Research Paper   **Education**

Unit Design in Distance Education

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ABSTRACT

All but the shortest courses consist of series of logical units of information. Like chapters in a book, these units include related materials that in sum make up the course. Units design may be in a sequential order or stand alone, not requiring any specific order. A course could mix units that are sequential and non-sequential.Units are typically comprised of multiple lessons, which are where instructional materials are presented. In the case of a stand-alone video series, the course may be comprised of multiple videotapes (units) that have several different lessons on each tape.Features of a unit are as under: to give us a framework for effective learning,to teach a subject matter,to help us for face to face contact programme,to support our text books,to understand the complete black of a course or subject,to cover a subject matter,to give right orientation to the course,to provide reinforcement to the learners and teachers,to help the distance learners to get feed back,to encourage the distance learners to understand the learning material,to become helpful for directional learning,Each and owing unit has its main three essential components such as Begning of a unit ,Main Body of a unit and Ending a unit .

Keywords : UNIT DSIGN DISTANCE STRUCTURE

A course is a collection of closely related instructional components that have structure and sequence aimed at assisting learners to develop specific knowledge and skills. A course of study is designed for the characteristics of a specific learner group to meet their specific needs and interests. A program of study may consist of multiple courses.

For our purposes, a course may be of any duration and it need not have sub-units, however they are likely. It could be a semester-long citizenship course, a vocational training program, a pre-employment job preparation course, an online self-directed certification course, or a self-paced CD-ROM or videotape series. In most cases, media will support a course that is mediated by an instructor.

Unit Definition
All but the shortest courses consist of series of logical units of information. Like chapters in a book, these units include related materials that in sum make up the course. Units design may be in a sequential order or stand alone, not requiring any specific order. A course could mix units that are sequential and non-sequential.

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In distance education the word 'Unit' is termed as a part of Block. The content or learning material of unit depend on the theme, subject, topic or black. For instance in a Economics course a black on Demand may contain a unit on "Elasticity of Demand". Learning theories give more emphasis on learning in small steps. Further each unit is subsided in to part or sections in intergrated sequence. Features of a unit are as under:

1. To give us a framework for effective learning.
2. To teach a subject matter.
3. To help us for face to face contact programme.
4. To support our text books.
5. To understand the complete block of a course or subject.
6. To cover a subject matter.
7. To give right orientation to the course.
8. To provide reinforcement to the learners and teachers.
9. To help the distance learners to get feed back.
10. To encourage the distance learners to understand the learning material.
11. To become helpful for directional learning.

Structure of A unit :
Each and every unit has its main three essential components as under:

1. Begning of a unit
2. Main Body of a unit
3. Ending a unit

The introductory part of a unit is to provide an orientation to the distant learners. The learners requires proper guidance on how to proceed ahead to the unit and what do expect from it. The introductory part of a unit contains some important components as under :

A. Title
B. Outline of contents or unit structure.
C. Objectives
D. An overview
E. Study Guidance
F. A note an other related units
G. Research

The title of a unit must be precise written in few words. The title should be related to the Block of the couse.Content outline makes the distant learners able to observe what includes the unit. Content outline or structure of a unit helps the distant learners how to organize their study. A unit usually requires many hours for study spread over several days or weeks. Content outline supports the learners to recall the content of the unit quickly whenever they open their text or Self Learning Material. If course content is very short in a unit then in this case, outline of content is often omitted. Unit structure not only indicates the contents of a unit but also the framework in which they presented. Unit contents, contents, and unit structure are synonymous words, though unit structure is most commonly used these days.

Before starting only work, we must construct its objectives. In respect of a unit, we should frame statements of the behavioural objectives based on contents incorporated in unit. The personality of the distant learner has three domains such as cognitive, affective and Psychomotor Domain. The objectives should be stated at knowledge level, understanding level, application level, skill level, values level, interest level, and most important attitude level.

An overview is a explanation of the unit which provides an idea of why the writer has selected to present the learning material in a specific way and indicates at different points of view, the distant learners may desire to take. This overview helps to encourage the learners to observe the whole unit in a creative and constructive way and to complement the mechanistic emphasis of the desired objectives.

The unit of a course is only part of the study. The distant learners require advice on the other aspects of the study. The distant learner should know how to relate to the text. Such type of advice is often given in the text. In most distance teaching system, print learning material is the main medium. The beginning pages of a unit contains the following :

1. Essential or recommended reading note related to the unit.
2. Desired information about related practical work and advance warning of equipment that may be needed later in the unit.
3. Presentation of related audio or video materials
4. An idea of the terms needed to the study the unit, especially if course units are of different lengths.
5. Any other practical and relevant information that could help in getting the best out of a given unit.

A note on other related unit should also be incorporated. In a long course of study, it usually occurs that many units are interrelated to each other but are not necessarily adjacent. For example , the learners may study main components of market situation in an early unit, and return to this topic several unit later. In terms of time, it could be after two or three months. Sometimes learners forget the original learning material. Some of the learners could not be able to recognize the later unit follows earlier unit. Therefore, it is supportive if includes a note on other related units. It is helpful to recall new learning material .

The body of a unit usually contain a number of parts or sections. Each and every part of a unit consists of at least one new aspect or component or main or specific point. Mostly each part of a unit covers a different objective of the unit. The main body of a unit consists of explanatory presentation of learning material with excellent and suitable examples. This helps the distant learners to understand the text well. The course writer should also provide some exercise cover-

ing suitable questions for checking to what extent the distant learners understand the learning material. The self assessment questions and in text questions are provided in the main body of the unit. After completing the study of a unit, the assessment is usually to be done. However assignments could be given to the distant learners for a single unit or assignment could cover a number of units of a block at a time. In this way, the main body of the unit normally contains a well integrated sequence of explanatory learning material with suitable examples, and self assessment questions or in text questions or both. The subdivision of a unit is essential for maintaining integration of each and every new points of a unit. The course writer must make clear organization of the learning material. Within part or section of a unit, bold headings or signs mark are to be included to make the changes from text to exercise . The distant learners make the study of learning material in different way. In this case a clear and consistent structure helps the distant learners to make the indepth understanding of a subject mater related to the unit of a block and ultimately related to the course.

The last section of any unit is termed as Ending a unit. This section supports the distant learners for checking the completion of essential activities understood and learnt all learning materials of a unit.

This section has the following considerations :
1. Summary
2. Assignments

Summary could have its several forms. It could he a list of main several key points covered in a unit. Sometimes, a check list form is presented. This checklist includes a list of points covered in a unit. The distant learner is requested to check off points the learner have understood. In some of the cases, the objectives are placed at last of the unit. These objectives plays a role of checklist. Sometimes, course writer provides an activity in the form of an exercise of self-marked test. This helps the distant learner quickly to check on the main points.

The assignments plays significant role in teaching –learning process for assessment of various activities performed by the distant learners. The assignments helps the learner to see or evaluate themselves to what extent they have understood the learning material and whether they are able to apply what they learnt, the assignments are marked by a distance tutor. Most of the courses, the assignments are provided for each and every unit. While in some other courses assignments are provided after a block of several units. If the assignments are provided infrequents. Exercises based on self assignment should be provided. It could essay type questions. Essay type questions help the distant learners to advance and create their ideas with suitable examples in the preparation of assignments.

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