

### **BEST PRACTICE-3**

#### **The context that required initiation of the practice:**

As members of the community, we must be sensitive towards the needs of others and help them grow in the society. At Pillai College of Education and Research, New Panvel, we have always kept the community and its needs in mind. We sensitize our students and create awareness regarding the needs of the society. We try to create compassion, empathy among teachers to help reduce social inequalities.

#### **Objectives of the practice:**

- To sensitize future teachers to the needs of the community.
- To create humane, compassionate individuals who will carry forward the message of being useful to the community in its upliftment.
- To inculcate among our students' values like other-centeredness, humility, love and respect for all fellow human beings.
- To enact the various activities that will start the process of community -centered behaviour among our students.

#### **The Practice:**

PCER-Panvel is involved in community service activities and in creating an interface to find common boundaries that can be useful to the society. One of the activities we are involved in is teaching. This year along with Jeevan Jyothi Trust, Panvel our community work was with 40 children from economically weaker sections residing around Mall Takka area. It is located close to Panvel railway station and NMMT bus depot. We catered to their educational needs; around 25-30 of these children were school going while remaining were not. Clearing concepts, revision work, taking English class and covering topics from their scholarship exams were the focus for school children. While for the other, alphabets, numbers, coloring, body parts, days of the week occupied most of their activities. Apart from speaking, writing skills, action songs and making simple origami articles from old newspapers were also taught. We spend nearly two hours daily, Monday to Friday planning and implementing various activities.

Every year Mahatma Education Society celebrates **Community Day** with the members of the NGO we work. On this day, the members are provided with an opportunity to come together and have a day filled with games and activities. Lunch, games, and music become the main agenda of the day. The whole day activity is organized by student volunteers; preplanning of games and prizes are done. These activities create a sense of responsibility, awareness and satisfaction among our student teachers. They realize how little it takes to keep a group of children from weaker section of the society happy.

**Paper bag making** is another community project which we undertake at our institution. Apart from being a community initiative, it is also an Environment conscious activity. We believe that if we live in the community and work in the community, then we must give back to the community.

**Obstacles faced, if any, and strategies adopted to overcome them:**

With our education initiative mentioned earlier, most of the children are first generation formal school going children. The importance of education has not found a place in the lives of this generation. Most of the students are very receptive and prompt with their work but some must be coaxed out of their homes and brought to the centre to study. Once at the centres, they are keen learners. Many of these children are here on a temporary basis, i.e. they will go back to their hometowns after 6-8 months. Hence, when we approached the parents about admitting them to school, they were very reluctant.

**Impact of the practice:**

The impact of the community work initiatives undertaken by our college is seen when our students come back to tell the eye-opening experience they had. Most of them have never been exposed to situations where they deal with people from poor socio-economic background. A lot of these students continue to be involved in the community activity either through the school or the alumni of our college. They visit old age homes and orphanages during festival times and spend time with them. It is always a joy to see the smiles on the faces we connect with in the community.

**Resources required:**

The resources required for these efforts are provided by the college. Most of our community centered activities do not require any outside resources other than time and effort on our part. For the paper bag making activity students and staff and the college provide old newspapers and magazines. The community day activity is conducted under the umbrella of Mahatma Education Society. As always, we believe it is our attitude towards things that can work as wonderful resources.

**Future plans:**

We plan to continue this practice because we believe that education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world. As a teacher education college, we realize the importance of education and how it can be an equalizer in this country of the deprived and the privileged.

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