

**AVSAR- RESEARCH PROJECT ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT OF  
B.ED (Special Education-) STUDENTS**

Organized by  
CCYM'S HASHU ADVANI COLLEGE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION,  
(HACSE)

64-65, Collector's Colony, Chembur, Mumbai 74.

(From 02/3/2019 to 31/8/2019)

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### 1. Brief about CCYM'S HACSE

CCYM's HACSE functions under the management of reputed Chembur Colony Yuvak Mandal ([www.hashuadvanismarak.org](http://www.hashuadvanismarak.org)) which is established in 1956 by Shri. Hashuji Advani and works in the various areas of health and education. CCYM HACSE is the first college of special education in India to be accredited by NAAC (Grade 'B'). It is also one of the very few colleges of special education which have been listed under the category of 2 (f) 12 (B) of the University Grant Commission (UGC).

Developing a nation is synonymous to developing classroom teachers. With this philosophical base CCYM's Hashu Advani College of Special Education ([www.hacse.org.in](http://www.hacse.org.in)) undertakes various activities related to human resource development in the field of special education. The prime focus of the activities of the college is empowering human resources in education for children with disability. Two of the courses that CCYM's HACSE offers are B.Ed (Special Education - Hearing Impairment) and B Ed (Special Education – Learning Disability) which are affiliated to University of Mumbai and are recognized by Rehabilitation Council of India. Apart from these long term courses, the college also organizes several short term courses for different target groups like parents, in-service teachers and pre-service teachers.

The B.Ed students who have enrolled in HACSE for the academic year 2018-20 are going to be the future teachers contributing to the field of special education. The B.Ed (Special Education) curriculum prescribed by the RCI and developed by the University of Mumbai aims to empower the teacher trainees in three areas namely: 1. Theory 2. Practical skills 3. Field engagement. All the three areas provide lot of scope for the development of

conventional professional knowledge & skills essential to become efficient teachers which involves knowledge of pedagogy of teaching languages and subjects, orientation to the specific needs of children with different disabilities, strategies of curriculum adaptation , techniques of guiding and counseling caregivers, steps in teaching, maxims of teaching, various disciplinary techniques, types of feedback, different types of assessment, use of reinforcement while teaching and so on. However, development of these higher level teaching skills is based upon the acquisition of few primary skills. Any curriculum of a professional program pre supposes that the students have acquired adequate command over these skills during their school / degree college education. These skills may be termed as the core-skills that facilitate the acquisition of the professional skills. These skills involve the following:

- Communication skills like commenting, summarizing, paraphrasing, posing questions,
- Language-comprehension skills,
- Note-taking skills,
- Task-analysis and task-management,
- Collaboration skills
- Skills of setting SMART objectives

However, experience with students year after year entering into B Ed colleges indicates that the students enrolling for the program do not have adequate command over these core skills. Reasons could be several – one of the most important being the lack of opportunity and exposure. Whatever may be the reason, graduates cannot be successfully groomed into professionals without ensuring that they possess these core skills. This is the guiding thought behind the research project titled AVSAR – the opportunity.

### **1.1 Overall Goal of the Program:**

To provide opportunity to current B Ed students to learn selected core skills needed to function as professional teacher. ‘Learn’ refers to undergoing structured program that includes basic theory, skill development, self-anchored practicing and reflecting on the selected three workplace skills during around 20 hours spread over 4 months.

### **1.2 Profile of B.Ed (Spl.Edu) students at HACSE:**

A total number of 33 students participated in the AVASAR program. The students seeking admission to B Ed special education program at HACSE can be divided into groups. First

group contains ‘freshers’, which includes the college students who have passed their graduation exam and are willing to join teaching profession. Second group contains ‘teachers’ who have already worked in school-set ups for few years and wish to take up teaching students with special needs as a different carrier option. Third group consists of ‘caregivers’ of children with disabilities who wish to become special-educators and help in the rehabilitation of their own kids as well as other kids with similar disability. The students generally belong to lower socio-economic strata and have completed their basic education in vernacular mediums. Hence, many students face difficulty in approaching the content that is to be learnt and taught in ‘English’ language. Majority of them do not have much exposure to teaching skills and especially they are not much exposed to different techniques of teaching children with disabilities. In the absence of the primary skills mentioned above, the teacher trainees may not be able to grasp the professional teaching skills. Therefore, to overcome this gap in learning, and maintain the quality of manpower development, HACSE decided to organize short term skill development program for its B Ed Special Education students titled ‘AVSAR’ indicating the ‘opportunity to learn’ new core skills. The aim of the program was to provide the opportunity to B Ed students to develop skills into:

- A. Content enhancement
- B. Study skills with the focus on note taking
- C. Communication & collaboration.

