

**MASTER OF ARTS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION
(MADE)**

Term-End Examination

June, 2016

**MDE-413 : LEARNER SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND
SERVICES**

Time : 3 hours

Maximum Weightage : 75%

Note : (i) Attempt all the three questions.

(ii) All three questions carry equal weightage.

1. Answer any one of the following questions in about 1200 words :

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- (a) What are study skills ? Discuss the need and importance of these skills and how do these study skills help distance learners in their studies ?
- (b) Explain the importance of academic counselling in distance education. How will you organise a counselling session for distance learners on a topic of your choice ?

2. Answer **any four** of the following questions in about **300** words each :

- (a) What are learner support services ? Write a short note on any one of them.
- (b) What is 'Flexistudy' ? Discuss briefly its purpose in distance education.
- (c) What should be the qualities of a good counsellor ? Discuss those qualities with suitable examples.
- (d) Discuss different tasks performed by a distance teacher.
- (e) What is a study centre ? Describe its major functions.
- (f) Write a short note on positive tutor comments with appropriate examples.

3. Answer **any one** of the following :

- (a) What is assessment ? Discuss different types of assessment in the context of Open and Distance Learning system in about **1200** words.

OR

- (b) The following is an excerpt from an actual assignment response (see Appendix - I). Write your marginal comments in the margin provided and global comments on

the assessment sheet enclosed. Award a grade on the assignment response on five - point scale, using letter grade A, B, C D and E. The notional correlates of these letter grades respectively are Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. After evaluation attach the evaluated script and the 'Assessment sheet' with your examination answer sheet. Award a grade in the box provided and also write the global comments on the assessment sheet.

[NOTE : PLEASE TEAR OFF THIS APPENDIX
(ASSIGNMENT-RESPONSE) AND ATTACH TO
YOUR ANSWER SHEET WITH THE ASSESSMENT
SHEET]

Your Roll No. :

Grade :

APPENDIX I

MDE-413 : Learner Support Services and Systems

Space for Comments

Assignment - Response

Question :

Describe the specific contributions made by (a) theories of learning and (b) theories of communication in the development of self learning print materials.

Answer :

Sometimes we learn and practice the skill without knowing the theoretical aspect of it. But if we understand the theories as well, the practice of our skill may be improved. Similarly for a distance teacher, the knowledge of various theories of learning and communication may be very useful when she/he consciously attempt to design and develop a self learning print material. The function of SLPM is more of an application of theory rather than a theory itself.

Theories of learning and communication :

The main theories of learning's are behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism. Major theories of communication are mathematical theory and information theory. The two other theories i.e. free press and social responsibility theories have indirect bearing on education.

How these theories help a distance teacher for designing self learning print materials ? Depending upon the learners in situation, different theories may apply. A distance teacher, before developing the self learning print materials must understand the strengths and weaknesses of each theory to optimize their use in appropriate instructional design strategy. Behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, communication theories that work where and how to knit every thing together to at least give a distance teacher some focus in his/her approach to instructional design. To facilitate distance learners, the self learning print materials should perform all the activities which a classroom teacher does. These activities are :

Presenting the materials :

The behaviourists approach of learning has greatly influenced upon modern educational practices. For getting desired behavioural change in learners the manipulation in the

environment is necessary, similarly in distance learners the desired change in behaviours can be attained by presenting the materials in a proper way. For the successful presentation the material should have the following features :

Intellectual clarity :

There should be clarity of what the author wants to present. For that before presenting, the materials should be analyzed logically and then should be put into the best order in which various sub themes of a particular they may be presented. That way one can retain the continuity and consistency of the materials.

Linguistic simplicity - the language should be simple. The behaviourists approach can also be put for educational use by individualizing instruction such as a personalized system of instruction based on reinforcement theories. The course designer should use simple and short sentences, common words, express ideas and concepts clearly, adopt a personalized style, and there should be a touch of humor wherever possible. Concretizations - Materials should have certain illustration, diagram or devices like lexivision to understand the difficulty concepts easily.

