

Peer Coaching — Live Classroom In-service Teachers' Training Programme

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Abstract

Peer coaching provides training to in-service teachers so that they can improve their teaching strategies while carrying out teaching–learning process in a class. For peer coaching, these in-service trainee–teachers, who may also be referred to as peer teachers, are required to visit a school, imparting training in teaching–learning strategies. The school serves as a training centre or model school. A teacher of this school may function as a coach and train these in-service teachers. A peer teacher is required to observe, cooperate, collaborate and evaluate oneself and other peer teachers under the guidance of the coach. After completion of the training, these peer teachers can also work as coaches.

INTRODUCTION

In-service teacher training programmes, conventionally, include lecture method, in which a master trainer trains trainee–teachers at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and Block Resource Centres (BRC) on teaching–learning process without a classroom environment and involvement of the main beneficiaries, i.e., students. Therefore, it results in minimum understanding on how to transfer skill and knowledge

to students in a classroom in trainee–teachers. Generally, master trainers are not provided with an opportunity to implement what they are supposed to tell in training to the trainee–teachers. Besides, the trainee–teachers do not get an opportunity to observe the teaching strategies of the coach and each other in real classroom conditions.

Skilled and trained teachers become master trainers and they train student and in-service teachers at

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training centres. This may disturb the teaching–learning process in their own schools and studies of the students. This type of traditional training leads to wastage of time and money with least acceptance by teachers.

PEER COACHING

Schools, following the best teaching–learning practices are, generally, selected for providing peer coaching. A teacher of such a school may take up the role of a master trainer or coach. Trainee–teachers visit the coach’s school to learn and modify their teaching strategies in real classroom situation and share their experiences with each other and their colleagues in their respective schools. Peer coaching may be beneficial for all kind of schools, providing an opportunity for on-site support and helping implement new teaching techniques or strategies with quick response. Peer coaching in-service training programme for trainee–teachers may serve as an effective training ground with classroom participation, in which a trainee–teacher can observe, cooperate, collaborate and evaluate oneself, other peer trainers and the trainer.

PLANNING OF PEER COACHING

The first step in peer coaching is the selection of willing teachers, who have brought out constructive changes in their schools in different areas like subject teaching, school management, community participation, games, craft, etc. These teachers may be trained to function as coaches and their schools

as coaching centres for teachers of other schools. Each coach can train a maximum of 10 teachers (peer teachers) in one’s school. The selection of peer teachers must also be done on voluntary basis, i.e., only willing teachers must be selected. The training of peer teachers needs be carried out at the selected coaching school centre or model school without disturbing the school’s routine activities.

The peer teachers are allowed to visit the model school, observe the practices or activities being followed there, cooperate and collaborate with the coach in performing classroom teaching and co-curricular activities in a span of five days.

It is a participatory learning activity, where one learns by choice. The coach’s job is to make visible the things that one is planning the peer teachers to notice and reflect upon. In these five days, the peer teachers get time to critically observe the practices followed in the model school and implement the same later in their own schools as per the requirement.

The suggestions of the coach and peer teachers in changing the classroom environment must always be welcomed. Besides, the peer teachers must have the choice of selecting a coach as per their requirements.

PROCEDURE OF PEER COACHING

Peer teachers have to be with coach in the model school for at least five days. The day-wise schedule, usually, followed in the model school, is given in Figure 1 (a and b). However, this schedule is flexible.

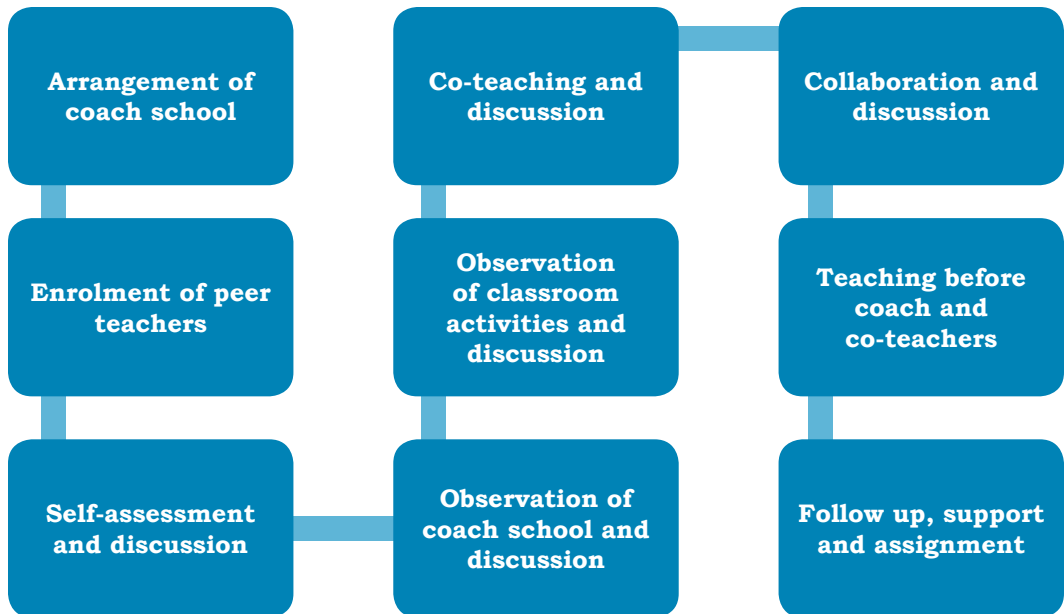


Figure 1(a): Flow chart depicting the schedule for peer coaching in a model school

