Distance Education;Some Practical Aspects for Course design
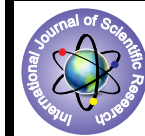
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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights some practical aspects of distance education course design.Course design is very helpful for the distance education course writer. This helps to write self instructional material of different subjects for distant learners.these practical aspects for course design includes presentation of learning material,aims identification,objectives identification,sources of motivation for the learners,utilization of experiences,provision of activities for the learners,enhancing retention power of learners,tansformation of learning,two way of feedback,guidance to the learners etc

1. Presentation of learning material:

(A) Logical Analysis:

Learning materials should be well analyzed before writing it into any kind of format. Each and every part of the learning material must be examined critically with logical thinking according to the nature of subject and needs of different learners. The age level and class level should also be considered because needs vary age to age and class to class of the distant learners. The whole learning material should be categorized and divided into various themes sub-themes and its different small parts. Ultimately this help to enhance self learning among distant learners. Logical sequence and integration should be maintained thoroughly.

(B) Languages Consideration:

The language must be clear, simple and understandable to the distant learners. Vary common words, small and easy sentences should utilized in writing text of self-learning materials. Some touch of humour should also be provided. Such type of utilizing language helps the distant learners for understanding the whole subject matter in self-learning.

(C) Concretization:

Concretization helps the distant learners to understand subject matter easily. Illustrations diagrams, lexivision etc. should be utilized for the concretization of subject matter.

(D) Media Selection:

According to the nature of learning material selection of media is to be done. There are some of the important media are like television, video, programmed instructions, computer assisted learning, through print, films, filmstrips software etc.

2. Aims Identification:

Aims or goals are stated for the longer period. Aims are stated for the whole subject to be taught in longer period of one month, one year or more than the years. Before hand, each and every aims of the whole subject must be identified because with stating aims or goals objectives could be formulated for the shorter period.

3. Objectives Identification:

A the time of formulating these objectives of the topic or unit the different domain of the learners must be considered for the sake of their behavioural development. These domains are as under:

(A) Cognitive
(B) Affective
(C) Psychomotor

Cognitive domains of the learners consists of knowledge, understanding, application analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The objects must be considered all these parts of cognitive domain of the distant learners. Affective Domain:

Affective domain of the personality plays significant role in the development of behaviuour of the learners. The affective domain of the learners is related to the changes in interest, attitudes, values, appreciation, feelings, emotions, etc. Important stages of affective learning are as under:

(i) Reception pertaining to willingness of learners to attend a specific phenomena or stimuli like textbook, activities, etc.
(ii) Responding pertaining to the active participation of learners. For example, participation of leaner is in cultural activities.
(iii) Valuing pertaining to the level of value of a situation, an object or phenomenon etc. to what extent it is worth or valuable for the distant learner.
(iv) Organization pertaining to bringing together different values resolving conflicts between them and maintaining an internally consistent value system. The outcomes are arranges, combines, modifies, and prepares etc.

(V) Characterization by a value or value complex:

Value hierarchy are maintained in complex behaviour of learner. A set of values or a pattern of behaviour of individual learner in complex society becomes a way of life. The learning outcomes are displays, listens, revises, solves, uses and verifies.

Psychomotor Domain:

Psychomotor domain refers to the manipulative or psychomotor skills of educational competency. Face to face teaching in various personal contact programmes (PCP) of distance education could determine such type of learning. For example, after watching television, lesson like driving a car could be learnt effectively under the dynamic supervision of three important teachers, response chains involving a train of motor responses for examples, the muscular movements in swimming of driving or writing etc. Movement coordination pertains to the coordination of perception and motor skills. For example, a learner begins writing by acquiring this coordination. Response patterns pertains to the organization of stimulus-response chains into large response patterns. For instance, a learner begin to write without occurring any error after mastering such type of skill. The seven stages of psychomotor learning are as under:

(i) Perception: Pertaining the awareness of objects, qualities or relations by way of sense organs. The learning outcomes are chooses, identifies, selects and relates etc.

(ii) Set: Pertaining to a preparatory adjustment of readiness for a particular kind of action. The learning outcomes are begins, moves, reacts, and volunteers etc.

(iii) Guide Response: Pertaining to an early step in the development of skills, which includes imitation and trial and error. The particular learning outcomes are assembles, builds, sketches, manipulates and constructs etc.

(iv) Mechanisms: Pertaining to habitual learning response. At this time, confidence and proficiency are developed in the behaviour of the learners. The learning outcomes are displays, measures, organizes and builds etc.