Identifying the Objectives :

In SLPM the role of the teachers may be achieved by listing clearly what the objective of a particular course units

are. The objectives clearly convey at a distance learner will be able to do after going through a unit. These objectives can be defined in different ways :

- Defining objective in behavioural term : subjects like mathematics and languages, the objectives need to be stated in behavioural term. Example - the learners should be able to solve simple quadratic equation, the learners should be able to answer at least eight comprehension questions out of ten on an unseen passage of given standard.
- Objectives can be defined keeping in mind the different domains like, Cognitive domain - to have corrected and relevant information, conceptualize reasonably well, recall easily and correctly, generalize etc. Psychomotor domain - which skill is to be displayed by the learners after working through a particular study unit.
- Objective can be put in mixed terms : indicating as far as possible, which are behavioural and cognitive in nature. Example, for subjects like commerce and technology may have equal share of cognitive and behavioural objectives.
- In addition to the domains specification, the objectives can be presented depending upon

the target learners. Example, for an authority from Ministry of Education the objectives can be put in very broad terms; for course writers the objectives should be more specific, because they have to shape the course according to the specification given, and for distance learners, the objectives should be even more specific for she/he has to be achieved the specific objectives.

Motivating the learners

SLPM should motivate the distance learners. According to behaviourists approach, learning depends on the external stimulus/conditions provided by the environment while cognitive theories, stress the internal condition of learning. But in reality, learning depends on both external and internal conditions. Similarly motivations by a SLPM depend on external and internal characteristics.

External features - including the cover, the typography, the format, the lay out and even the packing.

Internal features - ultimately it is the quality of the material which motivate the learners. Materials should be highly motivated if it :

- Fulfills the needs of the learners
- Exploit the experiences of the learners
- Has a personalized style
- Has interesting and enjoyable exercises

- Provide ample feedback
- Present study units of moderate length and
- Present assignment in order of their difficulty level

Exploiting learner's experiences

The curriculum of distance education should provide experiential learning situation for the all adult learners. The process of designing distance teaching materials should be consistent with the constructivity theory. For that the materials should have quality of drawing attention upon the learners own experiences. Such an approach helps the course writers to take the learners from what is known or experienced to what is to be known.

Providing learning activities

Skinner's theory of operant conditioning suggests that the subject matter should be divided into small shape and presented in a logical sequence. At each stage the learner is provided with positive reinforcement in the form of questions, exercises followed by relevant answers. Similarly in SLPM the course writers should provide various learning activities. This is the best way of learning by doing. Some of the learning activities are exercises (with the possible answers/possible solutions/few hints) work on useful materials, assignments and other activities like performing an experiment, expressing and enlisting

constructing suggestion and criticism, redesigning a given unit etc.

Facilitating retention

The most important aspect of the cognitive approach is the education relates to promoting retention of knowledge acquired through learning. The retention of learners can be improved by providing sequence repetition and revision at appropriate intervals, presenting adequate number of illustrations and explanations etc. and by providing problem solving approach like application type exercises.

Promoting transfer of learning.

A learner may be said to have achieved learning satisfactorily only if she/he can transfer his/her learning to a new situation within a particular discipline and also across discipline if necessary.

Providing feedbacks and guidance

One of the important elements of cognitive approach is the notion of feedback. The information theory of communication also has greatly contributed to the process of teaching, learning in terms of the process of feedback being provided by the learners to the teachers to improve teaching and also by the teachers to learners for effective learning. For example, feedback in the classroom can take many forms like puzzled looks or signs of boredom like yawning which inform the teacher for further clarification, or move into another topic. Similarly

SLPM should provide such two way feedback with the help of devices like (a) structure of the unit (unit in small steps followed by exercises and model answers/possible answers) (b) Let us some up sections (in the form of summaries, schematic diagrams) and (c) assignments (from assignments the teacher get feedback from learner and provide comment and suggestions which act as feedback to learners by teachers.)

Conclusion

An attempt has been made from the above points, to show that learning materials can perform the functions of classroom teachers and a distance teacher can develop a good self learning print materials keeping theories of learning and communication in mind and incorporating all the above points based upon the theories.

Theories are useful because they open our eyes to other possibilities and way of seeing the world. It is sure that the best design decisions are most certainly based on our knowledge of theories of learning and communication.

With intelligent application of strategies of learning and communication theories and technologies the modern course designer will surely find solutions to the learning requirements of the 21st century.

ASSESSMENT SHEET

(To be filled in Duplicate)*

Enrolment No. _____ Programme _____ Assessment _____

Student's Name _____ Course _____ Grade

Assignment No. _____

Study Centre Code No. _____

Evaluator's Comments

If the space is not sufficient, please use back paper.

Please tick ✓ in the relevant box below

CONTENT		STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION	
Accurate Information <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Inaccurate Information <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Well Planned <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Inadequately Planned <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate Coverage <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Inadequate Coverage <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Concise <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Too long or Too short <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Good Conceptual Analysis <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor Conceptual Analysis <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Clearly Expressed <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Not Clearly Expressed <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