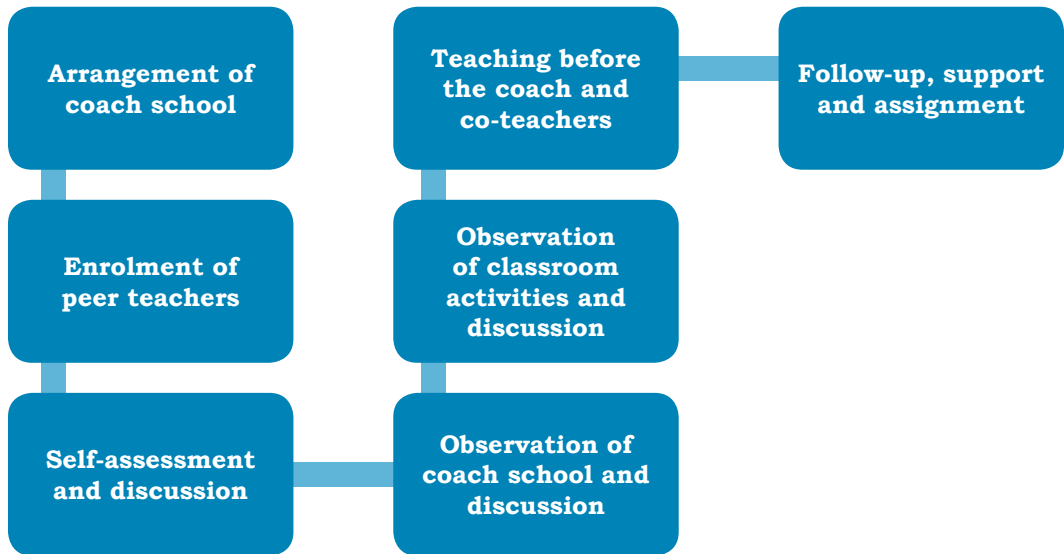


Figure 1(b): Flow chart depicting the schedule for peer coaching in a model school

Day 1: Observation of Coach's School

On the first day, the peer teachers must observe the coach's school. Here, they need to observe the coach's class as per a given format and compare it with their own school. This needs to be followed by a discussion between the coach and the peer teachers. The discussion must focus on the implementation of reforms and problems faced in bringing out the desired changes in the coach's school. It needs to go on for at least 30 minutes.

Day 2: Co-teaching

On the second day, peer teachers need to participate in classroom teaching. A peer teacher must help the coach in performing classroom activities and evaluating students on a provided format (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Peer teachers participate in classroom teaching along with the coach

Day 3: Collaboration

On the third day, the peer teachers need to collaborate with the coach in classroom teaching (Figure 3). The

coach and peer teachers must together develop a lesson plan and classroom activities, which need to be performed by both. The coach and peer teachers must observe, help, correct and support each other.



Figure 3: The coach and peer teachers participate in collaborative teaching

Day 4: Independent teaching by peer teachers

On the fourth day, each peer teacher will make a lesson plan under the supervision of the coach and perform classroom teaching independently (Figure 4). The coach and other peer teachers observe the person while teaching.



Figure 4: Peer teachers doing independent teaching in a model school

Day 5: Designing the plan of action

Each peer teacher, now, has to develop a learning plan chart, in which the person will design a plan of action to be followed at one's school. A discussion session is must after each observation, activity or classroom session schedule.



Figure 5: The coach provides on-site support in a peer teacher's school

FOLLOW-UP

The coach may visit the schools of the peer teachers to provide on-site support as per one's convenience, ensuring least disturbance to one's own school's schedule (Figure 5).

BENEFITS OF PEER COACHING

- Peer coaching helps provide on-site support to peer teachers as per the requirement.
- A collaborative environment is built so both the peer teachers and coach feel that they are part of the classroom teaching process and adopt an approach for improving the teaching-learning process collectively.

- Peer teaching is open to critical observation as regards to the teaching-learning process being followed and discussion to achieve the desired goals.
- While participating in peer coaching, the coach must ensure that the routine at one's own school is not disturbed.
- Peer teachers receive real classroom experience in the model school.
- Peer coaching is a spontaneous and participatory process.
- Even students of the coach's school also get benefited by peer coaching.
- The coach also gets an opportunity to learn from discussions and the peer teachers' classroom presentation.
- Peer coaching involves less expenditure with higher outcome.

PEER COACHING IN UTTAR PRADESH

- In Uttar Pradesh, peer coaching was launched in 2015 by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) under the guidance of Ajay Kumar Singh, *Joint Director*, SCERT, Uttar Pradesh.
- Six schools were selected as model schools and a teacher from each school was selected as a coach.
- The coaches were trained at the SCERT in Uttar Pradesh. They were asked to select interested peer teachers (maximum five).

- A five-day peer coaching session was run in each model school, providing coaching in different fields of expertise under the supervision of the *Joint Director*, SCERT. Thus, 30 peer teachers were trained with least investment.
- After coaching, the peer teachers improved in classroom teaching and the coaches also provided on-site support whenever required.
- Many teachers, who received coaching, are now being given an opportunity to coach 10 other teachers. Hence, $30 \times 10 = 300$ teachers will be trained by coaches under the supervision of the SCERT and founder coaches.

CONCLUSION

Peer coaching is a process, wherein, in-service teachers are trained in teaching-learning strategies so as to achieve the maximum output while carrying out teaching-learning process in real classroom conditions.

In future, the trained peer teachers may play the role of coaches, if they implement innovative teaching strategies in their own schools. Peer coaching may be a revolution in teachers' training as it provides an opportunity to in-service teachers to improve and modify their teaching skills by observing each other. Thus, the training provides an opportunity for peer teachers to observe, cooperate, collaborate and evaluate each other in real classroom conditions.

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