

TOWARDS SELF-UNDERSTANDING AND EVOLVING AN EDUCATIONAL VISION I

Maximum Marks : 50

External : 30

Internal : 20

Design of the Course

This is not intended as a standard 'course' with specific units of study. Instead it may be thought of as two strands that run parallel through the two year duration of the D.Ed. programme.

Strand A

An on-going strand during the two year course, to be coordinated and shared by the faculty, would include

1. Journal writing by student-teachers to reflect on significant experiences and periodically process their observations and thoughts on life situations, with comments being noted by a designated faculty mentor
2. Carefully framed writing tasks towards the beginning and end of each year, which enable student-teachers to express and reflect, in stages, on their prior life journeys, current assimilation of experiences and questions, as well as evolving perspective on education.

Strand B

The other strand of the 'course' would be designed as a series of workshops and seminars with carefully chosen themes. It is recommended that there be around 4-6 one-day or two-day workshops in each academic year, and 2-4 half-day or one-day seminars. It is recommended that the workshops are conducted by outside resource persons (from organizations working in related areas of personal development). The workshops should be experiential, and provide occasions for active participation and reflection. One regular faculty member from the field of psychology will need to be associated with the external resource person to take up the overall responsibility of the course. In addition, the faculty should organize seminars that involve student-teachers in taking responsibility for making presentations and holding discussions that bring out multiple perspectives on key issues of life and education.

Rationale and Aim

"Teachers teach what they know, they educate what they are." This maxim suggests that more than any other profession, education and teaching require the whole being of the teacher to be engaged with the life and learning of their students.

This course aims at the inner development of the student-teachers as individuals who are engaged in a process of self-understanding and begin to take responsibility for

their own learning as also the learning of their students. Such self-understanding would involve critical reflection on factors that have shaped one's identity and personality, an awareness of one's thought-patterns, motivations and behavior, and openness to learn and renew oneself. This would then reflect in a capacity for social-relational sensitivity, a search for harmony within and without, and a deeper level of communication with students, colleagues and others.

This course also intends to initiate student-teachers into a process of original thinking about their wider educational concerns and the conscious development of an evolving perspective on education. In beginning to develop their own educational vision they would gain the impetus to translate their knowledge of children, their subject areas, and the contemporary Indian reality, into workable curricula and teaching-learning practices within their classrooms and schools that are coherent with their evolving values. It is through such an agency of teachers that any kind of transformation in themselves, their students and society at large, may begin.

Strand A

1. *Journal Writing*

Objectives

- To enable student-teachers to become more conscious of their responses to experiences, observations of life situations, as also of ideas and issues that arise in their minds, and to thus develop their capacity for reflection
- To allow for an individual contact and interaction between faculty and student

Mode of Transaction

- Each student-teacher should be asked to maintain a regular Journal, in which he/she may write:
 - a) short reflective accounts of significant experiences
 - b) observations of life situations that evoke questions and responses
 - c) questions on education, learning or teaching that he/she is grappling with.
- The Journal should be periodically shared (once a fortnight is recommended) with a faculty mentor, who will read through it and offer brief comments, suggestions, or further questions for the student-teacher to reflect on.

2. *Writing Tasks*

Objectives

- To enable student-teachers to recall and reflect on their own educational journeys and become conscious of factors that have shaped their aspirations and expectations
- To synthesize their experiences and learning over a period of time

Suggested Tasks

- Writing an 'Educational autobiography' (at the beginning of the D Ed course)

- Writing a reflective statement of aspirations and expectations, based on one's learning so far in the course (after six months in the course)

Strand B

Workshop 1: *A significant event or experience in life*

Objectives

- To make student-teachers aware of some key shaping factors in their lives
- To enable an exploration of one significant event or experience
- To share and learn from each other's experiences

Suggested workshop themes

- Representing key events and experiences - as timeline, mind-map, pictorial poster, any other
- Investigating the texture of one key event experience (working with partners) - 'what did it look like?'; 'what did it feel like?'; 'What did it mean?' 'What does it feel like today?'
- Sharing and assimilating a range of experiences

Workshop 2: *Learning to Observe (and to Listen)*

Objectives

- Sensitizing student-teachers to the 'difficulty' of openness in observation and listening
- Enabling them to become aware of the nature of their judgments and 'quick' interpretation and opinion (that 'filters' or 'distorts' observation and listening)

Suggested workshop themes

- Observation of nature; observation of persons; observation of (and listening to) situations
- Exercises in observation and listening to uncover one's judgments and interpretations (and slow these down, to allow for richer perceptions)
- Multiple views on a variety of situations: classroom situations, and human situations in a school context

