved. Inculcating pedagogic experience, practice teaching makes a novice teacher to transfer the core competency of the subject knowledge to students in real classroom situation. In the present scenario practice teaching must be blended with ICT which can make teachers feel more confident for effective teaching. Good practice teaching is a key influence on student learning - a desired outcome and a primary goal of teacher educational institutions.

Keywords: Practice Teaching, Pupil Teacher, Micro-Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an indispensable vital process in human life. It aims at shaping an individual into a perfect man. Education has the potentialities to shape the destiny of a nation. This necessitates that teacher who shape the destiny of nation in classroom have to be agenda for such transformation, catalyst in the process of developing the future citizens who are to be productive, who believe in social justice and national integration and who possess values befitting to a dramatic, socialistic and secular citizen. Education is a process of development which includes the three major activities teaching, training and instruction. Thus teacher should develop

understanding, interests, attitudes and skills which would enable him/her to foster all round development and growth of children under his/her care. Teaching is one of the instruments of education and its special function is to impart understanding and skill among learners and teachers. Therefore, pupil teachers must get skill in microteaching and perfection in using instructional material and appropriate teaching methodology.

Teaching is science as well as art and practice teaching is an integral part of the teacher education programme. The exercise is to acquaint pupil teachers with the practical knowledge of teaching and learning process including lesson plan preparation, presentation, class management, communication skills, evaluation and the required personality of a professional teacher. Teacher education programme is being made competency based. However, the teacher needs to be properly educated for professional efficiency and inculcated with a positive attitude that will enable him/her go through the teacher education program properly and come out with well-equipped for the professional responsibility ahead. Teacher education is an important component of the education system, where key role is played by the teacher educators, who initiate all curriculum related activities, motivate pupil teachers to participate and learn from them and also help them to use the newly acquired knowledge and skills in practical situation.

PRACTICE TEACHING

Practice teaching is a teaching by a pupil teacher under the supervision of an experienced teacher educator. Practice teaching experience involves assuming the responsibilities for creating a learning environment and constructing a learning experience for students. Practice Teaching is the most important part of Teacher Education Programme. It is an opportunity for pupil teachers to put their theoretical studies into practice. It prepares pupil teachers for future challenges through acquisition of relevant skills through Micro-teaching, simulated teaching, and mega teaching. Practice teaching is the hallmark of Teacher education course which enables pupil teachers to get mastery in teaching skills. In the class room, students are acknowledged with theoretical concepts of the educational psychology, classroom management, teacher taught relationship and various philosophies dealing with education. Teaching is a time when all these learned concepts through practice teaching have to be applied successfully in real life situations. Thus, Practice teaching gives a sense of accomplishment to pupil teachers. They learn to take responsibility, gain confidence and improve upon their classroom management skills. Practice teaching is the core component of all pre-service teacher education programs. Through practice teaching, a novice teacher is assumed to have inculcated pedagogic experience to transfer the core competency of the subject knowledge to students in real classroom situation. Practice teaching provides pupil teachers with an opportunity to develop appropriate skills for classroom interaction. Practice teaching makes a teacher expertise in several areas, such as academic subject knowledge; Pedagogical knowledge; Effective use of instructional aids such as multimedia, ICT, Effective interpersonal behavior; Enthusiasm and motivating skills; Understanding of social relationships in schools and classrooms.

The pupil teachers should learn under mentioned twelve points during practice teaching.

Lecture: A lecture is an oral presentation of information about a particular subject by a teacher. Lectures are used to convey critical information, history, background, theories, and equations. A politician's speech, a sermon, or even a businessman's sales presentation may be similar in form to a lecture. Usually the lecturer will stand at the front of the room and recite information relevant to the lecture's content. Though lecture method is much criticized as a teaching method, yet the institutions have not found any practical alternative teaching methods. Lecturing is

mainly a one-way method of communication that does not involve significant audience participation but relies upon passive learning. Therefore, lecturing is often contrasted to active learning. Lectures delivered by talented speakers can be highly stimulating.

Lectures have a significant role outside the classroom, as well. Academic and scientific awards routinely include a lecture as part of the honor, and academic conferences often center on "keynote addresses", i.e., lectures. Lectures represent a continuation of oral tradition in contrast to textual communication in books and other media. Thus, lecture is an effective ways to present new information orally to fit differences in learning styles. At times information must be transmitted orally to students. Lecture enhances learners retention.

Group Discussion: It is an effective way to present a common experience to engage a group in a discussion. Awareness of complexity and enhanced understanding result when learners discuss the meaning of events with each other. Groups need a common experience to draw learners into participation, establish a personal connection with the content, and provide a shared referent from which to exemplify their ideas.

Thoughtful Questions: It is an effective way to formulate questions that foster engagement and confidence. The right questions focus the learner's attention upon applying their current understanding to the content or problem.

Reflective Responses: It is an effective way to establish mutually beneficial communication by reflective listening. To facilitate self-discovery and self-appropriated learning, effective teachers respond without changing the topic to share their own information or perspective from a posture of mutual respect, without domination.

Rewarding Learner Participation: It is an effective way to support learner actions with well-timed, encouraging positives. The best rewards are not contrived, foster personal reflection and independence, and actually work, that is, learners maintain new abilities or do better. Effective teachers support emerging initiative, cooperation and perseverance with well-timed positives.

