



COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

*Learner support: reflections on paradigms,
models and pedagogical approaches for 21st
Century learners in Higher Education*

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Outline of the Lecture

- Conceptualisation of learner support
- Learner support in past perspective
- Learner support services in HEIs
- Learner support systems - 3 case studies
- 21st Century learners
- The paradigm shift
- Digital divide & innovative possibilities
- Final remarks

Conceptualisation of learner support

- How is learner support conceptualised?
- Why is it critical for a HE provider to understand the learner profile?
- Effective learner support
 - Learner centric
 - Needs oriented
 - NB: is generated when the institution has a *robust and technologically enhanced administrative structures; strong counselling and academic services*



Learner Support in past perspective

- Initially treated as a separate subsystem
 - limited to print & assignment feedback
 - correspondence
 - Radio & TV
 - Limited face-to-face and in some institutions it remained very limited
- Now integrated in curriculum design, teaching and learning
- Promotes blended approaches and leverages on ICTs

Learner support services in HEIs

University Students Affairs

Conducive and supportive learning environment

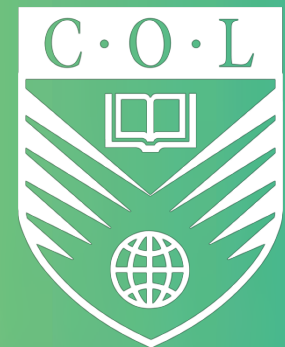
- Administrative, counselling and academic support
- Learner governance and management
- Resource centres
 - *career development*
 - *Language*
 - *libraries*
 - *Technology*
 - *health & wellness, legal clinic etc*

Learner support systems

- Centralised system
 - *whereby the national centre responsible for all learner support services*
- Decentralised learner support system
 - *whereby responsibilities are delegated to the campus, regional centre, or basically faculty based with the National Centre providing constant support*

CASE 1

LEARNER SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS



Case 1

Goals

- Develop and implement policies and quality assurance mechanisms towards an effective and sustainable learner support system
- Establish and maintain self-improvement, self-sustaining, accessible and cost effective learner support services and system as a way of ensuring the quality of teaching and learning at a distance
- Orientate students to the process of learning at a distance and how to use the available technology

Cont'

- Design and provide information on learning opportunities and strategies for successful learning
- Provide academic support to enable students to succeed in their studies
- Provide psychosocial counselling services and other forms of non-academic learner support in order to improve throughput
- Develop tutor-training programmes to enable part time tutors, markers and examiners to facilitate quality learning and become efficient in carrying out their responsibilities

Cont'

- Assist students in developing problem solving skills and become life-long learners
- Develop and implement monitoring and evaluation instruments for the purpose of improving student learning outcomes and academic standards

Challenges addressed by learner support

Personal circumstances

- Job responsibilities
- Long distances home and study centres
- Domestic responsibilities
- Inability to manage time
- Little or no contact with fellow students
- Little or no support from friends, workmates & supervisors

Cont'

Academic circumstances

- inadequate of finances to attend vacation schools
- Poor or lack of study environment
- Delayed study materials
- Inability to write academic assignment
- Little or no contact with their tutors or fellow students

Cont'

Social circumstances

- Lack of professional counselling in some parts of the country
- Social pressure from home and community affect motivation
- Poor assignment guidance in marked assignments

Learner support staff & other challenges

- Inadequate staff
- English language a huge challenge
- Lecturers/Professors & part-time tutors not familiar with ODL mode of delivery

Academic support

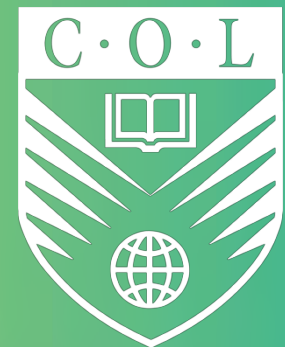
- Vacation schools
- Weekend tutorials
- Interactive Video Conference
- Telephone tutorials
- Marked assignments
- Orientation

Cont'

- Tutorial (tuition) manuals
- Action research
- Non-academic & other psycho-social support

CASE 2

LEARNER SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS



**HQ/MAIN
CAMPUS**

**Regional Services Division
(Headquarter)**

Regional Centers

Study Centers

LEARNER



The learner-centred instructional system

Student Support Services Network

Student Services Centre (SSC)

- Centralised SSC at the main campus
- Redress student grievances
- LAN connectivity
- Online data are made available from all the operational divisions of the main campus

Support Services (Academic)

- Induction
- Academic Counseling
- Library
- Assignments & Feedback
- Projects - Synopsis
- Projects & Viva voce
- HE provider's website
- HE provider's Newsletter

Support Services (Administration)

- Student registration/ re-registration/ re-admission
- ID card, Migration & other related matters to registration
- Counseling schedules
- Assignment submission
- Student assessment
 - Continuous assessment
 - Term end assessment
 - Theory & Practicals
- Hall Tickets (*ID card*) for TEE
- Results & Grade sheet

Regional Centre: Functions

Academic Activities:

- Related to admission, evaluation
- orientation of ACs, training of Coordinators and other part-time staff
- seminars, workshops, academic counselling, intensive contact programmes, monitoring of assignments and counselling, library services
- teleconferencing facilities etc.

