

Title of the practice

Peer Group Learning (FINE - A friend in need of education)

The context that required the initiation of the practice

Our college is located in the rural backward area of Kasargod district of Kerala. Most of the students pursuing their higher education in the college are drawn from villages and are certainly lagging behind the English medium students. The educationally weaker students come from different schools located in villages with varying standards and will generally be lacking the expected grasp of the subject and command over it. They will not be that strong enough in the subjects. They face the problem of language proficiency and so do not perform well in their subjects. This causes increased failure and dropout rate.

Objectives of the practice

1. To strengthen the knowledge of weaker students in such subjects where they, lag behind the average students.
2. To provide a strong foundation to the weaker students for further academic activities,
3. To raise the academic skills and linguistic proficiency of weaker students.
4. To bring the weaker students to the necessary level to pursue higher studies in order to reduce failure and dropout rates.

The Practice

A form of group learning to initiate and promote human relations and skill development of students. It is a series of formal and informal gatherings often conducted at leisure times under the leadership of advanced student to extend a helping hand to a few of his/her friends in the matters of education, career counselling and so on. FINE, the whole programme became more appealing and effective. The dropout rate was effectively reduced and pass percentage was subsequently increased. Thus, it becomes one of our best practices in letter and spirit. We prepare a separate time table for the FINE classes without affecting the general time table of the college. The probable timings are from 9 am to 10 am and from 3.50 pm to 5.15 pm. The time table is informed to students and principal. A few advanced learners are incharge of a group of six or seven students. The group regularly conducts discussion sessions in which there is maximum scope for exchange and enhancement of knowledge base of each student.

Obstacles faced if any and strategies adopted to overcome them

The identification of weaker students at the beginning of the academic year often becomes inaccurate. The students newly admitted require some time for normalisation and to perform better. The number of students attending for FINE (sessions) is comparatively low in the number at the beginning and after a month their number gradually increases. The number of students attending these FINE (sessions) increased gradually by frequent interactions of staff members and class tutors with students. The students are encouraged FINE sessions which are arranged exclusively for weaker students.

Impact of the practice

‘FINE’ sessions during last year is remarkable. The academic standard of the weaker students are improved considerably and succeeded to bring them to the level of average students. This is evident from the fact that more number of weaker students who attend the FINE sessions got through their final examinations successfully. The language proficiency of weaker students is also improved and this is verified in the counselling sessions with the students at the end of the FINE sessions and before commencement of annual examination. The dropout rate among the weaker students who have undergone FINE sessions is negligible. “Progression to higher studies” an objective of practice is also achieved.

Resources required

The following resources are required for the implementation of ‘FINE’ for weaker students. The library facilities, teaching aids such as LCD projector, laptop, smart boards and computers are the necessary resources required. All infrastructure facilities are provided by the college for implementation of the practice of FINE for weaker students.