

BEST PRACTICE: II

TITLE: EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES ORGANISED AND FACILITIES PROVIDED BY THE COLLEGE AT ACADEMIC YEAR END.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To avail feedback of student teachers on the activities organized, and facilities provided by the college during the academic year;
2. To assess the relevance and effectiveness of activities, both academic and co-curricular, organized by the college;
3. To determine the student teachers' satisfaction of the facilities provided by the college;
4. To plan for activities and facilities to be provided in the forth-coming year based on the feedback received.

Rationale: The change-over from the Annual to Semester System during the current academic session, with updations in the Curriculum, necessitated consequent changes in the organization of the various academic and co-curricular activities spread over the two semesters. Being the first year of implementation and also being the first course under the University to switch over to this system, the programmes for the Course were planned out without much guidelines, on an experimental basis. It was therefore felt necessary to avail sufficient feedback from the student teachers, to guide effective and meaningful planning of programmes for the future.

THE CONTEXT: The Nagaland University, in keeping with the directives of the UGC and the NCTE had decided to adopt the Semester system at all levels of Higher Education. Consequently, the B.Ed. programme was the first course to adopt the system, under the University. This also necessitated structural changes in the Curriculum. Being a Professional Course, the University was unable to provide a detailed guideline with regard to the scheduling and nature of activities to be organized through the two semesters of the course. The B.Ed. course being composed of numerous Practical Activities, both academic and co-curricular, in keeping with the objectives of the Course, programmes and activities needed to be planned out at different stages, taking into consideration, the relevance, viability and meaningful organization of activities. It was also felt necessary to determine the satisfaction of student teachers of the facilities provided by the college, based on the feedback given by student teachers of the previous batch, to ensure continuous efforts at development.

THE PRACTICE: Although feedback sessions on some important academic activities were held throughout the academic year, it was felt that a comprehensive feedback on all the academic and co-curricular activities carried out during the two semesters needed to be availed. This was felt important as the different activities had to be related to the objectives of the different theory papers in the two semesters, while also maintaining cohesiveness and logical organization in terms of sequence and continuity. In addition, feedback on the facilities made available to the student teachers, as per the newly introduced curriculum and shift to the semester system was desirable. Hence, after the completion of all the practical activities of the academic year, a day was identified on which the Feedback session was to be held, in which all teacher educators along with student teachers participated. However, feedback was availed only from the student teachers.

The 28 areas for feedback were classified into academic activities, co-curricular activities and facilities provided. The Academic activities comprised of areas such as Micro, Block and Practice/Macro Teaching, Workshops conducted on Evaluation, Low Cost Teaching-Learning Aids, Practicum conducted, and Classroom Transactional Processes. The aspects on Co-curricular activities composed of Observation of various Important days throughout the year, Seminars on important themes of social

importance, Club activities, etc. On the facilities provided, aspects such as Admission process, Library and Laboratory facilities, Sanitation, Hostel, Canteen facility, problems of In-service and Pre-service student teachers, were included. At the very beginning, a faculty member highlighted the necessity of such a feedback session, encouraging the student teachers to give their frank opinions, which would positively contribute to qualitative improvement of the programme as well as help in the continuous development of the functioning of the institution. The student teachers were divided into groups of 4s and 5s to ensure greater participation and that each member's feedback was elicited. This would also ensure anonymity of persons who may have inhibitions to freely share their honest opinions. The groups were given time to discuss and collect the views of each member, which were listed by the group leader. On completion of the discussions, each group was given time to present their views. Two faculty members were engaged in noting down all the feedback collected from the groups. In this context, it may be emphasized that although only written feedback could also have been availed, it was felt that verbally sharing the feedback of all could also enlighten all members of the varied opinions and at the same time initiate discussions where necessary.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS: It was found that student teachers enthusiastically participated in the group discussions as well as in the discussions that followed the presentations of each group. Opinions were freely expressed, and faculty members restrained from giving any justifications even when necessary, which encouraged the student teachers to speak out their opinions without inhibitions. On the contrary, the views expressed were taken in with appreciation which further motivated the student teachers. The fact that the opinions of the student teachers were treasured and appreciated also boosted their self image. A positive and vibrant atmosphere prevailed throughout the day-long session. In the days that followed, student teachers expressed their appreciation for the exercise conducted and also commented that the most positive aspect of the institution was in the way teacher educators and the authority were open and receptive to the student teachers' feedbacks and how this formed a tradition/culture of the college. Some even expressed their desire to adopt the same practice in their schools in the future. This feedback session proved to be an eye-opener both for the administration as well as the faculty. It threw light on the shortfalls in some programmes organized, the time of conducting the activities, which needed to be reconsidered, loopholes in information dissemination, improvements required in some of the facilities provided and also created awareness of the various problems and challenges faced by the student teachers in the course of the programme. This would help the college decide on the plans for the ensuing academic session as well as make future plans keeping in mind the feedback received.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED & RESOURCES REQUIRED: There were no problems encountered in conducting the Feedback Session, apart from the fact that there were initial inhibitions among the student teachers to freely share their views and opinions. However, with the assurance of the teacher educators on the importance and need for availing their true opinions and with their encouragement and appreciation of views shared, the inhibitions were overcome. The practice does not require any resources apart from dedicating a single working day for the purpose.

IMPORTANT NOTE: It is often noted that institutions, including teachers do not have the practice of encouraging feedback from stakeholders, particularly the students, which stagnate their growth and progress. The students being the most important stakeholders as well as the direct beneficiaries of the institutional programmes, it is felt that their continuous feedback on all aspects of the institution which contribute to the effectiveness of courses offered and have an impact on their development and achievement, is of paramount importance. Teachers in particular are intolerant to any form of assessment and feedback from the students, which, in turn, tell on their professional development. Understanding of the importance of such feedback mechanism should therefore be given to teachers as well as institutions, and the practice encouraged, if qualitative and quantitative growth and development in educational institutions is to be realized.