

ABSTRACT

Topic: Analysis of zone of proximal development (ZPD) in graduate teacher training programme of Allama Iqbal Open University and development of a strategy to achieve ZPD incidence using Delphi technique.

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Objectives of the Study:

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To explore the ZPD gap in the AIOU B.ED. programme, courses, tutorial support, workshop and teaching practice in the Vygotskian perspective.
2. To compare the perception of heads of schools with the perception of AIOU graduate teachers regarding the effectiveness of AIOU B.ED. programme.
3. To compare the performance of AIOU graduate teachers in the actual classroom situation as rated by external observers with the perceptions of heads of schools and AIOU graduate teachers about their classroom performance.
4. To develop a strategy to achieve ZPD incidence in teacher training programmes of AIOU.

Method

One thousand AIOU trained graduate teachers and eighty heads of schools where these teachers worked were taken as sample of the study. Out of these, 602 graduate teachers and 42 heads of schools returned the completed questionnaires. Actual classroom performance of ten percent of sampled teachers was rated by external observers. 105 respondents belonging to 7 different strata were chosen as Delphi sample. Of these 89 responded in the first cycle, 84 in the second cycle and 73 in the third cycle.

One questionnaire on five points scale was constructed to obtain the views of graduate teachers about the effectiveness of AIOU B.Ed. programme. An observation schedule, also on a five points scale, was drawn up to conduct classroom observation of the teachers. Another questionnaire on five points scale was constructed to elicit the views of the heads of schools under which these teachers were working. Yet another questionnaire with alternate response type items was constructed to obtain views of different strata included in the Delphi sample to develop a strategy to achieve ZPD incidence in graduate teacher training programme of AIOU.

Data collected from graduate teachers were analyzed by calculating mean scores, and percentages. Observation schedule data were analyzed by calculating mean scores and mean of means. Data collected from the heads of schools were analyzed on percentage basis. Z test and ANOVA were applied to determine if the data collected through the three instruments differed significantly and to identify the existence or non-existence of ZPD gap in the programme.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn:

1. AIOU graduate teachers, heads of schools where these teachers work and observers of actual classroom performance of AIOU graduate teachers, have perceived ZPD gaps of varying extent. The gaps pertain to all dimensions of teaching, tutors' effectiveness, workshops and practice teaching of AIOU B.ED. programme.
2. Obvious weak areas in dimensions of teaching are 'command over the subject', 'evaluating students', 'co-operation with other teachers' and effective use of teaching aids.
3. In respect of tutors' effectiveness 'proper guidance from tutors', 'tutors' awareness of modern trends in education', 'evaluation of students' performance' and 'preparation of tutors for tutorials' are the main weak areas with greater ZPD gaps.
4. AIOU B.ED. workshops have been perceived less effective in developing lesson planning skills, providing training in guidance and counselling, providing model lessons by tutors, providing practice in evaluating students and developing teaching and communication skills.
5. The core courses B.ED 512, B.ED 513, B.ED 514 and B.ED 518 have been generally perceived effective in developing the teachers professionally. However, the concepts related to research and guidance and counselling have been rated comparatively lower indicating bigger ZPD gap.
6. The area of practice teaching of AIOU B.ED. programme have been perceived as one of the weakest, in which observation of trainees' teaching, guidance

tutors and supervisors, feed back to trainee teachers and lack of full co-operation from schools need considerable improvement.

7. ZPD gaps are obvious in almost all aspects of classroom teaching like beginning of the lesson, presentation of the lesson, questioning, encouragement, teaching style, understanding of students' problems, closure of lesson, homework, lesson planning and personality of the teacher. All these aspects have pronounced ZPD gaps.
8. Z test showed no significant difference in the perceptions of AIOU graduate teachers and heads of schools where these teachers work.
9. Z test showed that there was a significant difference between the performance of AIOU graduate teachers as rated by heads of schools and as rated by observers of their actual classroom teaching. This reflected ZPD gap between theory and practice of AIOU B.ED. programme.
10. Z test showed that there was significant difference between the perception of AIOU graduates, and their actual performance as rated by observers. This again showed ZPD gap between theory and practice.