**2. Introduction of AVSAR program:**

The short term training program titled ‘AVSAR’ was organized from 2/3/2019 to 24/8/2019. It consisted of a total number of 9 training-sessions of 3 hours each. The content of the training sessions was planned and executed by an external agency named ‘Learning Differently’. ‘Learning Differently’ is established by Dr. Bindiya Hassaram. All the sessions of AVSAR were conducted by Dr. Bindiya Hassaram. This program received funding of Rs. 1,06,000/-. The following are the budget heads:

Table 1 below indicates the detailed schedule of AVSAR program:

#	Budget Heads	Amount
1.	Remuneration to outsourced organization	100000
2.	Hindi Facilitator	004000
3.	Stationery	002000
<b>4.</b>	<b>Total amount</b>	<b>106000</b>

**Table 2: Schedule of AVSAR**

Sr. No	Topics	Date
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Managing time II - Weekly Schedule</li> <li>○ <i>Homework:</i> Keep notes on being able to follow the weekly schedule</li> <li>● Note-taking II - Linear method</li> <li>○ <i>Homework:</i> Use the Cornell method to take notes during a lecture</li> </ul>	2/3/2019
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Managing time III - Monthly planning</li> <li>● Note-taking III – Cornell Method/Mind Mapping</li> <li>○ <i>Homework:</i> Create a mind-map for your next reading assignment or Lecture</li> </ul>	9/3/2019
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task Management I - Tasks and subtasks/To Do lists</li> <li>● Communication Skills I</li> <li>○ <i>Communication Style inventory</i></li> </ul>	16/3/2019
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task Management II - Reviewing To-Do lists</li> <li>● Note-taking IV - Summarizing notes for exams/tests</li> <li>○ <i>Homework:</i> Select and use a graphic organizer to take notes from your a chapter in a content-area textbook</li> </ul>	30/3/2019
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communication Skills II - Pausing, Paraphrasing &amp; Posing questions</li> <li>○ Practice the skills of pausing &amp; paraphrasing</li> <li>● Content-area Knowledge (cont.) ● Communication Skills II - Pausing, Paraphrasing &amp; Posing questions</li> <li>○ Practice the skills of pausing &amp; paraphrasing</li> <li>● Content-area Knowledge (cont.) ○ Continue with content-area work</li> </ul>	3/4/2019
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaboration Skills I - Working Style inventory (Compass Points)</li> <li>● Content-area Knowledge (cont.)</li> <li>○ Continue with content-area work</li> </ul>	13/4/2019
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● My Goals</li> <li>○ Establish three goals/commitments in the following areas:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Study skills</li> <li>■ Communication</li> <li>■ Collaboration</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Reporting on Content-Area Knowledge</li> <li>○ Goals for next steps</li> </ul>	18/4/2019
8.	Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)	20/4/2019
		24/8/2019

**3. Brief about AVSAR sessions:**

AVSAR sessions were organized in the area of study skills, communication and collaboration, subject-area content knowledge, knowing self and social-emotional skills such as empathy building. This course was an addition to an already demanding syllabus; hence the goal was to give an overview or menu of available options from which students would be able to select strategies that will work for them individually.

The ultimate goal was to prepare them for the professional work they would be doing as special educators in schools.

### **3.1 Objectives:**

- 1) Build workplace skills by learning techniques for note-taking, time-management and task-management.
- 2) Build understanding of importance and variety of communication skills and collaboration skills
- 3) Practice communication and collaboration skills
- 4) Identify, select and summarize content-area knowledge from textbooks

### **3.2 Scope and Sequence:**

The course was split into 3 strands: Study Skills, Communication and Collaboration, and Content-Area Knowledge Development. There were 8 (eight) 2-hour sessions that covered these 3 strands. Two strands were covered in each session. As far as possible, students were asked to use the materials they had already read for applying their study skills.

Each session was interactive and the students had lot of scope for sharing their views about the topic under discussion. They were given the opportunity to work in small groups, pairs and large groups. Study material in the form of handouts, worksheets and home-work sheets were provided for each session.

### **3.3 Facilitation for Hindi Speaking Learners:**

The resource person, Dr. Bindiya Hassaram had developed the material in English. The lectures were organized in English. However, for the convenience of the B Ed students, the lectures and the study material provided by Dr. Bindiya was translated into Hindi by Mrs. Krutika Gandhare. HACSSE had hired Mrs. Gandhare for the purpose of Hindi facilitation. She remained present during the sessions and facilitated the bilingual communication ensuring keeping ALL participants in the loop.

