

PROFILES FROM THE NETWORK : FIJI COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

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The newly-established Fiji College of Advanced Education offers a two-year pre-service secondary teacher training programme leading to the award of a Diploma in Education to prepare teachers for teaching in Forms one to four in our secondary schools.

The courses offered at the Fiji College of Advanced Education are broad in scope and fall into two main groups. One group comprises a common core of Education and other supporting courses and the other includes combinations of special teaching subjects that the students study in some depth so that they can teach them well once they have graduated as teachers.

The Education courses include topics such as human growth and development, education and society, curriculum studies, educational evaluation and assessment, and other topics dealing with teaching skills and classroom learning. It is hoped that these education courses will help the students on the one hand to get a good understanding of the processes of human growth and development and on the other hand to relate these processes to educational decision making and practice. As a result of these studies, the students will also be able to see how the various factors that influence children's learning in schools are inter-related.

The supporting studies that include computer literacy and communication and study skills have the dual function of contributing to the personal development of students and also equipping them with skills that will be very useful to them in any studies that they are or will be engaged in.

The other major group of courses comprises special

teaching subjects. This group in double teaching subjects aims at extending students' background in those subjects that they will be expected to teach once they have graduated as teachers. Students are expected to specialize in either English and Accounting or Mathematics and Science or Home Economics with its two major components of food and nutrition and clothing and textiles. In future, the number of such subject combinations will grow and teachers will be prepared to handle other important areas of the school curriculum. In addition to their special teaching subjects, all students also take a major study comprising a sequence of courses in expressive arts as a preparation to teach PEMAC.

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Teaching practice is an important component of our teacher education programme and its successful completion is a requirement for certification and the award of the College's Diploma in Education. Students are exposed gradually, through micro or small group teaching to begin with, to the realities and practicalities of classroom teaching, and it is hoped that by the time they graduate, they will have experienced a wide range of teaching situations and acquired the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills that will enable them to function as efficient teachers on their own.

To conclude, it is our hope that the courses offered at the Fiji College of Advanced Education are of such a breadth and depth that will help produce teachers who will respond positively to the demands of teaching in a rapidly changing social and economic environment.