

Learner Support

in Open and Distance Learning



Training toolkit

Learner Support in Open and Distance Learning

Trainers' Kit 006

*The Commonwealth of Learning
and
Asian Development Bank*

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FOREWORD

Human development is one of the strategic objectives of the Asian Development Bank. The Bank recognises that social and economic development ultimately depends on the quality of human development. People with basic education are more productive and more likely to play an active role in development. Well-nourished people are healthier and learn better. The synergies among education, health and nutrition are well documented, and it is universally recognised that investment in human development is an essential component of any development plan.

The Bank has been investing directly in human development for more than twenty years. Since 1990 alone the Bank has provided over \$2 billion and \$.5 billion for health, or about seven percent of overall Bank lending for development in that period. Within its education portfolio, there has been a substantial shift in recent years towards primary, lower secondary, and non-formal education in recognition of the fact that investment in basic education has a much higher rate of return. The Bank continues to support higher and technical-vocational education but is increasing its focus on basic education.

Within basic education, the Bank understands that quality and access are perhaps the two most critical issues. People must be able to attend school, and the education provided to them must be good enough to enable them to learn effectively. Provision of adequately trained teachers is all too often an impediment to providing quality basic education. Distance education has been shown to be an effective means of reaching untrained teachers in remote areas, enabling teachers to receive information and techniques that would otherwise have to be acquired through prohibitively expensive classroom-based instruction.

The Bank has in the last decade supported a number of regional activities in the area of distance education, and extended that support to the area of distance education for primary teacher training in the context of a regional technical assistance project implemented together with United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and The Commonwealth of Learning. The project aimed to develop national action plans for primary teacher training through distance education in selected countries and to develop capacity to plan and implement distance education programmes. The Commonwealth of Learning collaborated with the Bank to undertake a series of training workshops in distance education and to develop materials for these workshops.

Those materials comprise three topics in this series of six: (i) planning and management of open and distance learning, (ii) use and integration of media in open and distance learning, and (iii) designing open and distance learning materials. The materials have been designed in a flexible manner so that they can be used by a

variety of trainers in a variety of situations. Their basic aim is to contribute to the development of essential skills related to the design and implementation of distance education programmes – an aim of great importance to both the Bank and The Commonwealth of Learning in their efforts to ensure that quality education is made available to all persons in a cost-effective manner.

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Learner Support in Open and Distance Learning

1. Background

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are pleased to provide this toolkit for your use and we sincerely hope that it will be a valuable resource for anyone planning and conducting training in the practice of open and distance learning.

The development of this toolkit and others, in various topics related to open and distance learning, has involved the time and dedication of a number of organisations and individuals. The impetus and financial support which enable COL to embark on this undertaking came from the Asian Development Bank. Under the terms and conditions of the ADB Regional Technical Assistance Project for Capacity Building in Distance Education for Primary Teacher Training, COL was commissioned to prepare training materials for use in three training workshops in the Asian region. In addition, COL decided to concurrently develop an additional three toolkits. Therefore, toolkits will be available in the following topic areas:

- overview of open and distance learning
- designing open and distance learning materials
- planning and management of open and distance learning
- use and integration of media in open and distance learning
- quality assurance in open and distance learning
- learner support in open and distance learning

Each of the training toolkits will incorporate several elements including:

1. detailed trainer's guide including training strategies, exercises and activities
2. master overhead transparencies
3. recommended reading list
4. case studies of best practices

The toolkits are designed to stand alone although it is envisaged that trainers may choose to use complementary segments from other kits in order to customise training workshops for particular audiences. It is assumed that the ultimate user of the toolkit, the trainers, will have extensive experience and knowledge of the subject area and will augment and embellish as required.

Professional staff at COL were responsible for developing the preliminary blueprint for each of the six topic areas. The International Extension College, Cambridge, UK, was then commissioned to prepare the toolkits. IEC staff, COL staff and trainers, who were responsible for the first pilot test of the materials, consulted regularly throughout the development process.

A special thank you is extended to Dr. Charles Currin, Senior Education Specialist, Asian Development Bank, who has provided encourage and support throughout the RETA project. Sincere appreciation also goes to Dr. Barbara Spronk, Executive

Director, IEC and her staff, for their dedication, commitment and hard work in developing and producing the toolkits.

Finally, a special note regarding the case studies section of the toolkit and the gracious co-operation of the many colleagues from around the world who so readily agreed to share their experiences and prepared a case study for inclusion in the toolkits.

The training of people in the practice of distance education continues to be a priority for The Commonwealth of Learning and we are hopeful that this series of toolkits will be a valuable resource for the distance education community. We of course would welcome your comments and feedback so that we can continue to improve and enhance the toolkits.

2. Introduction to the Kit

In the pages that follow, you will find a variety of resources intended to assist you in preparing and offering a workshop on providing learner support in open and distance learning.

The materials are arranged by topic, seven in total, followed by a bibliography of suggested readings, glossary of terms used in open and distance learning, and a set of case studies. Within each 'topic' section, you will find:

- a complete table of contents;
- an overview of the section and the sources from which materials were drawn;
- a variety of material, including definitions, descriptions, diagrams, and checklists;
- a set of practice exercises; and
- a set of masters from which to make overhead transparencies.

Interspersed throughout the materials are examples of the issue or practice that is being outlined. These examples have been set out in indented sections like the following:

Example: Audio cassette lessons can help learners develop note-taking skills. The audio teacher demonstrates, the learner stops the tape and practises the skill, and then restarts the tape to listen to the feedback the teacher provides.

Suggestions for involving your workshop participants in the generation of additional examples that are drawn from their own experience are set out in screened boxes like the following:

Discussion: What kinds of support personnel are available in the programmes in which your participants are involved?

The case studies are provided as yet another source of illustrative examples of actual practice.

These materials are not intended as a course in providing learner support in open and distance learning programmes. There are no ‘objectives’, no prescriptions, and no statements of what you should be able to do as a result of having worked through the kit. Neither are the materials intended as an outline of an actual workshop, for you are faced with new audiences, new contexts, and new challenges each time you set out to conduct a workshop. You may adapt these materials to any situation, as in these examples:

- you may be asked to provide a three-day workshop to a group of ministry officials and high-level managers from a variety of educational institutions and agencies, all of whom are new to the idea of open and distance learning, to introduce them to the challenges of setting up a learner support system for an open and distance learning programme; or
- you might have two weeks to spend with an audience that consists of the deans and department heads of a variety of faculties from one institution, who have been given the task of developing open and distance learning programmes in their units and who have asked for a workshop that will give them an overview of what learner support is involved; or
- you may be asked to do a workshop on learner support in open and distance learning for field workers in development projects who are interested in incorporating some distance methods in their work.

As an experienced trainer you know that designing an effective workshop is the same as designing an effective course: the participants’ needs and contexts come first, and your decisions about what you will present and how you will present it will follow from what you are able to find out about your audience. Of course your workshop design will also be influenced by your own experience, expertise, and point of view because you bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and understanding to your task. Consequently, a ‘trainers’ kit’ can aim only to supplement your own resources and to offer some ideas and materials to use or not use as you choose, based on your tasks and needs.

We hope you will find these materials useful. They are based on the real-life training experiences of a range of distance educators, some of whom prepared the outline for the kit, some of whom prepared the topic-by-topic materials, some of whom provided the case studies, and yet others who reviewed and piloted the first version and offered valuable advice and suggestions as a result. We look to you for continuing advice and suggestions, especially in the form of training materials that you have found useful and would be willing to share with others via the agency of The Commonwealth of Learning. Please contact the COL Project Manager, Patricia McWilliams, at the address provided in this kit, with your comments.

TOPIC 1

Introduction to Open and Distance Learning

Overview

Source materials for this topic

The concept of open and distance learning

Definitions

Distinguishing the types of open and distance learning

Time and place continuum

Open and distance learning systems

Advantages of open and distance learning

A systems approach to open and distance learning

Functions of open and distance learning

Kinds of open and distance learning

Practice exercises

Categorising various institutions

Application to home institution

1. Overview

These materials support an introductory discussion on the topic of open and distance learning. The discussion is in two parts.

The first part discusses the concept of open and distance learning by defining terms and distinguishing the various types of open and distance learning, and then by establishing each type along a time and place continuum. The various sections of the first part can be used as follows:

- The *definitions* section focuses on the six features common to most definitions of open and distance learning. You may want to reword these definitions, or add to them. A discussion of *accreditation*, for example, can show how open and distance learning involves both teaching and learning and thereby is different from entirely self-directed learning. A discussion of *two-way communication* can raise points about learning theory that are central to distance approaches. A discussion of *industrialised processes* can be a starting point for discussing ways in which the teaching function in open and distance learning is reconfigured into *course development* and *course delivery*, setting open and distance learning apart from more conventional approaches to teaching and learning.

- The *distinctions* section provides material that will help you establish a working vocabulary for your workshop. Some examples are provided, but you will want to draw examples from your own experience and from the experience of your participants.
- The *time and place continuum* section provides an opportunity to discuss the varieties of delivery systems possible in open and distance learning. Again, you will want to draw examples from both your own and your participants' experience.

The second part looks at the types of open and distance learning systems, and can be used as follows:

- The first section lists the *advantages* that open and distance learning offers. This section is intended to prompt discussion of the problems that participants expect open and distance learning to help them solve.
- Open and distance learning applications are then studied using a *systems approach*, which recognises that all parts of the system are interrelated.
- Then the *functions* list provides one way of describing and labelling the tasks involved in operating an open and distance learning programme. You may have another list. The point is to emphasise how distance makes a difference in carrying out these functions.
- Finally, the *modes* or types of open and distance learning institutions and programmes are described. Again, you will doubtless have many examples to offer, and you may also want to take this opportunity to start participants thinking about the mode of open and distance learning in which they are operating or plan to operate.

1.1 Source materials for this topic

Jackling, N. Weaving my own design. In M. Parer (ed.) *Development, design, and distance education*. Churchill, Australia: Centre for Distance Learning, Monash University, 1989.

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Mugridge, I. The language of distance and open learning. *Journal of Distance Education*, IV: 2, pp. 83–85, 1989.

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2. The concept of open and distance learning

2.1 Definitions

There is no one definition of *open and distance learning*. Rather, there are many approaches to defining the term. Most definitions, however, pay attention to the following characteristics:

- **separation of teacher and learner** in time or place, or in both time and place;
- **institutional accreditation**; that is, learning is accredited or certified by some institution or agency. This type of learning is distinct from learning through your own effort without the official recognition of a learning institution;
- **use of mixed-media courseware**, including print, radio, and television broadcasts, video and audio cassettes, computer-based learning, and telecommunications. Courseware tends to be pre-tested and validated before use;
- **two-way communication** allows learners and tutors to interact as distinguished from the passive receipt of broadcast signals. Communication can be synchronous or asynchronous;
- **possibility of face-to-face meetings** for tutorials, learner–learner interaction, library study, and laboratory or practice sessions; and
- **use of industrialised processes**; that is, in large-scale open and distance learning operations, labour is divided and tasks are assigned to various staff who work together in course development teams.

Discussion: Take advantage of the wealth of examples available both from your own and your participants' experience. The case studies provided with this kit describe institutions around the world that exemplify the characteristics of open and distance learning.

2.2 Distinguishing the types of open and distance learning

The term *open and distance learning* and its definition are relatively new in the field of education, having gained prominence only in the past 15 to 20 years. The language and terms used to describe distance learning activities can still be confusing, and geographical differences in usage, for example, between North America and Europe, can add to the confusion. Among the more commonly used terms related to open and distance learning are the following: *correspondence education, home study, independent study, external studies, continuing education, distance teaching, self-instruction, adult education, technology-based or mediated education, learner-centred education, open learning, open access, flexible learning, and distributed learning*.

Correspondence education, home study, and independent study

These distance learning methods are:

- well over a century old;
- based on stand-alone, self-study materials. Learners do not have to leave their homes to study; and
- often print-based with communication through postal services or telephone. They can, however, use a variety of means for tutor–learner contact, including the postal system, telephone, electronic mail, television and radio broadcasts, and video and audio cassettes.

Example: Many university programmes in North America have, in the last 15 years, renamed their correspondence programmes to more current titles such as *open and distance learning* or *independent study*.

External studies

The term *external studies*:

- applies to instruction that takes place somewhere other than on a central campus, such as a classroom remote from campus; and
- includes a variety of delivery options like audio, video, or computer conferences or home study.

Example: The Centre for External Studies at the University of Namibia is responsible for open and distance learning programming.

Continuing education

The term *continuing education*:

- usually applies to non-credit education;
- refers to courses that can be delivered on campus or at a distance; and
- has varied meanings.

Example: See the case study on the Distance Education Unit at the University of Botswana, which is part of continuing education at the university.

Distance teaching

The term *distance teaching*:

- refers to only half of the open and distance learning equation: open and distance learning encompasses not only teaching but learning; and
- emphasises the teacher's role rather than the system.

Self-instruction

The term *self-instruction* refers to a process in which:

- materials take learners step-by-step through an instructional process;
- self-assessment exercises are a central feature; and
- instruction can be paper-based or computer-based.

Example: The Faculty of Medicine at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand makes a variety of self-instructional packages available via computer-assisted instruction on topics such as the circulatory system. Many language schools offer self-instructional packages that consist of print materials and audio cassettes.

Adult education

The term *adult education*:

- emphasises the principles of adult learning, often known as *andragogy*, as compared to *pedagogy*, or child-centred learning.

Example: See the case study on the University of Botswana, Distance Education Unit, which offers a Certificate in Adult Education at a distance.

Technology-based or mediated education

The term *technology-based education*:

- refers to systems of teaching and learning in which a technology other than print has a major role; and
- takes two major forms: stand-alone (for example, computer-assisted learning and computer-managed learning) and conferenced (for example, audio, video, or computer).

Examples: The University of the West Indies uses audio conferencing to link its various campuses and learning centres. Two of the postgraduate degrees available in distance open and distance learning, those offered by Athabasca University and the Open University of the United Kingdom, use computer conferencing as a primary mode of delivery. See the case studies on both the University of Guyana, Institute of Distance and Continuing Education, which uses audio teleconferencing, and the Open Learning Information Network in Canada, which delivers courses via the World Wide Web.

Learner-centred education

In learner centred education, integrity and freedom of the individual is primary. Therefore, the teaching and learning process provides:

- flexible sequences of study;
- negotiated objectives and content;
- negotiated learning methods;
- negotiated methods of assessment; and
- a choice of support mechanisms.

Open learning

The educational philosophy of open learning emphasises giving learners choices about:

- medium or media, whether print, on-line, television, or video;
- place of study, whether at home, in the workplace, or on campus;
- pace of study, whether closely paced or unstructured;
- support mechanisms, whether tutors on demand, audio conferences, or computer-assisted learning; and
- entry and exit points.

Example: Many institutions use the term *open* in their names.
See the case studies for:

Open Access College and the Open Learning Institute of
Charles Sturt University, both in Australia;

Open Learning Information Network in Canada;

Indira Gandhi National Open University in India;

Open University of the University of the Philippines; and

Open University of Sri Lanka.

Open access

The term *open access* implies a lack of:

- formal entry requirements;
- prerequisite credentials; and
- an entrance examination.

Flexible learning

The term *flexible learning* emphasises the creation of environments for learning that have the following characteristics:

- convergence of open and distance learning methods, media, and classroom strategies;
- learner-centred philosophy;
- recognition of diversity in learning styles and learners' needs;

- recognition of the importance of equity in curriculum and pedagogy;
- use of a variety of learning resources and media; and
- fostering of lifelong learning habits and skills in learners and staff.

Example: See the case study for Deakin University, which describes the challenges of implementing a flexible learning system.

Distributed learning

The term *distributed learning*:

- emphasises the learning itself rather than the type of technology used or the separation between teacher and learner;
- makes learning possible beyond classrooms; and
- when combined with classroom modes, becomes *flexible learning*

Discussion: You and your participants can provide a wealth of examples of different types of delivery systems from your experience in open and distance learning. The case studies included with this kit are a ready source of examples as well.

2.3 Time and place continuum

Open and distance learning programmes fall somewhere along two continua: the continuum of time and the continuum of place. The *place* continuum has at one end all learners and their tutor or instructor gathered at the same place, and at the other end all learners and their tutor or instructor in different places. The *time* continuum has at one end all learners and their tutor or instructor interacting in ‘real time’, that is, at the same time, and at the other end all learners and their tutor or instructor interacting at different times.

The following chart demonstrates how these two continua intersect. Their co-ordinates are numbered and match four scenarios for open and distance learning. Most open and distance learning providers use a combination of the four scenarios.

Scenarios for Open and Distance Learning

	Same Time	Different Time
Same Place	1	2
Different Place	3	4

1. *Same place and same time:* Classroom teaching, face-to-face tutorials and seminars, workshops, and residential schools.

Example: See the case study for the Open Learning Institute, Charles Sturt University in Australia, for an example of an institution that relies on residential schools to provide interaction between learners and tutors is being challenged.

The case study for the University of Nairobi describes a programme that is implementing more residential schools, to replace its tutorials.

2. *Same place but different time:* Learning resource centres, which learners visit at their leisure.

Example: See the case study for the Open Access College in Australia for an example of an institution that has a number of resource centres.

3. *Different place but same time:* Audio conferences and video conferences; television with one-way video, two-way audio; radio with listener–response capability; and telephone tutorials.

Example: See the case study for the Indira Gandhi National Open University for an example of an institution that is using audio conferencing and television with one-way video and two-way audio.

4. *Different place and different time:* Home study, computer conferencing, tutorial support by e-mail, and fax communication.

Example: The case studies provided with this kit describe a wide variety of ways to make learning materials available for this kind of independent study.

3. Open and distance learning systems

3.1 Advantages of open and distance learning

Open and distance learning offers a number of advantages to both learners and to providers of opportunities for learning. Problems such as distance and time, which are barriers to conventional learning, are overcome in open and distance learning.

Overcoming physical distance

Open and distance learning can overcome problems of physical distance for:

- learners in remote locations who are unable or unwilling to physically attend a campus; and
- learners and teachers geographically separated in that teachers in urban settings instruct learners in rural settings.

Example: See the case study on the University of Guyana, Institute of Distance and Continuing Education, for an example of an institution that is serving a widely scattered and remote population using open and distance learning.

Solving time or scheduling problems

Open and distance learning can solve time or scheduling for:

- client groups unwilling or unable to assemble together frequently;
- learners engaged in full-time or part-time work, both waged and volunteer; and
- family and community commitments.

Example: See the case study for the Southern Africa Extension Unit for a description of a programme for training councillors in local government.

Expanding the limited number of places available

Open and distance learning can expand the limited number of places available for:

- campus-based institutions few in number; and
- stringent entrance requirements.

Example: See the case study for the Open University of Sri Lanka for an example of an institution that is expanding access to university education in a country where the number of places available at conventional universities is very limited.

Accommodating low or dispersed enrolments

Open and distance learning can accommodate:

- low enrolments over a long period of time; and
- low enrolments in one geographic region but additional enrolments elsewhere.

Example: See the case studies for the University of Guyana and the Open Access College in Australia for examples of institutions that are meeting the challenge of dispersed enrolments.

Making best use of the limited number of teachers available

Open and distance learning can make the best use of the few teachers available when:

- there is a lack of trained teaching personnel relative to demand;
- teachers are geographically concentrated;
- teachers with certain expertise are in short supply.

Example: See the case study for the Open Access College, Australia.

Dealing with cultural, religious, and political considerations

Open and distance learning can deal with differences, and consequently:

- widens women's opportunities to learn;
- meets the needs of populations affected by violence, war, or displacement; and
- makes learning possible even when group assemblies are proscribed.

Discussion: Use this opportunity for a discussion of the problems your participants are trying to solve.

3.2 A systems approach to open and distance learning

A systems approach sets the conditions for proceeding in an orderly way. A systems approach also recognises that all the components of the system are interrelated. A change in one component will bring about changes in the others.

Open and distance learning programmes, units, and institutions use a phased model for problem solving:

analyse → design → develop → implement → evaluate → revise

Analysis: a detailed examination of all facets of the problem

- What is the problem to be solved?
- Is the problem an instructional problem or an environmental problem?
- Who has the problem?
- What are the resources available to solve the problem?
- What are the constraints or limitations to be faced?

Output from the analysis phase:

- a clear statement of the problem
- a detailed description of the target population
- identification of the resources and constraints

Design: requires the preparation of a detailed solution

- Who are the target population and other stakeholders?
- What will the solution accomplish?
- How will the participants be different after the course or programme?
- How will the participants achieve the objectives?
- How will the course or programme be developed?
- How will you know your solution is effective?

Output from the design phase:

- a detailed plan that describes how, when, by whom, and at what cost the problem will be solved

Development: must address the following kinds of questions

- What strategies, media, and methods will be used for each objective or task?
- What learning resources will be required?
- Where, when, and how will learners be ensured of feedback as they practise their skills?
- Where, how, and when will evaluation activities be used?
- What will be the consequences of success or failure or both?
- How will the instruction be evaluated and revised?

Output from the development phase:

- a complete course or programme package, including all materials, tools, equipment, and plans for delivery, learner support, learner evaluation, and course evaluations

Implementation: putting the solution into practice

- Are all necessary resources (human, physical, financial) in place?
- Are data collection mechanisms in place?
- Are problem-solving and recording mechanisms in place?

Output from the implementation phase:

- learner progress and performance records
- data from a variety of sources (for example, records and solutions)
- other evaluation data (for example, interviews, questionnaires)

Evaluation: not an ‘add-on’ but an integral component

- How well does the system meet the goals initially identified?
- How well does it meet the needs of the learners and other stakeholders?
- Do you have sufficient specific information? How will you obtain it?
- What specific changes can be made to improve the system?

Output from the evaluation phase:

- analyses of records and data
- specific solutions, including time, cost, and other resource estimates

Revision: including a review of all decisions and activities of previous phases

- Were the original analyses complete and correct?
- Have circumstances changed sufficiently to require a major review of the analyses?
- What changes, modifications, or improvements are evident in the evaluation data?
- Are sufficient resources available to complete the recommended changes?
- What action needs to be taken?

Output from the revision phase:

- revised course or programme, including the course materials, learner support and evaluation plan, and a revised course evaluation plan

3.3 Functions of open and distance learning

Regardless of the size of the programme, unit, or institution undertaking development and implementation of an open and distance learning system, the following functions must occur at some level. Valuable considerations in relation to each open and distance learning task are listed following.

Obtaining and managing money and other resources

- grant-sustained, cost recovery (self-financing);
- higher development and start-up costs; and
- human support relatively expensive component.

Developing or acquiring programmes and courses

- considerable development time required for full-scale development and production;
- buying or leasing courses from other open and distance learning providers may be more effective use of resources; and
- continuum of approaches, from single author to large teams of specialists.

Example: See the case study for the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside for an example of *course franchising*.

Recruiting and promoting

- analyse and assess the needs of your prospective learner populations;
- make information available at right place and time;
- provide sufficient accurate information about time, cost, and effort required;
- provide sufficient accurate information about when, where, and how to get involved; and
- reassure potential learners about legitimacy and credibility.

Physically producing, reproducing, storing, and disseminating materials

- course materials requirements may demand print, audio, video, or computer software;
- dissemination may require post, courier, transport companies, telecommunications, broadcasts, or satellites;
- physical production and reproduction time consuming; and
- specialised equipment and personnel required for storage, handling, packaging, dispatch, and inventory.

Enrolling and registering

- process varies from simple manual lists to complex electronic systems;
- fixed or rolling entrance dates; and
- range of delivery options available.

Delivering programmes and courses

- two-way communication required;
- evaluation and feedback;
- collaboration with other agencies;
- library services; and
- record systems.

Providing learner support

- personal support such as advice or counselling;
- academic support such as tutoring, grading, and examining; and
- face-to-face or mediated support.

Examining, crediting, and granting credentials

- range of credit options available;
- exam taking and credit evaluation requirements; and
- involvement of professional associations and external agencies.

Evaluating and revising processes, procedures, programmes, and courses

- learner performance;
- learner satisfaction;
- meeting goals and objectives; and
- resistance to change.

Training and developing staff

- orientation and adjustment to new technologies and approaches; and
- awareness of advantages and limitations of open and distance learning operations.

Discussion: There are many ways of labelling and describing these functions; the ones provided here are only suggestions. Extend your list with examples both from your own and your participants' experience.

3.4 Kinds of open and distance learning

A variety of terms describe the type of educational provision that involves some version of an open learning approach and uses open and distance learning techniques to a greater or lesser extent.

Single mode institution

- set up to offer programmes of study at a distance;
- some face-to-face interaction involved, but often optional;
- teaching and learning process 'mediated' in some way
 - by print, including correspondence;
 - by audio, including radio (one-way, two-way), cassettes, telephone, or audio conferences;
 - by video, including television (one-way, two-way), cassettes, or video conferences; and
 - by computer, including computer-based training, e-mail, computer conferencing, or World Wide Web;
- characterises many of the world's 'mega-universities', including Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Universitas Terbuka, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU), and United Kingdom Open University (UKOU).

Example: See the case study for IGNOU included with this kit.

Dual mode institution

- offers two modes:
 - one using traditional classroom-based methods; and
 - one using distance methods;
- may also offer the same course in both modes, with common examinations;
- regards the two types of learner as distinct: on-campus and external; and
- may or may not allow 'cross-over' registrations.

Example: See the case studies for the Open Learning Institute of Charles Sturt University, the University of Nairobi, the University of Botswana, and the University of Zambia for discussions of issues facing dual mode institutions.

Mixed mode institution

- offers learners a wide choice of modes of study
independent, group-based, or some combination; and
face-to-face, mediated, or some combination;
- maximises flexibility of place and pace of study;
- the result of ‘convergence’ of face-to-face and distance modes; and
- increasingly characterises organisations that were once ‘single mode’ or ‘dual mode’.

Example: The case studies for Deakin University and Murdoch Universities provide examples of institutions that are now ‘mixed mode’.

4. Practice exercises

4.1 Categorising various institutions

Instructions: Divide the participants into small working groups (no more than five to a group). Give each group a set of three case studies, a single mode institution, a dual mode institution, and a mixed mode institution, without labelling the institutions as such; the case studies that are part of this kit are suitable for this purpose. Ask each group to

- agree on the category they think is most appropriate to each of the three institutions;
- list the main characteristics of each institution that justify the category; and
- report their findings to the group as a whole.

Use the findings of the working groups as a springboard for discussion of the challenges involved in defining *open and distance learning*.

Timeframe: Depending on the language level and experience of the participants, the small group work can take as long as an hour.

Materials: Case studies (see the case studies that are included with this kit); flip chart paper or overhead transparencies, and marker pens.

4.2 Application to home institution

Instructions: Ask participants to spend half an hour, working on their own, describing the programme in which they work, in terms of how the supporting institution (or department or faculty) fulfils the ten functions of an open and distance learning system that have been discussed as part of this topic.

On the basis of this description, ask them to work with a partner to determine what kinds of changes will have to take place in each of these functions to make their institution function more effectively as an open and distance learning operation.

Timeframe: An hour in total, half an hour for individual work and half an hour for paired discussion.

Materials: Paper and pen or pencil for each participant.

TOPIC 2

Adult Learning and Learner Support

Overview

Source materials for this topic

Characteristics of open and distance learners

Adults as learners

Demographic factors

Motivation

Learning factors

Subject background

Resource factors

Typical problems of distance learners

Special problems of distance learners

Implications for learner support

Types of learner support

Tuition and counselling

Ways of providing support

Support personnel

Support structures

Functions of learner support

Tasks involved in tuition

Tasks involved in counselling

Qualities required of support personnel

Implications for course design

Administrative support

Counselling support

Tutorial support

Peer support

Support for support personnel

Checklist

Practice exercises

Profiling your target audience

Designing for learner support

Justifying learner support

Meeting learner needs

Blocks to learning

1. Overview

These materials support a discussion of the topic of adult learning and learner support. The discussion is in two main parts.

The materials in the first part present checklists of adult learner or target audience characteristics that are useful to course designers and programme planners in focusing their learner support services appropriately. There is also an outline for a discussion of the implications of some of these learner characteristics for course design.

The second part is intended to support the presentation and discussion of issues involved in the design of learner services and materials and the kinds and mechanisms of support provided to learners.

1.1 Source materials for this topic

Brookfield, D. *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1986.

Commonwealth of Learning. *Perspectives on distance education: student support services*. Vancouver: COL, 1992.

Evans, T. *Understanding learners in open and distance education*. London: Kogan Page, 1994.

Lewis, R. *Tutoring in open learning*. Lancaster: Framework Press, 1995.

Macharia, M., and J. Mungai. Adults as distance learners, Unit 3 in *Adult learning and communication in distance education*, Course 3 of M.A. in Distance Education. London: University of London and International Extension College, 1992.

Mills, R., and A. Tait. *Supporting the learner in open and distance learning*. London: Pitman, 1996.

Rowntree, D. *Preparing materials for open, distance, and flexible learning*. London: Kogan Page, 1994.

Simpson, O. Meeting the needs of the learner, Unit 9 in *Adult learning and communication in distance education*, Course 3 of M.A. in Distance Education. London: University of London and International Extension College, 1992.

2. Characteristics of open and distance learners

What do you need to know about your learners in order to provide them with the kind of support they need?

2.1 Adults as learners

According to Brookfield (1986), adult learners have the following nine characteristics.

- Adults maintain the ability to learn.
- Adults are a highly diversified group of individuals with widely differing preferences, needs, backgrounds, and skills.
- Adults experience a gradual decline in physical and sensory capabilities.
- The learner's experience is a major resource in learning situations.
- Self-concept moves from dependence to independence as individuals grow in responsibilities, experience, and confidence.
- Adults tend to be life-centred in their orientation to learning.
- Adults are motivated to learn by a variety of factors.
- Active learner participation in the learning process contributes to learning.
- A comfortable, supportive environment is a key to successful learning.

It is important to realise that adults' past experiences of learning may act against them as well as acting in their favour. For many adult learners, their previous education was marked by lack of success, exclusion, and frustration. Therefore coming back to studying as an adult can be a daunting task.

In addition, as adults, learners generally have more commitments than do children, and the place studying takes in their lives is therefore quite different. This can be a positive factor, in that it enables some adult learners to keep the stresses of studying in better perspective; or a negative factor, in that studying must compete with essential life maintenance activities such as keeping a family, growing food, holding down a job, and finding enough money to get by on.

Some factors influencing adult learners in the way they approach their studies include:

- prior learning;
- access to other learners;
- access to resources in workplace or home;
- prior training;
- sense of failure;
- motivation;
- fear;

- prejudice; and
- time.

2.2 Demographic factors

- How many learners are you likely to have?
- What ages are they? Are they children? Adults?
- Are your learners men? women?
- What is their family status?
- How many children do they have?
- What is their geographic location (for example, rural, urban)?
- What is their previous education?
- What language or languages do they read and speak?
- Do they hold jobs?

2.3 Motivation

- Why are they learning?
- How might your programme relate to their lives or work?
- What do they want from the programme?
- What are their hopes and fears?

2.4 Learning factors

- What are their beliefs about learning?
- What learning styles do they prefer?
- What learning skills do they have (for example, reading ability)?
- What experience do they have of open and distance learning?

2.5 Subject background

- How do they feel about the subject of the programme?
- What knowledge and skills do they already have in that subject?
- What misconceptions or inappropriate habits do they have?
- What personal interests and experience might they have that are relevant?

2.6 Resource factors

- Where, when, and how will they be learning?

- Who will be paying their fees or expenses?
- How much time will they have available for study?
- What access will they have to facilities such as study centres?
- What access will they have to the equipment and media required for the course?
- What access will they have to human support from tutors, mentors, colleagues, and other learners?

2.7 Typical problems of distance learners

- Family pressures;
- Worries about work and money;
- Lack of books and libraries;
- Lack of their own study space;
- Isolation;
- Lack of transport to get to tutorials;
- Lack of confidence;
- No undisturbed study time;
- Low levels of reading ability; and
- Too busy to attend tutorials.

2.8 Special needs of distance learners

Distance learners have special needs, which include:

- information to help learners relate to the institution and understand its system;
- contact with tutors to help maintain motivation and overcome learning problems;
- institutional identity, which is some means of helping learners identify with a remote institution and to feel that they are part of a body of learners rather than studying in isolation; and
- advice on how to study; as well as that provided within the course itself, learners often need additional support to guide good study techniques.

3. Implications for learner support

These characteristics of your learners have implications for the way you design your learner support services, as shown in the following example.

Complete the Sentence

If my learners ...	then I must ...
are paying for the course themselves,	try to avoid expensive media.

have a fixed amount of time available for studying,	be restrained in how much time I expect them to commit to tutorial attendance and to completing assignments.
will not see any obvious reason why they should send in assignments regularly for correction and feedback,	emphasise how doing the assignments and receiving their tutor's feedback comments might benefit them.
have considerable experience in the subject covered by the course,	appeal to that experience by using examples suggested by learners.
differ from me in the way they use certain key terms and ideas, and in their attitude to studying,	begin by identifying and exploring our differences.
are women and men,	make sure that arrangements for tutorials and the language, examples and behaviour used by all learner support personnel are equally welcoming to and inclusive of men and women.
have to travel great distances to reach study centres,	be careful to make the tutorial programme as convenient, effective and useful as possible

Discussion: Encourage a discussion among participants to analyse the learner support services available in their institution. Do these address the unique features of distance learners and their special needs? In what ways could these services be improved?

4. Types of learner support

4.1 Tuition and counselling

There are two kinds of support that distance educators should be offering to learners:

- intellectual support, or tuition; and
- organisational and emotional support, or counselling.

4.2 Ways of providing support

There are a variety of ways of providing this support:

- face-to-face, at study centres, residential weekends, and summer schools;
- by telephone;
- by e-mail and computer conference;
- by fax and post; and

- by audio conference, audio cassette, and video conference.

Discussion: Your participants may have examples to provide or types and means of support to add to this list. Explore these options in light of institutional and national contexts.

4.3 Support personnel

In addition, there are a number of kinds of personnel who offer this support:

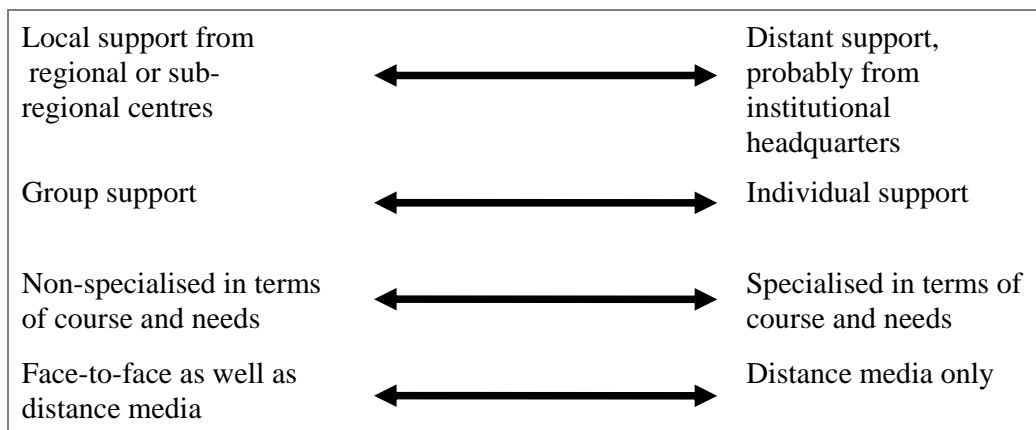
- part-time tutors;
- full-time academic staff;
- counsellors and advisers;
- administrative staff;
- library staff;
- staff of collaborating institutions;
- other learners; and
- friends and family.

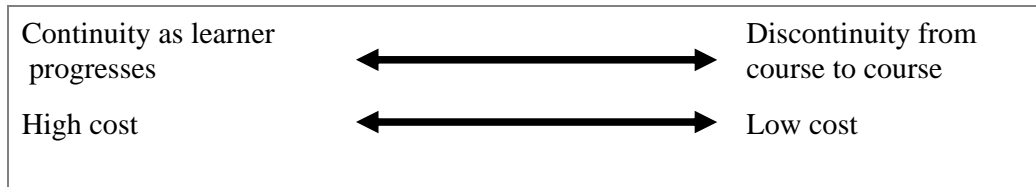
Discussion: What kinds of support personnel are available in the programmes in which your participants are involved? What are their roles and responsibilities?

4.4 Support structures

There are a variety of ways of describing or categorising the kinds of structures or systems that can be devised to support learners. One way is to look at the kinds of axes along which the characteristics of any given programme's support for learners can be plotted. These are described in the diagram that follows.

Support Structures Axes





These axes are not independent of each other:

- local support is unlikely to be specialised in terms of either course or needs whereas distant support could be specialised in terms of both;
- the greater the degree of specialisation in support, the less likely there is to be continuity in that support as learners move through various courses toward their final goal; and
- institutions devise support systems that both reflect their particular situation and attempt to maximise resources by making compromises such as the use of local part-time staff.

Discussion: You might wish to ask your participants to plot the support structures that characterise their programmes along these axes.

Another way of describing support structures is to look at their various characteristics and the kinds of requirements these characteristics mean for the structure or system. Because of the differences in the media used for communication, tutorial models have different characteristics, as summed up in these questions:

- Does the tutor–learner dialogue take place synchronously or asynchronously? That is, do the tutor and learner need to interact in real time or can a response be delayed?
- Do learners interact solely with a tutor or do they also interact amongst themselves?
- Can learners access the tutorial service from home or do they need to travel to an access centre?

The table on the following page identifies the management requirements for systems with the characteristics noted above.