Cooperative Group Assignments: It is a way to assign formal cooperative tasks. One form of active learning deserves special attention because it overtly places the learners as workers, demands that each process beliefs and construct expression with co-workers, and forces the achievement of a group goal. That interdependence affects three broad and interrelated outcomes: effort exerted to achieve, quality of relationships among participants, and psychosocial adjustment. Cooperative learning groups embrace positive interdependence, individual accountability, group processing, social skills, and face-to-face interaction

Fostering Learner Self-Responsibility: To allow learners to plan and evaluate much of their learning. Teachers offer ways for the learners to take an active role in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate strategies, and evaluating the outcomes.

MICROTEACHING

Microteaching is technically a scaled-down teaching. It is also known as simulated encounter designed and teaching laboratory. Its purpose is to provide teachers with the opportunity for the safe practice of an enlarged cluster of teaching skills while learning how to develop simple, single-concept lessons in any teaching subject. Microteaching helps teachers to improve both contents and methods of teaching and develop specific teaching skills such as questioning, explanation, illustration, reinforcement, introducing and closing lessons effectively. Micro-

teaching is a teacher education technique which helps the teacher trainee to master the teaching skills. Basically it aims at modifying teaching behavior provides flexibility, location, organization and divergent ways of thinking. Passi (1976) also known as the “Father of Microteaching” through his intensive application determined the domains of microteaching. He found that microteaching was practiced in terms of definable, observable, measureable and controllable teaching skills. Micro-Teaching involves actually teaching a real lesson to real pupils with none of the role-playing of earlier modeled teaching situations.

Plan→Teach→Feedback→Replan→Reteach→Refeedback are the six steps generally involved in Microteaching cycle. There can be variations as per requirement of the objective of practice session. Microteaching is an excellent way to build up skills and confidence, to experience a range of teaching/tutoring styles and to learn and practice giving constructive feedback. Micro teaching makes the teacher education program, more purposeful, goal oriented and helps to decide common objectives for the program. This enables them to develop competency in using specific teaching skills in view of their unique needs.

Apart from the competencies given above, Practice teaching makes a pupil teacher expertise in several areas such as:

- Awareness of current trends of the subject
- Teaching of the subject
- Effective interpersonal behaviour
- Enthusiasm, reinforcement and motivating skills
- Management skills such as learning, communication and monitoring
- Organizational skills
- Pedagogical and subject knowledge
- Skills in assessment, curriculum development, education and record
- Understanding of how students learn
- Understanding of social relationships in schools and classrooms.

Pupil teachers employ a range of teaching and learning strategies such discussions, activity based learning, experiential learning, exposition, explanation, questioning, group teaching, use of ICT in teaching and learning, interactive teaching, and group work etc.

CONCLUSIONS

Practice teaching is the most important part of teacher education. Teacher education requires continuous innovations to respond the need of students for effective teaching learning process. Practice teaching helps pupil teachers to reflect on shared personal concerns, to ask questions, to seek answers from others and this becomes a vehicle for articulating, examining and changing beliefs. Practice Teaching should not appear as apprenticeship, where only imitation of their supervising teachers is done by pupil teacher rather it should be flexible, challenging and reflective. Pupil teachers should be given the proper practice teaching in order to make them effective teachers. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (1996) the objectives of the practice teaching are given below;

1. To provide opportunity for self-evaluation and to discover strengths and weaknesses.
2. To provide opportunity to pupil teachers to gain confidence.
3. To provide opportunity to improve the knowledge of subject matter.
4. To enable pupil teachers effectively plan and prepare lessons and to discover their own strengths and weaknesses in teaching.

5. To expose pupil teachers to real life classroom experience under the supervision of professional teachers.
6. To expose pupil teachers to the total school environment.
7. To familiarize pupil teachers with school routines.
8. To help pupil teachers develop positive attitude towards the teaching profession.
9. To provide a forum for Pupil teachers to translate educational theories and principles into practice.
10. To provide pupil teachers with the necessary skills, competencies, personal characteristics and experiences for full-time teaching after getting teacher education.
11. To provide chance to learn about children in real life.
12. To develop desirable professional interest, attitudes and ideas for to teaching profession.

SUGGESTIONS

Following suggestions can adopt by the pupil teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice teaching.

1. More time should be devoted by pupil teachers in learning and applying skills under mock conditions where feedback can be provided by their own classmates and lecturers.
2. Lesson planning should be flexible. Pupil teachers can be encouraged to adopt new methods of teaching instead of adopting obsolete traditional methods.
3. Not only the pupil teachers but also the children should be encouraged to prepare charts, models, either individually or in small groups. This practice can help in developing psychomotor skills as well as increases interaction level of pupil teacher and taught.
4. Before starting practice teaching a workshop should be organized by faculty members of college to develop various skills of pupil teachers such as Black board writing, way of introducing the chapter, stimulus variation, illustration, effective use of instructional materials, etc.
5. Along with one supervisor's observation sheet, one more sheet should be included where pupil teacher can record his own observations about classroom environment, and additional activities to improve his/ her teaching.
6. Simulated teaching should be organized in order to improve interaction of pupil teachers with children of class.
7. Both formative and summative types of evaluation should be adopted for continuous evaluation of pupil teacher.
8. Class environment should be made conducive in order to remove teaching phobia among pupil teachers.
9. There must be the projector/ smart class concept during practice teaching to get direct feedback just after teaching is over.
10. Government should make a provision for at least two months internship for pupil teachers and to go to schools, where they work in close association and under guidance of senior teachers acting as mentors.

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