(v) Complex Overt Response: Pertains to the skillful performance of moor activities involving complex movement pattern.

The learning outcomes are assembles, construct, fixes, organizes and manipulates etc.

(vi) Adaption concerns with well developed skills helpful for modifying movements patterns for solving a problem in a particular situation. The learning outcomes are adapts, rearranges, reorganizes and revises etc.

(vii) Origination pertains to create new movements patterns for solving a particular problem. The particular learning outcomes are adapts, rearranges, reorganizes, and revises etc. Writer of course could present various objectives in different forms like rectangular panel, form of a list, or checklist etc.

4. Sources of Motivation for the Learners:
It is used to say that motivation is the heart of learning. The level of motivation depends upon the internal and external features of the learning materials.

External characteristic of self-learning material must be pleasing which motivate the distance learners. Most of the learners prefer books which has diagrams in pleasing and attractive colours. The different things which motivate the distant learners are good looking cover page, the proper paper size, the qualitative typography, the suitable format, the impressive layout and good packaging etc.

Some of the important considerations must be kept in mind for the internal sources of motivation for the distant learners like satisfying the requirements of the distant learners, utilizing experiences of the learners, utilizing a qualitative and versatile style in presenting learning material, providing interesting and enjoyable exercises, provision sufficient feedback, giving assignments according to their difficulty levels, maintaining moderate size of the topic/unit for the study, provision of good examples, pictures, diagrams, tables etc.

5. Utilization of Experience:
There are two types of experiences for teaching learning process either in formal system of education or in distance mode of education: Experiences of the teacher or course writer and experiences of the learners achieved after feedback. In distance mode of education, course writer has his own experiences in writing earlier several units or topics of the subjects. At the time of structuring or making framework of unit, the course could begin with easy and simple start by using easy learning material which already learner knows. The difficulty and complexity level could be increased gradually. For the requirement of reinforcement revisions should also be done frequently. Integrated and linked learning material should be presented. For instance learning material of second unit should be based and linked with the first unit.

At the time of selecting the experiences, the course writer may consider experiences from natural environment for various subjects. For example life sciences and geography, etc. experiences of the people the society in the area of sociology, economics, political science etc. every current affairs for medicines and commerce, statistics etc., folktales and good sayings for fine arts, history, literature etc, multi-media like famous T.V. serials and different programmes for the care of child, sports etc.

The course writer could incorporate experiences available all around us which are useful and beneficial to the distant learners in distant mode of education.

6. Provision of Activities:
"Learning by doing" is helpful for effective and permanent learning. Learning activities are incorporated in self-learning material in different styles. Different kind of exercises could be included at suitable gaps in the self-instructional learning materials. After completing the exercises, the learners could be able to evaluate his level of learning with the help of checking answers given in the topic or unit. For the distance learners, some of the exercises could be included like draw conclusion of the discussion presented in unit, express in the shape of diagram and sketches. The course writer could also suggest some name of books, journals, papers, encyclopedia annotated dictionaries, websites on internet etc. for further readings. Some field works could be given for conducting experiment and project work.

7. Enhancing Retention:
 One of the most important technique of maintaining retention is the provision of several repetitions at suitable intervals. Several repetitions and revisions could be done in self-learning materials with the consideration of questions in text learning material, sub-divisional summaries, assignments, etc. Good understanding of learning materials promote the level of retention and for this consideration, the writer of self learning material could provide sufficient illustrations, examples and required explanations, inclusion of problem solving approach on the basis of application type exercises etc.

8. Transformation of Learning:
More complex applicants and problem solving exercises are required to enhance transfer of learning.

9. Two way of Feedback:
There are two types of feedback namely teacher feedback and learner feedback. For the sake of knowing weaknesses and making improvements, feedback is required for the teacher and the learners. For improving teaching and learning, some essentials correctives, revisions, modifications and repetitions are too much needed. The course writer could provide two-way feedback in self-learning materials with the consideration of structuring the whole topic or unit into small parts. The learner learns something from each part followed by different exercise like questions, self-check exercises etc. the valuable comments provided by the tutor or counselor or assignment also provide feedback to the distant-learner for the sake of improvement in his learning.

10. Guidance to the learner:
Anticipatory questions, typography, prescriptive and suggestive instructions etc. are helpful for the distant learners and play significant role for guidance through the topic or course unit of various subjects, one of the other device of guidance for the distant learner is provided integrated and introduction based on previous topics or units of the self-learning materials.

These practical aspects are essential for designing and writing self-learning materials of different subjects in distance mode of education for the sake of maximization of learning in the behaviour of distant learners.

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