Management Requirements for Various Support Structures

Characteristic	Requirements of system
<p>Synchrony</p> <p><i>Example: face-to-face tutorial sessions, residential schools, audio conferencing and video conferencing.</i></p>	<p>High requirement for detailed scheduling</p> <p>High need to monitor technical performance of delivery medium as breakdown is a critical problem</p> <p>High need for on-hand technical support</p> <p>High training requirement so learners will master medium.</p>
<p>Asynchrony</p> <p><i>Example: independent study and computer conferencing.</i></p>	<p>Highly desirable to provide flexible temporal access to system</p> <p>Lower need for monitoring technical performance than for synchronous systems, as downtime can be overcome later and learner can re-enter the system</p> <p>Technical skill or operation of system by learners can be gained over a longer period, because mistakes are not as critical as in synchronous systems.</p>
<p>Tutor-learner interaction only</p> <p><i>Example: one-on-one telephone tutorials and tutorials by post.</i></p>	<p>Higher need to guarantee learner access to some minimum guaranteed amount of time</p> <p>High need to ensure tutor availability at regular times</p> <p>Lower need to schedule interaction in a precise manner.</p>
<p>Tutor-learner and learner-learner interaction</p> <p><i>Example: any of the conferencing media, face-to-face tutorials.</i></p>	<p>Requirement to provide inter-group access</p> <p>High need to schedule group interaction if interaction is also synchronous</p> <p>High need to ensure consistent technical performance of technology being used as downtime will affect multiple users.</p>
<p>Home-based interaction</p> <p><i>Example: computer conferencing.</i></p>	<p>Learner needs to be informed of how and when to access system</p> <p>Scheduling is critical if synchronous group interaction is to occur</p> <p>Learner needs to be trained at a distance to use the system.</p>
<p>Access centre-based interaction</p> <p><i>Example: face-to-face.</i></p>	<p>High need to organise a facility at which learners meet</p> <p>High need to schedule group meetings and inform learners</p> <p>High need to ensure performance of technology used.</p>

5. Functions of learner support

Regardless of how an institution chooses to organise its learner support services, the two basic functions of learner support apply: tuition and counselling.

Both can be broken down further into a number of tasks.

Discussion: Take advantage of both your and your participants' experience for examples of the functions and tasks that are discussed below.

5.1 Tasks involved in tuition

Those who provide intellectual support to distance learners do so on the understanding that it is the materials that are intended to 'teach'. The primary task for these support personnel is to facilitate the learning of those materials.

Teaching and learning are social processes, however, that arise from and are embedded in social structures and systems of values. For this reason no set of materials, no matter how carefully designed, can effectively teach every learner equally successfully.

This generates a number of tasks for those who provide intellectual support:

- explaining to the learner; for example, clarifying a concept or an instruction;
- exploring issues with the learner; for example, how the course material applies to the learner's own situation and experience; and
- giving feedback to the learner; for example, commenting on and grading assignments.

5.2 Tasks involved in counselling

Personal and emotional support is as essential to the learning process as intellectual support.

The tasks involved for these staff include:

- giving the learner information; for example, about fees, availability of courses;
- giving the learner advice; for example, about appropriate course choice;
- exploring an issue with the learner; for example, helping potential learners set their goals;
- taking action to help a learner; for example, arranging transport for a disabled learner; and
- advocating on behalf of a learner; for example, giving a reference or waiving an institutional rule.

5.3 Qualities required of support personnel

The tasks set out above suggest that distance educators might need the following qualities to succeed in their work of supporting learners:

- *warmth*: the quality in a person that communicates welcome, respect, comfort, and willingness to give time to another;
- *genuineness*: meaning honesty and openness about one's own strengths and failings;
- *acceptance*: being able to accept another person for who they are, as someone worthy of respect;
- *empathy*: sensing the hurt or pleasure in another as they sense it;
- *organisational skills*: the ability to manage time well, and to diagnose problems and take appropriate action to solve them;
- *explicatory skills*: the ability to help the learner break a problem into its component parts and then see how they fit back together; and
- *listening skills*: the ability to give one's entire attention to another and to respond in ways that do not judge but demonstrate you understand what has been said.

6. Implications for course design

The features of a support system have implications for the design of learning materials. These implications can be discussed in terms of the following categories:

- administrative support;
- counselling support;
- tutorial support; and
- peer support.

Discussion: It would be useful to have some sample materials available for demonstrating ways in which learner support functions are acknowledged and integrated.

6.1 Administrative support

In order to learn effectively, learners need to have four basic kinds of support which administrative systems provide:

- the dispatch of complete course materials in a timely fashion;
- information of a variety of kinds:
 - how much fees are and when they are to be paid;
 - when the course begins and ends;
 - who the tutor is, and how to contact him or her;

who to contact when things go wrong;
who to contact for certain kinds of information and services; for example,
library;
when and where course tutorials take place;
when and how assignments are to be submitted; and
when and where examinations are scheduled;

- the dispatch of the right examination to the right location at the right time; and
- accurate and complete records keeping.

Much of the information listed above can readily be included in the course materials, if not in the study guide then in another publication such as a learner handbook.

Such a publication needs to be designed with the same level of care and instructional clarity as the remainder of the learning materials. Accurate written information provided at the beginning of a course can prevent a great number of problems later on.

There are also a number of media that can be used to provide some of this information. For example:

- *audio cassettes*: tutors can use these for introducing themselves;
- *video cassettes*: can show distant learners the building to which they send their queries and some of the key staff with whom they will be dealing;
- *e-mail*: learners can e-mail their queries to administrative staff for responses that are independent of time zones, unlike the telephone, and faster than the post; and
- *Websites*: a growing number of institutions have Websites on which they post up to date information on courses, programmes, fees, staff, and so on. In some cases a Website may also provide access to the institution's library catalogue.

6.2 Counselling support

As with administrative support, a great deal of counselling material can be made available in print or other media. For example, a variety of booklets can be prepared on common problems faced by learners, including:

- making sure distance study is the right choice;
- how to choose the right course;
- how to apply for a course;
- financial assistance and how to apply for it;
- coping successfully with unfamiliar technologies;
- how to write essays;
- how to prepare for examinations;
- strategies for overcoming 'exam anxiety'; and

- planning for a new career.

Many of these booklets have already been produced (for example, by the Open University in the United Kingdom) and are generic enough to be applicable to a number of institutions beyond the institution that produced them, or could be readily adapted to suit your particular circumstances.

Again, technologies other than print can be used creatively to provide this support. For example,

- *audio cassettes*: can be used to engage learners in a ‘dialogue’ about some common problem, its diagnosis and possible solutions;
- *video cassettes*: some institutions have produced video cassettes of learners talking about their experiences as learners, to let other learners know they are not the only ones who have a particular problem;
- *computer conferences*: computer conferences, both staff- and learner-led, can provide timely and personalised help; in addition, ‘lurkers’ in the conferences who read but do not post messages can also benefit from the discussions; and
- *telephone counselling*: the telephone can be a very intimate and personalised medium for discussion of personal problems.

6.3 Tutorial support

Tutors typically have to deal with administrative issues, and also counsel learners. Roles of educators, and especially distance educators, tend to overlap.

In terms of providing intellectual support and facilitating learners’ learning, however, it is essential in the learning materials themselves to both provide and to prompt access to this support. For example,

- *tutor contact*: Learners need to be prompted in the learning materials to contact their tutor at frequent intervals, by whatever means is made available. This contact might be to discuss a particular issue, to plan for a major assignment, or to discuss a returned assignment. Instructions that use icons are helpful; for example, a telephone icon for telephone contact or a stamped envelope for correspondence;
- *assignment dispatch and grading*: Learners need clear, complete and accurate information about when and how to submit an assignment, what to submit, where to send it, and how long they can expect to wait before it is returned. Research indicates that ‘turnaround’ times of two weeks or less have an optimal effect on learner motivation to continue, as does the requirement for submitting an assignment early in the course. Most learners who get over this first hurdle will end up completing the course;
- *grading criteria*: In the learning materials, learners need to be told the criteria by which their assignment will be graded, and which aspects of their answer will receive particular emphasis. In turn, the tutors who grade assignments must be explicit in grading according to these guidelines, and provide comments and

reasons for their grade that display all the characteristics of effective support: warmth, honesty, empathy, organisation, explication, and the written equivalent of 'listening'. Acceptance is a little more difficult, since the tutor is in this case required to judge performance, but even so such judgments can be communicated in a constructive and helpful fashion; and

- *examinations*: The learning materials must also provide clear, complete, and accurate information on when and where learners will be sitting examinations; what kind of examinations these will be: multiple choice, short answer, essay, and so on; what material the examinations will cover; and what the examination grade will contribute to the overall grade for the course.

6.4 Peer support

- Learning materials can also point learners toward others in their communities and social networks who can help them, co-workers, friends, family members, and community members.
- Some institutions, for example, publish lists of learners and which courses they are taking, along with their telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, postal addresses, and so on. However, it is essential to obtain the permission of any individual before publishing this kind of information about them, since these data are frequently protected by privacy legislation.
- Tutorials that involve other learners (for example, at study centres, by audio conference or computer conference) can be used as much for purposes of providing peer support as providing intellectual and other kinds of support from the tutor.
- Learning materials can even require learners to seek out other learners, to work as a team on a particular assignment, for example.
- Learners may also be required to find someone from their immediate social network to interview, for example, or to seek information from in some other way.

6.5 Support for support personnel

Up to now we have emphasised the needs of learners in open and distance learning programmes for continuing contact with the programme and support from programme personnel as they undertake and work through their studies. The staff who provide this support also need support and contact, however, especially since they are frequently working under conditions such as the following:

- They tend to be part-time, with major affiliation and commitment to some other institution.
- They tend to be on short-term or annual contracts.
- They may be working at a distance from the institution themselves, with no regular face-to-face contact with supervisors and colleagues.
- Their roles are frequently diffuse and ill-defined.

- Too often the adage, ‘Out of sight, out of mind’, means not just isolation but invisibility for distant staff when it comes to decisions on policies and procedures, which tend to be made without due attention to their particular circumstances and needs.

With distant staff it becomes even more important to practise effective staff relations, by means of measures such as the following:

- clear role descriptions, expectations, and reporting lines;
- a thorough induction into the programme, its history, goals, policies, and procedures;
- frequent and effective two-way communication (e-mail is an excellent medium for this where available);
- opportunities for face-to-face meetings;
- frequent performance review and monitoring;
- accurate and efficient records systems;
- continual updating on changes in policies and procedures; and
- opportunities for input into decisions that affect their work.

7. Checklist

If your support system is successful, you should be able to answer ‘Yes’ to the questions in the following checklist.

Checklist for Successful Delivery and Learner Support

- Do you know your learners’ geographical location, age range, access to facilities, academic ability, gender, and so on?
- Are staff sensitive to gender, societal, and cultural differences?
- Are staff sensitive to the frustrations and time constraints adult learners often face?
- Do staff have up-to-date knowledge about the institution and its courses?
- Are your support systems flexible and learner-oriented, available to learners when and where they need them?
- Are the resources allocated to learner support adequate?
- Is there an appropriate balance of resources allocated to the development of materials and subsequent support of learning from those materials?
- Does your support function provide support to the internal functions of the distance learning unit as well as to learners?

- Is your decision to keep support services centralised, or to manage them on a regional or decentralised basis, appropriate to meeting the needs of your learner population?
- Does your learner record system contain the following information:
 - personal details, including name, address, age, family circumstances, and employment?
 - academic and professional qualifications?
 - special requirements such as specially adapted materials for disabled learners?
 - tutorial record, including dates when assignments were received, grades, and copies of tutor comments?
 - list of materials sent, including date of dispatch?
 - record of attendance at face-to-face sessions?
 - fees paid?
- Are your records detailed, accurate, and up-to-date? Do you ensure that:
 - records systems are regularly monitored to ensure they are functioning efficiently?
 - information is disseminated to the right people at the right time?
 - records are kept in a secure fashion so that only authorised personnel have access to them?
 - legal requirements governing the handling and storage of information are met?

8. Practice exercises

8.1 Profiling your target audience

Instructions: To give your participants an opportunity to profile a target audience, you may wish to try the following:

- Have participants select a sample target population (for example, the kinds of learners they expect will be attracted to a programme they are developing).
- For that target population, instruct participants to answer the questions that have been posed in this session. The sets of characteristics can be divided up so that one small group deals with demographic factors, a second with motivation, and so on.
- Have participants chart these characteristics and their implications for the design of the course or programme, and present these to the group as a whole.

Timeframe: Half to three-quarters of an hour.

Materials: Flipchart paper or overhead transparencies and marker pens.

8.2 Designing for learner support

Instructions: Distribute to participants sample course units of any courses which are available to you. Ask the participants, in small groups, to study the materials and from them to

- determine from the sample units they what kinds of support are provided to learners by the institution that produced the units; and
- assess as far as possible whether that level and kind of support is likely to meet learners' needs.

They then report their findings to the group as a whole.

Timeframe: Approximately one hour.

Materials required: Sample course materials, flip charts or overhead transparencies and marker pens.

8.3 Justifying learner support

Scenario: An open and distance learning unit has been in operation for eighteen months at Prestige University. For the past six months three courses have been delivered by distance means, using a basic correspondence model. Learners can telephone the unit if they have problems, but there is no continuous assessment provided and learner performance is assessed only by the final examination, which learners must sit at the same time, and in the same examination hall, as the on-campus learners in the course.

Situation: The director of the open and distance learning unit is meeting with the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Learner Services, to whom she reports, to justify more funding so that tutors can be paid to support learners during the course rather than just marking the final examinations.

Task: Divide the participants into two groups. Group One is the Pro-VC group. Their task is to come up with reasons, from a strictly conventional, campus-based point of view, as to why learners ought not to need this 'special' service. Group Two is the distance education director group. Their task is to justify from the point of view of the distance education unit why learners must have the services for which the director is asking. Ask each group to supply a 'role player' who will play out the meeting situation with his or her counterpart, and argue the case that the group has developed.

Discussion: Draw out some of the issues and problems that confront open and distance learning providers in trying to supply adequate support services to their learners.

Timeframe: About an hour.

Materials required: None.

8.4 Meeting learner needs

Instructions: Provide the participants with a copy of the table below, either as a handout or by drawing it on a flipchart or blackboard.

Ask participants to complete the table, filling in each cell with the specific kinds of tuition, and advice and guidance, that they think a learner would need at each stage of a course in their own institution or a course with which they are familiar.

This exercise can be the basis of a discussion and exploration of the area of learners' support needs. Instead of doing the exercise as an individual or pair activity, it could alternatively be done as a plenary, where the facilitator elicits responses from the group and adds them to a flipchart or board.

Learner Support Needs at Various Stages of the Course

Stage	Tuition	Advice and guidance
Applying		
At start of study		
Preparing first assignment		
After first assignment		
Midway in course		
Towards exams		
Near end of course		
After completion		

8.5 Blocks to learning

Instructions: As with the previous exercise, provide participants with a table such as the one below, but with the cells blank (only the headings *Blocks* and *Solutions* would be filled). Ask them to consider what would block their adult distance learners from learning. Divide participants into small groups and ask them to complete the table. The completed version below is included as an example; every group will come up with a different version. Have each group report its results to the larger group as a basis for discussing emerging issues.

What Blocks Learning?

Blocks	Solutions
1.	

2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Completed ‘What Blocks Learning’ Table

Blocks	Solutions
1. <i>Anxiety and stress (home-related, job-related, or study-related)</i>	<i>Through counselling by tutors, mentors, and family</i>
2. <i>Lack of interest</i>	<i>Motivation through praise, encouragement, help to build self confidence</i>
3. <i>Comprehension skills</i>	<i>Encourage more reading, use of resource materials, and exposure to things of interest</i>
4. <i>Academic incompetence</i>	<i>Remedial work</i>
5. <i>Fear of failure</i>	<i>Opportunity for learners to experience success</i>
6. <i>Negative criticism</i>	<i>Avoid negative criticism, give positive reinforcement</i>
7. <i>Poor self-esteem</i>	<i>Frequent praise, boost to self-image, help from group</i>
8. <i>Poor learning environment</i>	<i>Create constructive learning environment for example, aids, apparatus, good rapport</i>

TOPIC 3

Tutorial Support

Overview

Source materials for this topic

The tutor

The varied role of the tutor

Tutoring models

The functions of tutor-marked assignments

The assignment turnaround process

How assignments can help learners to learn

Tools in the 'assignment toolkit'

Feedback on tutor-marked assignments

Helpful and unhelpful feedback

Guidelines for feedback from assignments

Face-to-face tutoring

Reasons to provide face-to-face tutoring

Reasons to limit face-to-face tutoring

Face-to-face tutoring activities

Styles of face-to-face tutoring

Activities in facilitative face-to-face tutoring

Practice exercise

Giving feedback

1. Overview

Tutorial support in open and distance learning is not simply teaching. In open and distance learning, the majority of the learning takes place when the learner is studying his or her course materials. By definition, in open and distance learning courses, the tutor does not usually have sufficient person to person contact with the learner to allow direct teaching of the majority of the course content. Nevertheless, the role of the tutor in helping the learner to learn is vital.

The use of media other than face-to-face contact and correspondence tuition for learner support is considered in Topic 6, Media for Learner Support.

1.1 Source materials for this topic

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- Thorpe, M. *Evaluating open and distance learning*. Harlow: Longman, 1988.
- Venter, M and A. Roman. *Tutoring distance education students: A Manual for Contract Lecturers*. 2nd ed. Windhoek: University of Namibia, Centre for External Studies, 1995.

2. The tutor

2.1 The varied role of the tutor

The role of the tutor in open and distance learning can be very varied. It generally extends well beyond teaching the subject matter of the course. Indeed, in many cases, the tutor is specifically *not* expected to try to teach the course content; that is left to the course writers to do through the course materials.

In different systems, the role of the tutor takes on different forms. While some systems have designated counsellors, tutors, mentors, and learner support administrative contacts, in other systems the post of tutor–counsellor or personal tutor may be expected to fulfil all of these functions. Whatever the case, the tutor generally represents one of the most crucial contact points (probably *the* most crucial one) between the learner and the institution.

The tasks of a tutor in one open and distance learning programme (the Guyana Inservice Distance Education programme, or GUIDE), as identified by the tutors themselves, include:

- helping learners to develop study skills;
- evaluating and assess learners, and also the programme;
- listening to learner problems (offer solutions and referrals);
- marking, commenting, and advising on tutor marked assignments (tutor-marked assignment) ;
- discussing strengths and weaknesses (offering advice and guidance);
- liaising with mentor;
- helping learners master concepts;
- keeping records such as attendance, feedback, test results, journals, and logs; passing on information;
- helping learners to learn to become good teachers;
- organising tutorials;
- encouraging promptness, organisation, planning work, and studying;
- giving feedback to regional co-ordinator, headquarters, and learners;
- motivating learners;
- acting as ombudsman;
- encouraging learners’ confidence in the learner support team; and
- creating and maintaining good tutor–learner relationships.

2.2 Tutoring models

While engaged in the process of dealing with the course’s academic content, the tutor may fulfil one of several roles, depending on the design and nature of the course, how the tutor perceives himself or herself in relation to the learners, and the tutor’s views of the teaching and learning process. Four different models of the role of the tutor are as follows.

- *Tutor as expert*: The tutor seeks to explain the course content and to act remedially if the learner has not understood.
- *Tutor as facilitator*: The tutor guides the learner in his or her studies in an enabling way without seeking to teach or explain directly.

- *Tutor as a reflective practitioner*: The tutor explores with the learner, without presuming to possess superior knowledge in relation to the learner.
- *Tutor as assessor*: The tutor's relationship with the learner is seen primarily as that of an examiner or tester of the learner and what he or she has learned.

Different learners, learning traditions, and cultures will have different views about the most appropriate balance to be struck among these models of the tutor. It is generally accepted that in open and distance learning learners should be in control of their experiences and take control of their learning wherever possible. Accordingly, the tutor should neither be overly directive nor try to be the source of all knowledge.

Very often, the job of marking assignments and examinations and the role of tutor fall to the same person. In other situations, the role of assessor is seen as primary. However, if the tutor were to perform the broader role of the facilitator or reflective practitioner in helping nurture the learner's learning experience, learners would benefit more fully.

3. The functions of tutor-marked assignments

The function of tutor-marked assignments can also be one of teaching and learning far beyond the confines of testing, as will be discussed below.

3.1 The assignment turnaround process

Typical systems for tutor-marked assignments

Tutor-marked assignments provide a common means of conducting formative assessment of learners in open and distance learning programmes. Typically, the learner completes part of the course, writes an assignment based on this section, and sends the assignment to the tutor. The tutor then marks the tutor-marked assignment, provides some feedback comments, and returns the comments to the learner. The tutor and the institution's administration typically keep a copy of the marks and sometimes of the feedback comments in the learner's file, to provide a record of the learner's progress and achievement.

Ineffective regimes for tutor-marked assignments

'Tutor-marked assignment turnaround', which is the time it takes to return an assignment to the learner, is one of the least well performed features of open and distance learning programmes. One aspect of this problem is often administrative:

- slow or unreliable postal or other delivery systems;
- lack of clerical capacity within the institution to process and record large quantities of tutor-marked assignments promptly; and
- the tendency on occasion for assignments to pile up in academics' offices waiting to be marked.

Another part of the problem may be that neither learners nor their tutors fully appreciate the potential value of engaging in a smoothly running and diligently conducted assignment submission and feedback system.

Effective regimes for tutor-marked assignments

In order for tutor-marked assignments to help learners in their learning it is important that:

- the learner, tutor, and administrators involved all have a shared understanding of the procedure and value of the tutor-marked assignment process;
- tutor-marked assignments are well designed, relevant to the course, and engage the learner in useful learning activity of some kind, whether it be analysis and essay writing or carrying out a practical task;
- learners have or are able to acquire the information, skills, and other resources needed to complete the tutor-marked assignment;
- the tutor-marked assignments are transmitted securely, whether by post or other means;
- they are marked quickly and reliably;
- they are returned to the learner with feedback with the minimum of delay;
- the tutor writes full and helpful feedback comments, not just a mark;
- the marks and any other significant points are recorded reliably and used as a basis for assessment of the learner; and
- the tutor uses the tutor-marked assignment interactions with the learner as an opportunity to develop a personal (professional) relationship: providing a ‘human face’ to the institution, making the learner feel individually recognised and valued, and raising the learner’s morale.

3.2 How assignments can help learners to learn

Assignments can be a powerful tool in helping distance learners to succeed in their studies, and serve a number of purposes. Some of these are the following:

- measuring learning against objectives;
- checking that material has been understood and covered;
- providing reinforcement of success;
- enabling diagnosis early on of weak point;
- providing learner the opportunity to apply new learning;
- developing a personal tutor–learner link;
- facilitating learner’s learning by making him or her an active learner;
- providing feedback to the learner on his or her performance;
- identifying learners’ strong and weak points;
- providing opportunity for remedial help;
- providing opportunity for individual study;
- providing an incentive mechanism for progressive improvement;

- helping tutor–marker to plan for face-to-face sessions;
- providing opportunity to demonstrate new learning;
- helping learners prepare for exams;
- suggesting where learner should focus further study;
- providing a basis for regular dialogue between learner and tutor;
- providing deadlines and set intermediate learning objectives;
- maintaining and developing learners’ commitment;
- guiding learners’ study of the course materials;
- alerting the tutor to any problems the learner is having; and
- alerting course writers to units learners found difficult and where extra help is needed.

3.3 Tools in the ‘assignment toolkit’

Various components make up the tutor’s ‘tutor-marked assignment toolkit’ and can be used in combination to good effect. Typical components include the following:

- questions;
- model answers;
- marking criteria;
- feedback comments;
- assessment comments; and
- records of the individual learner’s past performance.

4. Feedback on tutor-marked assignments

For tutor-marked assignments to help the learner, one of the most important factors is the quality of the feedback comments the tutor provides. The learner will gain very little from merely receiving a grade or a short, automatic, and discouraging comment such as ‘You must work harder!’

4.1 Helpful and unhelpful feedback

Feedback can be helpful or unhelpful. Helpful feedback encourages the learner to proceed even if he or she has not done very well in the assignment just completed. Unhelpful feedback, on the other hand, may discourage the learner to the extent that he or she wants to drop out of the course. Unhelpful feedback also lowers the learner’s sense of self worth, causing the learner to view of himself or herself as someone not capable of learning. This self-concept is extremely damaging and counter-productive, and is not justifiable.

The first task in getting tutors to provide helpful feedback is to persuade them of its value. The second task is to create the possibility for them to provide helpful feedback, by means of training, systems, materials, arranging realistic schedules and workload, and by continually motivating them to improve their skills.

Following are some characteristics of helpful and unhelpful feedback.

Helpful feedback

Helpful feedback does the following:

- establishes rapport between tutor and learner by
 - providing a sense of belonging; and
 - being facilitative and personal;
- links the learner's previous and future learning by
 - fitting the level of the learner;
 - encouraging the learner to review the course material; and
 - leading the learner to further consideration of the issues raised;
- encourages a deep approach to learning by
 - promoting dialogue;
 - acknowledging the learner's ideas;
 - commenting on relevance;
 - being open to further discussion; and
 - suggesting ways to improve study techniques;
- provides complete and accurate information by
 - being prompt;
 - being clear;
 - explaining the grade awarded;
 - fitting the grade awarded; and
 - being precise on where errors lie and improvement is needed

Unhelpful feedback

Unhelpful feedback does the following:

- suggests the tutor sees the learner as a failure by
 - being aggressive or intimidating;
 - providing a negative start;
 - being automatic rather than personal; and
 - discouraging rather than encouraging;

- offers inadequate information to the student by
 - being late;
 - being careless and inaccurate;
 - not being specific or clear;
 - being too short;
 - providing no suggestions for improving; and
 - not indicating any follow-up.

4.2 Guidelines for feedback from assignments

First assignment

Tutors should do the following when marking the first assignment:

- respond quickly;
- offer praise and recognise effort;
- refrain from being too critical;
- emphasise the next assignment (for example, “Remember to answer the next assignment in full sentences”); and
- establish a personal link.

Every assignment

Tutors should do the following with every assignment:

- start with personal tag;
- first, praise and identify the good;
- then, point out where and how the learner needs to improve;
- finish comments with upbeat, positive, and encouraging words; and
- close with a reference to the next assignment (for example, “Looking forward to your next assignment ...”).

5. Face-to-face tutoring

5.1 Reasons to provide face-to-face tutoring

Face-to-face tuition is seen as a key part of many open and distance learning courses. Where possible, it is common to include a component of face-to-face tuition, even if infrequently.

Some of the justifications for including face-to-face tuition in open and distance learning courses are that it:

- may help counteract feelings of isolation;
- enables learners to look at common problems together;

- boosts confidence and morale;
- provides opportunities for individual attention from the tutor, to clarify points and help learners with problems that would be difficult to deal with by correspondence or (if available) by telephone;
- provides opportunity for two-way communication with immediate response;
- helps to personalise learning, as tutor and learners come to know one another;
- may create a positive learning atmosphere and attitudes;
- provides opportunities for tutors and administrators to give instructions on studying and other issues;
- may be the best opportunity to conduct practical activities requiring groups or apparatus;
- fulfils learners' expectations;
- lets learners see others have the same problems as they do;
- reassures learners;
- may help refocus study and identify priorities;
- acts as a pacing mechanism by setting targets and imposing regularity;
- may be a catalyst and motivator; and
- provides an opportunity to articulate and present ideas.

5.2 Reasons to limit face-to-face tutoring

There are also reasons to minimise face-to-face tuition in open and distance learning programmes. Indeed, very often the reason that an open and distance learning programme has been developed is because problems are associated with bringing the learners together in one place to learn together, face to face with a tutor.

Some of the limiting factors associated with face-to-face tuition are that:

- it can be expensive, for the organisation and for the learners;
- unlike using printed materials or radio broadcasts, it does not offer economies of scale with larger numbers of learners;
- sufficient tutors may not be available;
- tutors may be under-qualified, so open and distance learning materials can teach better;
- distance, time, or other commitments or constraints often make it difficult for learners to come together to study; and
- it may not encourage the kind of self-reliant learning which educators wish to encourage learners to develop.

5.3 Face-to-face tutoring activities

Activities undertaken at face-to-face tutorials may include:

- practising skills;
- exchanging ideas;
- setting agendas for study, work, or application of current study material in the forthcoming period;
- demonstrating lessons, micro teaching, or role plays;
- providing access to study centre facilities; and
- exchanging records, materials, and administrative information.

5.4 Styles of face-to-face tutoring

Face-to-face tuition may be:

- didactic;
- explicative;
- remedial; or
- facilitative.

According to where the tutorial group operates on the continuum between the two extremes of wholly didactic and wholly facilitative, the tuition will have varying degrees of:

- interaction;
- independence;
- learner centredness;
- learner control;
- focus on process and skills; and
- focus on course content.

5.5 Activities in facilitative face-to-face tutoring

In carrying out a facilitative face-to-face tutorial session, a tutor might engage in a range of activities, such as the following:

- make advance arrangements;
- 'break the ice';
- encourage participation;
- lead or manage the discussion;
- set the focus (in context);

- review learners' contributions;
- use group activities such as
 - snowballing (an activity following through in phases from individuals, to pairs, to groups, to plenary); and
 - jigsaw tasks (where contributions from different participants are put together to create a whole);
- use techniques such as
 - hands-on, practical tasks; and
 - projects, with reporting;
- help with problems identified
 - from assignments;
 - from a mentor; and
 - from observation;
- mediate key parts of course modules (moving into explicative or remedial modes as appropriate);
- direct learners to tasks designed to enable them to learn from the modules (operating in facilitative mode);
- give preparatory advice on tutor-marked assignments;
- provide supplementary inputs through special guests or audio or printed material; and
- structure the sessions.

6. Practice exercise

6.1 Giving feedback

Instructions: For this exercise you will need copies of a completed assignment, enough to provide a copy to each participant. Preferably the sample assignment should not be too long or complex and should deal with a topic that is familiar to your participants. Make sure to remove any evidence from the assignment of its author, and to get permission from the school or department to use it in this way.

Ask participants to mark this assignment and to provide feedback, in writing, according to the guidelines set out in the assignment, and in line with the guidelines for helpful feedback set out in this Topic. Then ask them to exchange their marking and feedback with a partner, and to discuss with their partner their thoughts on the way their partner approached the task, and what problems they encountered.

Close the exercise with a general discussion of the challenges of providing helpful feedback, drawing on both participants' experiences with this task, and their experience more broadly.

Timeframe: You might wish to give the ‘marking’ task as an overnight assignment. Paired discussions will take approximately half an hour, allowing time for each partner to read the other’s work. General discussion is likely to take at least fifteen minutes.

Materials required: Copies of a completed assignment, as above.

TOPIC 4

Counselling in Open and Distance Learning

Overview

Source materials for this topic

Interacting with learners

Counselling qualities

Counselling activities

Counselling processes: the five Cs

Counselling tasks

Advising and counselling through prepared leaflets

Practice exercise

Role play

1. Overview

These materials support a discussion on the topic of the basic terms and issues of counselling, as it is commonly used in open and distance learning programmes. This is a more general application of the notions of counselling than would be the case in the field of professional counselling.

1.1 *Source materials for this topic*

Leech, G., and R. Lewis. Dialogue through correspondence, Unit 10 in *Adult learning and communication in distance education*, Course 3 of M.A. in Distance Education. London: University of London and International Extension College, 1992.

Simpson, O. Meeting the needs of the learner, Unit 9 in *Adult learning and communication in distance education*, Course 3 of M.A. in Distance Education. London: University of London and International Extension College, 1992.

Simpson, O. Dialogue through 'face-to-face', Unit 11 in *Adult learning and communication in distance education*, Course 3 of M.A. in Distance Education. London: University of London and International Extension College, 1992.

Simpson, O. Dialogue through other media, Unit 12 in *Adult learning and communication in distance education*, Course 3 of M.A. in Distance Education. London: University of London and International Extension College, 1992.

Simpson, O. Counselling role play materials. Cambridge: Open University East Anglia Region, n.d.

2. Interacting with learners

The range of ways of interacting with learners can be grouped according to:

- the extent to which the learner is actively included in the process as an agent or subject rather than merely an object of the process; and
- the extent to which the interaction is focused or centred on the problem or on the learner.

These categories are indicated on the following table.

Ways of Interacting with Learners

	Learner included in process		
	Advising	Exploring	
Problem			Learner
Centred			Centred
	Telling	Manipulating	
	Learner excluded from process		

3. Counselling qualities

Counsellors need to develop and demonstrate qualities that are appropriate to their role. It is not for them to be simply ‘advisors’, as if they had all the requisite solutions. Rather, they should be able to help the learner reach his or her own conclusions.

Counselling without imposing one’s own views unduly is a highly skilled process. In open and distance learning settings, very often tutors and others are expected to act in counselling roles although they are not trained as counsellors. It is important that all learner support personnel, including administrators and clerical staff who might be in a situation in which they provide guidance or advice to learners, have some awareness of this area. Tutors and others whose role clearly incorporates the counselling function need to be well versed and steeped in its principles.

Even so, many people find counselling effectively extremely difficult. The tendency is either to offer no help at all (just to listen and sympathise) or to tell the client (in this case, the learner) what he or she should do. Simpson (1992) describes the six attributes of an effective counsellor using the acronym ‘WHALES’:

- Warmth;
- Honesty;

- Acceptance;
- Listening;
- Empathy; and
- Structure.

4. Counselling activities

Counselling may be more or less directive. The greater the degree of responsibility the learner takes for his or her own understanding and decisions, the more useful the counselling is likely to be. In some circumstances learners simply need straightforward information; or, if heading in a completely unproductive direction, they may benefit from the advice of their tutor or counsellor. In any single counselling session, the nature of the interaction is likely to shift back and forth among the following activities:

- *telling*: giving appropriate information;
- *advising*: suggesting best approaches or courses of action; and
- *exploring*: helping learners clarify issues and problems for themselves.

5. Counselling processes: the five Cs

Counselling can be seen as a cyclic process of five phases (Simpson, 1992):

- *clarifying*: ensuring the learner's needs are clear;
- *checking*: ensuring the counsellor correctly understands the needs;
- *conceptualising*: restating the need in the counsellor's own words;
- *challenging*: pointing out contradictions and other ways of seeing an issue; and
- *consequent action*: agreeing to what the counsellor and learner each might do as a result of their discussion.

6. Counselling tasks

Counsellors take on a range of tasks when interacting with learners. These involve three primary tasks and associated sub-tasks:

- selecting the appropriate mode for the interaction, including
 - informing the learner;
 - advising the learner on a course of action; and
 - exploring with the learner what the problem seems to be and what courses of action might be possible;
- listening to the learner by
 - reflecting back to the learner what the counsellor has heard and understood;
 - and

- open-ended as opposed to closed questioning;
- structuring the interaction by
 - clarifying understandings;
 - checking understandings and information; and
 - agreeing on the actions that will be taken consequent to the discussion.

7. Advising and counselling through prepared leaflets

Many learners experience common problems that, if dealt with individually, can be time consuming. A number of issues and situations can be foreseen and addressed effectively with a well-prepared leaflet, which can be included in course materials and widely distributed to study centres, tutors, or local co-ordinators. The time saved in dealing with these common problems in face-to-face counselling can instead focus on individual problems that the learner may be experiencing. As well, by finding answers to common questions in the leaflet, the learner has been involved and takes more responsibility for decisions taken.

For example, it is possible to provide advice and counselling to learners through prepared leaflets on the following topics:

- coping with exam stress and suggestions for preparing for exams;
- self-assessment of time available for study; learner fills in own schedule;
- how to catch up (sent out to learners who are dropping behind);
- what to do if learner has missed assignments or an examination;
- reassuring and informing learners what to do if they have failed an exam;
- forming self-help study groups, and activities they could use;
- withdrawing and dropping out from the course, to a learner who is talking of doing so; and
- withdrawing and dropping out to learners who have done so (find out why).

8. Practice exercise

8.1 Role play

Instructions: Elicit from the workshop participants a set of possible problems and situations that might involve a learner seeking or being in need of some counselling support. This could range from very personal issues such as depression over poor grades and feeling like dropping out, to practical matters such as the need for information and advice about course choices.

Also, think of some situations in which a tutor or other member of the learner support staff might reveal to another staff member a problem that is bothering her or him. Perhaps a tutor has a problem with a particular learner or a learner has complained to senior staff about a tutor.

Set up the participants into groups of three. In each group, one person is to play the person with the problem; the second person is to play the person to whom the first person comes with their problem; and the third person in each group is to act as an observer.

Make sure each group understands its situation and the roles of the three members of the group.

To the observer in each group, give a copy of the checklist that follows this explanation.

Have the groups act out the situation as a role play. After a suitable amount of time, stop the groups and ask the observers to discuss what they observed with their two colleagues, within their group.

Rotate the roles, and give each group a new situation. Rotate a third time (if there is adequate time and the activity is going well), so that each participants has played each of the three roles (client, counsellor and observer).

Generate plenary discussion based on participants' reactions to the activity.

Timeframe: Approximately one hour.

Materials needed: Some way of writing down the scenarios or problems, chalkboard or whiteboard, flip chart, overhead transparency, so that all participants can see them. In addition, you will need one copy of the following checklist for each participant.

Observer's Checklist

- Was the enquirer made to feel comfortable right at the start?
- Was the counsellor's manner warm and welcoming throughout?
- Was the enquirer enabled to speak freely without undue interruption?
- Did the counsellor talk too much or interrupt too often?
- Was the enquirer's concern clearly outlined?
- Were there areas that the counsellor did not follow up adequately or missed altogether?
- If any suggestions or advice were made by the counsellor, were they appropriate and likely to be useful to the enquirer?
- Was the enquirer left feeling that the interview was a useful experience?
- Any special comments?

TOPIC 5

Administrative Support in Open and Distance Learning

Overview

Source materials for this topic

Types of administrative support

Records and record keeping

Why keep records?

What records to keep?

How to keep the records?

A checklist for evaluating records systems

Practice exercise

Describing an administrative support system

1. Overview

These materials support a discussion on the topic of the administrative support that relates directly to the learner in an open and distance learning programme.