Workshop 3: *Mindfulness in the classroom*

Objectives

- Making student-teachers aware of mind-body connections
- Introducing approaches to mindfulness
- Appreciating the effects of mindfulness on learning and action

Suggested workshop themes

- Sitting quietly and inviting mindfulness
- Individual breathing exercises and self-awareness of body and mind
- Exploring group exercises for mindfulness

- Mindfulness through the day, in classrooms, in stressful contexts
- Mindfulness and emotional well-being
- Mindfulness and decision-making
- Mindfulness in cognitive learning

Workshop 4: *Understanding working in groups*

Objectives

- Enabling an understanding of patterns of behaviour in groups
- Developing skills for and appreciating the importance of working in groups

Suggested workshop themes

- Exploring structural situations that promote competition or cooperation
- Exploring hierarchies and role-taking in group situations
- Exploring inclusion and exclusion in groups
- Facilitation of group working - everyone has a part to play
- Exercises for learning to work in groups

(Modes of transaction would include 'role-plays' and 'enactments' followed by discussions)

Workshop 5: *Viewing and analyzing film(s)*

Objectives

- Viewing films with social and educational content
- Learning to analyse and derive personal meaning from this
- Sharing different points of view on a film

Suggested workshop themes

- Purposive film viewing
- Ways of analyzing themes
- Detailed observation of a key scene and discussion
- Ways of seeing situations in the film
- Writing a film review

Workshop 6: *Celebration of an iconic cultural figure*

*(eg Kabir Tagore/Narayan Guru/Meerabai Akka Mahadevi/ Jnaneswar Basava
Thyagaraj / A Sufi saint : depending on region and culture)*

Objectives

- Rich exposure to cultural forms around an iconic figure of the region - stories, music, arts, etc
- To participate in celebrating cultural roots and absorbing the ideas and expressions that emerge from these

Suggested workshop themes

- Authentic performance by a practitioner
- Participation in learning and celebrating (in appropriate media)
- Discussion of cultural world-view and contemporary relevance of the icon
- Writing based on the above

Seminar 1: *Glimpses of different childhoods in India*

Format: Student-teachers present, via different media - narrative, photographs, audio-visual presentation, illustrated poster etc - stories of Indian children growing up in vastly differing circumstances; sharing to be followed by discussion

Preparation: Resource books and films to be gathered; each student-teacher picks a particular type of childhood and researches the life situation, the opportunities and constraints of an imaginary or real child from this circumstance; photographs, interviews etc, may be used.

Seminar 2: *Selection of short readings and dialogue*

Format: A selection of short but provocative readings on issues of life and education, to be read together, followed by exploratory dialogue in small groups

Preparation: Making a careful selection of readings that lend themselves to a nonpolemic discussion and exploration

Seminar 3: *The Role of science and religion in Society*

Format: Debate and Discussion

Preparation: Topic to be formulated to allow for different perspectives; some texts to be identified as resources; student-teachers prepare in groups

Seminar 4: *Education and environmental crises*

Format: Film and presentation or reading of a text; small group discussions around selected themes drawn from the film; sharing of implications for education

Preparation: Selection of a contemporary documentary or audio-visual presentation

Evaluation

Internal: This should be based on:

1. Qualitative grading for Journal writing - periodicity and quality of entries
2. Qualitative grading for participation in seminars - quality of preparation and presentation/participation
3. Marking of periodic writing tasks (four in number) - by faculty mentor

External: This should be based on qualitative grading for quality of participation in a series of workshops - by resource persons for each workshop

Resources

Books, articles, films, organizations, and resource persons could be need for specific workshops and seminars. This list may be added to over time.

1. *An Inconvenient Truth* a documentary film directed by Davis Guggenheim, looks

at former Vice President Al Gore's fervent crusade to halt global warming's deadly progress by Exposing the myths and misconceptions that surround it. In this intimate portrait of Gore and his "travelling global warming show." Gore comes across as never before in the media-funny, engaging, open and intent on alerting citizens to this "planetary emergency" before it's too late.

2. Poetry songs by Kabir, Tagore, Nirala etc; Passages from Tulsi Das etc; Plays: Andha Yug-Dharam Vir Bharati, Tughlaq; Girish Karnad.
3. Orr, David W. (2007) Is Environmental Education an Oxymoron? *Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools*.
www.kjionline.org
4. Orr David (2004). All Education is Environmental Education *The Learning Curve*. Issue 226.
5. Omvedt, Gail (2009) Seeking Begumpura. Navanya: New Delhi