

WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING PROBLEM SOLVING COMPETENCY OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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Abstract

This paper reports the outcome of a two-day state level workshop on Developing Problem Solving Competency of prospective teachers, which was conducted on 9th & 10th Nov 2002 in Tuticorin, India. As many as 60 pre service teachers (math & science) and 5 math educators from 7 colleges of education in Tamil Nadu participated in the workshop and the Vice Chancellor of Gandhigram Rural University, Tamil Nadu presided over the valedictory session of the workshop. Five mathematics educators including myself handled the 6 sessions of workshop.

I designed the workshop to meet the specific objectives of assisting the student teachers to identify the steps in problem solving, to ask structured questions during problem solving, to formulate and pose problems, to generate algorithms and heuristics, to use different techniques for analyzing and defining problems, and to use problem solving as an instructional method. A set of problems was given as pre-workshop assignment to ensure complete participation in the workshop.

A questionnaire was given at the end of the workshop to assess the attitude of problem solving behaviour of student teachers in terms of the variables: Sex, Educational Qualification (UG/PG), Most useful and rarely useful problem solving strategies, and Summated attitude score. The *most useful* problem solving strategy was found to be *Algebraic* and *Incubate* was speculated as *rarely useful* by the participants. Undergraduate male participants' attitude towards problem solving was lower than that of females while it was the reverse in the case of postgraduates. Evaluation Pro forma of workshop encapsulates the feedback of the participants that substantiates the objectives of the workshop are realised besides few deviant comments.

Key words: Workshop, Problem-solving Competency, Prospective Teachers, Pre workshop assignment, Questionnaire, Feedback.