1.1 Source materials for this topic

Commonwealth of Learning. *Perspectives on distance education: student support services*. Vancouver: COL, 1992.

Evans, T. *Understanding learners in open and distance education*. London: Kogan Page, 1994.

Lewis, R. *Tutoring in open learning*. Lancaster: Framework Press, 1995.

Mills, R., and A. Tait. *Supporting the learner in open and distance learning*. London: Pitman, 1996.

2. Types of administrative support

A range of administrative support may need to be provided to learners at different stages in their study career, including:

- sending out routine information;
- responding to routine enquiries;
- processing admissions;

- registering learners;
- keeping records;
- initiating delivery of course materials;
- supervising assignment turnaround;
- monitoring administrative support;
- administering examinations; and
- issuing certificates.

In open and distance learning programmes, administrative systems are every bit as vital as academic provision for the success of the individual learner and the health of the organisation as a whole. Because learners are studying at a distance, the institution relies far more heavily on the effectiveness of its administrative systems and its record systems for the support of its learners than does a face-to-face college.

3. Records and record keeping

Records are of great significance in open and distance learning systems. The record systems need to ensure that

- each learner receives the correct materials at the right time;
- learner's grades and performance data are securely logged; and
- that welfare and financial matters are documented in an informative way.

We might most simply consider records by asking three questions:

- Why keep records?
- What records to keep?
- How to keep the records?

3.1 Why keep records?

Records must be kept for the following reasons:

- to check progress of learners;
- to provide continuity regardless of changes of personnel;
- to assist a tutor in his or her organisation and tutoring;
- for institutional reporting purposes e.g. management;
- for tracking individual learner progress;
- to enable comparisons to be made between courses, tutors, learners, sexes, and years;
- to make analysis of learners as a cohort possible and to identify emerging trends;
- for ongoing planning;

- for historical proof of things done;
- for research;
- to verify regularity of attendance;
- to give feedback to learners, tutors, and others; and
- to evaluate the system.

3.2 What records to keep?

The following records should be kept:

- assignments submitted;
- marks allocated to assignments;
- test marks;
- problems learners face;
- problems in implementation of the programme;
- correspondence;
- feedback;
- attendance register;
- learner personal files
 - personal data;
 - progress report;
 - assessment record;
- log or journal: incidents, visits, equipment and material
- issue of modules;
- financial records; and
- notes regarding meetings and counselling and tutorial sessions with reference to necessary follow-up action.

3.3 How to keep the records?

Records may be kept on paper and card based systems or on computer. For larger open and distance learning programmes, with many learners, computer based systems are very much preferable to manual systems, as they can generate a great deal of useful information and reduce labour and errors considerably. However, many open and distance learning organisations still function with paper-based systems.

Whether on paper or on disc, it is important that the system be:

- logical;
- simple;
- understood by its users;

- secure; and
- sustainable.

3.4 A checklist for evaluating records systems

Ask yourself the questions in the following checklist to determine whether your records system is meeting learners' needs.

Checklist for Records Systems

Does your learner record system contain the following information:

- personal details, including name, address, age, family circumstances, and employment?
- academic and professional qualifications?
- special requirements such as specially adapted materials for disabled learners?
- tutorial record, including dates when assignments were received, grades, and copies of tutor comments?
- list of materials sent, including date of dispatch?
- record of attendance at face-to-face sessions?
- fees paid?

Are your records detailed, accurate and up-to-date? Do you ensure that

- records systems are regularly monitored to ensure that they are functioning efficiently?
- information is disseminated to the right people at the right time?
- records are kept in a secure fashion so that only authorised personnel have access to them?
- legal requirements governing the handling and storage of information are met?

Are your support staff, whether instructional, counselling, or administrative, trained and updated on an ongoing basis on the records system and how it is to be used?

4. Practice exercise

4.1 Describing an administrative support system

Instructions: Given the three tables that follow, ask participants to consider their own institution or an open and distance learning programme with which they are familiar.

Ask participants to make notes on a copy of the tables, either individually on their notepads, or in groups on a flipchart paper or overhead transparencies. Divide participants into groups of four and ask each group to present its version to the group as a whole.

These exercises can increase awareness of the team context in which each person involved in learner support works, and of the importance of records and

administration in distance education systems. They may also lead to setting agendas for action within the participants' institutions.

Time Required: Allow twenty minutes for each table.

Materials: Sufficient copies of tables, flipcharts or overhead transparencies for group work.

Evaluating administration

Make notes to the following questions in the table below.

- What areas of administration are particularly important to make the open and distance learning programme run effectively?
- Why are these areas important?
- How could the effectiveness of these areas be improved?

Administration for Open and Distance Learning Programmes

Area of administration	Why is it important?	How could it be improved?

Evaluating records systems

Make notes to the following questions in the following table.

- What specific *forms* or *procedures* in the records system are particularly important to make the open and distance learning programme run effectively?
- How could the effectiveness of these forms or procedures be improved?

Records Systems for Open and Distance Learning Programmes

Form or process	Why it is important?	How it could be improved?

Evaluating the learner support team

Make notes to the following questions in the table below.

- The learner support teams in an open and distance learning programme include people such as tutors, mentors, counsellors, local co-ordinators, senior tutors, residential tutors, and headquarters staff such as entry and dispatch clerks, stock controllers, records clerks, and learner support officers.
- What connections and areas of co-operation among different members of the learner support team are particularly important to make the programme run effectively?
- How could the effectiveness of these connections and areas of co-operation be improved?

The Learner Support Team for Open and Distance Learning Programmes

Connection or area of co-operation	Why it is important?	How it could be improved?

TOPIC 6

Media for Learner Support

Overview

Source materials for this topic

Technologies used in open and distance learning

Print

Radio

Audio cassettes

Telephone

Television

Video

Computers

Multimedia

A model for choosing appropriate technologies and media

Access

Costs

Teaching functions

Interaction, user-friendliness, and control

Organisational issues

Novelty

Speed

General points about technology in teaching

Media choice checklist

Guidelines for providing interactive learner support using media

Teletutorials

Audiographics

Video conferencing

Computer conferencing

Practice exercises

Lego® block version of communicating for learning without visual cues

Paper and pencil version of communicating for learning without visual cues

1. Overview

We can support our learners through many media in addition to direct face-to-face contact. In many instances, using media other than face-to-face contact (which may itself be considered as a medium) is vital if we are to provide adequate support to our learners, since opportunities for face-to-face contact may be very limited or non-existent.

Although media are generally first thought of in connection with their direct teaching functions, their role in learner support is equally important in open and distance learning.

Media can be used to support learners in two distinct ways:

- As part of the learning materials, design features can be built in to help the learner negotiate his or her way through the learning process and the subject content (for example, by using a helpful, interactive style of writing and materials design).
- By providing a channel for tutorial, counselling, and administrative support, separate from and complementary to the study material, media can contribute to the support functions which open and distance learning systems need to provide.

Indeed, as in other areas, the functions of learner support and teaching can overlap in the use of media.

These materials support a discussion on the capabilities of the various media that are used in open and distance learning and which media are best suited to defined instructional and learner support tasks and organisational settings.

1.1 Sources materials for this topic

Bates, T. *Technology in open learning and distance education: a guide for decision-makers*. Vancouver: Commonwealth of Learning and Open Learning Agency, 1991.

Bates, T. *Technology, open learning, and distance education*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Mason, Robin. *Using communications media in open and flexible learning*. London: Kogan Page, 1994.

Rowntree, D. *Preparing materials for open, distance, and flexible learning*. London: Kogan Page, 1994.

Simpson, O. Dialogue through other media, Unit 12 in *Adult learning and communication in distance education*, Course 3 of M.A. in Distance Education. London: University of London and International Extension College, 1992.

2. Technologies used in open and distance learning

The number of new technologies introduced into open and distance learning and open learning over the last ten years or so has expanded rapidly. These technologies now include:

- print (mechanical and electronic publishing);

- radio (one-way, interactive, and two-way);
- audio cassettes;
- telephone teaching, including audio conferencing;
- television (broadcast, satellite, and cable);
- video cassettes;
- video conferencing;
- computer-mediated communication;
- computer-based learning; and
- multimedia.

2.1 Print

Despite the enormous range of media from which distance educators have to choose, print continues to be the most frequently chosen medium for open and distance learning programmes. Why this predominant position?

Here are some possible reasons:

- Print is less costly to produce than most other media.
- Print requires less time to produce than most other media.
- Print materials are highly portable.
- Print materials require no other device to read them.
- Print materials can be accessed in any order desired.
- Print materials can be read at a pace determined by the reader.
- Print materials can be annotated by the reader.

There are, of course, things books cannot do, which is why distance educators wherever possible tend to integrate other media with print.

Discussion: Ask your participants to provide examples of the kinds of teaching tasks that books and other print materials are not able to perform, such as teaching comprehension and speaking skills in a foreign language, or providing examples of performance in drama, music, or dance.

2.2 Radio

- Radio has proven to be a cost-effective medium for education.
- Most radio is one-way transmission. Examples of two-way radio for education do exist, however.

Examples: The well-known outback schools in Australia linked learners and teacher by radio transceivers. See the case

study provided with this kit for the Open Access College in Australia, which is still serving this population with high-frequency radio links.

Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) broadcasts incorporate teacher-led activities with children in the classroom.

Wawatay Communications in northern Ontario, Canada, broadcasts secondary-level course programming to learners in isolated aboriginal communities who listen to the broadcasts while following along with their print materials, and can ask questions of the radio instructor on air by telephone.

- Radio programmes can be expensive to develop, but are cost effective if spread over large enough listening audiences.
- Radio requires adequate transmission and reception, power supply, and air-time.
- Radio is most effective when integrated with print and tutorials.

Example: Radio ECCA in Spain (headquartered in the Canary Islands) and radio schools throughout Latin America employ an effective three-cornered educational format, consisting of regularly scheduled radio broadcasts, printed workbooks and other materials, and weekly, community-based, face-to-face tutorials.

2.3 Audio cassettes

- Audio cassettes are an easy medium to work with, in that they do not inhibit or intrude upon the learning process.
- Cassettes are convenient. They allow learners to choose where and when they will listen.
- Learners can match their listening to their own learning pace.
- Cassette recordings should be designed in a way that takes advantage of the human voice, its modulation, stress, inflection, humour, and sense of ‘presence’.
- Cassettes are most effective when integrated with print and other media, especially a guide that outlines the topic and contents of the taped programme.

Example: Audio cassette lessons can help learners develop note-taking skills. The audio teacher demonstrates, the learner stops the tape and practises the skill, and then restarts the tape to listen to the feedback provided by the teacher.

- Audio lessons are a central part of second-language learning in many open and distance learning programmes.

Example: See the case study in this kit for the University of Guyana, Institute of Distance and Continuing Education, as an

example of an institution that uses audio cassettes as part of its learning materials packages.

2.4 Telephone

Use of the telephone in distance teaching takes two main forms:

- one-on-one telephone tutorials; and
- audio conferences that link learners at several sites with each other and with an instructor who may be at any of the sites.

Audiographics technologies add a visual component and a focal point to audio conference sessions, using equipment that is provided at each site. This equipment may consist of items such as:

- computers;
- electronic whiteboards;
- graphics tablets; and
- light pens for writing to computer screens, tablets, or whiteboards.

This equipment is relatively easy to use and operate. It is only as good as the audio link, however, and relies on good telecommunication infrastructure.

The telephone is not recommended for lectures, or for any monologue-type delivery that lasts for more than 10 to 15 minutes.

Example: See the case studies in this kit for the Open Access College in Australia, the University of Guyana, and the Indira Gandhi National Open University for examples of institutions that use audio teleconferencing in their programmes.

2.5 Television

- Educational television can be delivered via:
 - broadcasts;
 - satellite feed; and
 - cable feed.
- Satellite and cable programming can also incorporate interactive elements, such as linking classrooms via video and audio or via one-way video, two-way audio, in which learners watching the programme can ask questions on air by telephone.
- When appropriately designed, educational television programming takes full advantage of the features of the medium: sound, motion, text, and colour.
- High-quality programming is expensive to develop and requires a large listening audience to make it cost effective.

- Educational uses of television tend to take second place to entertainment uses. Broadcast slots tend to be at times inconvenient to learners, such as early in the morning or late at night.
- Broadcasts should always be accompanied by print-based topic outlines to guide and focus learners' attention and reduce the need for them to divide their attention between viewing and note-taking.

Example: See the case study included in this kit for the Indira Gandhi National Open University, as an example of an institution that uses television extensively in its programming.

2.6 Video

Video cassettes

- As with audio cassettes, video cassettes are easy to use and are under the learner's control in terms of pace and place of use.
- Learners with access to video recording equipment tend to record the educational broadcasts that are part of their learning package and watch them at their convenience.
- Most educational programmes that incorporate television into their learning packages make cassettes available to learners who cannot receive the broadcasts.
- Video cassettes, like broadcasts, should always be accompanied by print-based topic outlines to guide and focus learners' attention and reduce the need for them to divide their attention between viewing and note-taking.

Video conferencing

- Video conferencing takes the linking of classrooms one step further by compressing the video signal so that it can be transmitted over telephone lines.
- In this way learners at a number of sites can be linked via close-to-full motion video (transmission is usually slightly delayed).
- Video conferencing comes closest to replicating the classroom setting at a distance.
- It is also the most expensive conferencing medium, and is most effectively used when the learning situation requires full-motion, synchronous visuals with accompanying audio.
- Video conferencing like audio conferencing relies on a good telecommunications infrastructure.

Example: Learners in a number of colleges in East Anglia are studying massage therapy at a distance via video conferencing.

Four university campuses in Romania are linked via video conferencing to provide professional development for

physicians in the latest developments in diagnosis and treatment of a variety of medical conditions.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University uses one-way video with two-way audio. See the case study included in this kit for a description.

2.7 Computers

Computer-mediated communication

- Computer-mediated communication for education involves primarily electronic mail, computer conferencing, and access to the resources of the World Wide Web.
- Increasingly learning via computer-mediated communication, or CMC, is coming to be labelled ‘networked learning’.
- Electronic mail (e-mail) replaces the telephone and post as a means of connecting learners and teachers.
- Computer conferencing is basically a sophisticated and dedicated e-mail system that links learners together with each other and with tutors or instructors to share information and discuss issues arising from the learning materials, along with capabilities such as archiving, keyword searching, ‘threading’ or tracking of messages.
- Computer conference participants can read others’ contributions and make their own contributions at their own pace and place, without the need to travel to a learning centre. This assumes that they have the appropriate computer hardware, including modem and Internet connection, and software.
- Since computer conference communication is text-based, learners need relatively sophisticated skills in reading and writing, as well as in computer-mediated communication skills such as uploading and downloading messages.
- Like the other telecommunications-based technologies, computer conferencing relies on a solid infrastructure, not of telephone lines alone but preferably of high-speed lines that can provide fast and reliable Internet connectivity.

Example: See the case studies in this kit for Deakin University, which is creating ‘electronic communities’ using e-mail and computer conferencing, and for Murdoch University, which is integrating telecommunications media into all its programming.

Computer-based learning

- Computer-based learning (CBL) is a generic term for the various kinds of stand-alone, that is, non-networked, learning applications that involve computer software.

Examples: Athabasca University in Canada has developed computer-assisted learning packages to provide learners with

extra information, as well as drill and practice in English grammar and word usage skills.

The Faculty of Medicine at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand has a range of computer-based learning packages available in topic-specific areas such as the circulatory and respiratory systems.

- Computer-based learning packages that are effective learning tools and that take full advantage of the text, graphics, and animation capabilities of the authoring software now available are relatively expensive to design, and need to be used by a large number of learners to make them cost-effective.

2.8 Multimedia

- Multimedia learning technologies involve the whole range of audio, visual, text, and graphics media available, integrated into a package that has been effectively designed from an instructional point of view.

Example: A learning package might include a computer-based learning platform and a CD-ROM that provides full-motion video and high fidelity sound clips along with text and graphics.

Learners with full access to the World Wide Web can take advantage of the entire range of audio, video, text, graphics, and database information that is being made available via this medium. See the case study included in this pack for the Open Learning and Information Network in Canada, which is using the World Wide Web for its programming.

3. A model for choosing appropriate technologies and media

The salient factors to be considered when deciding on the use of technology for teaching can be summarised in the simple acronym ACTIONS (Bates 1991):

The ACTIONS Model for Selecting Media

A	Access	Where will learners learn — at home, at work, at local centres? ‘A’ also stands for ‘availability’ and ‘affordability’.
C	Costs	What are the capital and recurrent costs? Which costs are fixed and variable?
T	Teaching functions	What are the presentational requirements of the subject? What teaching and learning approaches are required?
I	Interaction and user-friendliness	Do learners and teachers require a great deal of training to use this technology?
O	Organisation	What changes in organisation will be required to facilitate the use of a particular technology?
N	Novelty	To what extent will the ‘trendiness’ of this technology stimulate funding and innovation? To what extent will use of this technology enhance learner interest and motivation?
S	Speed	How quickly and easily can material be updated and changed? How quickly can new courses be produced using this technology?

3.1 Access

Factors to be considered when evaluating access include the following.

- Who is the target group? Who are the priority target groups to be served?
 - learners denied access to conventional institutions?
 - disadvantaged or equity groups?
 - the unemployed?
 - the working poor?
 - workers needing upgrading or further qualifications?
- What is the most appropriate location for this learning? For example,
 - at home?
 - in a local centre dedicated to open learning?
 - at a local public education institution that shares its facilities?
 - at work?
- Which technologies do learners have available to them?
- What proportion of potential learners have access to a particular technology?

- If you make the use of a particular technology optional for learners, is it worth using at all?

3.2 Costs

Some important distinctions to be made between and among the various technologies available in terms of their costs.

What are the capital costs?

Television and computing, for example, require high initial capital expenditure -- a computing network or mainframe, a television studio and equipment.

What are the recurrent costs?

Television, for example, also has high recurrent costs because of the production staff needed to operate the capital equipment.

What are the fixed production costs?

Fixed costs for producing one hour of teaching material have been estimated as follows:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • face-to-face lecture | 1 unit |
| • audio cassette/radio/teleconference | 2 units |
| • televised lecture | 2 to 5 units |
| • computer-mediated communication | 2 to 5 units |
| • print | 2 to 10 units |
| • high-quality television programme | 20 to 50 units |
| • pre-programmed computer-based learning | 20 to 50 units |
| • computer-controlled video disc | 50 to 100 units |

Will there be large numbers of enrolments over which to spread any high fixed costs?

Can the materials be used for a number of years, thereby spreading the costs?

What are the variable costs?

For example, if audio cassettes are used, then the delivery costs vary in direct proportion to the number of students.

Technologies vary considerably in their fixed and variable costs:

- audio cassettes and radio have low fixed and low variable costs;
- face-to-face teaching, computer-mediated communication and tutor-mediated courses have low fixed costs but high variable costs;
- good quality broadcast television has high fixed costs and low variable costs; and

- pre-programmed computer-based learning and video discs have both high fixed and high variable costs, if work stations are to be provided.

Some of the newer interactive technologies such as computer conferencing and audiographics reduce fixed costs but have high variable costs, which make them suitable only for courses with relatively low student numbers.

Broadcast distribution is likely to be uneconomical for national distribution with less than 500 students per course for radio or less than 1,000 students per course for television.

3.3 Teaching functions

Media differ in the extent to which they can represent different kinds of knowledge. Most media can handle abstract knowledge, but some such as television are excellent for representing concrete knowledge. The representational possibilities of a medium like television are particularly important for non-academic learners, who often require concrete examples or demonstration rather than abstract theory. However, this form of television — which is symbolically very rich — is much more expensive to produce than televised lectures, which can be equalled symbolically by audio plus printed notes.

Media also differ in the extent to which they can help develop different skills. This is related to the control characteristics and the representational features of the medium. For example, computers are excellent for presenting and testing rule-based procedures, or areas of abstract knowledge in which answers are clearly correct.

Course designers, therefore, need a good understanding of what is required to teach a particular subject, and knowledge of the pedagogic strengths and weaknesses of the different media.

3.4 Interaction, user-friendliness, and control

Learners have much more control over permanent technologies such as books, cassettes, and computers than over ephemeral technologies such as lectures or broadcasts. This control enables learning from media to be much more effective.

Interactivity is the learner's ability to respond in some way to the teaching material, and obtain comment or feedback on the response — considerably increases learning effectiveness. There are two kinds of interactivity:

- *learning material interactivity*: learners' interaction with the medium; the level and the immediacy of feedback the medium itself provides; the extent to which the medium will accommodate learners' own input and direction; and
- *social interactivity*: learners' interaction with teachers and with each other via the medium.

The following table categorises different media used in open and distance learning according to whether they offer one-way or two-way communication; that is, social interactivity.

Media Categorised as One-Way or Two-Way Communication

	Audio	Radio	Video	Television	Computers
One-way	Cassettes	Educational radio	Cassettes	Educational television	Games
	Audiovision	Interactive radio instruction	Clubs		Computer-assisted learning
					Web based instruction
					Databases
					Bulletin boards
Two-way	Telephone tutoring	Two-way instructional radio		Video conference	Computer conference
	Audio conference			Interactive television	Computer-mediated communication
	Audio-graphics				

3.5 Organisational issues

The existing technological infrastructure within a country or an institution is a major factor in influencing media selection. For example, if an existing broadcast network is under-used, it is much easier to introduce television for open and distance learning purposes.

On the other hand, the need to exploit an existing technology can also be a very conservative influence on media choice.

Existing funding arrangements for course production are another important factor. For example, it is often difficult to shift funds from existing, 'traditional' technologies to newer technologies, because of the threat to existing budgets and power bases.

Innovation in this area depends essentially on 'champions for change' at a high level, such as that of vice-chancellor or dean. However, those in influential positions may sometimes champion a technology because it is new or 'leading edge' even though it may not be an appropriate choice for the programme in question.

3.6 Novelty

Caution is well-advised if the pressure to use new media comes from a desire for novelty or status. For example, audio cassettes combined with print can be a very low-cost and effective medium, but it is often easier to get funding for *new* uses of technology because they are more spectacular.

Novelty may be an important criterion in a highly competitive market, however. The fact that your programme looks 'leading edge' because it is using the latest in multimedia technology may make it more attractive to learners who have a choice between your programme and several others that use only one or two more 'traditional' media.

3.7 Speed

Open and distance learning programmes are plagued by the problem of time, specifically:

- the time it takes to produce a course; and
- the time a course must continue to be offered without changes once it is produced.

In some subject areas, such as public policy or information technology, courses need to be put on quickly and easily updated. Electronic publishing can enable relatively minor changes to be made, but the initial design process is still time consuming.

Some of the more interactive technologies such as audio conferencing and computer conferencing do allow for a quick development of a course and continuous updating.

4. General points about technology in teaching

A number of generalisations can be made about using technologies in teaching.

- *Media are flexible*: what can be achieved educationally through one medium can usually be achieved through any other medium given enough imagination, time, and resources.
- *Professional production and design are important*: each medium has its own aesthetic, and a different range of production skills necessary to exploit its unique features.
- *There is no 'super-medium'*: all technologies have their strengths and weaknesses.
- *Good teaching is important*: effective instructional design applies to the use of any medium for teaching.
- *Balance variety with economy*: the aim should be to use a limited range of media to maximise learning effectiveness, minimise cost, and a balance of both by convenience and ease of use to both learner and teacher.

Discussion: In terms of using media for learner support, what media are available to participants in their institutions? You might wish to involve participants in the following activity:

- Elicit the available media onto a flipchart or board.
- Allocate a different medium to each pair of participants.

- Ask each pair to assess the appropriateness of that medium for providing support to the learners in their programmes, according to the ACTIONS framework.
- Have pairs report their conclusions to the group as a whole.

5. Media choice checklist

Once you have provisionally selected the media you wish to use, ask yourself the questions in the media choice checklist.

Media Choice Checklist

- Have you been able to argue a convincing case for your choice of media?
- Have you considered how media might be combined? For example, print plus audio or class sessions with pre-read material.
- Do you have the expertise to make worthwhile use of your chosen media? If not, how soon can you develop it?
- Will you have enough personal control over your media? Or will you have to depend on media professionals?
- Will your learners be able to use your chosen media conveniently and without undue cost to themselves?
- Will your learners have positive feelings about your chosen media, and do they have the learning skills to use them?
- If you plan to use non-print media, have you considered how print material might be used in support?
- If you plan to use 'human media' (for example, tutors or mentors), are you confident that suitable people will be available and willing to help?
- If you plan to have your learners do practical work, carry out workplace activities, or pursue projects, can you ensure that they do so safely, conveniently, and effectively?
- Will your choice of media not require you to cut back on some other, more desirable, aspect of what you might provide for learners?
- Have you managed to avoid the following:
 - deciding on a medium before you have thought through your learners' needs and the content of the teaching?
 - using a medium because it is available or urged upon you by someone else?
 - choosing a high-tech medium in the belief that it will automatically be more effective than a simpler one?

Discussion: Here is an activity in which you might wish to involve participants at this point. Divide participants into pairs. Ask each participant to describe and explain to his/her partner the kinds of media applications that

- are currently being used for learner support in his/her working context;
- could be used in this context for learner support if certain conditions were met, and what these conditions are;
- could not be used for learner support in this context in the foreseeable future, and the reasons why.

6. Guidelines for providing interactive learner support using media

Providing support to learners using some medium such as audio conferencing or computer-mediated communication requires the tutor or counsellor pay attention to a range of features that are characteristic of that medium, and use them to advantage. The features of four kinds of mediated interaction with learners that are common in open and distance learning are described below.

6.1 Teletutorials

Teletutorial is another term for ‘audio conference’; that is, a group tutorial which happens, not face-to-face, but rather by means of a conference that is made possible by linking a number of learning sites simultaneously using telephone connections. Typically learners and tutor communicate without seeing each other, except for those learners who are at the same site.

Teletutorials are most likely to succeed when the following conditions are present.

Course and programme design

- Teletutorials are planned as part of the entire course design and are not a last-minute ‘add-on’.
- They are held regularly, at least monthly.
- The same group is retained throughout the series of teletutorials.

Pre-planning

- Prior face-to-face contact or personal communication has been made.
- The tutor has background knowledge of participants, including their teleconferencing experience, and uses that knowledge.
- Learners are made aware of the intended structure of the tutorial.
- Instructions and agendas are clear and comprehensive.
- Learners have prepared for the session by completing assigned readings and other tasks.

- Supportive material like tables and diagrams are sent ahead and clearly annotated.
- The tutor is conversant with the equipment and aware of its capabilities.

Making arrangements

- The tutor and learners are in an environment they find conducive to learning.
- All references, etc. are readily available.
- At remote sites, one person serves as local animateur or facilitator and spokesperson for the group.
- There is backup in case the tutor is unavailable because of illness.
- Adequate advice is given to responsible parties to ensure an accurate call list.
- Learners are given an explanation if the call does not eventuate.

Technical considerations

- All participants are promptly connected.
- They remain connected throughout the tutorial.
- Audio quality is clear and sustained.
- Any problems with equipment or line quality are reported to the telecommunications co-ordinator.

Conducting the tutorial

- The tutor uses connection time to establish introductions and set up a more personal approach.
- The tutor is relaxed.
- The tutor ensures there is variety in task and tone.
- Time is managed to allow for all the planned goals to be achieved.
- An appropriate balance is achieved between conceptual and management issues.
- The tutor manipulates the discussion with tact and sensitivity.
- Silences are allowed for and not seen as threatening.

Involving learners

- Learner participation is monitored and an attempt is made to ensure some parity over several teletutorials.
- In early sessions, learners identify themselves as they make comments.
- Direct exchanges between learners are encouraged.
- Learners contribute readily but not simultaneously.
- Constant attention is given to turn-taking, and maintenance of a courteous and polite atmosphere in which no one is left out or allowed to monopolise the discussion.

- Teachers use frequent questioning, to ensure that each participant is following the session and remaining involved, with use of discussion rather than lectures.
- Any presentations are kept to a maximum of seven minutes.
- Follow-up:

There is willingness to follow up with written material (bibliographies, etc.) where appropriate.

Tutors are willing to answer individual or complex queries by later call or letter.

Tutors and learners evaluate their performances and build on this for later teletutorials.

6.2 Audiographics

Graphics technologies or devices are pieces of equipment that create, store and send visual materials such as handwriting, drawings, and still pictures to the linked learning sites by means of telephone connections. An audiographic conference is a technical arrangement in which audio conferencing is supplemented by these devices. Examples of such devices are electronic whiteboards, on which participants write with 'light pens'. The images drawn in one site will be transmitted almost simultaneously to the other sites; there is usually a slight delay, however.

Here are some conditions for effective use of audiographics in teletutorials.

Class planning and management

- Each session must be carefully planned to ensure all participants are present at the start and the session should include a variety of teaching styles and activities.
- Using a drawing game such as Pictionary® for practice sessions with the technology will generate a few laughs and prompt learners to relax with tools which at first can look quite intimidating.
- The teacher needs excellent class management skills to be able to manage two or more distance classes simultaneously as well as control the equipment.
- Each class needs an animateur who will shoulder organisational, technical and social responsibilities connected with running the class with audiographics and be a spokesperson for the class.

Technical points

- The quality of the sound must be high to enable the teacher to pick up cues from the classes and for learners to be able to concentrate and participate.
- Visuals must be clear, and good pointing or annotation tools must be available, such as underlining, selecting and highlighting, for use by teacher and learners.
- There must be good facilities for spontaneous graphics during the session, in addition to prepared graphics delivered before the session starts, such as through graphics tablets, preferably with different coloured pens for each site.

- Graphics need to be legible and simple as opposed to complex, with a larger print size and drawings and text which complement and supplement what people are talking about rather than conflict with it.

6.3 Video conferencing

In a video conference, learners and instructors use microphones, cameras, and other equipment, linked again by telephone connections, to exchange dialogue and moving colour images in order to engage in discussion and exchange messages. All these interactions occur in 'real time', that is, learners and instructors are present at the same time and must co-ordinate their schedules.

The equipment required for a video conferenced link includes, at a minimum:

- a camera;
- a television monitor (screen);
- a codec (a device that codes video signals into digital form and decodes digital information into video images);
- a microphone;
- a control pad for changing camera angles;
- the equivalent of two digital telephone lines; and
- a mechanism for linking the learning sites, called a *bridge*.

Participants in a video conference can see others in the conference, and be seen by them. Typically the camera will follow the loudest sound; that is, it will focus on whoever is speaking at any given time. It is this person's image that will be shown on the video monitor at all the linked sites. In addition, many video conference suites include a document camera, which is used to transmit still pictures to all the sites simultaneously, as well as a video camera that can transmit excerpts or clips from video recordings to all the sites.

Because video conference technology offers the advantage of the visual presence of others who are geographically distant, it creates a strong sense of social presence and the possibility of a warm and supportive environment for learning.

Here are some techniques instructors can use to realise the full potential of this technology.

Planning

- Plan to have a technical facilitator at each site to operate the control pad and, if possible, train these facilitators before the class starts.
- Think about how the different visual resources will be integrated: the learners, videocassette clips, graphs, diagrams, photographs, and slides.
- In designing graphics, use pastel coloured paper, keep messages simple, and use large-sized fonts.

Technical points

- Give some attention to camera use. Experiment with camera angles, shots and visual inserts so that on-screen images are steady, in focus, well-composed, and interesting. Remember that learners are accustomed to high quality camera work on commercial television.
- If you plan to use graphics, establish two automatic pre-set camera positions, one for the graphics and one for the people.
- Display text material long enough for a slow reader to process, and display non-text material (for example, a cartoon or photograph) for only three or four seconds.
- Vary camera shots judiciously. Some camera shots that work particularly well are mid close-up (begin at waist level), full figure shot (entire body), and wide angle (for a group shot).
- Close-ups do not work well. Although the person may not seem to move much, there is still a lot of motion from the camera's perspective — eyes blinking, hands moving, note taking, or shifting in chair.
- Pay attention to lighting. Fluorescent lighting is usually adequate for educational use. Additional soft lighting that highlights faces and breaks up shadows will improve the image.
- Avoid backgrounds that are too cluttered or have too much white. Also, avoid clothing with stripes or 'busy' patterns, as they will cause the camera's focus to oscillate and the picture will not be clear.

Conducting the video conference

- Behave as naturally as you can. Sit directly in front of the camera and look at it while you are talking.
- Do not move too much or too quickly.
- Review the audio conference guidelines on interpersonal interactions because they are also fundamental to fostering interaction in video conferencing.
- Expect to participate in two or three sessions before you feel comfortable.
- Facilitate the technical process by commenting on issues that need to be resolved.

6.4 Computer conferencing

In computer conferencing, learners and their instructor are using personal computers that are linked together by telephone lines. Each of these computers has a modem, a 'hardware' device which enables the computer to be connected to a telephone line. The computer also has amongst its 'software', the programming that has been installed on the computer that enable it to work, a conferencing programme such as 'Cosy' or 'First Class' that provides instructions and facilities for the user to take part in computer conferences. Conferences are basically extensions of the more familiar 'electronic mail'. Instead of sending messages to a particular individual, conference participants send messages to a 'conference'. These messages can then be read by all the other participants in the conference, and only by those participants.

Computer conferences are created and led by a conference moderator, whose job is very similar to that of a facilitator of a face-to-face seminar. It is the conference moderator, for example, who decides who may participate in the conference and who may not. Those whose electronic mail 'addresses' are not included on a particular conference list are excluded from joining that conference.

In similar fashion, the learners who are participants in a computer conference have responsibilities similar to those of a participant in a face-to-face or audio conferenced tutorial, of contributing to the discussion both with original contributions and with responses to others' contributions. The difference is that these contributions are usually not made in 'real time'. That is, participants in a computer conference can turn on their computer at any time of the day or night, read what others have written or 'posted' to a conference since the last time they signed on to the conference, and respond or not as they choose. Several days can elapse between a participant's posting of a message and getting a response to it.

Here are some guidelines for preparing and facilitating sessions that will work in these contexts:

Technical points and training

- Ensure that learners have easy and regular access to a computer and modem, as well as to the most cost effective long distance services.
- Train learners to use the software before they deal with the content of the course.
- Ensure that a technician is available for support immediately before, during and after your initial series of conferences.

Facilitating the conference

- Have clear objectives for the interactions. People must feel that their on-line time is well spent.
- Plan a structure of subconferences that focus on specific topics. Organisation helps to keep messages linked.
- Keep your messages concise, on-topic, and preferably no longer than one screen, or 10 lines. One idea per paragraph is the maximum.

Fostering participation

- Introduce yourself and the conference rationale.
- Have learners introduce themselves to each other.
- Use informal and courteous responses, directions and questions. They read better than a staccato, formal style.
- Encourage people to keep up with the messages. Information overload can be daunting.
- Use learners' responses constructively. Learners will feel respected and included.
- Use humour only when you know the group very well.

7. Practice exercise

7.1 Lego® block version of communicating for learning without visual cues

Instructions:

- Divide your participants into pairs.
- Ask each pair to sit with their backs to each other, so they cannot see each other.
- Designate one member of each pair the ‘teacher’ and the other the ‘learner’.
- Provide each pair with identical sets of blocks (about ten blocks per set is usually sufficient).
- The ‘teacher’ of each pair is to construct something using all the bricks he or she has been given, at the same time ‘teaching’ the ‘learner’ how to do it. In other words, as the teacher builds a structure, he or she instructs the learner step-by-step how to build the identical structure.
- Give each pair time to complete their task; about fifteen minutes is usually ample time.
- Then ask each pair to compare the structures they have constructed.
- Debrief by having the group as a whole describe and discuss what they learned about communicating for instruction without visual cues. What strategies work? What strategies do not work?
- The game can be repeated, giving each pair a different set of blocks than they had initially, and asking them to switch ‘teacher–learner’ roles. This time you give them different instructions: only the teacher may talk; the learner may not ask questions or make comments. This task simulates the kind of instruction that happens by radio.

Timeframe: Allow one hour.

Materials: Lego® bricks.

7.2 Paper and pencil version of communicating for learning without visual cues

Instructions:

- Divide your participants into pairs.
- Ask each pair to sit with their backs to each other, so they cannot see each other.
- Designate one member of each pair the ‘teacher’ and the other the ‘learner’.
- Provide the ‘teacher’ of each pair with a photocopy of a sketch of some kind. Some complex geometric shape that is not easily labelled usually works well. Give the ‘learner’ of each pair a piece of paper and a pencil.
- The ‘teacher’ of each pair is to teach the ‘learner’ how to draw the sketch, without the ‘learner’ being able to see the original at any time.
- Give each pair time to complete their task; about 15 minutes is usually ample time.

- Then ask the members of each pair to compare the results, both with the original and with each other.
- Debrief by having the group as a whole describe and discuss what they learned about communicating for instruction without visual cues. What strategies work? What strategies do not work?
- The game can be repeated, giving each pair a different sketch than they had initially, and asking them to switch ‘teacher–learner’ roles. This time you can also give them different instructions: only the teacher may talk; the learner may not ask questions or make comments. This simulates the kind of instruction that happens by one-way radio — no feedback!

Timeframe: Allow one hour.

Materials: Photocopied sketches with paper and pencils.

TOPIC 7

Quality Assurance for Learner Support

Overview

Source materials for this topic

Quality in open and distance learning

What do we mean by 'quality'?

Quality assurance or quality control?

Quality assurance in learning institutions

Why the concern with 'quality assurance'?

The industrial model of quality assurance

Total quality management

Applicability to education

Development of a quality culture

The importance of organisational cultures

The 'machine' bureaucracy

The 'professional' bureaucracy

Creating a unified quality culture

Checklist for a quality assurance programme

Monitoring learner achievement

Learner achievement and quality assurance

Why assess?

Who should assess?

When to assess

Assessment methods

Practice exercises

What is quality assurance?

What is a quality assurance system?

1. Overview

These materials support a discussion on the topic of the terminology of quality assurance, especially as it applies to open and distance learning.