It is challenging to keep all the participants alert and involved for hours at a stretch. The sessions of the AVSAR program therefore, were activity based and the resource person tried to go beyond the conventional lecture method. Power point presentations, role-play, open forum, audio visuals, models, demonstrations, case presentations were used extensively. Each session was highly interactive. Moreover, participants were involved in tasks like group

discussions, group activities and team presentations so that each participant is kept in a loop of activities.

➤ **Session 1: (2/3/2019)- Note taking using Linear Method**

The first session was about note taking. The session started with an introductory game on 'Just like me'. The main objectives and importance of the AVSAR sessions were explained by Dr. Bindiya Hassaram. The concept of text structure and linear note-taking was explained to them. *Linear note-taking* is the process of writing down information in the order in which you receive it. Paper is itself two-dimensional so linear notes follow the natural sequence of time: page 1, 2 and so on, beginning, middle and end. Sometimes, when the resource person does not provide notes, this method serves to be beneficial to the learner. The resource person may introduce the key points that will be covered in the session during the beginning itself. Later, the same points will be elaborated during the session. The students can note (or type) each main point from the introduction on a separate page and fill in the key points for each as the lecturer proceeds ahead with explanation of each of the points. Another way is to note down the key topics from the introduction and give each a number or letter to use later when they are discussed in more detail. This helps to avoid repetition of points and saves time.

➤ **Session 2: (9/3/2019)- Note taking using Cornell Method**

The second session was about monthly planning. The students learnt the art of time management and setting goals for a month. They were exposed to the skill of taking down lecture notes using another method called as 'Cornell Method'. The Cornell method of note-taking was introduced in this session. This method provides a systematic format for condensing and organizing notes. This system of taking notes is designed for a high school or college level students. There are several ways of taking notes, but one of the most common one is the "two column" notes. The students were asked to divide the paper into two columns: the note-taking column (usually on the right) is twice the size of the questions/keyword column (on the left). They were asked to leave five to seven lines, or about two inches (5 cm), at the bottom of the page.

They were asked to listen to a lecture delivered by Dr. Asmita Huddar. Then they were asked to take down notes from the same lecture in Cornell's note-taking columns. They had to mention about the main ideas of the text or lecture, and paraphrase the long ideas. Students

were asked to work in groups for learning the skill of paraphrasing. The session was very interactive.

The Hindi-facilitator translated the content, important instructions into Hindi for the benefit of the students. They were introduced to the skill of writing weekly and monthly plans. The resource person first explained the concept using PPT, then asked the students to work in groups. Towards the end, study material and worksheets were provided to the students for self-study.

➤ **Session 3: (16/3/2019)- Collaboration(Task management/ To do list)**

During the third session the students were exposed to the skill of managing tasks and sub-tasks. The students learnt how to accomplish a task in a group. They learnt the importance of collaboration. To explain the importance of collaboration, the resource person had planned an activity wherein the students had to reflect upon their behavior and later discuss about their actions in group. They were exposed to the parameters of successful and unsuccessful collaboration using 'Fish bowl activity'.

The next half of the session focused on the tips and tricks for exam-preparation. The following were the tips for getting ready before the exam:

- Getting ready
- Knowing what you know
- Prioritize
- Memory
- Studying from a textbook
- Using visuals and colours
- Mnemonics
- The memory palace

The following were the tips for getting ready after the exam:

- Question types age requirements
- Essay Answer key words (expectations)

➤ **Session 4: (30/3/2019)- Communication Skills**

In the beginning, Dr. Bindiya Hassaram, revised the collaboration styles that were introduced during the earlier session. The remaining session focused on the communication styles. The students were exposed to the tools of effective communication and collaboration. This was

followed by a discussion regarding the same. The students were explained the importance of taking pause and paraphrasing while communicating a message to others. The students learnt about three types of paraphrases: acknowledging paraphrase, organizing paraphrase, and abstracting paraphrase.

➤ **Session 5: (3/4/2019) Note taking – Mind mapping**

This session commenced at 2 pm. The purpose of this session was to introduce students to the third type of note taking called as ‘Mind mapping’. The mind map format is a great alternative to linear note taking and can be used during lectures or presentations, in class, and even while reading a text or watching a video.