1.1 Source materials for this topic

Barnett, R. *Improving higher education: total quality care*. Buckingham: Society for Research in Higher Education and Open University Press, 1992.

Deming, W.E. *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge: MIT, 1986.

Haughey, M. Can Quality management help us cope with change? In A. Tait (ed.), *Quality Assurance in open and distance learning: European and international perspectives*, pp. 117–25. Cambridge: Open University, 1995.

Juran, J. *Quality control handbook*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979.

Lentell, H. Quality: is it always a move to better things? In D. Sewart, ed., *One world, many voices: quality in open and distance learning*, vol. 2, pp. 121–24. Birmingham: Open University, 1995.

Mintzberg, H. *The structuring of organisations*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979.

Robinson, B. Assuring quality in open and distance learning. In F. Lockwood, ed., *Materials production in open and distance learning*, pp. 185–94. London: Paul Chapman, 1994.

Sallis, E. *Total quality management in education*. London: Kogan Page, 1993.

Tait, A. Systems, values, and dissent: Quality assurance for open and distance learning. In A. Tait (ed.), *Quality assurance in open and distance learning: European and international perspectives*, pp. 241–51. Cambridge: Open University, 1995.

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West-Burnham, J. *Managing quality in schools*. Harlow: Longman, 1992.

2. Quality in open and distance learning

2.1 What do we mean by 'quality'?

Discussion: Begin this discussion by distributing pieces of paper, one to each participant, and asking participants to write down — in letters large enough for the group to see — their definition of *quality* in an educational setting. When participants have finished, ask one of them to collect the sheets and pin them up in front of the group. Draw out the features common to them all, point out the differences, and ask whether there are features to be added.

The features mentioned might include the following:

- chosen standards or criteria;
- the relative nature of quality;
- services as well as products;
- perceptions as well as measured outcomes; and
- relevance.

Additional points to be made might include the following:

- Everyone agrees on the desirability of quality.
- There is less agreement, however, on what quality is.
- This is because ‘quality’ does not exist in isolation from its context of use.
- Also, judgements differ according to whose views are being sought; for example, there is an amalgam of different meanings under the label *quality*; different stakeholders have different perspectives on quality; and different functional areas within a single organisation have different views.
- Priorities will vary according to who is making the assessment; and for what purposes the assessment is being made.

Discussion: Ask participants to provide examples of these points about quality from their own experience.

2.2 Quality assurance or quality control?

Following is a preview of some terminology that will be dealt with in greater detail in this topic:

- *Quality* is a characteristic of the products and services an organisation offers.
- *Quality assurance* is a process directed toward achieving that characteristic. It is the set of activities that an organisation undertakes to ensure that standards are specified and reached consistently for a product or service.
- *Quality control* operates retrospectively, ‘inspecting out’ or discarding faulty products that fail to conform to a predetermined standard.
- *Quality control* and *quality assurance*, together with the *assessment of quality systems* — the monitoring, evaluation, and audit of procedures — are overlapping functions in regulating how an organisation or venture works.

All of these tasks have a role in quality management approaches, the best known of which is *total quality management*.

In summary:

- *quality assurance* involves pro-active measures taken to avoid faults;
- *quality control* involves re-active measures taken to remove faults;
- quality assurance plus quality control plus continuous monitoring and evaluation equal *total quality management*.

Discussion: Do any of these terms or distinctions cause participants difficulties? Examples are always useful in clarifying such terms. Ask participants to provide examples from their own experience as you preview the list.

3. Quality assurance in learning institutions

3.1 Why the concern with 'quality assurance'?

While 'quality assurance' may be a recently applied term in the educational context, there is nothing new about educational organisations' undertaking systematic review and inspection of products and services to ensure their quality.

Discussion: Take this opportunity to solicit examples from participants of the ways in which the processes of review and inspection have been used in their contexts to ensure quality of educational products and services. In addition, almost all the case studies that are included with this kit contain examples of processes aimed at improving quality.

More recent use of and emphasis on the label *quality assurance* can be attributed to factors such as the following:

- governments' interest in return on public investment in education relative to other areas of expenditure;
- the assertion that education and training is essential to economic recovery, growth, and competitiveness;
- the assertion that the institutions responsible for education in the recent past have failed in their mission to meet demand because of ivory tower or anti-business attitudes; and
- insistence that education costs should be reduced and educational organisations made more accountable.

Discussion: Does this list of external factors fit with your participants' experience? Do they have other factors to add?

3.2 The industrial model of quality assurance

Quality assurance has its origins in the manufacturing industry and the military. Initially these ‘quality systems’ emphasised:

- quality control, those measures taken to remove faults at the end of the production process;
- the setting in place of systems to obtain better data about discrepancies between proposed and actual performances;
- the necessity of statistical processes to control non-compliance;
- using budgets as incentives and penalties to encourage units to tighten up procedures and reduce errors; and
- using market analyses and client satisfaction surveys to help keep clients interested in the products and services.

Discussion: Ask participants for examples from their own experience of applying these kinds of procedures to improve the quality of products and services. Also suggest they look for examples in the case studies which are included with this kit.

3.3 Total quality management

Over the last fifty years, industry has moved increasingly from *quality control* — measures taken to remove faults at the end of the production line — to a more proactive process called *quality assurance* — measures taken to avoid faults. Even these measures were insufficient to enable them to reduce error costs in order to compete in increasingly global markets. Out of this need for more effective ways to increase and assure quality of products and services developed the system known as *Total Quality Management*, or TQM.

The relationship among these processes is represented in the following ‘equation’.

The Total Quality Management Equation

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Quality Control} \\ + \\ \text{Quality Assurance} \\ + \\ \text{Continuous monitoring and evaluation} \\ = \\ \text{Total Quality Management} \end{array}$$

West-Burnham (1992) outlines the basic points of total quality management as the following.

Basic Points of Total Quality Management

Element	Purpose and Scope
Focus	Internal and external customers
Definition	Meeting customer requirements
Scope	Every aspect of the organisation
Responsibility	Everyone
Standard	Right the first time (fitness of purpose)
Method	Prevention not detection
Measurement	Zero defects
Culture	Continuous improvement

3.4 Applicability to education

Discussion: Begin this discussion by asking participants for their thoughts on whether this industrial approach to quality assurance is appropriate for education. Where does the approach fit? Conversely, what problems arise?

Is this industrial approach to quality assurance appropriate to educational institutions?
The points of contention centre on two features of the approach:

- organisational mission; and
- terminology.

Organisational mission

The organisational mission to be adopted by institutions following a quality assurance or total quality management approach is summed up by Sallis (1993:84) in the following statement. Sallis writes that in a total quality management environment there should be

... a single command for each process — the key processes, whether they are curriculum, pastoral, or administrative need to be charted and organised so that each process is brought under a single chain of command.

The processes in which the providers of education are engaged, however, are teaching and learning, that is, fostering the creation and sharing of knowledge. They may not lend themselves to such a tightly defined organisational mission.

Terminology

Given the nature of the ‘business’ in which educational institutions are engaged, debate also centres on the terminology characteristic of total quality management in particular. Examples include:

- fitness of purpose;
- the product;
- customers and learners; and
- services.

Fitness of purpose

The term *fitness of purpose* can usefully force us to ask questions about our ends, for example, about the nature of our audience or the style of our teaching.

Purposes in an educational institution are varied, and in some cases conflict. For example, our job as educators is to facilitate our learners’ learning. At the same time, however, we are expected to enforce certain educational standards of performance, which our learners may fail to meet. No business faces such a conflict.

Oversimplified notions drawn from the business sector and uncritically applied in educational contexts ignore the sometimes contradictory demands of various stakeholders, including:

- learners;
- academic and professional interest groups;
- research funders and practitioners;
- governments;
- employers;
- society at large; and
- future generations.

Discussion: Ask participants for examples from their own experience of ways in which the interests of these various stakeholders can contradict each other.

The product

The aims of the educational process are to bring about changes in learners’

- knowledge;
- skills; and
- attitudes.

Upon successful completion of the process set out by the educational organisation, the learner may be awarded a credential of some kind.

These outcomes — changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes and awards of credentials — may be called ‘products’ but they are considerably more complex than are the products of a manufacturing process.

Customers and learners

In quality assurance, all actors within and outside an organisation are customers, providing a service to others.

Unlike businesses, in higher education institutions we have to fail ‘customers’ (learners) from time to time, acting in accordance with other stakeholders such as professional bodies, academic peers, and prospective employers.

Thus elements of formal education, which is not based on the purchase of a service, remain in the relationship.

Services

The ‘services’ provided by educational organisations are as varied and complex as their ‘products’.

Services in support of learning include

- provision of information to prospective applicants;
- pre-enrolment counselling and advising;
- screening of applicants;
- enrolment and registration;
- teaching;
- supporting learning by means of tutoring, counselling, advising, materials provision, libraries, and learning technologies;
- assessing learners’ performance; and
- post-course advice and counselling.

Of these services, screening of applicants and assessing their performance in particular set off education provision from other kinds of services.

Discussion: Do your participants agree with these points?
What would they add, by way of agreement or disagreement?

4. Development of a quality culture

4.1 The importance of organisational cultures

Quality initiatives will inevitably flounder if the organisation implementing them does not take into account its organisational cultures. This requires a recognition that education organisations are not ‘people-incidental’ systems. Rather, they exist critically as the creation of their staff and learners.

It is often assumed that all employees, regardless of their terms and conditions of employment, share the same vision. Rather, education organisations tend to possess a plurality of cultures that significantly influence their operations. Most education organisations can be characterised by at least the following cultures (drawn from Mintzberg 1979 as presented in Lentell 1995):

- *faculties and schools*: the ‘professional bureaucracy’; and
- *administration and operations*: the ‘machine bureaucracy’.

4.2 The ‘machine’ bureaucracy

The administration and operations group is found in all units of the organisation. It includes:

- secretarial and clerical staff;
- technicians;
- warehouse workers;
- printers; and
- administrators.

This group is concerned with making the organisational ‘machine’ work on a daily basis. Typically workers in this sector have specialised and segmented knowledge of the business. This means that the power and the ability to see the enterprise as a whole tends to lie with the top managers. This bureaucracy tends to favour rules and regulations. Decision-making tends to flow in a chain of authority. Clerks and other main grade employees tend not to expect to be consulted and have limited discretion over work patterns.

4.3 The ‘professional’ bureaucracy

The ‘professional’ bureaucracy comprises the academic staff, who are primarily involved in developing, maintaining, and teaching courses. In having to rely on trained professionals, the organisation has to surrender some power to them. The academic and teaching staff tend to have considerable autonomy. In theory authority is horizontal, that is, between peers. But in practice there are considerable differences in status and authority based on factors such as

- seniority;
- academic standing within the wider academic community; and
- the kind of contract one has, for example, full-time or part-time, term or continuing.

Professionals tend to work independently. Power over the carrying out of work rests with the individual professional, subject only to the collective control and regulation of colleagues. This regulation is based on shared professional values. Their work is normally too complex to be prescribed.

4.4 Creating a unified quality culture

A 'quality culture' in educational terms is one that puts the interests of the learner and the facilitation of learning at the centre of its activities at every level, constantly striving to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of these activities in every way possible.

The variations in working conditions, tasks and roles, and levels of commitment among employees shape their attitudes to their work and their vision of the organisation. For example, professional staff are more likely than support or administrative staff to be critical of attempts at 'shared vision' and more protective of their autonomy.

Tait (1997) suggests that creating a commitment to quality assurance among all employees, whether support or professional, requires managers to recognise the following:

- the importance of a mechanism of self-evaluation in relation to meeting quality standards, so that professional staff and academic staff in particular feel they own the system;
- the connected importance of peer review and site visits by external experts accepted as unbiased specialists in the field;
- the importance of reporting in such a way as to facilitate development and improvement rather than judging or ranking; and
- relationships between outcomes of a quality review system and funding, which should not be direct and rigid since this will lead to a 'compliance culture' rather than a real interest in quality assurance.

Discussion: Ask participants to provide examples from their own experience of variations in organisational culture and how they deal with them in implementing quality assurance strategies.

4.5 Checklist for a quality assurance programme

To review, quality assurance focuses attention on operational processes and systems. It has three main elements:

- You set standards for a product or service.
- You organise the production or delivery of a product or service so that the standards are consistently met.
- You thereby create confidence in the client or recipient that what is promised is what will happen.

To implement these procedures, it is helpful to ask the questions in the following quality assurance checklist. (These are taken from a workshop developed for IEC by Bernadette Robinson and subsequently published in Robinson 1994:187–88.)

Quality Assurance Checklist

Quality policy and plan

- Has your organisation developed a policy on quality with which all staff are familiar?
- Has this policy been translated into a practical plan?

Specification of standards

- Are specified and clearly defined standards in place?
- Have they been communicated to all concerned?
- Are they specified for key activities?
- Are they achievable?
- Are they reasonable?
- Are they measurable?

Identifying critical functions

- Have the critical functions for achieving the standards been identified?
- Have they taken the learner as the starting point?
- Have the procedures to achieve them been analysed?

Documentation

- Are the procedures to be followed clearly documented?
- Are they explicit?
- Do they represent fact or fiction?
- Are they consistent in different documents?
- Are they concentrated on essential procedures?
- Are they in a readable and user-friendly form?
- Do all those who need them have access to copies?

Staff involvement

- Have all staff been involved in the development of quality assurance systems?
- Have their suggestions been built in?
- Has enough time been given to this process?

Monitoring

- Are there systematic monitoring mechanisms for critical functions?
- Do they check whether standards are being met and procedures followed?
- How do you know?
- Are the findings disseminated?
- Are they harnessed to appropriate action?
- Do they result in improved performance or a review of practice, or a reappraisal of

standards?

- ❑ Do they provide effective feedback loops between providers of products and services and learners or clients?

Training

- ❑ Is there adequate provision of training and staff development?
- ❑ Is this linked to the achievement of standards?
- ❑ Are there effective mechanisms for assessing training needs?
- ❑ Are these reviewed regularly?
- ❑ Are there resources allocated to meet them?

Costs

- ❑ Is there a strategy for monitoring the costs of implementing and maintaining quality assurance activities?
- ❑ Does this strategy take account of human and financial costs?
- ❑ Are the costs greater than the benefits?
- ❑ Is there a review process to find out?

5. Monitoring learner achievement

5.1 Learner achievement and quality assurance

Learner achievement is another aspect of quality in open and distance learning, and monitoring that achievement is correspondingly a tool in quality assurance. We can assess the quality of the processes (the learning experiences) and the quality of the products (the graduates).

5.2 Why assess?

Assessment in open and distance learning may have any of three main purposes:

- *formative assessment*: to give learners feedback on their progress so that they know how well they are doing and can, if necessary, change the way they are tackling the course;
- *summative assessment*: to provide the basis for marks that may contribute to the learner's eventual certification; and
- *as part of the overall evaluation process*: to help the open and distance learning institution to monitor the effectiveness of its courses.

5.3 Who should assess?

Assessment may be carried out by any of a number of people, including:

- *the learner him or herself*: generally called *self-assessment*;
- *other learners*: called peer assessment;

- *the learner's tutor*: often through *tutor-marked assignments* that are built into the course;
- *examinations*: an examiner or assessor, as may sometimes be the case with summative assessment; and
- *course evaluations*: someone else does the assessment, perhaps a researcher evaluating the course.

5.4 When to assess

In deciding at which times during your course assessment is appropriate, here are some points to bear in mind:

- Early in the course, learners may not have learned anything significant enough for testing.
- On the other hand, an early assignment provides an opportunity for early interaction and feedback and thereby builds the relationship between learner and tutor.
- Relate assessment to major sections of content.
- Spread assessment evenly to spread the load and generate regular feedback.
- Keep in mind the turnaround time and capacity of your tutors.
- If an assignment is prescribed very late in the course, learners are unlikely to receive feedback before any end-of-course examinations.

5.5 Assessment methods

There are a number of possible methods of assessment, each appropriate for testing certain kinds of aims and objectives:

- *diagnosing learning needs*: early on in a course, assessment can help learners decide which parts of the course they need most, and may form the basis of a learning contract;
- *checking progress*: self-assessment questions during or at the end of study units enable learners to check how they are getting on and provide immediate reinforcement of learning;
- *increasing motivation*: reinforcement helps to keep learners going;
- *providing feedback*: tutor comments on tutor-marked assignments ensure the learner knows what to do next;
- *encouraging a deep approach to learning*: particular types of assessment such as questions that call for reflection, analysis, or application; projects; and practical assignments can help learners improve their approach to learning;
- *facilitating contact between learner and tutor*: tutor-marked assignments are often the main point of contact between a learner and his or her tutor, and are therefore an invaluable way of reducing learner isolation; and

- *increasing learner control*: giving learners the means to assess their own progress can increase their control over their own learning.

6. Practice exercises

6.1 What is quality assurance?

Instructions: Ask participants to take 5 to 10 minutes to try to develop individually their own definition of *quality assurance* in an educational setting. Then ask participants to share their definition with the other participants in the workshop (depending on numbers of participants, perhaps share definitions first within a small group and then have each group report to the group as a whole the definition on which they have agreed).

Timeframe: Between half an hour and an hour, depending on size of group and extent of discussion required.

Materials required: Flip chart paper and pens if reporting back to large group is required.

6.2 What is a quality assurance system?

Instructions: Ask participants to answer the question, ‘How would the structure of your own organisation have to change in order to become committed as a whole to quality assurance?’ As a facilitating device, ask them

- to pair themselves off;
- to each draw, for and with their partners, a chart of their organisation as it exists at the moment;
- to indicate on it using a different colour of marker the kind of activities that are necessary at each level of position to foster commitment to quality assurance;
- to post these charts on a wall, for description and discussion.

Timeframe: Approximately three-quarters of an hour.

Materials required: Flip chart paper and a variety of coloured markers.

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Glossary of Open and Distance Learning

Access centres: see **learning centres**.

Accountability: holding operating personnel responsible for the estimated costs in their budgets and for expenditures.

Accounts payable: the money you owe to providers of services or products.

Accounts receivable: the money owed to you for services rendered or products sold.

Action verbs: in writing learning objectives, verbs that state expectations of learner behaviour as an action to be performed, which learners and teachers can evaluate as having been performed.

Activities approach: a way of designing learning materials that provides a series of activities to help learners master content, on the assumption that learners will only learn if they actively engage with the material presented.

Administrator: the person who carries out administrative duties on behalf of the development team, liaises with contract writers, assists with copyright clearance, compiles readings and illustrations, ensures production schedules are met, and controls the day-to-day progress of the course.

Adult education: teaching and learning that emphasises the principles of adult learning, often known as **andragogy**, as compared to **pedagogy**, or child-centred learning.

Advance organisers: paragraphs at the beginning of a unit or lesson that are intended to remind learners of what they have already learned, to connect it with what they will learn in this lesson.

Affective domain: in teaching and learning contexts, the domain field of activities relating to feelings or emotions.

Aim: in the context of teaching and learning, a broad, general statement of either what the learner might learn or what the teacher will do.

Analysis: a level of learning that involves breaking down material into its meaningful parts so that the relationship among the parts can be determined.

Analytical approach: an approach to designing a curriculum, for example, which examines the components of that curriculum — such as the learning objectives, key concepts, or the competencies that are desired as outcomes — and organises the curriculum around them.

Ancillary operations: activities that fall outside the core activities of an organisation.

Andragogy: see **adult education**.

Application: a level of learning that involves using knowledge in concrete situations.

Apportioning: the act of assigning fractions of the cost of a shared facility or service to cost centres.

Assessment: the measurement of a learner's performance in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Asynchronous: see **networked learning**.

Audio conference: a technological arrangement in which telephones or speakerphones are connected so that people in three or more places can talk to one another.

Audiographic conference: a technological arrangement in which audio conferencing is supplemented by devices that send text or still pictures, such as computers, electronic whiteboards, graphics tablets, and light pens for writing to computer screens, tablets, and whiteboards.

Basic education: the provision of teaching and learning opportunities that enable learners to obtain primary-level skills in reading, writing, and numeracy, so that they can participate fully in society.

Behavioural objectives: learning objectives that indicate the expected changes of behaviour in learners who complete a course of instruction.

Bimodal institution: see **dual-mode institution**.

Broadcast: any transmitted radio or television programme.

Budgeting: a process consisting of a series of steps by which estimates of revenue and expenses and related statistical data are used to compile a plan for expenditure for the next financial period.

Bulletin board system: a small computer system that allows members to exchange messages, maintain discussion groups, and download software.

Cable feed: broadcast material sent via a fixed cable or a community antenna.

Capital budget: money set aside on a recurring basis to meet capital expenditure.

Capital cost: expenditure on the acquisition of fixed assets (land, buildings, machinery, equipment), in which the expenditure is intended to benefit more than one accounting period.

CD-ROM (compact disc–read only memory): a disc that can store a large amount of text, audio, video, and graphic information; a computer needs a special drive and software to display these materials.

Cloze test: a test of reading and comprehension skill that involves the insertion or deletion of appropriate words in a text.

Co-production: the joint production of a course or courses by two or more institutions.

Cognitive domain: in the context of teaching and learning, the domain of learning activities that relate to perceiving the world and knowing about it or understanding it; this domain contains six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Comprehension: a level of learning that involves grasping the meaning of material or restating previously learned material in one's own words.

Computer-assisted learning (CAL): a learning method that uses a computer system to present individualised instructional material.

Computer-based learning (CBL): a generic term for the various kinds of stand-alone (that is, non-networked) learning applications that involve computer software.

Computer conferencing: the use of a central computer to receive, hold, and distribute messages among participants' computers.

Computer-marked assignments: assignments that are scored by computer using optical scanners.

Computer-mediated communication (CMC): in the context of teaching and learning, the use of electronic mail, computer conferencing, and the World Wide Web to deliver learning material and provide learners and teachers with opportunities for interaction; learning via CMC is also called '**networked learning**'.

Condition statements: parts of a learning objective that describe the conditions under which the performance required is to take place, such as 'without supervision' or 'using a calculator'.

Consortium: an arrangement involving a number of organisations in formal partnership, with joint allocation of resources and sometimes an independent managing agent; for example, open and distance learning institutions that set up formal agreements may involve co-production of elements of a course, complete joint course production, joint learner enrolments, or cross accreditation and credit transfer.

Constructivist: frameworks for learning in which learners and teachers work together to construct meanings, rather than having these meanings pre-determined or prescribed in advance for the learner by the teacher.

Continuing education: education that is usually not for credit, but which can be delivered on campus or at a distance.

Copyright: a set of rights granted to an author under the national law on copyright.

Correspondence education: education that relies on print-based, self-study materials with communication through postal services.

Cost: the amount of actual or notional expenditure of money incurred on, or attributed to, a specific object or activity.

Cost-benefit analysis: a systematic comparison of the cost of carrying out the project, with the value of the resulting service, resource, information, or product to any of a possible range of beneficiaries.

Cost centres: the locations, functions, items of equipment, or departments to which costs are attributed; for example, a particular degree programme may be identified as a cost centre within an institution.

Cost unit: a measured amount of a product or service used for the expression of the costs of that product or service.

Counselling: the provision of personal and emotional support to learners.

Course blueprint: a course planning document, containing details of the content, components, and costing of a course that is proposed for development.

Course transfer: the sale, lease, or gift to one institution of a course produced by another institution.

Course writer: the person on the course team who possesses both expertise in the subject matter of the course and the ability to write in a way that communicates effectively with learners at a distance.

Criterion-referenced assessment: the evaluation of a learner's performance in relation to a given standard rather than in relation to the performance of a reference group.

Curriculum: the total structure of knowledge and skills and educational experiences that make up any one educational system or its component parts.

Curriculum planning: the global term applied to any systematic process intended to develop the structure of a **curriculum**.

Database: a collection of data fundamental to an operation, organised in some pre-defined structure; typically held on computer.

Deep learning: an intention on the part of the learner to develop his or her understanding and to challenge ideas; contrast **surface learning**.

Desktop publishing (DTP): the production of printed text using a 'desktop' or personal computer system.

Developmental testing: trying out materials with learners in the hope of developing or improving those materials for the benefit of other or future learners.

Digital: information stored in the form of 0s and 1s; digital information may include video, audio, graphics, and text.

Direct cost: a cost that can be identified with a particular product or service and not with others; these normally comprise the cost of materials, labour, and of expenses directly incurred on the product or service.

Discounted cash flow: the return desired at some time in the future for a payment made now.

Dispatcher: the person who bears responsibility for dispatching materials to the learner in a timely fashion, maintaining inventory and warehousing, and keeping records.

Distance teaching: a term that emphasises the teacher's role in the distance education system.

Distributed learning: a term that emphasises learning rather than the technology used or the separation between teacher and learner; distributed learning makes learning possible beyond the classroom and, when combined with classroom modes, becomes **flexible learning**.

Dual-mode institution: also called **bimodal**; an institution that offers learning opportunities in two modes: one using traditional classroom-based methods, the other using distance methods; the same courses may be offered in both modes, with common examinations, but the two types of learner — on-campus and external — are regarded as distinct.

Editor: the person on the course team who bears responsibility for the clarity and accuracy of the language and the textual presentation of the materials, much as in a traditional publishing house.

Effectiveness: the ability to achieve the objectives set for a project or programme.

Electronic mail (e-mail): the exchange of information from one computer to another using software that is designed to store and forward messages received or sent.

Evaluation: a level of learning that involves judging the value of the material with reference to a specific set of criteria.

External studies: instruction that takes place somewhere other than a central campus, such as a classroom remote from campus, and that includes a variety of delivery options, including home-study and telecommunications.

Feedback: in the context of teaching and learning, the response to or comment on a learner's performance that the learner can use to understand more clearly and improve his or her performance.

Field trials: also called **pilots**; a method of developmental testing learning materials that uses relatively large numbers of learners (20 to 30) in circumstances as similar as possible to those in which eventual learners will work.

Financial year: the year over which costs are measured.

Fixed costs: operating costs that are unaffected by variations in volumes of output; this does not mean that they do not vary over time in response to other cost factors (for example, price increases).

Flexible learning: a term that emphasises the creation of environments for learning that have the following characteristics: convergence of open and distance learning methods, media, and classroom strategies; learner-centred philosophy; recognition of diversity in learning styles and in learners' needs; recognition of the importance of equity in curriculum and pedagogy; use of a variety of learning resources and media; fostering of lifelong learning habits and skills in learners and staff.

Fog index: an index of readability based on a formula that involves the average number of words in a sentence and the average number of syllables per word; basically, the longer the words and the sentences, the 'foggier' or less readable the text.

Formal assessment: the evaluation of learning that is carried out using scheduled assignments or examinations, on which the learner's performance is graded.

Formative assessment: the evaluation of learning that is carried out as the learning activities progress; contrast **summative assessment**, which takes place upon completion of the activities.

Formative evaluation: the assessment of learning that occurs as a project or course is in progress, with the aim of identifying problems and addressing them immediately; contrast **summative evaluation**.

Free-standing institution: see **single-mode institution**.

Full absorption costing: a method of costing used for some purposes — for example, to support pricing decisions and to derive performance measures — but not required for other purposes, as when one is looking at the effect of changes in the volume of output; ask the question, ‘Am I looking at costs as they are now (full absorption costing) or am I seeking to examine the effect on costs of profitability of a change in volume costs (marginal costing)’?

Graphic devices: items in a text design that are used to emphasise a point, direct the reader’s attention, highlight the relationship between ideas, or provide learners with cues as to the activity in which they should be engaged; for example, tables, charts, symbols, shading, borders, textures, and different fonts.

Handbooks: the part of the learning materials package that provides information to learners about other materials (for example, video cassettes) that have been purchased or leased from another institution but that need some explanatory notes so that they fit into the context of the user institution.

Home study: a mode of learning that does not require the learner to leave home in order to study.

House style: a set of guidelines to writers, editors, and visual designers that specify the typefaces to be used; type size; length of lines; size of margins; use of bold, italic, and other variants of the typefaces; treatment of headings, subheadings, footnotes, and so on; position of illustrations and captions in relation to the text; and editing and reference style.

Hypertext mark-up language (HTML): the protocol used to create documents for publication and distribution on the World Wide Web; HTML consists of tags, added to text documents, which format and create links to other WWW resources.

Icon: a visual symbol that resembles the thing it represents, used in learning materials as a signpost or indication to learners that they are to undertake a particular activity; for example, a stylised pencil might be used to indicate to learners that they are to write the answer to a question, or a stylised book might indicate they are to turn to the reading indicated.

Incremental cost: the additional cost arising from an increase in more than one unit of output.

Independent study: a mode of learning in which learners work through their study materials independently of other learners.

Indirect cost: a cost that cannot be identified with any particular product or service, but must be shared over a number of products or services because it is common to or jointly incurred by them.

Informal assessment: assessment of learning that is carried out using discussion with tutors or peers, self-tests, and so on, in which the learner’s performance may be noted but not formally graded.

Information highway: a term developed as a way of describing the joining together of once-separate telephone and television technologies and computing systems into a single global network of networks.

Instructional design: see **instructional development**.

Instructional designer: the person on the course team who understands research in open and distance learning and adult pedagogy, is the collector of wisdom and successful techniques in open and distance learning, and is able to apply this knowledge to the course in question without clashing with the course writer or writers.

Instructional development: also known as **instructional design**; a process of designing instruction in a way that enables learners to learn effectively.

Interaction: two-way communication between tutor and learner, between learners, and between learners and the learning materials.

Interactive radio instruction (IRI): a system of educational radio broadcasts, intended for reinforcing learning in classroom settings, which contain instructions to teachers and learners to engage in some activity related to the broadcast and to actively respond to what they are hearing.

Interactive television: television broadcasts that are combined with some form of telecommunications link to enable viewers to respond to what they are watching.

Interactive textbooks: course books that are created anew, from the ground up, using a dialogue approach that incorporates a great many activities in which the learner may engage.

Interactivity: the ability for the learner to respond in some way to the learning material and obtain feedback on the response; there are two kinds of interactivity: (1) *learning material interactivity*, involving the learners' interaction with the medium, the level, and the immediacy of feedback the medium itself provides, and the extent to which the medium will accommodate learners' own input and direction; and (2) *social interactivity*, the extent to which learners interact with teachers and with each other via a given medium.

Internet: the worldwide collection of computer networks that use a common communications protocol and addressing scheme to share resources with one another; owned by no one, it is maintained collectively by the individual national, regional, commercial, and institutional networks that make up the Internet; it is a learning, information, and business tool.

Intuitive approach: a way of designing curriculum, for example, which relies on one's own experience of and feelings toward the subject, and hence is relatively informal, unstructured, and non-systematic.

Inventory: the stock kept on hand.

ISDN cable: Integrated Services Digital Network cable, allows linkage for video conferencing.

Knowledge: a level of learning activities that involves recalling previously learned material.

Learner-centred education: an educational philosophy in which the integrity and freedom of the individual is primary; therefore, the teaching and learning process provides flexible sequences of study, negotiated objectives and content, negotiated learning methods, negotiated methods of assessment, and a choice of support mechanisms.

Learning centres: sometimes called **access centres** or **regional centres**; offices or buildings maintained by open and distance learning programmes in order to provide localised delivery of learning materials and support to learners.

Lifelong learning: a philosophical concept in which learning is viewed as a long-term process beginning at birth and lasting throughout life; a conceptual framework within which the learning needs of people of all ages and educational and occupational levels may be met, regardless of their circumstances.

Listserv: an e-mail system that automatically sends messages to all subscribers on specific mailing lists, especially interest groups.

Marginal cost: the additional cost of an increase of one unit of output (for example, one additional open and distance learning centre).

Marginal costing: see **full absorption costing**.

Market elasticity: the extent to which the price of a product can be increased without reducing the market for the product.

Media designer: sometimes called the **visual designer**; the person on the course team who bears responsibility for the illustrations, page layout, formatting, and integration of print with other media.

Mediated education: see **technology-based education**.

Merger: the creation of a new entity out of previously independent entities.

Mixed mode institution: an institution that offers learners a wide choice of modes of study, including independent, group-based, face-to-face, mediated, or some combination; mixed mode institutions maximise the flexibility of place and pace of study, and are the result of the convergence of face-to-face and distance modes of study.

Multimedia: learning technologies that involve the whole range of audio, visual, text, and graphics media available, integrated into a package that has been effectively designed from an instructional point of view.

Needs analysis: a process for identifying the learning and training needs of a particular group or population.

Networked learning: a type of learning in which learners and instructors use computers to exchange messages, engage in dialogue, and access resources; the interaction can occur in real-time (**synchronously**) when learners and instructors are communicating at the same time from different places, or in delayed-time (**asynchronously**) when they are not linked at the same time.

Networking: the process of creating, expanding, and maintaining relationships with other agencies.

Non-formal education: education that takes place outside the formal education system on either a regular or an intermittent basis.

Non-recurrent costs: see **one-time costs**.

Norm-referenced assessment: assessment of learning that is based on the learner's performance in a given area in relation to that of some norm or reference group.

Objective: in the context of teaching and learning, a specific statement about what the learner will be able to do when a learning activity is complete, the conditions under which learners will demonstrate their competency, and the way in which this competency will be measured.

Objective assessment: evaluation that is designed as far as possible to exclude the learner's subjectivity; grading is done by presenting a number of factual questions to be answered by one word or a check mark instead of using verbal expression and the organisation of material, requiring a minimum of judgment on the part of the marker.

One-time costs: also called **non-recurrent** costs; costs that do not recur year after year; for example, equipment purchases.

Open access: a way of providing learning opportunities that implies a lack of formal entry requirements, prerequisite credentials, or an entrance examination.

Open and distance learning: a way of providing learning opportunities that is characterised by the separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or both time and place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face-to-face meetings; and a specialised division of labour in the production and delivery of courses.

Open learning: an educational philosophy that also emphasises giving learners choices about media, place of study, pace of study, support mechanisms, and entry and exit points.

Operating cost: see **revenue cost**.

Opportunity costs: the notional costs, difficult to quantify, of undertaking one activity rather than another; for example, the project team and other staff involved, as well as materials and equipment, could all have been used in different ways to benefit the institution during the project period.

Overhead cost: the sum of all the indirect costs of a cost centre or cost unit; for example, the cost of a shared telephone exchange, central computer, and utilities.

Pay-back period of return: the length of time it will take to pay back the original investment of staff salaries and other costs.

Pedagogy: child-centred learning.

Peer assessment: a type of assessment of one learner's performance carried on by other learners.

Performance: the part of a learning objective that states what the learner should be able to do as an outcome of a learning process.

Performance indicators: measures for assessing the quantitative performance of a system.

Period of account: the period of time over which costs are measured.

Pilots: see **field trials**.

Post-tests: tests given to learners after they complete a lesson, module, or course, to assess what they have learned; contrast **pre-test**.

Pre-tests: tests given to learners before they begin a lesson, module, or course; they serve two purposes: to check that the learner has the necessary prior knowledge, skills, and perhaps attitudes to undertake the course; and to compare the results obtained with those obtained in subsequent post-tests to establish how much the learner has learned; contrast **post-test**.

Printer: the person who oversees the physical reproduction of learning materials, including collating, binding, and packaging.

Printing: the actual manufacture of printed distance learning materials; the industrial process or processes required to put the production manager's requirements into their final physical form.

Process costing: a method of costing by which expenditures are accumulated into costs of production and allocated to units of the product.

Production: the overall process of taking a manuscript and managing it through to printed, finished copies.

Project costing: a method of costing used when the manufacturing process is not continuous, but is a series of large, special-order contracts.

Psychomotor domain: in the context of teaching and learning, the domain of learning activities that deal with learning physical skills; normally associated with vocational training.

Quality: the fitness for purpose of a product or service according to a set of required standards.

Quality assurance (QA): an approach to organising work that: ensures the institution's mission and aims are clear and known to all; ensures the systems through which work will be done are well thought out, foolproof, and communicated to everyone; ensures everyone's responsibilities are clear and understood; defines and documents the institution's sense of 'quality'; sets in place systems to check that everything is working to plan; and when things go wrong — and they will — there are agreed ways of putting them right.

Quantitative analysis: the process of identifying the discrete components of some phenomenon and the relationships that obtain between them, emphasising entities that can be counted or measured.

Rate of return: the percentage return on the investment.

Recurrent costs: costs that recur year after year (or period of account after period of account).

Regional centres: see **learning centres**.

Relevant range: the range of activities within which fixed operating costs are set.

Revenue cost: also called an **operating cost**; expenditure that is expected to benefit only the current period.

Satellite feed: broadcast material sent via a satellite that is orbiting the earth.

Self-assessment: a type of assessment carried on by the learner him or herself.

Self-contained: a course that contains all the subject material as well as the features of self-instructional courses; to produce a self-contained course one writes everything that would be included in a textbook as well as all the activities and so on that would turn it into a tutorial in print.

Self-instruction: a process in which materials take learners step-by-step through an instructional process; self-assessment exercises are a central feature, and instruction can be paper-based or computer-based.

Single-mode institution: an institution that has been set up solely to offer programmes of study at a distance.

Stakeholders: groups or sometimes individuals who have a significant interest in the successful outcome of some initiative or activity; in the case of an educational institution, stakeholders can include funding agencies, employers of those who eventually graduate, the staff of the institution, and existing and potential learners.

Standards: the parts of a learning objective that describe how well the learner will be expected to perform, expressed in terms of accuracy, speed, or quality.

Stepped fixed cost: a cost that varies with the level of activity, but only has a number of possible values, each of which applies over a relevant range.

Study guides: the part of learning materials that are used in conjunction with collections of articles, textbooks, audio cassettes, video cassettes, and broadcast programmes; they are more substantial than handbooks but less labour intensive than interactive textbooks; they are probably the most commonly produced print materials for course packages.

Subjective assessment: evaluation designed to take into account the learner's own thoughts, feelings, and experiences and ability to express them, rather than factual knowledge alone.

Summative assessment: evaluation of learning that takes place on completion of the learning activity or activities.

Summative evaluation: assessment that occurs at the completion of a course or project, which provides a summary account of its effectiveness and the extent to which it met its goals and objectives; contrast **formative evaluation**.

Surface learning: an intention on the part of the learner to memorise information and to follow instructions rather than to understand and challenge; contrast **deep learning**.

Synchronous: see **networked learning**.

Synthesis: a level of learning activities that involves combining parts to form a new whole.

Systems approach: an approach to organising the tasks required to accomplish one's goals, which sets the conditions for proceeding in an orderly way; a systems approach recognises that all the components of the system are interrelated, so that a change in one component will bring about changes in the others.

Task analysis: the process that identifies the skills and knowledge a competent person needs to complete a task to ensure that they are included in the learning process.

Technical or vocational training: training that is designed to prepare technicians, middle management, and other skilled personnel for one or a group of occupations, trades, or jobs.

Technology-based education: in the context of teaching and learning, a system in which a media other than print has a major role.

Telephone tutoring: the use of the telephone for providing academic help to learners, either one-on-one or in groups (see **audio conference**).

Tendering: the process of calling for bids on a project or supply of products or services.

Total cost: the sum of all the costs attributed to some specific object or activity.

Tutor-marked assignments: assignments marked by the learner's tutor.

Tutorial tryouts: a method of developmental testing that involves testing the materials with one learner or a small group of learners.

Tutoring: the provision of academic assistance to learners in two major forms: (1) stand-alone (for example, computer-assisted learning (CAL), and computer-managed learning (CML)) and (2) conferenced (video, audio, or computer).

Two-way instructional radio: radio broadcasts for educational purposes that are combined with some form of telecommunications or that use two-way radio links to enable learners to interact with teachers and other learners.

Variable costs: costs that vary with volume of output.

Variiances: measures of financial performance derived by comparing actual expenses to original budget plans.

Video conference: a technological arrangement in which television monitors, cameras, and microphones are linked so that people in three or more sites can all see, hear, and speak to one another.

Video disc: a disc on which video and audio signals are recorded for television use; a video disc requires a video player compatible with the video disc.

Visual designer: see **media designer**.

World Wide Web (www): a communication protocol of the Internet that deals with text, audio, video, animation, graphics, and colour — anything that a computer programme can produce.

Deakin University

Prepared by:

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Brief description of the programme

Located in the State of Victoria, Australia, Deakin University is a multi-campus institution with a major commitment to flexible learning delivered through the use of educational and communications technologies. Headquartered in Geelong, the university operates three campuses in Melbourne, two in Geelong, and one in Warrnambool.

Deakin enrolled 30,191 students in its regular programmes in 1996. A further 30,000 students were enrolled through its commercial arm, Deakin Australia, for a total in excess of 60,000 students. Of the regular students, 13,088 or 43 percent were enrolled off-campus. All Deakin Australia students were off-campus students, making Deakin, with a total of more than 43,000 off-campus students, the largest university off-campus provider in Australia.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- The major planning and management issue facing the university over the past six years has been how to integrate the academic programmes and approaches to teaching and learning of the three formerly independent degree granting institutions that merged in the period 1990 to 1992 to form the present Deakin University. Two of these institutions had major pre-merger distance education programmes.

Implementing quality assurance

- The university is committed to the principles of quality management and continuous improvement. Implementing these principles involves both the regular evaluation of teaching materials and the assessment of teaching of academic staff, both of which involve seeking student reactions to their course experience. It has proved difficult to distinguish between student reactions to learning materials and to the performance of teaching staff. The distinction is important because the corrective actions that are needed are very different in each case.

Using and integrating media in distance learning

- The development of the World Wide Web allows Deakin to deliver off-campus programmes in new ways. Used well, the Web provides an easy-to-use, cost-effective, flexible, and powerful medium for the delivery of higher education. Its ease of use, however, presents the university with a serious issue. Academic staff

can quickly learn to ‘mount’ Web courses. They are not always, however, well equipped to take best educational advantage of what the Web offers. The issue facing the university is how, on the one hand, to ensure that all Deakin-based Web offerings reflect university standards and policies, while, on the other hand, allowing academic staff to creatively explore the Web for educational purposes.

- Similarly, a broader issue facing the university is how to develop the skills of teaching staff so that they are able to make the best educational use of new educational media. The increasing reliance of the university on resource-based learning methods has fundamentally changed the nature of academic work in the university with considerable implications for the nature of professional development activities.

Instructional design and production for distance learning

A major issue facing the university is how to cost-effectively maintain an up-to-date archive of all its course materials. Over the last two years, staff have been involved in the development of an ‘electronic warehouse’ of materials. The concept is that all materials will be stored digitally, allowing for both easy revision and reproduction in whichever medium is required.

Another important issue is how to allocate scarce educational development resources for maximum benefit. Should the university allocate significant resources to ‘lighthouse’ projects designed to illuminate and illustrate the art of the possible? Or would it be better to allocate resources more widely to projects that make use of mainstream approaches? This issue is unresolved.

Learner support systems

An important challenge is how to foster the effective use of electronic media for teaching and learning. Many staff and students are new to the educational use of e-mail, bulletin boards, and computer conferencing. Their effective use requires the development of new skills and a willingness, in the case of students, to participate.

Part of the process of higher education is the integration of students into a broader, often discipline-based, academic community of students and scholars. The development of such a community is problematic in distance education programmes such as those at Deakin University, which often do not require students to engage in on-campus or face-to-face activities. Deakin’s response has been to use communication technologies to create electronic communities. The members of this community — academic staff, students, academic support staff, and administrative staff — are linked through an integrated, interactive, electronic communication environment known as the *Deakin Interchange*. The Interchange provides users with access to e-mail, computer conferencing, library and administrative databases and services, and Web services through the use of a consistent, menu-driven, ‘point and click’ user interface. Creating a reliable system that is easy to install, use, and upgrade has been a difficult task. The Interchange, however, as its technological manifestations evolve, will increasingly become the mechanism for the creation of virtual communities of the sort that develop spontaneously in campus settings.

The most important issue: Planning and managing a multi-campus, flexible mode university

At the beginning of 1992, Deakin University, with campuses in the regional communities of Geelong and Warrnambool, merged with three campuses of Victoria College in metropolitan Melbourne. Deakin had a strong tradition of distance education while Victoria College was almost exclusively campus-based. The challenge was to bring together the distinct cultures of the two institutions to create a new Deakin University with a common vision that would be in a position to operate effectively in the new national and international environment of higher education. From the distance education perspective, it was important that, at Geelong and Warrnambool, distance education and on-campus education were integrated in a dual mode model, with more than half the students and 38 percent of equivalent full-time load studying at a distance.

The new university determined early that distance education was one of its strengths and should be spread across its campuses. Several strategic decisions were critical to developments: structural integration; course rationalisation; resource-based learning and technology integration; and industry-based and professional programmes.

Structural integration

Deakin University did not adopt a federated model in which the regional and metropolitan campuses would operate with some degree of independence and duplicated services; instead, it opted for full structural integration. In academic terms, seventeen faculties were reduced to five, each with from two to five schools (or departments). While a small number of schools are based predominantly on one campus, the majority of schools and all faculties have staff spread across different campuses. This means that academic decisions pertaining to distance education, at the faculty and school level and in terms of university policy, engage the entire university rather than a traditional interest group. Administrative and academic service divisions of the university are similarly integrated. In some cases, a particular type of operation is based on one campus; for example, the off-campus library service operates from one of the Geelong campuses but draws on the resources of all campus libraries. In other cases, services of a division or branch are available on a number of campuses; for example, Learning Resources Services, which is responsible for the physical development and production of learning materials, has distributed staff and facilities.

Course rationalisation

Flexible learning options for students required an integrated curriculum with common cross-campus courses (programmes of study) and course units. Academic staff in a particular field or discipline, who may have been based on a number of different campuses, were required to review areas of overlap and develop single course structures; for example, several Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Commerce degree courses became one Bachelor of Commerce taught on three campuses and off-campus. In fields that typically have fewer required units and more options (for example, history) academic staff were encouraged to review the units of the predecessor institutions and create a coherent selection that would be offered across the university.

Resource-based learning and technology integration

Flexible learning, including cross-campus delivery as well as distance education, could best be served by the development of learning resources for use by all students. This approach had its origins in the Deakin University of the late 1970s when the open campus, with on-campus students using off-campus materials, was conceived as transforming teaching and learning for all students and academic staff. Following the mergers, the university's distance education infrastructure, including educational developers and Learning Resources Services, were deployed in developments and redevelopments across the university. At the same time, the university set a policy of technology integration with particular emphasis on information technology and computer communication. In 1995, Deakin was named Australian University of the Year on the basis of its integration of technology into teaching and learning.

Industry-based and professional programmes

Both predecessor institutions had innovative programmes for students outside the regular government funding structures. Victoria College's Technology Management Programme saw students in major industries use laptop computers to access technical (Technical And Further Education) and university courses year round in a self-paced system. Deakin Geelong's Centre for Management Services provided development and delivery services for professional associations on a contract basis, enabling the associations to offer continuing education at a distance. These activities were merged in Deakin Australia, which continues a successful record of providing distance education services to the professions and industry. Some programmes offered through Deakin Australia are accredited by the university. In one case of co-operation, Deakin University and the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists, and Managers of Australia offer a joint MBA degree in Australia and internationally using Deakin Australia facilities and services.

Summary

The result is a new type of university that is unrecognisable in the terms of its predecessor institutions. The transformation, of course, is not complete, and never will be in this environment of continuous change in higher education. We believe that Deakin University is in a better position than it would have been without such radical restructuring. In our view, essential ingredients for success in such an endeavour are:

- strong leadership, including appropriate rhetoric about the mission of the university;
- a programme of change management that allows all parts of the institution to understand and accept their new roles; and
- serious commitment to professional development to address the changing nature of academic and administrative work.

External Studies at Murdoch University

Prepared by:

Patrick Guiton

Brief description of the programme

Murdoch is a dual mode university where external study is a viable alternative mode of study that is available to all students rather than a substitute mode of study to accommodate the disadvantaged needs of those who cannot get the 'real thing'. Because more than 70 percent of the university's credit offerings are available for study either on- or off-campus, students exercise their choice of mode on a unit-by-unit basis and many study concurrently in both modes.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- Maintaining university commitment to a Centre for Off-campus (External) Studies in the face of policies favouring devolution of managerial and financial responsibility to individual schools of study.
- Allocating systematic workload release time for academic staff engaged in the development of a second (distance education) mode of learning resource materials.

Implementing quality assurance

- Involving academic staff in dual mode teaching to adopt the view that assuring a common curriculum regardless of study mode demands flexibility not identity in delivery method or style.
- Establishing a consistent house style across a large range (250 units per annum) of courses despite a relatively small enrolment (average 30 units).
- Gaining acceptance by staff of quality assurance as a standard course design improvement procedure not as a punitive measure.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Deciding the point at which it may be assumed that a technological innovation (audio or video cassette; personal computer; and e-mail) has become sufficiently widely diffused to justify its use as a compulsory component of course materials.
- Getting to the point at which academic staff involved in dual mode teaching recognise the value to themselves of modifying their face-to-face teaching by integrating the use of guided independent learning resources into the classroom mode.

- Addressing staff development needs associated with integrating new communication technologies into course design.

Instructional design and production

- Justifying the annual update and production of print and audio resource materials for all courses as a means of ensuring parity of curriculum content both ‘on-campus’ and ‘off-campus’.
- Maintaining a course development and production pattern spread throughout the calendar year rather than bunched around the peaks and troughs of the standard academic calendar.
- Developing and disseminating new instructional design techniques for on-line publication.

Learner support systems

- Gresham’s Law of Organisational Life — ‘Work drives out avoidable work regardless of its relative importance’ — translated to the dual mode context, means getting academic staff to give equal attention to the external student’s mailed assignment or telephone call as to the internal student’s knock on the door.
- Providing realistic and consistent support for isolated students in a geographic context that regularly places a student 200 kilometres from the next student and up to 1,000 kilometres from another enrolment in the same unit of study.

The most important issue: Maintaining university commitment

In calling these issues ‘challenges’ rather than ‘problems’, I suggest that all except maintaining university commitment are, in fact, challenges that anyone setting up and running a Centre for Distance Education in a dual mode university will have to deal with if the enterprise is to succeed. Maintaining university commitment is of a different order in that it reflects the influence of broad economic rationalist thinking from beyond the arena of academic policy and university politics. For that reason, it must be the most important issue.

In dealing with all the other challenges, we argue for acceptance of the distance mode as a viable alternative and equivalent mode not as a poor substitute: in short, we claim it as part of the mainstream of university life. When times get tough and resources get short, those whom we have spent our time convincing are tempted to ‘hoist us with our own petard’. If distance education is a mainstream function, it is argued, then why does the university need to spend significant resources maintaining a specialist organisational centre to handle the distance mode and the needs of its students separate from the mainstream university structures provided by the schools and the registry?

In these hard economic times, a highly professional centre for external or off-campus studies in the dual mode system can all too easily become a victim of its own success. But it is evident enough that success in coping with all the other challenges has always depended on the vigilance, persistence, and single-mindedness of professional distance educators working from a visible and well-recognised centre. So a challenge translates into a problem.

Open Access College

Prepared by:

Marg Beagley

Brief description of the programme

The Open Access College (OAC) opened in January 1991, replacing the former South Australian Correspondence School. The college's vision is to 'recognise, value, and celebrate its uniqueness and the diversity of its people. It is an organisation whose business is teaching and learning ... and as its very title suggests, all of its operations will be founded on the core values of access and openness'.

The teaching and learning programme involves interaction with students using a range of technologies, including high-frequency radio, telephone, facsimile, and electronic classroom techniques, as well as through a visiting programme, mini-schools, camps, and school experience weeks.

The college has the responsibility of redressing the educational disadvantage for children which arises from remoteness and isolation. It provides opportunities for students in metropolitan, rural, and remote areas of South Australia to gain access to a broader curriculum.

What is the Open Access College?

The establishment of the Open Access College was a key strategy in the management and co-ordination of the increased demand for distance education in South Australia. The college is a multi-campus organisation consisting of:

- *Three Schools of Distance Education*
 - reception to year 10 (Marden site, metropolitan Adelaide),
 - senior secondary (Marden), and
 - reception to year 12 (Port Augusta site, 300 kilometres by road from the Marden site);
- *Open Access Materials Unit*
 - responsible for refinement, development, and production of open access course materials; and
- *Outreach Education Services*
 - providing educational support for a range of cultural and scientific institutions, for example, the State Zoo, Museum, Botanical Gardens.

Student profile

Students for whom services are provided by the schools of distance education come from the following groups:

- students in government schools and non-government schools;
- remote and isolated students, including some South Australians who are resident or travelling interstate or overseas;
- post-secondary age students, including prisoners, adult re-entry students, and students in full-time vocational courses; and
- special needs students, including medical-based and student behaviour management enrolments.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- Although close liaison between course developers and teachers is needed, it is at times difficult due to different tenure of employment.
- Teaching through course packages is supplemented by telephone, radio lessons, or both; teleconferencing; and visits.
- The range of clients at any given year level is very wide, with a high turnover of students, particularly in the reception to year 10 levels. Continuity and short-term enrolments can present difficulties in the management of learning activities.

Implementing quality assurance

- Quality checks are built in at the course development level — writers are selected on merit; reference groups provide feedback at all stages of course development.
- Feedback and liaison between teachers and course developers are vital parts of the writing process.
- Quality checks are built into the materials production process.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- The use of media varies widely — audio and video are considered integral components of course development.
- The use of other media is optional where possible — videoconferencing, teleconferencing, facsimile, Electronic Classroom™, as facilities for students permit.
- Internet resources are being developed as an option for those students with access.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- Principles for course development include teaching and learning methodologies, course structure, and presentation elements.
- Course structure, design, and layout are based on 12 learning principles developed by the Open Access College.
- Course materials are developed on-site at the Open Access College in the Materials Unit; artists, keyboarders, electronic media studio, printing, and distribution facilities are utilised.

Learner support system

- Learners are provided with high-quality course materials for distance education, supported by teacher contact, and electronic learning strategies. Itinerant teachers visit primary students in remote areas.
- Counselling and resource centre services are available from the Marden site to support students in enrolment, personal concerns, and future option decisions.
- Supervisors work with school- and home-based students, particularly primary students and those in remote areas.

The most important issue: Using and integrating media in distance education

While the print medium is central to the delivery of courses through distance education from reception to year 12 levels, the use of other media is rapidly becoming an integrated part of all course development. It is expected that aural and visual media will be used in all courses so that different styles of learning can be addressed.

- Students are provided with audio and video cassettes to provide stimuli for the work that they do alone or with the assistance of a supervisor.
- Teachers and students have print material from which to work, and this is augmented by aural and oral contact with the teacher through high-frequency radio, telephone links, or both, varying from daily to weekly lessons.
- The most basic form of electronic media is the teleconference in which several students may be linked with the teacher by telephone for their weekly lesson. Interaction between students and teacher is possible, although clearly the group dynamic takes time to establish using this type of communication.
- Where students have access, videoconferencing is possible giving the visual as well as the audio contact; it is generally not available as a multi-point medium but enables closer contact between teacher and student.
- The Electronic Classroom™ allows interactive learning to occur through the use of electronic whiteboard, video, and audio. Using this medium, the teacher and the student are able to exchange work and produce diagrams, maps, and written work in much the same way as they would face to face.

Depending on the availability of student access, each of these electronic media are used daily by teachers in their delivery of lessons to isolated students.

Current developments include the use of the Internet to provide stimulus not previously possible through distance education. The Open Access College has allocated considerable time and resources to the development of its Web site and specific subject pages, enabling course writers to provide Internet options for students who have access to this technology. The range of subjects utilising this medium at present includes the arts, legal studies, social studies, biology, environmental studies, geology, and home economics, as well as languages other than English.

In particular, the languages other than English (French, German, Indonesian, and Spanish) have used this medium to great advantage. Students can be given a selection of Web sites chosen for specific research, or the teacher is able to introduce new

learning materials. For example, a student of Spanish is able to view an exhibition of etchings by Francisco Goya, produced co-operatively with the Art Gallery of South Australia. The student can also search for specific resources on aspects of culture — food, dance, and music — researched by the developer, and included in the subject page. The subject can incorporate a more holistic approach to learning for its student clients and allow them to access current, stimulating events to enhance their learning.

Information on each of the Outreach Education Services provided by the Open Access College as well as on cultural events and activities is also available through the home page.

The inclusion of the Internet resource must be an option at present as many students (particularly those in remote areas) do not have access to the Internet or even, in some case, to telephone communication. Nevertheless, it is a growing area, and one that is providing an exciting and stimulating aspect to distance education in South Australia.

Please visit our home page at http://www.saschools.edu.au/open_acc/open_acc.html

Open Learning Institute Charles Sturt University

Prepared by:

David Meacham

Brief description of the programme

The Open Learning Institute (OLI) of Charles Sturt University (CSU), a multi-campus institution, is located in several cities in inland New South Wales in Eastern Australia.

Charles Sturt University offers a wide range of degree courses, both on-campus and through distance education, using print and electronic instructional media.

The Open Learning Institute is responsible for research and development, learning materials, design, production, student liaison, and academic staff development.

The university is expanding its proportion of off-campus students, with only about 13 percent being recruited directly from high school on the basis of their learning certificate results. An increasing number of overseas students study both at a distance and on-campus. Charles Sturt University is currently the largest single university provider of distance education in Australia and is seeking to expand its market by introducing both greater choice and greater flexibility of learning for its clients, many of whom are young professionals seeking to enhance their careers.

Problems encountered

In a time of rapid social and technological change coupled with government induced destabilisation of universities, many issues are emerging relating to the future role of distance education and its efficient operation in a client focused market, where needs may have to be met with diminishing resources.

Planning and managing distance education

- In a dual mode institution, structures and practices develop primarily to serve on-campus students who are now in the minority. This focus creates problems in introducing new systems for learners who require flexibility and asynchronous teaching. Currently the university is attempting to expand resource-based learning to allow greater flexibility in study time and location, which is problematic in a conventional two-semester system with fixed entry and exit times.
- Structures in the university are based on substantive areas of study, that is, schools, faculties, and centres, and functional divisions (for example, Information Technology and Financial Services). The Open Learning Institute exists to service a particular mode of learning that has become dominant. In addition, there has been considerable devolution of organisation and financial responsibility in an environment of diminishing resources. Consequently it is extremely difficult to

develop a corporate or institutional approach to distance education when large numbers of factions with particular self-interests demand more from severely limited budgets.

- The volatile external political and economic environment makes forward planning difficult. Politically and economically it has become expedient to attempt to increase the level of student support for distance learners, while reducing expenditure. This situation has the potential to precipitate extreme management problems.

Implementing quality assurance

- The Open Learning Institute has begun a comprehensive quality assurance programme, starting with the development of a series of comprehensive procedure manuals. These manuals are proving difficult to update during a time of rapidly changing structures and priorities.
- In the university there is a large degree of scepticism about the effectiveness of industrially derived quality assurance schemes in higher education. In contrast, the political imperative is to develop sophisticated responses to government inspired quality audits that could significantly influence future funding.

Using and integrating media in open learning

- The university has enthusiastically embraced the use of non-print media in distance education. However, there is considerable increase in development costs in continuing to offer print materials with a multimedia alternative, or by using some multimedia to complement print.
- Important equity and marketing issues need to be addressed with regard to the use of integrated multimedia. The technology policy of the university will require new students to access specified personal computer hardware and software, eliminating some potential clients and attracting others, unless alternative provision exists for a while.
- The early stages of transfer to a predominantly electronic medium of distance education have led to some materials being made available that are little more than digital textbooks. More research needs to be done on the value added by various media and their suitability for specific applications.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- The integration of electronic media into distance education resources has required the recruitment of specialist instructional designers who have expertise in video, authorware, and Web design. General instructional designers, whose competence is mainly in the area of print, have become somewhat apprehensive as resources are moved to support emerging technologies.
- Electronic media are being produced by individual teaching staff with limited input from educational designers, making quality control problematical. Print materials are rigorously checked before dispatch, after a comprehensive editorial

process. New technologies are emerging at a rate that outstrips the development of systems to support and control their use.

Learner support systems

- The university has traditionally provided compulsory residential schools for many subjects, where group work and the use of specialised equipment were deemed to be necessary for appropriate understanding and competency development.
- Such provision is currently being challenged on the grounds that residential schools are costly, both for the university and for the student, who has to leave work and often travel long distances. Consequently, alternative, media-based means of support are being developed, sometimes against the views of the traditionalists, who regard face-to-face contact with students as a necessary ingredient for effective learning.

The most important issue: Finding alternatives to face-to-face contact

An important contemporary issue is the university's lack of a structured, informed approach to the offering of residential schools.

The original intention was to require distance education students to attend campus for not more than two weeks per year to obtain intensive instruction, practice in areas in which human interaction or a specialist environment was a precondition for understanding and skill development, or both. Residential schools also provided an assurance to accrediting bodies, employers, and professional associations that distance education was not inferior to conventional teaching. The issue of parity of esteem between on- and off-campus courses was of paramount importance in the early days of distance education in Australia, but has diminished with widespread acceptance of the quality of distance education graduates.

Over the years, differences emerged between the two colleges that amalgamated to form the new university. Historical factors led to one campus offering course-based residential schools on a reduced scale, while another campus offered a greater level of subject-based residential schools. The original intent of residential schools appeared to be diluted, with idiosyncratic, campus-based views dominating. At the same time, emerging technologies capable of providing group interaction and simulations were not promoted and implemented on an institutional basis as an effective substitute for the on-campus instruction residential schools provided.

The Academic Senate of the university issued regulations concerning the conduct of residential schools which were often ignored or circumvented by the substitution of 'optional' residential schools operating under different or even no rules whatsoever.

Consequently, the Senate undertook to review its policy in this area, and adherence to it.

A working party investigated the issue and concluded that decisions about the offering of residential schools should be made on a transparent and rational basis, with such decisions being the responsibility of specific staff members. It also required monitoring and accountability systems to ensure conformance.

In addition, the Open Learning Institute seconded a staff member to research media-based alternatives to face-to-face teaching.

Thus the outcomes in the near future should be:

- the restoration of pedagogic considerations as the prime determinants of the existence of residential schools;
- an improved system of accountability; and
- research upon which to base decisions about appropriate modes of teaching.

It would be presumptuous to believe that procedural change and research will achieve all these improvements. Little has been done to address entrenched attitudes, which differ on the various campuses, and had their genesis in groups working in isolation from one another and in the corporate goals of the university. Scant attention may be given to regulations and recommended practice emanating from outside these groups. For success to be achieved, the benefits of both change and conformity must be clearly conveyed to the stakeholders, unless they are to revert to their comfort zone of familiar practice.

Summary

The following lessons can be learned from this study:

- Instructional design issues can only be resolved satisfactorily in an organisational context.
- The logic of pedagogy may conflict with the requirements of the market, the institution, and individual stockholders.
- Instructional design issues involve innovation and change; therefore, they require changed management components for successful implementation.
- Responses to external pressures on universities may lead to a diminution of the importance of pedagogical considerations.
- The structure and decision making processes of universities make innovation arising from outside the school structure and central administration problematic to deliver and monitor.
- The necessity for face-to-face contact to complement distance education in this context is poorly researched and lacks objective articulation.
- The mere availability of technology does little to ensure its institutionalisation.
- Institutionalisation of changes in teaching methodology is highly problematic in multi-campus institutions with highly devolved decision making and financial process.

**Distance Education Unit
Centre for Continuing Education
University of Botswana**

Prepared by:

J. W. Kamau

Brief description of the programme

The University of Botswana, which hitherto existed as a constituent college of the University of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland (UBLS), became a separate national university in 1982. The university is a dual mode institution that offers on-campus degree programmes through various academic faculties, conducts research through various institutes, and provides off-campus academic and other outreach programmes through the Centre for Continuing Education where the Distance Education Unit is based. The mandate of the Centre for Continuing Education is to provide educational opportunities to adults through distance education, evening and weekend classes, public education conferences, workshops, seminars, and radio programmes on a variety of subjects that are in high demand by the public.

The university's involvement with distance education dates back to the 1970s when radio campaigns, complemented by face-to-face contact, were used to educate the public on issues of national interest such as civic education. Geographically, Botswana is a vast country and radio broadcasts could reach many people simultaneously. Today, the main responsibility of the Distance Education Unit, which conducts its distance education programmes mainly through the print medium, is to increase the university's capacity for distance education and, in collaboration with relevant departments, to identify and develop certificate and non-certificate programmes for delivery at a distance. The Distance Education Unit plans to provide programmes at non-credit, certificate, diploma, degree, and post-graduate levels. Currently, the unit offers a certificate in adult education for people involved in literacy, adult, continuing, and community education programmes. A diploma in primary education commenced in 1998 to upgrade primary teacher's certificate holders in a bid to raise the standards and quality of education at the grassroots level. Plans to launch further programmes are also underway.

The certificate in adult education course development experience

The Distance Education Unit has, in the past, offered a certificate in adult education programme in a semi-distance education mode, with materials developed by consultants and heavy reliance being placed on residential study schools in Gaborone, where most of the teaching has taken place. This programme was reviewed in 1989 and is being revised so that it can be offered completely by distance education.

This exercise has proved to be a useful pilot project, as it has brought to light a number of problems in the area of materials development that the unit will have to address in the future. These problems relate largely to four specific areas of course development: the development of the syllabus, the recruitment of course writers, the submission of a first draft, and the actual development of the materials.

Developing the syllabus

The syllabus outline for each of the five courses was developed as a collaborative effort between the Distance Education Unit and lecturers in the Department of Adult Education who have been teaching the courses. As each course will be taught over a two-semester academic year, courses were divided into two modules, each consisting of 10 to 15 units, but no firm guidelines were set regarding the exact number of units that would comprise each module. The content of each unit was then detailed under several major topic areas. Course writers were thus armed with mutually agreed upon unit outlines to use as the basis for their writing but these were insufficiently detailed.

Recruiting course writers

In the unit's material development process, course writers are recruited mostly from the co-operating departments and colleges that run the on-campus equivalent of the programmes. In the Certificate in Adult Education programme, some of the course writers have been drawn from the Distance Education Unit because of their professional training in adult education. A decision was made that all writers, apart from unit staff, would be paid for their services and that all materials developed would be recognised as academic publications for staff appraisal purposes. Contracts were not signed as they required the approval of university authorities. Thus, course writers have proceeded with their task on the assumption that they will be paid for their efforts in due course. In each course, at least two course writers were appointed and decisions relating to a division of the writing workload was left up to the individuals concerned.

As distance education has not been a significant feature of the University of Botswana in the past, it is understandable that most writers have not had any experience of writing materials for distance learners. As a result, course writing workshops were held to train writers for this specific function. During these workshops, the writers were made aware of the nature of distance education programmes, the features that would be expected in materials, and the reasons for incorporating them. They were advised that a typical unit should be 10 to 15 typed pages in length and consist of an overview, unit objectives, several sections of content divided into subsections, interactive questions, a summary, self-assessment questions on the whole unit, and a list of additional reading materials. They then set off to start writing.

Submitting the first draft

In most cases, materials were not forthcoming as writers were preoccupied with teaching activities and could not find the time to devote to additional tasks. Many manuscripts, when submitted, did not conform to expectations, and in some cases, ignored the guidelines altogether. Consequently, the decision was made to hold a series of writing retreats during which writers were isolated in comfortable surroundings conducive to the activity of writing. Secretaries accompanied the group

to word process materials as they were submitted and there were high expectations that all units for both modules would materialise. In reality, although these retreats have produced units, less than half of the expected output has been achieved.

Once written, units were passed on to the word processors and editor for word processing, formatting, and editing. On the whole, the submission of hand-written manuscripts resulted in unnecessary confusion and delay as word processors struggled to decipher handwriting and instructions. The content was often not divided into subsections with identifiable headings and manuscripts were incomplete as they did not contain all the expected features. Many units did not follow the agreed upon syllabus outline for content and, in some cases, later units were collapsed into previous units and dealt with fleetingly as the agreed range of twelve to fifteen units per module was not met, leading to unequal workloads for students over the semester.

Actually developing the materials

A combination of inexperienced distance education writers and word processors has meant that part-time copy editors had to be employed to work on the initial word processed drafts before they were passed on to the editor. In addition, the volume of work arriving at one time meant that it has not been possible to return a first draft to course writers within a short period of time. The underlying assumption at the time was that hand-written materials would only need word processing and superficial editing and formatting by an editor. The reality has been that this is not the case and that there must be far more concentration on developmental processes if quality standards are to be met. Materials could be improved considerably by the input of instructional design, graphic art, and media staff.

Possible solutions

Identified Problem	Possible Solution
Development of syllabus outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide modules into a set number of units. • Develop behavioural objectives for each unit. • Identify and list major topics to be covered in each unit. • Identify and list sub-topics to be covered under major topics in each unit. • Use this detailed unit outline as a framework for writing.
Recruitment of course writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit from a wider pool of potential course writers by advertisement. • Utilise a signed contract stipulating firm submission dates, allowing for

Identified Problem	Possible Solution
	<p>progressive payments and requiring the submission of a model unit for assessment of writer suitability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to enforce submission deadlines in terms of the contract.
Training of course writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide rigid guidelines stipulating the essential features that will be expected in each unit. • Assess a model unit to determine the course writer's suitability and compliance with requirements. • Extend the training period to permit submission of at least the first two units. • Stress the significance of the team work approach to developing materials and the consequent importance of deadlines.
Submission of a first draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stipulate and enforce minimum standards for presentation of hand-written drafts. • Accept only hand-written drafts that are complete.
Course development process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the importance of developmental staff and increase their numbers accordingly. • Spread realistic submission dates for units over the whole writing period to avoid developmental congestion. • Provide professional development training for word processors. • Appoint instructional design, graphic art, and media staff to enhance and enrich materials.

Open Learning and Information Network

Prepared by:

Genevieve Gallant

Brief description of the programme

The Open Learning and Information Network (OLIN), Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial College partnered to design, develop, and implement a Web-based business course for delivery through the World Wide Web. This joint initiative was funded by Human Resources Development Agreement.

The subject of organisational behaviour is included in nine different post-secondary programmes of study, with transfer credit available between the university course and the college equivalents. Consequently, a Web-based course in organisational behaviour was designed by an instructional design team over a three-month period and delivered to 10 university and 40 college students during the winter 1997 semester.

The Web-based course, delivered in an open learning, distance education format, uses a blend of conventional resources (textbook and study manual) and information and communication technology resources (Web pages of the study manual and a computer conferencing system — *Conferencing on the Web*). The computer conferencing system design allows student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction and collaborative learning at a distance. Class assignments, both individual and group; two on-line quizzes; opportunities to ask questions of the instructor and professor; and peer interaction are supported by the computer conferencing system.

A student orientation session explaining access to and use of the Web pages and computer conferencing system was delivered via audio through multimedia computers to college students while university students received a face-to-face orientation.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- Use of a systematic approach to planning distance education is important and must include using experts from each area of instructional design. The collaborative efforts and expertise of instructional designers, content experts, technical specialists, and administrators are necessary. The roles and timelines for each person must be clearly stated at the beginning of the project.
- The Web-based course on organisational behaviour is offered to both university and college students, and the administrative requirements of each institution are similar, yet different. Incorporation of both sets of regulations for registration,

dropping and adding courses, and examination requires communication with both administrative groups.

- Selection of a computer conferencing system to meet the design needs and learning outcomes requires that criteria be established early on in the planning stage.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Using the Web and a computer conferencing system to deliver a course is relatively new for faculty and students. Instructor and student awareness of how to use the conferencing system to provide quality learning and the need for a different teaching style is an issue.
- An orientation for both instructor and student is necessary to familiarise them with how to use the media, its benefits for learning at a distance, and expectations for both in creating learning.
- The instructor's role changes from one of 'sage' to that of 'facilitator'.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- Using the team approach to developing and implementing a Web-based distance course is advantageous. Experts in instructional design, Web design, graphics, content, and technical operations working together will make for a quality product.
- Access to the Internet, modem connections, and telephone lines are important issues for instructional designers to consider. Slow modem connections and poor telephone lines limit the size and quality of graphics and increase the need for user-friendly, easy-to-navigate systems.
- Web-based courses have philosophical and pedagogical issues — whether to use linear, textual course design or a design that enables interaction among students and instructors. Technology gives us the ability to design distance education courses with more interactivity, thus overcoming the isolation issue in previous distance education practices.
- To ensure that learning occurs, the instructional designer must be aware of learner needs, learning styles, and the limits of the technology.
- Pacing is important. To keep students on-track and on-time, guidelines must be incorporated into the design of the Web pages and the study manual. Scheduling of course assignments and exams must be manageable. Including a printed study manual and Web pages displaying sections of the study manual are used as organisers.

Learner support systems

- Many learners are novices to the computer and the Internet and learner frustration with the new media is to be expected. To decrease frustration and maintain motivation in the course, the use of technical and human support systems is an absolute. An orientation to the new media, telephone contact during the first two weeks for technical assistance, and instructor feedback, especially in the initial

stages, are necessary. These learner support systems must be established before the course starts.

The most important issue: Instructional design and production for distance education

Our experience in dealing with the issue of using ‘teams of experts’ was positive and beneficial. So many times one or two people are responsible for all the design, production, and delivery of a course. However, using new media to deliver a course requires people with expertise in these areas as not everyone has all the expertise needed for design and delivery of Web-based courses.

The Web-based ‘Organisational Behaviour’ course used an instructional design model. Both the university and college offer courses in organisational behaviour; however, the objectives, some content areas, evaluations, and textbooks differ. To have one course that could be used simultaneously by university and college students required an articulation process. The content experts were a university professor with many years of experience teaching in a face-to-face setting and also in the traditional distance education format, and a college instructor with many years of experience delivering this subject in a classroom setting using a self-directed, competency-based learning approach. The instructional designer worked with both to develop course objectives, content, evaluations, and a study manual.

Graphic and Web designers, the next team, working with the instructional designer, were responsible for determining how much text and content should go on the Web pages. They were also responsible for creating the look and feel of the pages so that they are easy to read, visually effective, user-friendly, and can be downloaded in a short time. Designing the entrance areas to the conferencing system to be visually attractive yet self-explanatory was also completed by this team.

The conferencing system was designed by the instructional designer. Attention was paid to the learner needs, different learning styles, and course requirements, as decided by the content experts, and use of collaborative learning techniques.

Technical support was provided by the systems administrator and a technical specialist. The systems administrator was responsible for mounting the computer conferencing system on the server. The technical specialist was involved in the conferencing system selection and the audio capabilities through the computer for students’ orientation session.

Lessons learned

It is important for all members of the instructional team to be part of the process from the beginning. The technical part of the system is as important as the instructional design. The systems administrator must be allowed enough time to mount the conferencing system on the server to give other members of the team the opportunity to become familiar with how it works, make necessary changes, and work out any anomalies.

Determining computer conferencing criteria that makes using the system easy, accessible, and user-friendly is important. For example, the use of word-wrap for posting and replying to discussions is a must. The ability to attach a file from any

word processing software makes for less Internet time, and allows for spelling correction, editing of text, and reflection on a topic.

Using the audio capability of a multimedia computer provides benefits of talking with learners any time, anywhere. It was used to deliver the orientation session but there were problems in hearing the session because of differences in modem rates, bandwidth, and telephone connections. More time must be allowed (two to three days depending on the number of sites) for technical specialists to tune the audio with the different sites to make the multimedia computer usable and achieve its objective.

**Institute for Educational Development and Extension,
The University College of Education of Winneba
Post-Diploma Bachelor of Education (In-Service)
Distance Education Programme**

Prepared by:

S.A. Kadingdi

Brief description of the programme

Until 1992, diploma teachers who wanted to further their education by upgrading themselves to the degree level had to pursue the same four-year courses planned for sixth-formers at the University of Cape Coast. The University College of Education of Winneba (UCEW) was established in 1993 through the amalgamation of seven diploma-awarding teacher training institutions to serve such diploma teachers. The college was therefore established with the overriding purposes of both preparing teachers and other professionals for service to the nation and improving upon the basic education needs of Ghana by concentrating on the training of teachers at both the Diploma and Bachelor of Education degree levels. UCEW therefore carries out its mission by designing and implementing pre-service education programmes for the preparation of teachers and other personnel. Even though the college was set up to recruit more teachers to pursue higher courses, the limited accommodation facilities available militated against the achievement of this noble objective.