The basic principle of mind mapping is very simple: Instead of lined paper, one has to start on a blank paper or digital canvas. The subject (e.g. the topic of the lecture) is placed at the center of the canvas, such that it is always clearly visible. Instead of writing whole sentences, a student is expected to note down individual keywords or short phrases, which are connected to the center with lines. Towards the end of the session, there was a discussion on the advantages of having mind-maps. They are as under:

- A mind map shows **relationships, hierarchies and connections** between individual pieces of information at a glance.
- Mind maps provide a **great overview of a topic** because they store all your notes related to that topic on one single page.
- One can easily attach additional **notes, links and whole files** to the map and thus add a whole lot of information to it without diminishing the great overview it provides.
- Mind maps enable the students to take **fewer yet more meaningful notes**. While creating the map our brain actively processes the information instead of just mindlessly transcribing it.
- Mind maps use a number of **mental triggers** such as images, icons, colors and a two-dimensional structure that helps to **memorize** the contents more easily.
- One can always **go back and add more information** to a topic.
- Taking notes in a mind map is fun and **feels more like doodling than actual work**.



**➤ Session 6: (13/4/2019) Communication Styles**

The sixth session was about communication styles. It began with an interesting ice-breaking activity. The students were asked to list down the primary groups with whom they communicate. Then they had to write few lines about how their communication with each group differed. There was a discussion about the adjustments made in the communication styles while communicating with different groups. This was a self-reflection task. This was followed by filling up of a questionnaire.

Then the four types of communication styles namely analytical, driver, amiable, and expressive were explained by the resource person using PPT slides. People who are analytical and amiable are slow, patient and introvert to an extent. On the other hand, people who have driver and expressive communication styles are fast, impatient and extrovert by nature. Individuals falling under the category of analytical and driver communication styles think a lot. They are think-tanks. Individuals belonging to amiable and expressive category are more emotional. After the explanation, the resource person had planned a skill-based activity. The participants had to identify the communication styles among themselves and group them into the 4 groups. Towards the end, they were asked to take down the home-work. This session was appreciated by all the students.

**➤ Session 7: (30/4/2019)- Pausing & Paraphrasing**

In the beginning, the resource person briefly revised the points from the earlier session including communication styles, collaboration styles, and factors which affect the communication and collaboration styles. The concept of pausing and paraphrasing were introduced in this session. The students were asked to present definitions of these concepts. Paraphrasing involves re-wording the idea presented by others either in oral or written form. Then the students learnt about three levels of paraphrases. The first is the acknowledging paraphrase which involves simple non-verbal gestures like head nod, eye-contact as well as verbal communication expressed through emotions and intensity of emotions. Organizing paraphrase which involves organizing the chunk of information in sequence like first, second, third, etc. The third type involves abstracting the gist of the content and presenting it in summarized form. In the remaining session, the students learnt about the benefits of pausing, when to take a pause while teaching, the duration of the pause.

**➤ Session 8: (31/8/2019) IEP**

This was the last session and the students were exposed to the format of planning IEP sessions. IEP stands for Individualized Educational Plan. These lessons are a feature of special education and are prepared for one child at a time. The students were asked to plan IEP which involves breaking down a goal into small objectives. They were asked to work in pairs. Each pair was asked to choose one goal and prepare IEP lessons based on the same. After this session, the students were asked to express their views about the Avsar sessions and present the vote of thanks. They were asked to fill in the feedback forms.

**4. Feedback about Avsar Sessions**

The feedback of the participants was overwhelming. It was recorded on three parameters with the help of a three point rating scale (good, satisfactory and bad). Organization and management of the skill-development program was the first parameter and majority of the participants recorded their judgment about the registration procedure, refreshments provided and the use of advanced pedagogical techniques, as being the good. Apart from the organization of the program, the participants were also asked to express their opinion about the theoretical & practical input provided by the resource person; topics covered by them and the efforts taken to guide and reach the participants. On an average, almost all the participants expressed their satisfaction about the pedagogical skills and guidance given by the resource person and the topics covered by them.

**4.1 Analysis of the feedback:**

Out of the total number of 33 students, 25 rated Avsar sessions to be good, 5 rated them to be satisfactory while only 3 rated the sessions as bad.

**Photo 1:**



Group Photo of Avsar Participants with Dr. Bindiya Hassaram, Resource Person, Dr. Asmita Huddar, Principal, CCYM'S HACSE and Kasturi Kulkarni, Coordinator of Avsar Program.

**Conclusion:**

The college is committed to monitor the student's progress in the said parameters for this current academic year. Overall the effort was fruitful and the college would like to take it up for the new batch.