To complement the efforts of the university college in meeting the ever-increasing demand for access to its programmes, the Institute for Educational Development and Extension (IEDE) was established as one of seven academic divisions of UCEW to co-ordinate the offering of some of the courses at a distance. The distance education unit, which is by far the largest of the five units of IEDE, is therefore charged to run the Bachelor of Education (In-Service) degree programme for teachers and teacher trainers holding diploma certificates who expect to study part-time without undue disruption of their work schedules. The programme will run alongside the internal two-year post-diploma Bachelor of Education programme and will offer a degree of equivalent status. Like most distance education programmes in developing countries that have been heavily influenced by donor countries, the IEDE received some funding at least in the beginning from the Department for International Development (DFID), formerly known as the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). DFID invested in the initial survey of the learner profile of prospective students to enrol in the Bachelor of Education programme and also helped to address the training of writers of participating departments through consultancies involving workshops that were run jointly by external experts, the DFID subject advisers, and local counterparts (co-ordinators) of the IEDE. Even though IEDE co-ordinates the course material writing of the departments, the participating departments are responsible for the content of the

distance education programme. UCEW is therefore a dual mode distance education institution using departmental course teams and editors. Co-ordinators at IEDE serve in varying roles from simple proof-reading and assisting with artists' briefs and layout to offering advice for the restructuring of study material.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance learning

- Academic staff of the participating departments are not provided release time for the writing and review of their course material. This has caused delays in the submission of course material since lecturers have many functions such as lecturing, organising tutorials, and marking their examinations as well as supervising their on-campus students on teaching practice.

Implementing quality assurance

- Lecturers in the participating departments were initially sceptical about the credibility of the programme, taking into consideration the user-friendly language proposed for the writing of distance education course material. However, this scepticism can be explained in light of some lecturers' inexperience with the delivery systems involved in distance education programmes. It should, however, be emphasised here that external assessors have been engaged to read and comment on the course materials and provide supportive feedback to the course writers. Each course has its own editorial team of two or three members who review the materials initially and provide feedback to the authors.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- The use and integration of media in the distance education programme of UCEW leave much to be desired, since the departments engaged in course writing do not have the basic skills or the necessary equipment to enable them to use any medium other than print.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- Instructional design is the sole responsibility of the departments although co-ordinators at IEDE monitor their work and give advice. The production of course materials is facilitated at IEDE with the help of support staff using the equipment purchased by the DFID.

Learner support systems

- Even though the programme has not yet taken off, the institutional response to student enquiries needs improvement. The preparation of course material by the academic staff needs speeding up to avoid the situation in which students enrolled in the programme have to wait long periods for study materials to be delivered and are consequently frustrated and demotivated. Four regional study centres have been established to provide student support through tutorials and library facilities, with the help of tutors and other supporting staff.

The most important issue: Instructional design and production for distance education

The literature on the Open University of the United Kingdom and many other institutions on distance education indicate that for a course to be implemented, an institution requires about 18 months (some even a lot longer, say three years) from the initiation of the writing process to the implementation of the programme. Although the writing of the distance education material at UCEW began in April 1995, only four courses out of a total of twenty-four first-year courses are on the shelves at present. The heavy teaching workloads of the course writers impedes their ability to deliver the study material as planned.

Staff who have found it difficult to prepare their teaching in the distance mode are given close support from the IEDE co-ordinators, who have been trained in distance education. To this end, therefore, the IEDE co-ordinators have always tried to treat writers with respect and courtesy by sharing with them their concerns and encouraging them to pick up from where they left off. In this way, the co-ordinators provide not only guidance in content, style, and format but also give moral support while urging them to make time to write — despite their heavy teaching workloads. The IEDE co-ordinators also ensure that writers are provided with regular feedback on the progress of writing to the respective course teams. Course writers are encouraged to meet regularly with the co-ordinators to discuss their units.

Realising that a good team can exert pressure to achieve deadlines and equally ensure quality output, the IEDE co-ordinating team instituted departmental academic editorial boards of committed and dedicated writers trained in the editing of distance education material to help more specifically with the content editing of materials. During the editorial training, emphasis was laid on the basic principles of distance education material writing procedures.

This step has to some extent speeded up the writing process even though much is still left to be done. At one time it became clear that one reason writers could not deliver the materials on time was that they managed their time poorly. A workshop on time management was organised to enable writers to make the optimum use of their time.

Future plans

To facilitate the production of the course materials on time, it is important that the UCEW establish realistic workloads and, if possible, set up staff support networks to maintain the writers' morale. There is also the need to consider involving a wider development team by contracting external writers and staff from other institutions. Plans are afoot for a series of short one- to three-day writers' workshops to encourage faster planning, drafting, and reviewing of course materials. A 'writers' surgery' session will likely evolve to give writers the opportunity to bring and share their difficulties with their more experienced and successful colleagues.

University of Guyana Institute of Distance and Continuing Education

Prepared by:

Lynette Anderson

Fitzroy Marcus

Elaine Thomas

Brief description of the programme

The Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) began in 1976 as the Extramural Department of the University of Guyana's Faculty of Education. Its objective was to take quality education to adults throughout the 10 regions of Guyana. By 1982, the department had increased the scope and reach of its activities so significantly that it was reconstituted as the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education and assigned a status equivalent to that of a faculty. The newly formed institute was mandated to use distance education modalities to extend its reach to remote and deep riverine areas in order to make educational opportunities accessible to the thousands of Guyanese resident in those areas, who previously were denied such opportunities because of the dual constraints of distance and population spread.

In 1992, the institute launched a pre-university distance education programme aimed at increasing the number of learners qualified to enter the university. A concomitant thrust was the consolidation of IDCE's efforts at raising public awareness about distance education, assisting decision makers to see distance education as a viable option for making education accessible to learners in remote areas, and developing a pool of resource persons. The outcomes include a student body of 1,029 learners drawn from the 10 regions of Guyana, various forms of participation by the institute in the development of all other distance education programmes that have been introduced by other agencies, and IDCE's representation on the National Committee for Distance Education. Out of the institution's involvement in distance education has developed not only a commitment by its administration to making distance education an integral part of its activities, but also a commitment by the administration of the University of Guyana to employing dual mode strategies to offer university level programmes to learners who cannot attend classes at its Turkeyen Campus. A corollary has been the current nomenclature of the institute. The renamed institute has the responsibility of facilitating the introduction of the university's distance education activities.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- A participatory approach is one of the characteristics of planning and managing distance education at IDCE. This is evident in the strategies employed in conducting needs analyses and in designing, developing, and implementing the programme.
- Another characteristic is flexibility, since support provision is influenced by the human and physical resources available in the student's region. This support operates on the principle of 'equality of concern' rather than 'equality of provision'.

Implementing quality assurance

- IDCE's distance education programme represents a shift from conventional practice to new approaches to learning. The institute therefore views the implementation of quality assurance strategies as essential since a natural resistance to change must be met with the assurance that standards will be maintained if not surpassed. The challenge lies in ensuring that all involved in the provision of distance education, including academic and non-academic staff, recognise this fact and be sufficiently motivated to strive for excellence at all times.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- The institute's integration of media in the course package is based on the principle that in distance education there is a need to serve various learning styles, to help to reinforce learning, to motivate learners, and to minimise their feelings of isolation.
- Print is the basic medium of instruction. Teleconferencing and audio cassettes are meant to provide valuable support. Despite generous assistance from The Commonwealth of Learning during the period 1992 to 1996, problems were encountered. They included:
 - a poor or non-existent communication infrastructure, including an unreliable electricity supply in remote areas;
 - a lack of telephone links; and
 - a shortage of resource persons adequately trained to prepare and produce the audio material.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- When distance education institutions attempt to produce materials without providing adequate finances, difficulties must arise. In the absence of a central budget for materials production, remuneration for course-writing teams, tutor-markers, and other support staff has been inadequate. Furthermore, an inadequate desktop publishing system has added to the challenges.

Learner support systems

- The distance education programme the institute offers is learner-centred. All its components, whether print-based, classroom-based, or audio-based, are oriented toward the provision of learner support. The challenge lies in the management of the programme. Strategies to meet Guyana's unique geographical, cultural, economic, and educational situation must be developed and implemented.
- Support staff accustomed to the conventional system must be trained and retrained for their task of ensuring that students receive the necessary support. This is essential if learners are to complete their courses successfully.

The most important issue: Supporting learners in remote areas

Supporting learners in the remote areas of Guyana presents a significant challenge to IDCE's distance education system. Overseeing the tutorial system and generally providing learner support services are activities dependent on the deployment of competent and highly motivated staff, as well as a good communication infrastructure. Learners are scattered over vast forested areas, some accessible only by aircraft, where few qualified tutors may reside. Sharing of expertise is difficult even in cases in which only a few miles may have to be covered. An underdeveloped communications infrastructure restricts the use of telephones or teleconferencing. Some access to radio links exists but that, however, does not guarantee quality interaction.

The limited finances available to the university contribute to inadequate funding. Some of the energy of staff is devoted to seeking funds from various local and international sources. The presence of the distance education system is largely due to the range of support (advisory and training) extended by the Commonwealth of Learning. The Organisation of American States (OAS) has also contributed directly to the costs of managing our remote support activities.

Despite the constraints, a mobile team is used to provide tutorial support for learners, matching to some extent the pattern of air services provided to these communities. Most flights to remote areas must originate in the capital, making it difficult for staff from our interior locations to service neighbouring locations. Staff based in the coastal areas, however, can and do make direct flights in, at intervals, to give support to students at specific locations. It is also possible to include competent staff from interior locations to be part of the mobile team providing learner support in areas outside their own locations.

Lessons learned

The provision of learning materials and visits by mobile teams to interior areas needs to be further supported by mentoring, which will prove beneficial in enhancing the learner's ability to study through distance strategies. A further benefit inheres in the fact that interaction between learners and a mentor who understands the environs and cultural practices is highly motivating.

There is also a need to sensitise planners, policy makers, and regional officials as a first step to introducing courses in remote areas. This method has resulted in a collaborative approach to the identification of needs and resource persons.

Indira Gandhi National Open University Electronic Media Production Centre

Prepared by:

Jai Chandiram

Brief description of the programme

The Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC), located in the new Sanchar Kendra at the Maidan Garhi campus of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), has a budget of 700,000,000 rupees to produce educational media materials. The distinguishing feature of IGNOU's distance education programme is the extensive and systematic use of educational media in its courses.

Today the EMPC is an advanced centre for the application of media technologies for distance education and training at the national and international level. The primary functions are: programme production; media education; and research.

Programme production

The tasks involved in programme production include:

- producing audio-visual course materials;
- developing and applying communication technology strategies in distance education;
- developing approaches to integrate communication technologies into existing training programmes;
- undertaking pilot projects in the application of new technologies to improve education, training, and the quality of delivery;
- consulting in education communication systems and technologies;
- expanding the infrastructure for training and delivery in distance education;
- developing high quality course materials for media studies;
- providing an audio-visual library and resource centre; and
- marketing and selling EMPC-IGNOU products and facilities.

Media education

At present, the EMPC offers a one-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication.

The following additional programmes are under development:

- Diploma in Audio-Video Technology;
- Certificate in Audio Programme Production;

- Certificate in Videography; and
- Certificate in Video Editing.

The following short-term or weekend courses have been planned as an open school:

- ‘Art of Video Presentation’;
- ‘Interview Techniques for Television’;
- ‘TV Studio Lighting Techniques’; and
- ‘Evaluation of Educational Television Programmes’.

Research

The EMPC conducts the following research tasks:

- regular feedback studies on programme use; and
- specially designed studies to assess quality, content, and impact are undertaken from time to time.

Facilities

The facilities available at EMPC include:

- Two large video studios equipped with multi-camera set-ups, ENG beta SP camcorders, edit suites, Quantel Paint Box, audio studios with digital audio cassette format equipped with eight-track recording facility, audio dubbing suite, audio edit suites with multi-format editing facility, duplication facilities, including format transfers and high speed audio cassette duplication, audio-visual library with more than 564 video and 646 audio cassettes of curriculum-based programmes.
- The Training and Development Communication Channel, which is a teleconferencing facility comprising a studio with teaching end and up-linking for two-way audio and one-way video through INSAT-2A on the Extended C band being offered jointly with the Indian Space Research Organisation. Presently 23 receiver terminals located all over the county are linked to the teaching-end studio. Another 135 locations have been identified. This facility is being used for counselling and teaching students as well as providing orientation to regional centre personnel.

The system configuration of the Training and Development Communication Channel is as follows: the teaching-end studio (195 square metres and located in the Sanchar Kendra complex) is equipped with two cameras on tripods and a third camera set up as a caption scanner. Audio and video signals from the control room are fed to the Transportable Remote Area Communications Terminal for up-linking to the INSAT-2A satellite. Direct reception sets are located at state open universities, resource centres, and a few remote study centres, as well as at other user institutions. The return communication is through telephone lines and fax.

Services

The services EMPC offers include:

- producing audiovisuals;
- broadcasting and telecasting through national channels;
- teleconferencing;
- conducting research in educational media;
- providing training in media production, research, and technical operations; and
- offering short-term courses and workshops in script writing, presentation techniques, videography, and technical operations.

Output

So far, EMPC's output includes:

- a total of 606 videos and 659 audios to date;
- about 80 to 100 days of live teleconferences, conducted per year by various schools of as well as other users through the Training and Development Communication Channel; and
- regular feedback reports on data gathered pertaining to the utilisation of the teleconferencing.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- During the preparation of audio-visual materials, EMPC works with academics in developing audio-visual productions. The academics concentrate predominantly on the print materials and consequently the audio-visual component is often only a supplementary input of the course materials. The strengths of audio-visual media are yet to be fully explored.
- Greater integration of audio-visuals into print materials in the course materials is being attempted in programmes.
- Greater interaction with counsellors and facilitating their utilisation of audio-visual materials, encouraging students and counsellors to use them as part of the learning system.

Implementing quality assurance

The quality of EMPC programmes is assured through:

- training of technical and programme staff
- preview sessions; and
- increasing interaction at the concept development stage.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Teleconferencing through the Training and Development Communication Channel. The response of students at weekends is more than weekdays when students are not usually available at the study centres. Certain courses have more active responses (for example, those in the School of Nursing and the MBA programme).

Instructional design and production for distance education

- Instructional design essentially comprises of ‘talking heads’ with few print graphics and is more easily accepted by experts. They are yet to experiment with other flexible interactive formats. The cassette mode of audio-visual materials production is yet to evolve.

Learner support systems

- Access to modes of delivery such as lending library system needs to be strengthened.
- Quicker production and timely delivery system are necessary.

The most important issue: Using and integrating media in distance education through the Training and Development Communication Channel

IGNOU has adopted the multimedia approach to reaching out to its student population. A variety of modes, including print, audio and video, face-to-face counselling, as well as mass media are being adapted. The EMPC produces the curricula-based audio-visual programmes that are distributed to more than 256 study centres located all over the country. In addition, they are broadcast or telecast over the national network three times a week in regularly allotted time slots.

Yet a need for greater interactivity is always felt. The Training and Development Communication Channel at IGNOU has added a new dimension, striving to enhance learning by serving as a critical communication bridge. It helps create a ‘virtual classroom’ environment conducive to real-time interaction, lateral learning, immediacy in communications, and participatory decision-making.

The Training and Development Communication Channel has been in operation since 1993. It is a two-way audio, one-way video teleconferencing facility through INSAT-2A on the Extended C-Band offered jointly with the Indian Space Research Organisation. The teaching end is at EMPC-IGNOU, while about 23 receiver ‘nodes’ are located at all state open universities, regional centres, and a few remote study centres. Efforts are underway to set up at least another 135 nodes in the near future. Other ‘user’ institutions such as the All India Management Association, State Bank of India, and National Dairy Development Board have set up 200 receiver nodes of their own. Other major institutional users include the National Open School, National Centre for Education Research and Training (NCERT) the state governments of Karnataka and Gujarat, the Department of Women and Children, the Department of Electronics, and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

Training functions

IGNOU regularly uses the Training and Development Communication Channel for telecounselling and extended counselling with student groups, and for training resource and study centre counsellors and co-ordinators. Different schools at IGNOU are evolving their own strategies in utilising this facility based on the volume of enrolment in their academic programme, duration of the course, profile of the student groups, and availability of experts.

Other user institutions have put the facility to a variety of uses; for example, the All India Management Association conducts regular classes, and the National Open School and the National Centre for Education Research and Training conduct training sessions for their regional functionaries. The Department of Women and Children launched a popular social welfare programme 'Indira Mahila Yojana', to enable all concerned at the state, district, and village levels to interact with the minister in Delhi.

Response

Regular feedback from the Training and Development Communication Channel's receiver nodes is being sought and available data shows that there have been extremely good responses in some of IGNOU's academic programmes in Management, Nursing, Journalism and Mass Communication, Panchayati Raj, and Tourism, and in most sessions held by other institutions such as those in the Department of Women and Child and the NCERT], wherein a lot of participatory processes were planned into the sessions and sufficient advance notice given. Most students of IGNOU seem to prefer after-office hours and weekend sessions. A feedback research study to assess the utilisation of the teleconferencing system by the student sessions is being undertaken and will be completed by year-end.

Other aspects need study, including the policy, technical, co-ordination, and administrative components, as well as the academic, research, and production components that in one way or the other influence the success of the sessions. Better co-ordination at the headquarters, school, EMPC, Indian Space Research Organisation, and resource and study centre levels are being fine tuned. With resources becoming an additional but critical criteria, efforts are underway to balance in-house use with external use, to make it an economically viable activity. However, there is great scope for improvement in the utilisation of the facility.

Strengths

Technical: The Training and Development Communication Channel is a unique facility using modern satellite-based communication technology. It is eminently suited for mass training simultaneously and cost effective.

Learner content: The Training and Development Communication Channel can improve the quality of training as top level experts could be involved. The asynchronous mode of communication is also possible through recording sessions at the teaching and learning ends and using them in other teaching and learning situations.

Shortcomings

Technical: Due to the poor condition of the telecommunication network in the country, the desired quality and level of interaction is affected. The receiver network is still in the process of expansion.

Learner content: From an academic viewpoint, the audio-visual component, including the Training and Development Communication Channel, is not a mandatory part of the students' learning package. The optional and supplementary status accorded for various reasons results in it being given lower priority by the schools and students. They are yet to adapt fully to utilising the technology-aided visual medium with adequate graphic support. They also lack sufficient advance planning of content. The high rate of technology obsolescence is also adding to the problem. A lack of adequate co-ordination among the various departments involved delayed information flow, affecting attendance at the sessions.

Students are faced with mainly logistic problems in attending the sessions as most are working or live at long distances from the venue.

National Open School: The School that Made a Difference

Prepared by:

Professor Mohan B. Menon

Brief description of the programme

The National Open School (NOS) was set up in 1989 as an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Its objective is to provide continuing and developmental education through distance and open learning to all those outside the formal education system. With a multimedia package of self-instructional print materials, audio-visual support, and face-to-face teaching, NOS has a strong and effective network of about 800 academic, vocational, and special (for disabled and disadvantaged target groups) study centres all over India and the Middle East. The study centres perform a variety of functions, including admitting students, supplying learning materials to learners, providing and evaluating assignments, conducting personal contact classes, and organising laboratory, workshop, and other practical experiences. The special features of open learning in NOS include freedom to choose subjects according to one's needs, interests, and abilities; no upper age limit; course credit accumulation over a period of five years; academic and vocational courses offered separately and in combination; transfer of credits from other national boards; and use modern communication and information technologies.

The academic courses NOS offers include the following:

- the 'Foundation Course', equivalent to grade 8, which serves as a bridge course for joining the secondary level programme;
- the 'Secondary Education Course', leading to the Secondary School Certificate (O level);
- the 'Senior Secondary Education Course', leading to the Senior Secondary School Certificate (A level);
- open vocational education at basic, elementary, secondary, and senior secondary levels;
- life enrichment and continuing education courses, addressed to the general public and those in various area of work;
- the open basic education programme, aimed at providing continuing education to neo-literates 14 years and older; and
- open elementary education, for the benefit of school-age children who are not attending school.

NOS has a diverse student profile, with learners ranging in age from 14 to 89 years, distributed throughout the country. About 94,000 students were enrolled in 1996–97, which increased to an annual enrolment of more than 110,000 students in 1997–98. Most of the students are young adults between the age of 18 and 24 years.

NOS is also an apex institution at the national level, and has the mandate to provide professional and technical support to state (and provincial) governments to set up and maintain quality in the state open schools.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- Managing flexibility without affecting the quality of instructional organisation has been a major problem considering the variety of target groups and wide geographical distribution.
- Managing the instructional experiences provided in 800 study centres, which are formal institutions accredited by NOS, is another major issue.

Implementing quality assurance

- While it has been reasonably possible to maintain quality in instructional inputs, it is difficult to ensure that quality is maintained in contact sessions and practical classes.
- As a large number of part-time tutors (more than 8,000) are involved in organising learning support to students, developing the necessary competencies required for the personal contact programme and counselling in them has been difficult.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- NOS does not have production facilities and hence all audio-visual production is done on contract by production and post-production staff, resulting in quantitative and qualitative improvement in media production.
- NOS uses interactive technologies mainly through one-way video and two-way audio conferencing for orienting and training study centre staff. However, the use of interactive technologies for learning support has not been possible due to a lack of infrastructure at the receiving end.
- Audio and video programmes are used as supplementary input to the self-instructional print materials. They have not been integrated into the self-instructional print materials mainly because all learners may not have an access to them.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- Vocational courses vary considerably and are from various sectors of the economy. Developing curriculum and designing instructional strategies for vocational courses has not been easy.
- Flexible instructional designs for different categories of target groups is necessary in the Indian context. Learners with various types of disabilities and social disadvantages require modification in instructional design and learning materials.

Learner support systems

- The use of suitable pedagogy in the personal contact programmes has not been easy, mainly because teachers are from formal schools and are unacquainted with distance education methodology.

The most important issue: Using and integrating media in distance education

NOS caters to the educational needs of a large number of clientele groups who have been out of the formal schools for one reason or another: social, economic, or geographical disadvantages, or physical and mental disabilities. In order to provide quality education to all these groups in a large country like India, the integration of media is extremely important. However, due to many problems, the major component of the instructional system has been self-instructional print materials distributed to students supported by contact classes and practical work arranged at study centres. Use of media in the system has been marginal for many reasons:

- NOS, which was established in 1989, emphasised three main aspects of the print materials. The Media Unit under the Academic Department was visualised only to co-ordinate production of audio-visual programmes using outside contract producers and post-production staff. The media unit developed no further during the eight years NOS has been in existence. At the moment, NOS is looking for funding from international agencies to set up a temporary production facility as internal funding for production infrastructure will not be forthcoming.
- NOS has been using facilities available with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) for one-way video and two-way audio conferencing using the Indian communication satellites INSAT-2A and INSAT-2C. The receiving facilities available in the IGNOU regional centres are also hired by NOS. The use has been mainly to orient and train co-ordinators and tutors in the 800 study centres of NOS. This has been extremely successful; however, the facility has not always been available as many institutions are making use of it. NOS is planning to provide about 10 receiving facilities in Delhi and surrounding areas very soon. NOS has about 120 study centres in this region and enrolls about 35,000 students annually. It plans to start academic counselling and tutoring using the up-link facility and the proposed receiving facilities.
- NOS produces about 60 audio-visual programmes for its secondary (O level) and senior secondary (A level) courses. These programmes are all supplementary and not integrated into the self-instructional print materials. During the instructional design of NOS courses it was assumed that not all students would have access to audio-visual programmes and hence the self-instructional print materials were planned to be developed as complete and self-contained from the learning point of view. Such an approach to design can be changed only after ensuring that all students can either watch or listen to video and audio programmes in the study centres or that these are widely broadcast.
- NOS has approached Doordarshan (Indian National Television) for broadcast time, but unsuccessfully. Alternatively, the ministries of Human Resource Development and Information and Broadcasting are planning to launch a dedicated educational television channel, initially through a cable network and subsequently through

terrestrial transmission], using Doordarshan's low-power transmitters. It is expected that NOS, as well as other educational institutions in the country, will get broadcast time for its programmes. However, if this broadcast channel is available only through a cable network its access will be considerably limited. Most of the villages and small towns in India do not have a cable network facility and even in urban areas it is limited to only well-to-do families. Nevertheless, NOS is increasing production, contracting individual producers and institutions so that a substantial number of video programmes are available.

- NOS is also initiating an Indian Open Schooling Network using the Internet. This network will be linked with The Commonwealth of Learning's Commonwealth Electronic Network for School Education. The Indian Open Schooling Network will provide access to the Internet for all schools and students, who register for a nominal fee and take advantage of information updates in school subjects, career information, and, subsequently, on-line NOS courses.

University of Nairobi

Distance Education Teachers' Programme

Prepared by:

J. O. Odumbe

Brief description of the programme

The College of Education and External Studies distance education teachers' programmes started in 1967 with primary teachers' certificate courses and later, in 1986, a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree programme was introduced, which eventually replaced the certificate programmes. In 1996, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) was introduced. Currently the college operates a dual mode programme. The admission to the bachelor's programme is by qualification in the national examinations, while admission to the diploma programme is on the basis of a recognised first degree with at least two teaching subjects. The bachelor's programme takes a minimum of six years, while the diploma programme takes two years. Both programmes are offered by the Department of Educational Studies in the Faculty of External Studies.

The learning system uses specially developed print materials as the main medium of instruction, supported by audio cassettes, audio teleconferencing, and limited face-to-face tutorials of up to two weeks' duration, conducted three times in each academic year. The assessment in these programmes is continual through home written and timed tests as well as end-of-year examinations.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- Justifying regulations that provide for flexibility to students.
- Justifying payments for the services rendered by the staff from the internal departments to the Department of Education Studies.

Implementing quality assurance

- Allowing sufficient time to field test materials before production for students.
- Budgeting for the cost of transporting university staff for face-to-face tuition to remote study centres instead of using local staff, who are not well received by students.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Training students to use each medium appropriately for the purpose it is intended.
- Allowing increased costs to the students and the institution.

Instructional design and production

- Overriding the initial reluctance of writers to accept and see the need for developing materials in the distance education format of presentation, which they felt was too much ‘spoon feeding’.
- Providing resources and time to develop all the materials within the workshop setting, especially for undergraduate and post-graduate materials that need more reference and consultation of sources.
- Encouraging writers to work within the deadlines, especially when there is no lead time.

Learner support systems

- Identifying and developing staff with the right skills, approaches, and attitudes to provide adequate counselling and tutorial services at the study centres.
- Standardising the distribution of infrastructure and learning resources, variations of which create disparity and difficulty to students.
- Providing time and opportunity for adequate individual attention.

The most important issue: Providing guidance and face-to-face tutorial services

These learner support issues are closely connected to quality assurance issues. Apart from helping in the learning process, learner support services also reduce isolation, and sustain or create motivation and confidence to students.

To provide the decentralised tutorial services that play a major role in learner support, the faculty identified tutors from the teacher colleges and universities and organised training for them on tutoring in the distance education system. Enough tutors in each subject were found for all 10 study centres in Kenya. Out of two one-week training sessions conducted for the tutors, a tutors’ handbook was developed and made available to all the tutors. It became a useful guide for briefing new tutors who joined later to replace drop-outs.

When the actual tutoring started, some students were tutored by the university’s course lecturers while others were tutored by college tutors. In some subjects the students felt that those being tutored by course lecturers were advantaged. The feeling became so strong that eventually course lecturers and writers were taken around to each study centre in turn, but this approach became too expensive for the institution and too demanding for individual lecturers.

The regional tutorials were discontinued and instead the residential schools were intensified. Regional tutorials were always presented by course lecturers and have been acceptable to students, who often travel long distances to attend and expect a satisfactory learning opportunity.

For general counselling, the faculty uses resident lecturers who are stationed at six extramural centres in the country. However, these centres do not serve low population density and remote parts of the country; plans are underway to increase the distribution of extramural centres to cover most of the country.

A second move which has been undertaken to provide constant support is by installing audio teleconferencing with eight receiving stations. This technology enables the use of course lecturers throughout the country without strain on their time. This arrangement was made possible by assistance from The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), but budgetary arrangements have been inadequate to sustain it.

The third move has been to prepare students for effective tutorials by encouraging them to read the study materials and identify issues they would like the tutor or course lecturer to explain. As well, at the beginning of a residential school, each student is given a briefing sheet that outlines the objectives and strategies to be used during each specific residential session. This advance information tends to make the students more active participants who do not expect lectures but focus on identified issues.

Last, the part-time tutorial staff and the core staff have been encouraged to allow time for personal attention to students outside class.

University of Nairobi

Prepared by:

Judith W. Kamau

Brief description of the programme

The External Degree Programme of the University of Nairobi is conducted in the Faculty of External Studies, College of Education and External Studies.

The establishment of the External Degree Programme of the University of Nairobi in 1986 followed two feasibility studies in 1976 and 1983, which established the need and relevance of such a programme in Kenya. The External Degree Programme was set up to upgrade both professional and academic qualifications of secondary school teachers who had trained to teach the first two classes of secondary school but who, due to a shortage of staff, found themselves teaching O level and A level classes in the secondary school curriculum. Through distance education these teachers would receive in-service training without leaving their families and as they continued to perform their duties. Of the 600 candidates who were selected and admitted to the programme from more than 3,000 applicants, 504 registered for different subjects in the External Bachelor of Education (Arts) programme.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

The university with its six colleges is a dual mode institution. The fact that the External Degree Programme operates within a dual mode system has its own inherent problems. The programme has a core of academic staff who serve full-time as subject co-ordinators and are in charge of a group of subjects. This core staff, comprised of subject experts, editor, radio and audio lecturer, and a graphic artist, identify, train, and supervise part-time staff, who are engaged to write, review, and edit instructional materials. The radio and audio lecturer, editor, graphic artist, and printer are in charge of the production and distribution of instructional materials under the supervision of the chair of the Department of External Degrees and the dean of the Faculty of External Studies. Both the chair and the dean answer to the principal of the college, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, and the Vice-Chancellor, in that hierarchy.

The department and its core staff perform duties similar to those of a publishing house. The subject co-ordinators provide academic guidance and counselling to students during residential sessions and also by correspondence. Each subject co-ordinator handles part-time staff in a whole subject area (for example, history), which constitutes a department of its own in the conventional internal programmes of the university. In this arrangement, part-time staff are paid for their services on a piece work basis. The costs of running the programme are met from government subsidy, student fees (the programmes run on a cost recovery basis), and from the sale of

materials to other institutions such as the Open University of Tanzania; Makerere University, Uganda; and the University of Zimbabwe.

The learning system of the External Degree Programme has been mainly the print materials supported by audio and video cassettes, face-to-face tutorials, and supervised teaching practice, with students studying specially developed print materials in each subject. During the four residential sessions held at the University of Nairobi each year in August, November, January, and April, during school holidays and at the six regional study centres which are spread in six major towns, writers and subject specialists introduce course materials to students, revise course content, and mark assignments and give timed tests that form part of student assessment as provided for in the regulations.

The regional study centres are managed by resident lecturers who are core staff within the External Degree Programme.

Management challenges

The management of the External Degree Programme within a dual mode institution has presented a major challenge.

To start with, the students are external. Where choices must be made, the needs of internal students come first and those of external students come second. This problem is particularly common in the sharing of resources. If the timetable of internal programmes is slightly interrupted, for example, then the residential sessions for external students, which are held at the university where accommodation facilities and tutors are based, must be rescheduled. These interruptions sometimes mean re-scheduling supervised tests and examination schedules, causing frustration to students and part-time staff.

The distance education mode of delivery is not quite understood by senior management. The programme managers on the ground have often found it difficult to explain and justify, for example, expending tuition revenues on the production and reproduction (or reprinting and dubbing) of study materials because the term 'tuition' has a different meaning in the conventional mode.

When the programme started in 1986, students attended regional field tutorials once a month, twelve months a year, in addition to three residential sessions at the University of Nairobi. Although very popular with students, the field tutorials were discontinued in 1990 due to the high costs of paying the field tutors and the accompanying supervision constraints due to limited core staff. However, the hours from the field tutorials were recouped into the residential sessions so that students still have the same number of tutor contact hours per subject. While senior management are convinced about the value of frequent student–tutor physical contact, it is difficult to raise funds to pay for the monthly accommodation and transport bills field tutors incur.

Instructional design and production for distance education

Materials development has been another problem area. When the programme was launched in August 1986, only two units (booklets) in Education were written and ready to go to students in a 10-subject External Degree Programme. Consequently, the other materials were developed as students waited, causing frustration to many. By

the time students were ready for their first-year examinations in 1988 only 388 out of the registered 504 students sat for their exams. By 1990 the programme had only 260 regular students who went on to graduate in 1994. This high drop-out rate was partly due to a lack of study materials to maintain and sustain student motivation and progress through the programme because students lacked credibility about the sustainability of the programme. Also, materials development was delayed due to low motivation on the part of writers, reviewers, and editors, which resulted from delayed payment for work completed because of the long part-time claims scrutinisation process by the finance department. After the claims were approved for payment the amount due was subjected to super scale taxation as required by law, leaving the part-time staff dissatisfied with the very small sum of money earned from writing course materials. As a result, the External Degree Programme lost many good and trained part-time staff, thus prolonging the already protracted materials development process.

Possible solutions

Problem	Suggested Solution
External Degree Programme in a dual mode institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is need for some degree of autonomy for the progress of the programme. • Management is often too conservative, leaning more towards the conventional mode. They should be sensitised about the needs of external students. • Measures of full-time students equivalent contact hours should be based on the distance mode requirements rather than on on-campus procedures that do not interface with a distance education programme.
Materials development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no need for lead time to develop or acquire ready to use course materials. • A programme that starts with limited study material should wait for the materials to roll off the press before accepting students.
Processing of part-time claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid delays, the External Degree Programme requires its own budget to process part-time claims and to procure printing and other materials required for the production of study materials. Of course, this budget would be subject to both internal and external audit as is

Problem	Suggested Solution
	the rest of the university.
Learner support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support services are a vital link between students and the institution providing the programme. • Field tutorials should not be substituted with anything else as they provide the maintenance function for learners who are isolated from the providing institution, their tutors, and from fellow learners. • Logistics for implementation costs, who will bear them, and the availability of physical facilities and field tutors should be planned well in advance in order to limit drawbacks after the programme is launched. • However, the programme has now come of age and the regional centres are now available. The arrangements on the ground seem to satisfy the needs of the students and programme providers adequately.

Conclusion

The External Degree Programme has been a real eye opener. Following successful completion and graduation of the first cohort of 260 students in December 1994, a second cohort of 1,500 students enrolled in August 1995 and the drop-out rate is negligible because most of the study materials required in the Bachelor of Education (Arts) course are now readily available. Study materials from this programme have helped expand education frontiers through distance education to other countries and other institutions in Kenya. In time there has been a cost benefit accrued from the study materials as different cohorts of students use the materials, thus reducing the unit costs substantially.

Massey University Women's Studies Programme Research for Social Change: A Third Year Compulsory Course

Prepared by:

Catherine Bray

Brief description of the programme

At Massey University, the Women's Studies Programme course 'Research for Social Change', compulsory in the third year, is designed to present information about feminist research for social change in Aotearoa (New Zealand). It weaves together three strands: explanation of research skills (methods); evaluation of research methods (methodology and epistemology); and description of particular New Zealand feminist research projects. Students are required to conduct research for social change and to evaluate published research.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- This one semester course is based on a similar course developed and delivered at Athabasca University in Canada. Therefore, the major planning consisted of translating from an open environment in which the students operate on their own timeline and are constrained only by the need to complete the project within six months, to a semestered environment in which a student cohort proceeds together and intermediate assignment deadlines are enforced. This translation resulted in changes to the instructional design, described below.

Implementing quality assurance

- Quality controls consist of normal standards of scholarship, adherence to university-wide key performance indicators, assessment by colleagues within women's studies, and student evaluations.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Delivery methods include post, telephone, and, where available to the students, e-mail.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- The most important design element to include in an upper year skills building course such as 'Research for Social Change' is the opportunity for the students to consult with tutors and other students about their projects as they complete their research. Production is print-based, on the Massey campus, using editorial and educational consultants.

Learner support systems

- Learner support systems include tutors, the international students' office, regional advisers, chaplaincy, disabilities office, English Language Centre, student counselling service, and the Massey University library. The Extramural Students' Society facilitates communication between students by mail and the Centre for University Extramural Studies organises optional regional gatherings for students and tutors.

The most important issue: Instructional design and production

In 1993 I developed Athabasca University's course Women's Studies 444 'Feminist Research Methodology'. This course has been successfully delivered to a small number of fourth year women's studies major Bachelor of Arts students each year. As part of my work at Massey University, I am designing a similar course for the Aotearoa environment. The lessons I have learned through this process include the following.

- Some of the classic material in the field of women's studies seems applicable in 'western' countries around the world. A canon has developed in women's studies as in other fields.
- As a consequence of the need to ground the course in the New Zealand experience, about 40 percent of the teaching materials are new.
- Instructional design is affected by the following differences:
 - Students usually pay for their phone calls to tutors at Massey but not at Athabasca.
 - There are intermediate assignment deadlines at Massey but none at Athabasca.
 - There are more international students at Massey.

Therefore, the study and administration guide at Massey must include more assistance with the process of learning (for example, precise information on note taking, sample quiz answers, more explicit grading guidelines).

Massey University is a 'dual mode' institution, which delivers its courses both extramurally and internally. Because of the more rapid production and revision of courses at Massey than at Athabasca, as well as on-campus teaching, there is less time for lecturers to devote to course writing, and the study guide therefore includes less by way of commentary. Where thoroughgoing synthesis are included in Athabasca study guides, Massey study guides contain shorter questions and commentaries. However, Massey texts and study guides can be more up-to-date because of the more rapid re-development of materials.

The dual mode institution allows the testing of materials in a classroom situation, prior to delivery at a distance, allowing the refinement of commentaries to be included in the study guide. However, distinctive components for extramural delivery must still be created, in keeping with the difference learning process.

University of Papua New Guinea Institute of Distance and Continuing Education

Prepared by:

Harold Markowitz

Brief description of the programme

Distance education began at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1974, with the establishment of the Department of Extension Studies. In 1994, the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) replaced Extension Studies, adopting a broader mission and new funding and reporting processes. Enrolment in the distance education programme has increased continuously in recent years, with growth in all programme areas and at each of the 15 distance education centres in the provinces and on the main campus in the National Capital District. The central activities are the Matriculation Programme (upper high school), the Diploma in Commerce Programme (two-year university diploma in accounting), the Bachelor of Education In-service Programme (for upgrading elementary teachers), and the Non-credit Programme (maths and English review). In 1996 there were approximately 16,000 course enrolments throughout Papua New Guinea (up from 4,000 in 1991), and, in 1997, enrolment is expected to show continued increases.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- A lack of planning for growth in distance education is a serious problem. The nation is growing at an annual rate that exceeds most other nations, yet the high school system has increased its intake only slightly by building new schools and the university system has not increased its intake in several years. Increasing enrolments result from the increasing demand for distance education, and increasing enrolments also result from the opening of new centres and new courses, but due to national financial limitations the institution has had repeated cuts in staff and funding.

Using and integrating media

- Courses are based entirely on the printed page and tutoring, and no media have been introduced. The tropical environment and the lack of air conditioning results in prompt growth of mold on the few audio and video cassettes that have been obtained, soon making them unusable. There are no facilities for creating audio or video cassettes, no staffing or funds to do so, and equipment for playing cassettes exists only at a few centres (and then it is typically one machine in the director's office). Most centres have a computer for administrative use, but only in one centre are computers used for education.

The most important issue: The planning environment at the university

Guidelines for IDCE planning are derived primarily from three documents: The national higher education plan, the University of Papua New Guinea's five-year plan, and the plan for the institute. Though these documents assign our mission and provide the best and most comprehensive structure for our activities, problems with each limit their usefulness.

Both the national higher education plan and the University of Papua New Guinea's five-year plan have gone unrevised for several years, well beyond the period they were intended to cover, and thus they reflect the priorities and values of several years ago. An example of an outdated value is the advocacy of goals for IDCE enrolment growth that are so conservative that they were fully achieved six years ago. Current issues and the concerns of the nation and the university have not been woven into the structure of these documents. Examples here are the failure to address the massive change in teacher education and new educational standards, and the failure to reflect major changes in educational emphasis growing out of the restructuring of our national and provincial governments.

Lacking any other guidance, the guidelines provided by the higher education plan and the University of Papua New Guinea's five-year plan have been closely reflected in the plan for the institute. Indeed, the rationale for operation as an institute is presented in the national higher education plan. The national plan also provides the framework within which growth and development of the institute is expected to occur. IDCE has continued to take the derived plan for the institute very seriously, particularly since it has been endorsed by the University Planning Committee, the Academic Board, and the University Council. This document was the basis for recurrent requests for increased staffing and financial resources in the past three years, without any results. In fact, the IDCE central office's annual budget of 140,000 kina in 1994 has been reduced to 23,000 kina in 1997, which is the equivalent of about one United States dollar per course enrolment. Over the past six years we have repeatedly proposed that a standard be adopted for staffing (most recently suggesting a ratio of 1,000 students to each academic, which if accepted would double our staff) but no action has ever been taken. It must be said that there has been no detectable support for the planning process as a basis for resource allocation in the university.

The plan for the institute contains our view of the IDCE's future, and as such it is our guideline for mission accomplishment. For example, in the years ahead our priorities for growth in certain areas and reduction in others will be as outlined in the plan. Similarly, later this year when IDCE occupies the new building constructed for it by the European Union, and when IDCE eventually expands its staff and incorporates new media, the utilisation of these resources will be as described in the plan. If and when the national higher education plan or the university five-year plan is revised in the future, the plan for the institute will then be revised to assure the compatibility and support that is required in an effective planning environment. We have elected to be true to our assigned mission of bringing increasing educational opportunity to a nation that desperately needs it. By franchising our courses to private institutions and by raising and retaining registration fees we have assured operating funds for essential IDCE activities at the main campus. Provinces usually provide budgets for university centres, but some provinces have virtually no money and most centres are in poverty.

We have begun a planned reduction in non-credit (remedial maths and English) courses, reducing non-credit enrolments to offset some of the growth in matriculation and degree programmes. Using collected fees we have recently hired two new staff members, though we may not be able to retain them as the university does not provide benefits such as housing because they are not a part of the regular establishment.

In 1997 an estimated 62 percent of all students in the university will be in the distance education programme, but IDCE has only six academics and two administrators on the main campus and a maximum of two persons at each centre. Funding, already sub-marginal, is expected to decrease by five percent each year for the next three years, disregarding inflation. Staffing has been cut, people who leave are not replaced, and it is difficult to remain confident of our future ability to grade papers much less revise courses. We are at a crossroads, with rapidly increasing demand and massive expectations, and no agreed-upon plan for achieving our assigned goals.

University of the Philippines Open University

Prepared by:

P. Eulalia

L. Saplala

Brief description of the programme

The University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) is one of six autonomous units of the University of the Philippines system. All the other autonomous units operate in the residential mode; the UPOU alone of the six units is mandated to be the open and distance education institution of the University of the Philippines system. It has its own set of officials headed by a chancellor and it has its own budget. Unlike the other autonomous units, however, it does not have its own faculty. Recognising the rich human resources of the University of the Philippines system, the University of the Philippines Board of Regents in its resolution establishing the University of the Philippines Open University on February 23, 1995, directed the UPOU to draw from the expertise and experience of the University of the Philippines faculty in all the autonomous units.

In each of the autonomous units of the UP system, the UPOU has set up a School for Distance Education headed by a dean. The deans work very closely with the autonomous units, where they are located to develop programmes and courses to be delivered by distance mode by the UPOU. To guide the faculty in developing the course materials for the programmes, the Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services (OASIS) was established under the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Delivery of instruction is administered by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Student Support Services. The UPOU operates its distance education programmes through learning centres distributed throughout the country. These centres are located either in a UP campus or in a non-UP institution, including other state universities and colleges, high schools, or even in government offices which are willing to work with the UPOU as co-operating institutions. Each learning centre is under the charge of a local co-ordinator who works part-time for the UPOU, as do the locally hired tutors who may be members of the faculty of the co-operating institution.

While autonomous, the UPOU is not a stand-alone institution since it works very closely with the faculty of the other autonomous units, both in programme and course development and in the delivery of instruction.

The University of the Philippines plays a critical role in national development, particularly in the improvement of the quality of the country's human resources and the ability to bring about technological changes that would make for a globally competitive economy. However, the University of the Philippines' instructional output has been limited by the bounds of conventional instructional modes. The UPOU

can play a significant role in increasing this output by developing open and distance education programmes which employ modern communication technology for their delivery. These programmes are expected to overcome barriers to access to higher education brought about by geographical constraints, family and work-related responsibilities, and the rigid structures of conventional education.

Only two years old this year 1997, the UPOU now offers eight diploma programmes, six masters' programmes, and one Ph.D. programme. It is developing an undergraduate programme, an associate in arts. It operates 20 learning centres in the country and one abroad, and will set up several more this year in the Philippines, and possibly another one abroad. While employing less than 70 full-time staff, the UPOU has a wider reach in the country than any other educational institution, including the other autonomous units of the University of the Philippines system.

Academic programmes

Academic programmes of UPOU offered in collaboration with the different units of the autonomous universities are set out in the following table.

Programme	Collaborator
Diploma in Science Teaching	<i>College of Arts and Sciences, UP Los Banos</i>
Diploma in Agriculture	<i>College of Agriculture, UP Los Banos</i>
Diploma in Research and Development Management	<i>College of Economics and Management, UP Los Banos</i>
Diploma or Master of Social Work	<i>College of Social Work and Community Development, UP Diliman</i>
Diploma or Master in Language Studies Education	<i>College of Education, UP Diliman</i>
Diploma or Master in Social Studies Education	<i>College of Education, UP Diliman</i>
Diploma in Mathematics Teaching	<i>College of Arts and Sciences, UP Los Banos</i>
Diploma in Computer Science	<i>College of Arts and Sciences, UP Los Banos</i>
Master in Public Health	<i>College of Public Health, UP Manila</i>
Master of Hospital Administration	<i>College of Public Health, UP Manila</i>
Master of Arts in Nursing	<i>College of Nursing, UP Manila</i>
Ph.D. in Education	<i>College of Education, UP Diliman</i>

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- Since the UPOU does not have its own faculty, it must win the support and co-operation of the faculties in the different autonomous units. Because these faculties carry the full load of work in their own autonomous units, work for the UPOU may not be their priority.
- It is important to be able to identify the right co-operating institution where the learning centre is to be located. Since a local co-ordinator and local tutors will be hired for student support, care must be taken in choosing the right people who will work with the UPOU in meeting its objectives.

Implementing quality assurance

- UPOU designates a quality circle course writing team. Finding the best teacher who also knows how to write modules for distance education may be a problem. It is not easy to find the other members of the course writing team — such as the instructional designer, the reader, the editor, and so on — who possess both the qualifications and the time to devote to the development of course materials.
- The other aspect of quality assurance is in the delivery of instruction. Our students go to the learning centres about once a month or about four times in a term to attend study sessions, submit assignments, and sit for examinations. The success of these study sessions depends upon the competence of the tutors. When they are hired, they undergo training in the art of facilitating study sessions and in the content of the course that they will facilitate. While tutors are hired on the strength of their background in the area in which they will serve as tutors, there is no guarantee that they will live up to expectations.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Print is the major medium in the UPOU's distance education courses. However, the university has begun to develop courses for on-line offering using the Internet, and video lessons for broadcast (having obtained a time slot in a major television channel), or for learning centres. The cost in terms of staffing requirements, equipment, and other production aspects is very high. Video conferencing, for example, is very expensive. High costs will continue to be a limiting factor in the use of technology.
- The plus factor in the use of technology is that, as in the case of television, its audience reach is very wide. The UPOU would be serving not only its own students, it would be helping to bring educational programmes into the homes of many Filipinos.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- The training of the faculty in course development is a continuing programme of the UPOU, but it has a limited number of people competent enough to handle the training programmes and to shepherd the faculty through the difficult task of writing course materials. As it is, development and production is still on a very

small scale, but when the number of students and the number of programmes increase, as they increase every year, the UPOU, with its limited funds, will have to find ways of coping with the volume of work.

Learning support systems

- The lack of a communication system linking the learning centres with the UPOU offices hampers the efficient delivery of student support. An audio conferencing system will soon be installed but it will not yet cover all the learning centres. A telephone network to include Internet use is being designed in co-operation with a private service provider.
- There is an acute need for library resources. Orders for foreign publications take weeks, maybe even months to arrive. Of course funding is a problem because UPOU must provide library resources not to one or two centres but to 20 or later 30 or perhaps even 50 centres.
- With the lack of communication facilities, faculty or tutors are not within easy reach of the students. To meet a tutor, students must go to the learning centre, which may not be close to home and will require the student to travel some distance. While counselling services are available, they are on a very limited scale. Aside from the lack of communication facilities, the tutors and even the learning centre co-ordinator serve only on a part-time basis and have a limited time to serve the students.

The most important issue: Planning and managing distance education

Because of its unique structure in the University of the Philippines system, the UPOU is autonomous but at the same time must work very closely with each of the other autonomous units. Administratively, this situation may give rise to rather complex procedures. Papers must be routed not only through one set of officials within an autonomous unit but as well through the other autonomous unit whose faculty are involved in distance education programmes. The UPOU finds itself therefore involved with five other sets of officials in addition to its own officials, which can become very complicated. Programmes must be approved in the autonomous unit from which they originate, and then go through the UPOU machinery. The same is true of appointments of course writers, appointments to course teams, and appointments as faculty-in-charge of courses offered by the UPOU; even the offering of courses must be synchronised with the autonomous unit colleges since faculty credit load must be cleared with their deans.

Undoubtedly, the UPOU has increased the workload of the faculty in the residential colleges by adding distance education responsibilities. Conflict therefore may arise in terms of which takes priority: work for the mother unit (the residential college), or work for the UPOU. While the faculty may be willing to put in their time for UPOU responsibilities, their administrators may believe otherwise and require that the mother units have first priority. When this happens, the UPOU of course finds itself in a difficult situation accomplishing the task to be done.

Solutions

Several approaches have been initiated to address the situation.

- To remove the issue of ownership of programmes and therefore of who can or should initiate any action with regard to programmes, the UPOU is embarking on using a different approach to programme and course development. UPOU will take a proactive stance and take the lead within and outside of the University of the Philippines system, and will seek to include those who have retired from active service in the university to help develop the programmes and instructional materials.
- Since serving in the programmes of the UPOU increases the load of the faculty in the other units, the UPOU must help the colleges of these units with funds to allow them to hire additional faculty for better distribution of workload.
- UPOU will start to hire its own faculty to serve as a core faculty for each programme. It will then have full-time academics to run its programme.

Open University of Sri Lanka

Prepared by:

B. Weerasinghe

Brief description of the programme

The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) was established in 1980 to provide greater access to higher learning for the employed and adults. Today it has an enrolment of nearly 20,000 students spread across three faculties of study: Engineering Technology, Humanities and Social Studies, and Natural Science. The programmes offered vary from one-year certificates and two-year diplomas, to three- and four-year degree programmes. Students can extend the duration of study at their convenience. OUSL also offers reading for post-graduate diplomas and degrees.

The distance education strategy involves the distribution to learners of study material in print, supplemented occasionally with audio cassettes. Limited video material is available for viewing at regional centres and study centres.

Regional centres are larger resource bases than study centres in terms of physical space, facilities, and staff availability. Currently four regional centres and 16 study centres are spread across the country. Day schools offer limited face-to-face interaction between staff and students at these centres. Laboratory facilities are more concentrated at the Colombo regional centre with limited access at other regional centres.

Student performance is assessed through continuous assessments and a final exam.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- The study programmes and their conduct are planned by individual faculties and implemented with the approval of the university Senate. Management of activities related to the conduct of programmes are done according to a master plan by the director of operations. The OUSL is currently formulating a three-year corporate plan to enhance planning and management.

Implementing quality assurance

- There has been no quality assurance system in place until recently. OUSL has now developed its own house style. The British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) Project to improve distance education at the OUSL (1996 to 1999) has both a material production and a desktop publishing component which, by its completion, would have quality assurance systems in place for study material in print. Quality assurance for audio-visual material is yet to be formulated. The Senate has approved recently a scheme to award merit points for audio-visual productions to teachers involved in their production, which would develop into a

quality assurance system. Currently, research surveys are being conducted to assess the quality of delivery mechanisms.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Yet to achieve a satisfactory level, the use of media in distance education is limited to regular workshops conducted for academic staff, which focus on the need to enhance print material with other media components and the need for integration. One drawback seems to be the availability of staff time for the exercise.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- OUSL has developed a manual called *Distance Writing: Bridging the Gap*, which guides lesson writers in important aspects of distance writing. However, the consensus is that OUSL material could improve both in instructional design and enhancement with media. The material production component of the ODA project may, within the next three years, contribute extensively to the transformation of existing material.

Learner support systems

- A guidebook distributed to students at registration now helps to induct students to the system of distance education at the OUSL. Further activities to orient students are being planned, including a video programme for student viewing at registration. Such orientation is crucial for success, especially for younger students. Student counselling is available easily for those who desire such help. The Regional Education Service (RES), functioning under a director, looks after the student support activities in the network of regional and study centres. RES provides facilities and staff to support student registration; issue course material; facilitate day schools, laboratory work, and continuous assessments and examinations; and provide library services and dormitory facilities for overnight stays at regional centres. Currently, a conscious effort is being made to improve student support at every level of operation. However, budgetary constraints and overload of the human network imposes certain restrictions in resolving issues as they surface.
- Activities related to the printing and dispatch of material are looked after by the director of operations. A new building complex for the university press and storage of material was nearing completion in 1997. Consequently, an upgrading of services in this area should result.

The most important issue: Using and integrating media in distance education

In the beginning, the majority of teachers at OUSL came from the conventional university system, their experiences rich in the use of print and face-to-face teaching. To most, use of other media components as well as distance writing itself has been an alien experience. The initial pressure to gather together course material to launch programmes in the early phase of development, within specified deadlines, had resulted in a first cycle of course material in need of much improvement to suit the distance mode. Adopting an appropriate 'media mix' had also suffered drawbacks for

the same reasons. Instructional design and media integration were at a low ebb. This scenario is apparently not unique to OUSL. Other institutions in the region and elsewhere have undergone similar experiences during their formative years.

With nearly 15 years of experience, in 1997 the OUSL has paused and is looking back with a hope of consolidating its future. In 1993, the government of Japan donated a US\$8.5 million project to establish a state-of-the-art audio-visual production centre. Since then the OUSL has been training academic staff in the use of audio-visuals to enhance study material. Nearly 100 academic staff have now been trained at several in-house workshops of one month's duration in which project work demands the completion of a print-related audio and a video programme. A long term Japanese International Cupertino Agency (JICA) expert has been helping the training for the last four years. However, the completion rate has been affected by the heavy workloads of academic staff who after their return from the workshop mostly fail to find time for media inputs. The OUSL at present has no staff positions comparable to 'producers' and depends on input by academic staff and a competent team of technical staff to carry out productions.

The university Senate has recently approved a merit point scheme to award merit points for audio-visual productions that would be considered as career promotion exercises for academic staff. This strategy to motivate staff participation in audio-visual productions is pending University Grants Commission approval at present. Its effectiveness in overcoming the constraints mentioned earlier is yet to be proven.

A positive outcome of all these activities is the awareness and consensus among academics that media components are very desirable to enhance learning. It is a personal belief that achieving this end in itself has been extremely important.

This is only a beginning. A longer journey waits to reach the goal of an adequate level of media component production to enhance all study material at OUSL.

Open University of Sri Lanka

Post-Graduate Diploma in Education Programme

Prepared by:

G. D. Lekamge

Brief description of the programme

The OUSL started the two-year Post-Graduate Diploma in Education Programme (PGDE) in 1980 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka. The main objective of the programme is to provide professional training for graduate teachers employed in government schools, pirtvenas (community schools) private schools, and teachers' colleges. A few years ago selection to the programme was based on teachers' seniority and the marks obtained in the qualifying test. Now it is open to all graduates of recognised universities.

The curriculum of the programme consists of nine components: eight theory subjects and one practical component. Students complete four theory subjects in each academic year as shown in the following table. Teaching practice, which is the only practical component of the programme, is arranged under the supervision of master teachers and carried out for eight to 10 weeks at the end of the second academic year.

The main medium of imparting instruction is print material. They are supported by occasional day schools, tutorials and a few audio and video programmes. In 1995–96, 3,200 students were enrolled in both Parts I and II of the programme. Several studies have been carried out by OUSL academics with the view of improving the quality of material and instruction, minimising drop-out rates, and increasing the effectiveness of the programme.

PGDE Programme — Part I Courses	PGDE Programme — Part II Courses
ESP 1305 — 'Principles of Education'	ESP 2305 — 'Teaching Practice'
ESP 1306 — 'Educational Psychology'	ESP 2306 — 'Techniques of Teaching'
ESP 1307 — 'Evaluation of Educational Outcomes'	ESP 2207 — 'Curriculum, School and Society'
ESP 1308 — 'Student Adjustment and Counselling'	ESP 2208 — 'Comparative Education and Educational Problems'
	ESP 2209 — 'Educational Administration and Management'

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- Monitoring and co-ordination of master teachers activities is difficult because of the large numbers involved (250 master teachers) and their placement in dispersed locations.
- Meeting schedules is difficult: even though the PGDE is a two-year programme, academic activities last for six months in each year. Therefore marking assignments and giving eligibility have always been delayed.

Implementing quality assurance

- Because of the involvement of large numbers and pressure put on meeting eligibility schedules, it is difficult to maintain quality in marking assignments. Discrepancies among marking examiners are noted.
- Updating material is not economical.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Audio-visual programmes are not popular among teacher trainees. They prefer face-to-face instructors to audio-visual programmes.
- Academic staff is heavily burdened with other activities (planning, management, writing, marking, and conducting day schools), so it is very difficult to find time to produce good quality audio-visual material.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- It is difficult to simplify material while maintaining the quality of teacher training.
- Academics who have worked in the conventional university system have little faith in distance methods.

Learner support systems

- Participation in day schools and tutorials has been limited due to personal difficulties and geographical barriers.
- Decentralisation of academic and other support is difficult due to lack of facilities.

The most important issue: Monitoring and co-ordinating teaching practice

The OUSL recruits nearly 250 master teachers from all over the country to conduct teaching practice during the second year of the programme. They are full-time employees of other institutions like government schools, teachers' colleges, training colleges, or technical colleges. Therefore they tend to maintain their own schedule of involvement in the distance education programme so that it will not affect their day-to-day activities. Due to the enrolment of large numbers and geographical barriers, proper monitoring and co-ordination procedures cannot be maintained. This situation has led to the following problems:

- variability in guidance;
- difficulty in meeting deadlines;
- poor quality of supervision and guidance;
- practical difficulties faced by the students; and
- negligence of the supervisory role (they tend to act as evaluators but not as supervisors).

Solutions

On the basis of recent research findings and the experience of academic staff of the Department of Education, the following procedures were launched as solutions to the above problems:

- conduct workshops and seminars for master teachers;
- conduct demonstration lessons for student teachers in small groups; and
- the significance accorded master teachers' evaluation was reduced from 50 percent to 30 percent and a decision was made to consider it a continuous assessment of teaching practice.

Suggestions were also made to allocate 10 to 15 master teachers to each academic member of the Department of Education to monitor their activities. However, many problems remain unsettled.

University of Tanzania

Prepared by:

Dr. Eginu M. Chale

Brief description of the programme

University status

The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) is a pioneering tertiary level distance education institution. It is the third public university in Tanzania, but with a difference.

The Open University of Tanzania was set up after a history of more than half a century following the adoption of open and distance education as a strategy of increasing access to education in Tanzania. It is against this experienced context that the university came to be established by Act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992. The Act became effective on March 1, 1993, and the activities of the university were inaugurated in January 1994 when the first Chancellor was installed.

The university is a forerunner not so much in adopting the multimedia distance education approach, for even conventional universities are increasingly becoming dual mode, but in having been set up constitutionally as a single mode university. Apart from being independent, it is meant to be innovative, comprehensive in its programmes, as well as exclusive in its use of distance education, as certified by the Higher Education Accreditation Council of Tanzania (1996).

Location, boundaries, and mission

The three public universities in Tanzania to date are meant to serve the whole of the United Republic of Tanzania with a total population of about 30 million (1988) spread within 245,000 square kilometres.

While efforts have been in progress to grant the Open University of Tanzania a permanent home, for expediency, it began in temporary offices let by another institution. Finding those offices eminently suitable, the university has scheduled them to become their permanent home. They are located in Msasani township in Kinondoni, which is about seven and one-half kilometres from the Dar es Salaam city centre.

Despite being headquartered in Dar es Salaam, the university's campus in practical terms needs to be conceived as the whole of Tanzania and beyond on account of its out-reach delivery provisions of distance education, namely, print, broadcast, and occasional face-to-face contact at study centres. Thus, in order to be accessed, the complete address of both the head office and the out-reach regional and study centres need to be known.

The university's objectives and functions as provided for in the Act are two pronged. On the one hand it must offer the opportunity for formal courses to youth and adults leading to pre-degree, degree, and post-graduate awards, and on the other hand, it must provide continuing (non-formal) education programmes which do not necessarily lead to awards or qualifications. It is thus open to all students 18 years and older and from all walks of life. The university serves mostly working adults with or without full-time employment where and when they wish and at a pace that suits individual needs.

Organisational structure, decision-making machinery, and academic processes

Although at face value the university's organisational structure is elusively similar to a campus-based university, in practical terms the Open University of Tanzania's organisational structure provided for a considerable administrative flexibility inherent in multimedia distance education. The organisational structure takes into account the central responsibility of providing high quality education through such processes as the development and production of course materials, technology, integration in teaching, their distribution and storage, and the delivery of back-up services. It thus has a dual structure: it is partly centralised and partly, if not largely decentralised through the establishment of regional and study centres. While this duality defines power relations between the headquarters and periphery, it also defines delivery processes: specifically, course development, media technology integration, publishing and production, pedagogy and teaching, and student services. All these processes need to be conceived as integral components. Two separate charts are provided to illustrate structural relations and processes.

Chart I

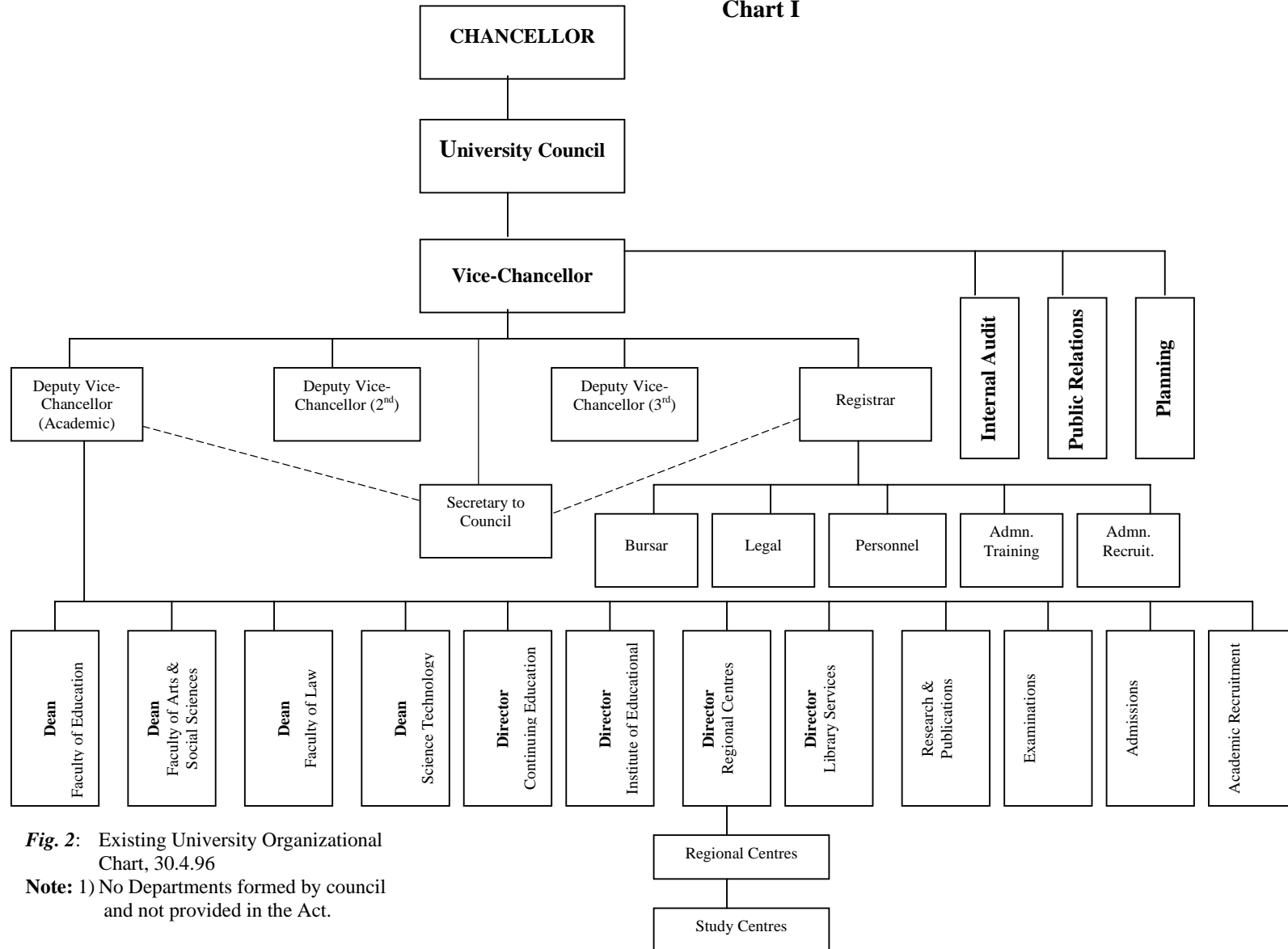


Fig. 2: Existing University Organizational Chart, 30.4.96

Note: 1) No Departments formed by council and not provided in the Act.

Chart II

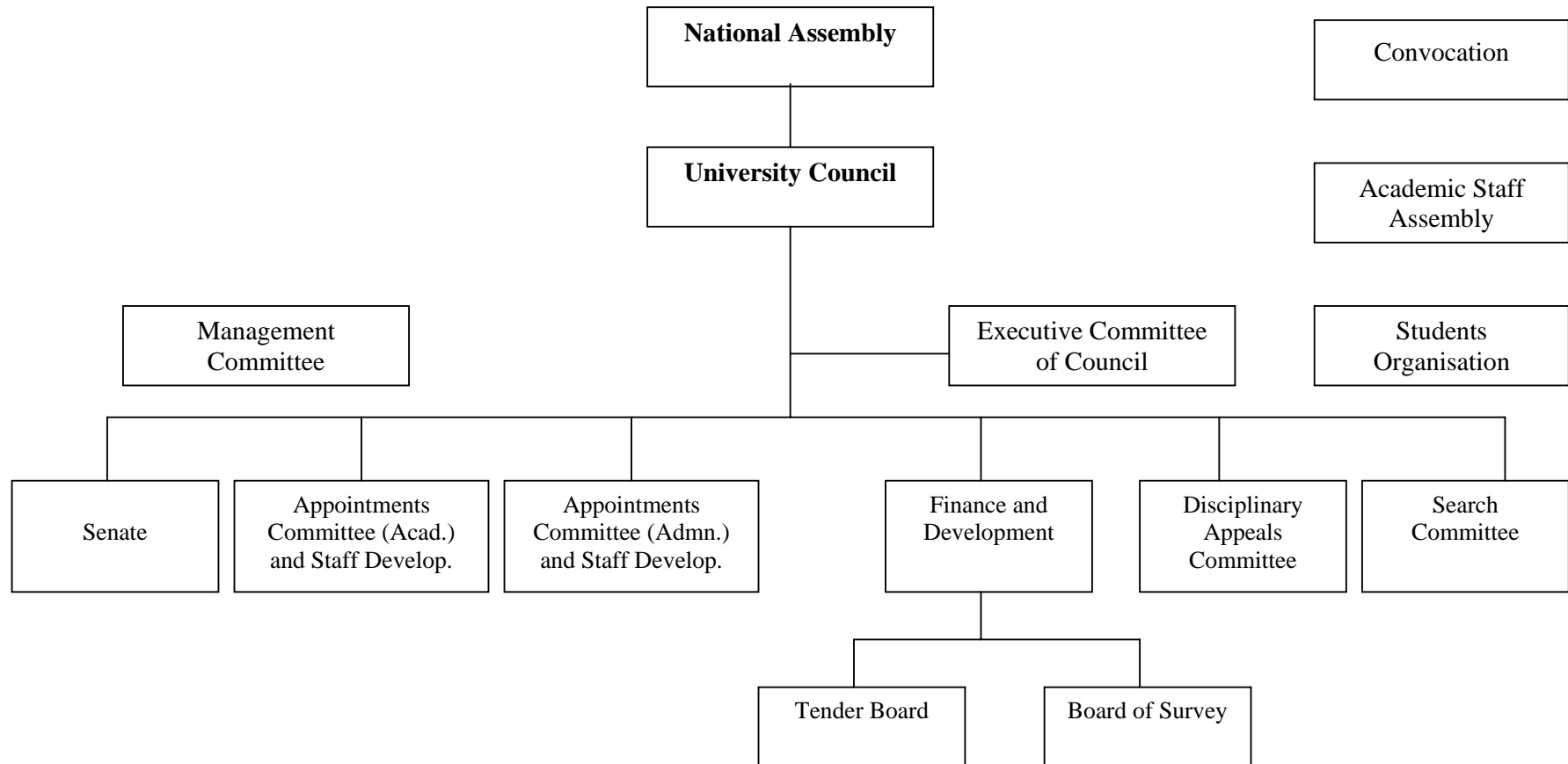


Figure 1: Existing University Decision Making Machinery April 30, 1996.

- NOTES:
- (1) No Departmental meetings are provided for in the Act now approved by Council.
 - (2) No Workers Council has been established or provided for in the Act by the Council.

The conically defined structure at the head office with the Chancellor on the apex as the head is the university administrative expediency designed to take into account of the national policies applicable to public institutions. The next in line is the Vice-Chancellor. He or she is the chief executive answerable to the Chancellor through the University Council, which is the supreme statutory institutional authority. Parallel to Council but in the academic arena, the top-most authority is the Senate. It is responsible for all academic matters. Below the dual authorities are both statutory and non-statutory organs, including the committees of the council, faculties, institutes, and boards. The Vice-Chancellor is assisted by three Deputy Vice-Chancellors and the Registrar (Finance and Administration). All of these four officers are responsible and accountable to the Vice-Chancellor.

The Open University of Tanzania's decentralised structure facilitates access to open and distance education for dispersed students who may on occasion be convened at regional or study centres. The regional centres are thus designed to co-ordinate and supervise the Open University of Tanzania's activities for students, tutors, and the public.

Staffing

With the priority given academic administration, the university is designed to operate with a proportionately small core of full-time officers (35 to date) and a large number of part-time staff (95). To accomplish its mission, objectives are made feasible through the rational use of contracted expertise and facilities of other public institutions. Currently there are five categories of full-time officers: executive, academic, administrative and management, technical, and operational or ancillary. Part-time staff, on the other hand, are of a wide range, both academic and non-academic. They are formally co-opted or contracted on a piece work basis as the need arises to perform behind-the-scene functions such as to writing study materials; reviewing them; setting assignments, tests, and examinations; and handling the production and distribution of learning materials. Thus the terms and conditions of service of the two principal categories of officers — full-time and part-time — are different in statutory terms. On the whole the qualifications prescribed by campus-based university for their staff are enforced here too.

Programmes, mode of study, and academic calendar

On its commencement in 1994 the Open University of Tanzania started with four degree programmes. The following year, three similar programmes were added and, in 1996, one more programme was brought up. Thus the Open University of Tanzania has a total of eight programmes on completion of its first three-year cycle: the Foundation Programme, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts with Education, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Science with Education, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Commerce with Education, and the Bachelor of Laws. This array may appear to be quite ambitious but it is believed the range of under-graduate programmes reflect the great need for higher education in Tanzania.

For the mode of study, the degree programme is arranged in three parts, with each part corresponding to one academic year at a residential full-time university. All candidates for the Open University of Tanzania degree programme are meant to take

their courses by distance study methods. The main medium of instruction is through print materials. The main study materials for each of the subjects are called ‘units’, with each unit covering content materials equivalent to 35 one-hour lecture materials. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 70 hours studying each unit, spread over 10 weeks. Student support services are provided in the form of face-to-face teaching, audio cassettes, library services, and other learning media, laboratory exercises for science subjects organised at designated institutions, and teaching practice or field work for others as the disciplines may dictate. Theoretically, the pace of learning for Open University of Tanzania students (who are considered part-time learners) is designed at half the pace of the full-time candidates in the same course taught at the conventional universities.

To qualify for the award of the degree a candidate is supposed to have successfully completed study for the degree extending over a period of not less than six academic years. A study may take a maximum of two years on any one part provided that he or she does not exceed eight years in total. Earlier completion is possible for students who can set aside more time for their studies and whose progress from year to year is satisfactory.

In summary, the Open University of Tanzania as a national university is established to offer academic programmes to students throughout Tanzania. Its distance education method allows students all over the country to pursue higher education whenever and wherever convenient without interfering with their other personal, occupational, and vocational obligations. The institution attempts to offer an intricate and integrated distance education system that combines expertly formulated study materials and text books, 35 full-time staff and 95 part-time staff, a growing number of study centres throughout Tanzania, an exacting range of tutors as well as self-marked assignments, exams, and a multimedia programme of educational supplements. The flexible method of study effectively surmounts the obstacles of distance and time, making academic studies available to additional youth and adults hitherto prevented from studies by technical difficulties.

Problems encountered

Implementing quality assurance

The university has adopted and adapted various processes that enhance quality assurance. Alongside the development of its own study materials the university has made use of transferred materials produced by other open universities. On the other hand the development of its own materials has been accompanied by training workshops, completed either individually or by course teams. Completed draft learning materials are expediently taken to external course reviewers in place of subjecting them to trials by students.

The production of such materials also counts in one’s academic advancement as well as promotion. The university also liaises with all tertiary institutions in the country in order to benefit from their human and material resources. It has also established links with local business organisations, external universities, The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), Association of African Universities (AAU) and Association of Eastern and Southern African

Universities (AESAU). The Open University of Tanzania is thus keen in fostering close collaboration with relevant institutions, organisations, and agencies at regional, sub-regional, and international levels. It has built into its programmes formative and summative evaluation so that regularly the performance of the institution itself, its working tools and its products (students) are systemically determined through external examining. Thus, despite flexible entry qualifications, the university enforces vigorous quality assurance mechanisms and tight control over the standards.

Using and integrating media in distance education

Adoption of a multimedia approach is statutorily provided for in the university. Print has hitherto been the ‘master medium’ for teaching. It is supported by radio, audio cassettes, field work, and face-to-face sessions. Plans are underway to make use of television on completion of the establishment of a national network in the country. Interim plans in the regular use of the national radio broadcasting services initially thought to be free of charge has suffered a setback after its being transformed into a self-financing agency. Study centres are meant to be the focal point for student-to-student interactive learning and common listening and viewing of audio taped and video taped educational materials.

Instructional design and production for distance education

The didactic design of the university materials, in keeping with the central theory and practice of distance education, is marked with provisions of two-way communication. Their instructional design, unlike textbooks that smack of one-way instruction, reflect the dialogue and interaction processes of both teaching and learning.

Arising out of the instructional design is the convergence of two types of tutors: the course writer and the provider of student support services (that is, the course tutor). The two terms: ‘course writer’ and ‘tutor’ as used by people in higher echelons of distance education are but conceptual constructs that are mutually related. Regrettably, however, research to date in a number of distance education institutions seems to suggest that the training of the distance tutor is not given as much prominence as that of the course developer and producer.

The materials’ design and development are actuated through both individual and team approaches all the way through the planning, writing, reviewing, testing, typesetting, and editing. Their final production is done by appointed printing agencies. By and large this task is handled by both core and part-time members of the university.

Learner support systems

Provision of learner support services is embedded in the centralised and decentralised organisation of the university and staffing levels. It is designed to have a small but highly competent cadre of permanent academic, administrative, and technical staff at the headquarters and at the regional centres. Some decision-making processes should devolve to the periphery, where regional centres are used for such activities as face-to-face sessions, laboratory and field work, time-tests, and for final examinations. As discussed earlier, the centres are designed to be pivotal in the learners’ interactive activities. They constitute learning communities.

Up to the Open University of Tanzania's fourth year (1997), about 4,000 adult learners have seized the opportunity to benefit from its wide range of professional, business, and other courses at pre-degree and degree levels designed to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Post-graduate programmes are in the offing. By the end of 1998 about 1,000 students are expected to receive their degrees. Their spread is set out in the following table, which shows student distribution by: programme; year; and gender.

Programme	1994		1995		1996		1997		1998		Sub-total		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
B.A.	173	15	47	4	54	7	45	5	50	5	369	36	405
B.A. Ed.	318	41	104	23	167	25	115	18	112	24	816	131	947
B.Com.	184	11	90	5	149	12	92	13	79	8	594	49	643
B.Com. Ed.	24	0	17	0	32	7	16	2	20	3	9109	12	131
LL.B.	-	-	329	26	445	36	300	33	260	35	1334	130	1464
B.Sc.	-	-	30	2	67	7	63	7	77	10	237	26	263
B.Sc. Ed.	-	-	51	10	85	8	38	8	50	13	224	39	263
Found.	-	-	-	-	194	34	182	41	189	60	565	135	700
TOTAL	699	67	668	70	1193	136	851	127	837	158	4248	558	4806

The most important issue: Learner support systems

Institutionalisation of student support systems at the university, as has been the case in a number of the Commonwealth member countries (The Open University of Tanzania (November 1993) *OUT Financial Regulations*, The Open University of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, p. 1) has been threatened with relegation. This seems to have arisen out of an uncalled for traditional dichotomy between academic and administrative roles of such institutions. While course development, media incorporation, and the setting of assessments are taken as core academic activities, traditional student concerns such as admissions, registrations, study assistance, and the provision of learning materials and equipment as well as marking of assignments and provision of feedback tend to be probably inadvertently dismissed as of lower or less academic importance.

Instead of driving a wedge between integrated academic processes, institutions should strive to be held accountable for the whole of the academic administration. One of the most recent challenges the university has had to cope with is a daunting student:staff ratio on the average of 1:200, with correspondingly large submissions of assignments, tests, and examinations. This rise in student:staff ratio followed the government's adoption of a retrenchment policy (The Open University of Tanzania (1995) *OUT Staff Regulation*, The Open University of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, p. 96) and a temporary freeze on employment that irrationally affected the nascent university. Faced with this challenge the Open University of Tanzania's officers put aside the accepted

dichotomy and addressed the problem related to the student record and management system with the view to improve and track the students while enrolled at the university to forestall drop-outs, withdrawals, and pushouts. In keeping with the university's commitment to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and public service, the student record management system project demonstrates the Open University of Tanzania's dedication to developing and supporting sustainable high quality courses and programmes.

Southern Africa Extension Unit

Prepared by:

M. J. Mntangi

Brief description of the programme

The Southern Africa Extension Unit (SAEU) is a distance education institution. Initiated as a project during the 1983 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, the unit was set up in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in November 1984, to serve the educational and training needs of South African youths and adults living in exile in Eastern and Southern Africa. SAEU courses for the exiles focused on the foundation and secondary levels of education.

The SAEU took the following three transformational steps between 1990 and 1994 to cope with the repatriation of its traditional target group:

- introduced vocational courses to the students;
- extended the courses to the returnees in South Africa; and
- reviewed the future role of the target group to other refugees and non-refugees. The Local Government Councillors' Distance Training Programme is one radical outcome of the SAEU's transformation process.

The Local Government Councillors' Distance Training Programme targeted 3,700 local councillors scattered throughout mainland Tanzania. The main aim of the training was to enable the councillors to carry out their functions effectively under the newly introduced political system of multi-party democracy. The decision to appoint the SAEU to implement a distance education programme in the area of local government was prompted by the track record and the potentials of the unit in running other programmes that demanded the following features of innovative distance education institutions:

- ability to extend services to a large target group which is also widely heterogeneous and scattered across a wide area of territory;
- ability to deliver a quality-conscious course relatively quickly and at minimal costs; and
- flexibility of the institution and its training packages in building a resource base for adopting the skills and course materials developed for training other groups.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- How to organise the training so that it could promptly reach a target group that was large, showed diverse characteristics, and was scattered over a large area of territory (four times as large as Ghana).

- How to produce course materials that could be accepted by councillors from several political parties using an unfamiliar teaching approach.
- How to get and maintain constant support for the main stakeholders of local government (that is, the central government, the local councils, individual councillors, professionals in the field of local government, and funding agencies); for example, how to solicit their co-operation by reviewing the project schedule against other divergent schedules and, in the light of long bureaucratic procedures observed, by some of the stakeholders.
- How to organise a huge training project with limited financial resources.
- How to design and make operable a learner support system making use of existing government structures.
- How to cope with difficulties of communication in the process of co-ordination and monitoring of course progress.

Implementing quality assurance

All the challenges encountered while planning and managing distance education can be considered to re-occur under the theme of implementing quality assurance. Others include:

- How to ensure that there will be maximum enrolment and minimal drop-outs.
- How to organise effective learner support services.

Using and integrating media in distance learning

- How to reconcile the inevitable bias on the print media and difficulties that would face councillors who are barely literate and those who cannot be easily reached by other simple media.
- How to get optimal benefits from face-to-face tutorials without causing excessive costs to the project.
- How the radio programmes could be utilised effectively to assist councillors; in situations in which reception was poor along the borders remote from Dar es Salaam, councillors' initial and subsequent training could not be paced.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- How to cope with the extreme range of educational levels of the target group (some councillors possess post-graduate level qualifications while others have barely completed primary education), as well as their wide age groups.
- How to make the course materials adequately interesting, resourceful, and acceptable to such a diverse target group.
- How to distribute large quantities of course materials over long distances with a relatively poor network of communication.

Learner support systems

- How to take advantage of the benefits of face-to-face tutorials but minimise unit costs in the light of the high costs of organising councillors' meetings.
- How to locate study centres for face-to-face tutorials in rural councils where some wards are several hundred kilometres apart or separated by difficult physical barriers.
- How to ensure standardised scales for assessing councillors' assignments whereby the number of part-time tutors is large (more than 300) and their professional backgrounds differ significantly.

The two most important issues

Experiences dealing with challenges in planning and managing distance education

- Two basic strategies were set up in order to deal effectively with the process of operation of the project and ensuring a smooth flow of information among the stakeholders. The first was the setting up of a Project Consultative and Advisory Committee and the other was to decentralise the management and training functions to the regional and district and council level.
- All the major activities of the project planned and carried out by the implementing agency (the SAEU), including course design, identification of course writers and editors, course pilot and review, support services and funding were presented to the Project Consultative and Advisory Committee for input and final approval. The members of the committee were drawn as follows:
 - Prime Minister's Office, as the Ministry responsible for local government and regional administration;
 - Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania (ALAT);
 - Local Government Service Commission (LGSC);
 - Local Government Training Institute, Hombolo;
 - Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF); and
 - Southern Africa Extension Unit (SAEU).

The committee was expected to meet on a quarterly basis and whenever there was an issue requiring its decision. The committee facilitated the flow of information to the relevant authorities of the government as well as to the grassroots levels, including the target group.

- SAEU played a significant role in training the trainers and co-ordinators of the programme. Trainers for this programme were located at three levels — the SAEU head office, regional local government offices, and the district and council level.

As a result of the large number of trainers required (more than 300) at the regional local government and district and council levels and the extreme dispersion of their working stations across the territory, the training of trainers task was partly decentralised as a cost-cutting measure.

The SAEU conducted short, intensive training for the regional co-ordinators in national level workshops. The regional co-ordinators and tutors subsequently conducted training workshops for the council co-ordinators and tutors in their regions after reviewing with the SAEU the peculiarities of their councils.

- Management operations of the project were also decentralised on the basis of the national administrative blocks into 20 regions each co-ordinated by a regional local government officer, and 110 districts councils, each co-ordinated by a district executive director and course tutors. All the staff at regional and council levels worked on a part-time basis as project tutors as well as project co-ordinators at their own levels of operation. The district level was expected also to assist in the sustenance of the project by meeting part of the costs of the tutorial support services from the council sources.

Experiences dealing with challenges in implementing quality assurance

The following measures were taken to promote the quality of the services and materials rendered to the project:

- accommodating a wide range of experiences in the preparation of the course materials and in the organisation of support services;
- appreciating the special role of sensitisation and initial training in promoting enrolment, minimising drop-outs and contributing to the sustenance of the project;
- focusing on the course materials and support services sharply onto the target group — some councillors were at an advanced age, other councillors had a poor educational background;
- making optimum use of the pilot study — course materials and the network of support services were improved on the basis of experiences gained from the pilot study; and
- conducting close monitoring and evaluation of progress including maintaining constant liaison with the field staff.

The following three issues illustrate the approaches taken by the SAEU in promoting quality in the implementation of the project. The issues focus on experience sharing, pilot study, and sensitisation initial training — only two cases will be explained.

Experience sharing

- The main forum for sharing experiences in the project was during the meetings of the Consultative and Advisory Committee. Other opportunities for experience sharing were achieved during the editors and review workshops, training seminars for the regional local government officers, and training seminars for district and council level co-ordinators and tutors and the councillors.
- Experiences from outside Tanzania were accommodated by incorporating a member of staff from the Local Government Training Institute, Mombasa-Kenya, in a workshop that reviewed drafts of the course materials in September 1995.

- As a result of effective sensitisation, adequate inputs were made by the field staff during the pilot study. Inputs made during the pilot study provided important guidelines for improving the course materials and the support services.

Sensitisation

The processes of sensitisation and initial training were intended to achieve the following goals:

- make the relevant people clearly aware of the project objectives and demands expected of them;
- promote enrolment level; and
- minimise drop-out level.

Sensitisation was achieved through the following means:

- meetings of the Consultative Committee;
- meeting with the relevant authorities of the local and central government;
- presenting papers during meetings organised by the Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania (December 1995 and December 1996) and in forums discussing training in local government; and
- preparing and transmitting radio programmes.

Initial training

Initial training seminars and workshops were organised for the regional and district or council level project co-ordinators, tutors, and for the councillors in order to:

- sensitise them on the project; and
- give them adequate background about the course materials and the distance education approach.

Makerere University

Prepared by:

Juliana R. Bbuye and Jessica N. Aguti

Brief description of the programme

Makerere University is a dual mode university running two external degree programmes (Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Commerce). These courses are run by the Department of Distance Education, which is part of the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education. These programmes are run in collaboration with the Faculty of Commerce (for the Bachelor of Commerce) and the School of Education (for the Bachelor of Education). The two faculties are responsible for the academic component, while the institute is responsible for the administrative component.

The External Degree Programme (EDP) is governed by the general regulations of the university. No special regulations were drawn to govern the External Degree Programme, an arrangement that has ensured the External Degree students receive the same quality of course content as internal students. However, without regulations that fully consider the needs of the external student, the programme has been affected by bureaucracy. As a result, the pace of various activities required for the smooth running of the programme has sometimes been slow.

The External Degree Programme study package consists of:

- print materials;
- face-to-face sessions;
- assignments and tests and quizzes;
- student study groups; and
- audio cassettes.

The External Degree Programme admits students every academic year and at present has 2,200 students.

For administrative purposes, the Department of Distance Education is divided into three units: Materials Development Unit, Tutoring Unit, and Support Services Unit. Each of these units is headed by a lecturer. The Department's major concern is the provision of External Degree Programmes but it is also in the process of developing short courses which include 'Skills for Research Assistant', 'Writing and Publishing', 'Marketing', and 'Income Generating Activities'. Written materials for these courses are being developed now.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

The planning and management of distance education programmes in Makerere University is greatly affected by a lack of clear policies on the running of distance education programmes. Neither are there clear policies on staff recruitment and development, student registration, or library and support services for students. Instead, all are governed by the general university regulations, disregarding the special needs of distanced education programmes and students.

Implementing quality assurance

Makerere University is a dual mode university. The university therefore feels that to ensure quality, students in the External Degree Programme must sit the same examination as internal students at the same time. This has particularly been the case for the Bachelor of Commerce programme.

Course delivery and course assessment structure for the external students is not yet satisfactory. There is a general lack of reading materials, insufficient contact with tutors, and lack of a personal tutor scheme.

The tutors participating in the External Degree Programme are lecturers in the internal programmes. They already have full loads and see the activities of the External Degree Programme as an extra load. Consequently, the assignments and tests given tend to be easy to mark and do not encourage in-depth study and research. These assignments and tests end up examining mainly surface learning.

Using and integrating media in distance education

Integration of media in the Makerere External Degree Programme has been a problem, caused by the delay in the production of print materials. A situation has therefore arisen in which the cassettes accompanying print materials are ready but, due to delays in publishing the print materials, they cannot be used. To a large extent students still depend on print materials. Radio and computer-based learning are difficult to integrate because of a scarcity of resources.

Instructional design and production for distance education

The process of instructional design and production has been very slow. The causes of this slackness are:

- inadequate staffing;
- lecturers who are supposed to develop and review materials are busy;
- lack of sub-editors to assist the principal editor;
- delays at the publishing stage due particularly to the long process of procuring funds; and
- delays by the publishing firms.

Learner support systems

There is no clear learner support system in the External Degree Programme. The programme began with no clear system and, due to a lack of resources, is evolving very slowly. Student study centres are being started in the different regions as a response to student demands rather than as part of a clear scheme.

The two most important issues: Developing a learner support system and developing study materials

Developing a learner support system

Learner support systems in Makerere Distance Education Programmes have not yet been fully developed. At the planning stage of the programme the role of the extramural centres, for example, which were supposed to play a vital role in the support system, was not fully defined. As a result, administrators, tutors, and students of the programme have failed to utilise fully the potential offered by these centres. Support is therefore very much centralised despite the scattered nature of students, who come from all over Uganda.

The scarcity of funds has made the personal tutor arrangement difficult to implement. The radio and television services have not yet been effectively used because many of the students, especially those who live in remote areas, cannot afford the accessories. It has also been difficult to use a multimedia approach to provide student support, largely due to inadequate staff and funds. For example, counselling on the telephone is almost non-existent since it is expensive and telephone services are not available in most remote areas. Students are therefore left to study mostly on their own with little support.

Support available to students

Learner support in Makerere University is provided in a variety of ways.

- On admission, students receive information about the programme through the prospectus and the study guide. They receive two weeks of orientation, which enables them to receive more information concerning the programme, guidance on subject combinations and study skills, and to interact with each other. It is also mostly during that orientation week that they form their study groups.
- The university main library and all off-campus library branches offer library services. The department also operates a small collection of rare books.
- Study groups have also been started, are located in existing education institutions, and meet mostly on weekends.
- Other groups meet in the evenings on campus to solicit the services of tutors.
- Hand-outs and other references are provided to students.
- Occasional visits are made by members of the Department of Distance Education to some of the study centres to meet with the students and to obtain feedback on their progress. The visits assist the department in the planning of materials distribution and preparation for face-to-face sessions.

Student study groups

Mainly because of a lack of study materials and the problems associated with remoteness from the centre, students have organised themselves into strong study groups. The study groups meet mostly on weekends to review previous work and discuss difficult assignments. Ongoing research has shown that groups are mainly found in areas where there is a concentration of students, not necessarily at the extramural centres. The radius of these clusters is as great as 50 kilometres so the department is encouraging students to form groups based on these clusters. This will assist the department to provide services to the students by establishing convenient centres where materials can be kept and students can go to read. These may later be developed into resource centres.

Personal tutors

Students have expressed their need for personal tutors. The department has also realised the urgency of establishing a strong network of personal tutors who will assist students in academic and socially related problems. Centralised support services are insufficient to cater to the large number of students. The total population of students on the External Degree Programme is more than 2,000.

The personal tutor scheme, it should be noted, has not been implemented in Makerere because of a lack of funds. A cheaper scheme can possibly be designed, for example, one in which the principals of teacher training colleges and qualified staff in other institutions and banks can be involved on a part-time basis in assisting students. They would, however, need training in handling distance learners.

Developing study materials for the External Degree Programme

The External Degree Programme was launched in 1991 and at that time no study materials had been developed. Instead, through financial assistance of The Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Makerere was able to purchase written materials from Nairobi University and from the Open College UK. This acquisition of study materials was a 'stop gap measure' that enabled the programme to take off.

Purchasing materials from other institutions is good as a 'stop gap measure' but in the long run it has proven too expensive. The department has not been able to continue doing this. Also, courses can be deceptively similar on the surface, giving the impression that they are identical when there could actually be deep set differences. Where materials are purchased, there may be need for the institution buying these materials to develop supplementary materials that would ensure the students needs are fully met.

In the External Degree Programme, written materials were viewed as the core of the learning package, so to ensure that Makerere University produces its own materials COL funded the initial writers' workshops. Since then, the Department of Distance Education has run a number of other writers' workshops. As a result a total of 40 units are at different stages of development with only five published so far. Clearly, this is far below the needs of the External Degree Programme and so the shortage of study materials is still acute.

To deal with this, the department has chosen a number of options, as follows.

Handouts

In nearly all the subjects, but more especially in subjects for which no written materials have been developed, students are given handouts. These may be handouts developed by the lecturers but which are not written in the distance education mode or they may be extracts from texts. Handouts are important but should be seen as either another 'stop gap measure' or supplementary reading material. To meet the needs of the distance learner it is still imperative that materials written for the distance learner be developed.

Face-to-face sessions

Face-to-face sessions should be part of the study package but, because of inadequate study materials, a lot of time is allotted to them, which is expensive to both the students and the department. Also, there is the danger of the External Degree Programme students beginning to rely entirely on these sessions even in subjects in which study materials are available.

Student study groups

Student study groups are also part of the study package but, like the face-to-face sessions, they have taken on a different meaning, particularly in the Bachelor of Commerce programme, where the shortage of materials is worse. The students now rely so much on the student study groups that sometimes meetings are held daily as though they were a conventional evening programme.

Conclusion

In any distance education programme, there is no replacement for study materials. Ideally, they should be developed even before the programme is launched and, where this is not possible, production should be guaranteed. If materials must be purchased, then care is needed in the selection and, where necessary, supplementary materials should be developed.

University of Lincolnshire and Humberside

Prepared by:

David Lippiatt

Brief description of the programme

The University of Lincolnshire and Humberside has some 13,000 students attending full-time and part-time courses on-campus but, since 1993, the university has been franchising some courses off-campus. In order to promote assurance of quality in these courses, the university supplies comprehensive sets of materials to support lecturers in other institutions. Building on this experience in materials provision, in 1994 the university began to develop distance education materials for 'top-up' courses that would enable students with a diploma level qualification to study for an honours degree.

Following the well-researched identification of a potential market, academic design of the course was quickly followed by design of the form that such distance education provision would take. Now in 1997 the course is up and running with some 800 students using the materials through a network of approved centres both in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- Although there is now widespread experience of matters relating to the planning and management of distance education, in fact, given the organisational structures within which we originally undertook this development, with advisors in one department and producers in another, the early stages of the project were fraught with difficulties. Part of the difficulty resided in the fact that directions were being given at an awkward distance; serious progress only began when 'management by leadership' was introduced and a managing editor was given direct responsibility for 'producing the goods'.

Implementing quality assurance

- In line with commonly understood standards and procedures, a quality assurance system had been created but to some extent this was theoretical, and experience showed the importance of drawing up such procedures in the light of local capabilities and particular market requirements. There is no point in designing idealised quality systems which in practical fact do not fit with customer requirements nor institutional capabilities.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Given the academic design of the course in business and management, some ready-made materials were available in a variety of media, but their principal weakness was that they could only have been adapted to meet the requirements of the course at uneconomical expense. There was the requirement that ‘distant students’ should be receiving university brand materials not substitute materials however good they might be. Print-based technology was adopted because it was manageable by both the supplier and consumer with the expectation that use of further media would be adopted at a later point as the need arose and as economic returns justified its use.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- Materials were developed for each unit of the course in the form of study guides centred on published core texts. This model permitted lecturers to depend on the texts for conveying content with motivating and explanatory text of their own in the study guides. Local arrangements with a book retailer who in turn made arrangements with publishers spread the cost of assuring access to large supplies of textbooks and ensured sufficient ‘buffer’ to guarantee at least six months’ life ahead for any one unit. The book retailer got the business and the university had assurance of a safe life for its units.

Learner support systems

- The best of materials do not support themselves so that local tutorial arrangements with approved centres were, and are, vital to the success of this distance education provision. Following the development of staff in centres, the maintenance and cultivation by the university of good relations with centre staff is as important a part of the process as the direct relation they have with the student.

The most important issue: Developing learning materials

The most important issue is difficult to isolate, but time and time again the difficulties encountered in the development of materials are purely the result of rushing things at the planning stages. It is not that the problems are overlooked or unforeseen at the outset but that pressures to start delivering the goods force the course developer to keep on using up safety spaces built into the project plan. This is not so much the result of not knowing how long it is likely to take to carry out a particular task nor of making a mistake in allowing for its duration. In fact, it is ironically the case that since the originally scheduled project is working, other commitments come to be made which, in effect, overlay the first plan. Success might breed success but it also breeds the pressure to succeed even more.

From one management point of view, this is understandable because few of us are working within fixed project time scales. We are frequently working within very fluid markets where flexible responses are required — reallocating resources on an almost daily basis so that project management is about redefining projects every day. The difficulty is to keep on managing things in such a way as to maintain confidence by fulfilling commitments made at one point while constantly readjusting dates to accommodate new projects.

But there are limits beyond which quality is in danger of being compromised and so, from another management point of view, one of the most important issues is to recognise those limits and refuse to cross them.

Napier University

Prepared by:

Sally Anderson

Brief description of the programme

Napier is one of the largest universities in Scotland, with more than 11,000 students. The university is organised into five faculties: Arts and Social Science, Engineering, Health Studies, Science, and the Napier Business School. The university takes its name from John Napier, inventor of logarithms, who was born in the Tower of Merchiston in 1550. The Tower is now an integral part of the Merchiston campus.

From its early days as the Napier College of Science and Technology, which opened in 1964, Napier has grown steadily, in 1974 merging with another institution to become the Napier College of Commerce and Technology and later becoming a polytechnic. In 1992, in recognition of its achievements, the polytechnic was given consent to adopt the title Napier University.

Delivery in Mauritius

Napier University is offering a number of courses in Mauritius in areas such as Economics, Computer Studies, and Management. These courses cover a range of levels, including the higher national certificate, a full Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Economics, and a post-graduate diploma in computer studies.

It is an important feature of all Napier's flexible learning projects that the courses are owned and delivered by the relevant academic department, rather than by a central unit. There is, however, a central support team who work with the academic department by providing advice, editorial and production assistance, project management expertise and staff development and training where required. Quality assurance procedures for distant courses follow the same route within the university as does any conventionally delivered course. The media used for delivering flexible learning in the university are varied, and are chosen with careful investigation of what is available to students. In the case of Mauritius, print-based delivery was the most accessible, with some limited computer and software usage.

For students at such a distance, with cultural and language differences from the delivery institution, support was of some concern, and a comprehensive strategy was developed.

- To establish a local base, we work with the Ministry of Education and related organisations (such as the National Computing and Information Technology Resource Centre) and for each course a local administrator acts as a liaison with Napier.

- Local tutors are recruited in accordance with requirements laid down by Napier, and they provide frequent and regular tutorials throughout the year. E-mail and fax allow local tutors and the local administrator relatively easy contact with Napier staff in Scotland.
- Napier staff travel to Mauritius at least twice per academic year. Not only do they work with students there, more importantly, they provide training and assistance to local tutors.
- All study materials are scrutinised by the project consultant, who is both a member of Napier staff and a Mauritian national, to ensure their applicability culturally and with regard to language level.

So, the course runs as follows: students attend a summer school at which they meet local tutors and Napier staff. This is an opportunity for students to explore exactly how they will study and develop some study skills appropriate for flexible learning, as well as to cover some initial content. They then study by means of flexible learning study materials prepared and supplied by Napier, with regular tutorials and opportunities to use computer facilities. A winter school with Napier staff and local tutors allows examination revision and clarification of problems. Formative assessment is done by local tutors with Napier moderating a random selection of written assignments, and final assessment is set and marked by Napier staff.

This model has proved very effective and a number of cohorts have graduated successfully.

The University of Zambia

Prepared by:

Richard Siaciwena

Brief description of the programme

The University of Zambia is a conventional university that has been operating a comparatively small scale distance education programme since it was established in 1966. Distance student enrolments vary from year to year. In the 1995–96 academic year, for example, 381 distance students (326 male and 55 female) were enrolled, constituting 9.8 percent of the total university enrolment of 3,980 (that is, full-time, part-time, and distance studies).

There are 68 first- and second-year level semester courses offered to distance students by the schools (faculties) of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. These lead to the award of the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts with Education, and the Diploma in Adult Education. However, students who enrol for the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Arts with Education degree programmes must transfer to full-time study for their final two years. The Diploma in Adult Education can be completed entirely by distance education.

Problems encountered

Planning and managing distance education

- In the past the distance education programme has suffered from the lack of a clear and comprehensive policy, inadequate funding, and long bureaucratic procedures through which matters relating to distance education are referred to the university's policy- and decision-making bodies. An additional problem is that the Directorate of Distance Education does not always find it easy to establish its authority over the overworked teaching staff, who are inclined to regard requests and instructions from the directorate as carrying less weight than those given by their teaching departments relating to internal teaching.

Implementing quality assurance

- There is neither a policy nor mechanisms or strategies for implementing or assessing quality in distance education, a phenomenon that has made distance education more variable in quality than should be the case. In the past, this has been compounded by the lack of trained staff (in distance education) and the difficulty in retraining teaching staff so that they become more proficient in distance teaching.

Using and integrating media in distance education

- Print materials are the predominant medium of instruction complemented by a four-week intensive face-to-face teaching programme. The comparatively under-developed telecommunications technologies make it difficult to use and integrate other media in distance education, resulting in a weak two-way communication system.

Instructional design and production for distance education

- There is no uniform policy or practice on instructional design or course presentation and there is very little input into course design from experts and professionals in the Directorate of Distance Education. The course production capacity of the Directorate of Distance Education is very limited and, therefore, it is not capable of supporting and facilitating efficient production and speedy delivery of study materials to the learners.

Learner support systems

- Some of the support services offered by different departments and units are not fully integrated into the distance education system as a whole and the Directorate of Distance Education can exercise no sanction for any failure on the part of various providers to offer efficient support services to distance learners. Most of the support services are centralised and the comparatively under-developed telecommunications infrastructure limits the range of learner-support services and the media through which they are provided.

The most important issue: Planning and managing distance education

Some policy and organisational changes instituted in the 1990s have helped to minimise a number of problems that, over the years, have affected the planning and management of the distance education programme.

- Unlike the report on the establishment of a university in Zambia which provided broad aims, the University of Zambia's *Strategic Plan: 1994–98* offers more specific and more comprehensive policy provisions for the development of distance education.
- Distance education, once part of the Centre for Continuing Education, was transformed into an autonomous Directorate of Distance Education in 1994. Its director, like deans of schools and faculties, is accountable to the Vice-Chancellor, and is a member of the Senate and its various committees. A Senate Committee on Distance Education, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, was established as part of the new structure of distance education. Its main functions are to consider and formulate policy on distance education and recommend to the Senate, rules and regulations governing the distance education programme.

Solutions

These changes have not only improved the decision-making process but have also enhanced the status and visibility of distance education in the university.

- Distance teaching staff are now paid allowances for: all work on study materials prepared; every hour of lectures and tutorials during the residential school; and for

each assignment and examination script marked. Although the current levels of allowances are not commensurate with the distance teaching responsibilities of the affected staff, they have had, in general, a positive effect on the running of the distance education programme.

- It has been realised that it is important and necessary for the Director of Distance Education and staff to meet regularly with distance education staff. Unlike Boards of Studies meetings (which also discuss matters relating to distance teaching) meetings with the distance teaching staff are more focused. Decisions or recommendations from these meetings can be referred direct to the Senate or to the Senate Committee on Distance Education.

Perhaps one important lesson to be learned from the experience of the University of Zambia is that, in a dual mode university, the administrative and financial autonomy as well as various incentives for teaching staff are crucially important. A lot more has yet to be done in these areas at the University of Zambia.

Characteristics of Open and Distance Learning

separation of teacher and learner

institutional accreditation

use of mixed-media courseware

two-way communication

possibility of face-to-face meetings

use of industrialised processes



Distinguishing the Types of Open and Distance Learning

correspondence
education

home study

independent study

external studies

continuing education

distance teaching

self-instruction

adult education

technology-based or
mediated education

learner-centred
education

open learning

open access

flexible learning

distributed learning



Scenarios for Open and Distance Learning

	Same Time	Different Time
Same Place	1	2
Different Place	3	4



Barriers that Open and Distance Learning Overcome



physical distance

time or scheduling problems

limited number of places available

low or dispersed enrolments

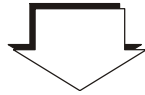
limited number of teachers available

cultural, religious and political considerations

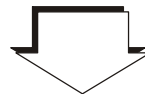


A Systems Approach to Open and Distance Learning

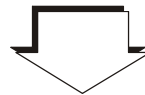
analyse



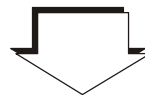
design



develop



implement



evaluate



revise

Functions of Open and Distance Learning

- obtaining and managing resources
- developing or acquiring programmes
- recruiting and promoting
- producing, storing and disseminating materials
- enrolling and registering
- delivering programmes and courses
- providing learner support
- examining, crediting and granting credentials
- evaluating and revising processes and programmes
- training and developing staff



Some Factors Influencing Adult Learners

prior learning

access to other learners

access to resources in workplace or home

prior training

sense of failure

motivation

fear

prejudice

time



Characteristics of Open and Distance Learners

adult learners

demographic factors

motivation

learning factors

subject background

resource factors

typical problems

special needs



Demographic Factors

- How many learners are you likely to have?
- What ages are they? Are they children? Adults?
- Are your learners men? women?
- What is their family status?
- How many children do they have?
- What is their geographic location (for example, rural or urban)?
- What is their previous education?
- What language or languages do they read and speak?
- Do they hold jobs?



Motivational Factors

- Why are they learning?
- How does programme relate to life and work?
- What do they want from programme?
- What are their hopes and fears?



Learning Factors

- What are their beliefs about learning?
- What learning styles do they prefer?
- What learning skills do they have?
- What experience do they have of distance learning?



Characteristics of Successful Learners

INTELLECTUAL

- knows subject content
- has adequate background education
- can grasp concepts
- able to help another person to understand

ORGANISATIONAL

- good study habits, including
 - planning and timetabling
 - time management
- able to establish intermediate learning objectives

EMOTIONAL

- stable
- able to accept criticism
- doesn't expect instant success



Learners' Subject Background

- How do learners feel about the subject?
- What knowledge and skills do they have in the subject?
- What misconceptions or inappropriate habits do they have?
- What personal interests and experience are relevant?



Resource Factors

- Where, when and how will they be learning?
- Who will be paying their fees and expenses?
- How much time will they have for study?
- What access will they have to study centres?
- What access will they have to equipment?
- What access will they have to support from tutors and other learners?



Typical Problems of Open and Distance Learners

family pressures

worries about work and money

lack of books and libraries

lack of own study space

isolation from other learners

lack of transport

lack of confidence

no undisturbed study time

low levels of reading ability

poor study techniques

too busy to attend tutorials



Meeting Our Learners' Needs

INTELLECTUAL NEEDS

academic problems

study skills and techniques

ORGANISATIONAL NEEDS

time management

establishing learning plans

setting intermediate objectives

EMOTIONAL NEEDS

coping with stress

self esteem

motivation

assertiveness



Roles of Tuition, Counselling, and Course Materials

Intellectual support → Tuition

Organisational and emotional support → Counselling

Teaching subject content → Course materials



Tutoring Models

TUTOR AS EXPERT
remedial
explicative

TUTOR AS FACILITATOR
guiding

TUTOR AS REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER
exploring

TUTOR AS ASSESSOR
examining and testing



Functions of Tutor-Marked Assignments

TEACHING AND LEARNING
provide feedback

SUPPORT AND MOTIVATION
keep learner on task

PACING
foster course completion

ASSESSMENT
evaluate learner progress

INSTITUTIONAL CREDIBILITY
to develop and maintain
external and internal validity



Helpful Feedback

establishes rapport
sense of belonging
facilitative and personal

links the learner's previous and future learning

encourages a deep approach to learning by
promotes dialogue
acknowledges learner's ideas
comments on relevance
open to further discussion
suggests ways to improve study techniques

complete and accurate information because
prompt and clear
explains the grade awarded
fits the grade awarded
precise on where errors



Unhelpful Feedback

suggests the tutor sees the learner as a failure by

being aggressive or intimidating

providing a negative start

being automatic rather than personal

discouraging rather than encouraging

offers inadequate information to the student by

being late

being careless and inaccurate

not being specific or clear

being too short

providing no suggestions for improving

not indicating any follow-up



Guidelines for Feedback on Tutor-Marked Assignments

first assignment

- respond quickly
- offer praise and recognise effort
- refrain from being too critical
- emphasise the next assignment
- establish a personal link

every assignment

- start with personal tag
- first, praise and identify the good
- then, point out where and how the learner needs to improve
- finish comments with upbeat, positive and encouraging words
- close with a reference to the next assignment



Positive Things Feedback Can Do

praise

comfort

guide

correct

encourage

reinforce

clarify

confirm

validate



Some Functions of Face-to-Face Tutorials

- to establish a personal link
- to offer individual help
- to provide a chance for learners to interact
- to give a psychological boost
- to provide practical experience
- to provide a stimulus for written work
- to help learners to work confidently on their own
- to encourage learners to think independently
- to form self-help groups
- to help pace learners' study
- to exchange assignments and give feedback on common problems

The WHALES Acronym

(Simpson, 1992)

W Warmth

H Honesty

A Acceptance

L Listening

E Empathy

S Structure

Counselling Activities

TELLING

giving appropriate information

ADVISING

suggesting best approaches or
courses of action

EXPLORING

helping learners clarify issues and
problems for themselves



Counselling Processes: The Five Cs

CLARIFYING

ensuring the learner's needs are clear

CHECKING

ensuring the counsellor correctly understands
the learner's needs

CONCEPTUALISING

restating the need in the counsellor's own words

CHALLENGING

pointing out contradictions and other ways
of seeing a point

CONSEQUENT ACTION

agreeing to what counsellor and the learner might
do as a result of their talk together



Counselling Tasks

SELECTING A MODE

informing

advising

exploring

LISTENING EFFECTIVELY

reflecting

open-ended questioning

STRUCTURING THE INTERACTION

clarifying

checking

consequent action



Types of Administrative Support

sending out routine information

responding to routine enquiries

processing admissions

registering learners

keeping records

initiating delivery of course materials

supervising assignment turnaround

monitoring administrative support

administering examinations

issuing certificates



Technologies Used in Open and Distance Learning

- print (mechanical and electronic)
- radio (one-way, interactive and two-way)
- audio cassettes
- telephone teaching, including audio conferencing
- audio graphics
- television (broadcast, satellite and cable)
- video cassettes
- video conferencing
- computer-mediated communication
- computer-based learning
- video discs
- cd-rom
- multimedia
- integrated services digital network or ISDN



The ACTIONS Model

A Access

C Costs

T Teaching functions

I Interaction and user-friendliness

O Organisation

N Novelty

S Speed

Basic Points of Total Quality Management

Focus	<i>Internal and external customers</i>
Definition	<i>Meeting customer requirements</i>
Scope	<i>Every aspect of the organisation</i>
Responsibility	<i>Everyone</i>
Standard	<i>Right the first time (fitness of purpose)</i>
Method	<i>Prevention not detection</i>
Measurement	<i>Zero defects</i>
Culture	<i>Continuous improvement</i>



Achieving Quality

Quality assurance *measures taken to avoid faults*

Quality control *measures taken to remove faults*



Aspects of Quality in Distance Education

products and outputs

- courses and materials
- graduates and completers
- examination pass rates



processes

- learning and teaching
- advising and tracking students
- record keeping
- co-ordinating groups of external writers



production and delivery systems

- course and print production
- scheduling and progress chasing
- warehousing and stock control
- dispatching materials to students
- transmission of broadcast programmes



philosophy or ethos

- policy statements
- staff attitudes
- management and training of staff
- motto or slogan
- images and messages to public