Promotional Activities:

Publicity, developing publicity materials, establishing regular contact with various institutions, organizing public seminar, participation in exhibitions and book-fairs, radio, television, press interviews, liaison with State Govt and voluntary organizations etc.

Types of Study Centres

- Regular Study Centres
- Programme Study Centres
- Recognized Study Centres
- Special Study Centres
- Work Centres
- Partner Institutions

Functions of Study Centres

- Academic Counselling
- Assignments evaluation
- Orientation Programme
- Library Services
- Information Services
- Term-end Examinations

Programme Study Centres

For a particular programme or a set of programmes which have intensive practical component e.g.

- Computer
- Science
- Engineering
- Library and Information Sciences etc

Work Centres/Skill Development Centres

For conducting practicals

- BSc Nursing- Conducted at the Institute of Health Science Labs
- Organized at District and Sub-District Hospitals

Special Study Centres

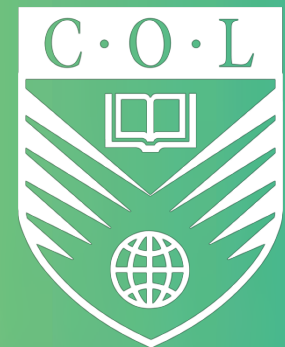
- Disadvantage groups
- rural and remote areas
- women,
- jail inmates
- physically challenged

Partner Institutions (PI)

- Main provider takes up the responsibilities of development of course materials, norms and guidelines of delivery and monitoring
- PI shares the responsibility of delivery of student support services

CASE 3

LEARNER SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS



Case 3

- National Centre & Regional Centres covering the whole country each located at a provincial capital. There are also district centres
- Printed modules, study guides & tutorial letters form part of the delivery with limited f2f of which six hours are conducted per module to provide specific assistance.

Cont'

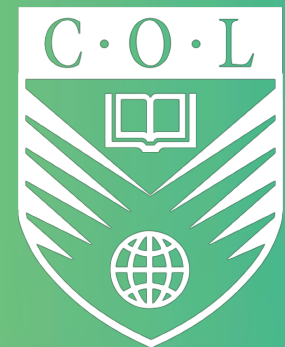
- The first session familiarises the learner with course structure, overview of content, guidance on assignment writing, logistics of the course, consultations with the tutor, forming study groups etc- thus laying the foundation. This takes place right at the beginning of the semester

Cont'

- The second session takes place midway the semester. Its purpose is for learners to share their study experiences thus challenges they met, solutions used, difficult areas they need explained & new directions in their studies. They also get feedback on general issues of their tutor marked assignments.
- The last session gives learners the opportunity to reflect on their learning and prepare for their examinations

CASE 4

LEARNER SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS



1971 -1976 model

- Local educational counsellor linked to student
- Module tutor for face-to-face and correspondence
- Regional Centre Staff
- Compulsory one week residential school

1976 -2000 model

- Tutor counsellor with integrated role - academic and counselling
- Module tutor, face-face tutorial and day school - where student cohort warrants
- Regional Centre staff support
- Residential schools

2000 to present model

- Subject based tutor for each module
- Regional Centre support staff
- Sharp decline in residential schools
- Student support teams based on qualification
- Support through phone, email irrespective of geography

21stCentury learners

Digital natives?

- They leverage on the latest technologies
- They don't want to be lectured to
- They thrive being co-creators of knowledge
- They are love technology, media, smart phones, social media
- They love working together & being independent
- They adapt and change to emerging technologies

The paradigm shift

■ Traditional

- Lecturer centred approaches
- Lecturer dominates
- Students passive as they take notes
- Students follow lecturer's instructions
- Lecturer administers individual assessment
- Lecturer gives homework

■ 21st Century expectation

- More learner centred approaches
- Lecturer facilitates and moderates - adopts blended learning approaches, flipped classrooms
- Students active, make connections to content, other students, lecturers, have access to varied resources- videos, podcasts, e-books, websites, MOOCs, etc
- Students work in teams

Cont'

Changing role of the lecturer

- Lecturer '*no mistake*'
- Lecturer centred approaches - *rote learning*
- Determined students' academic destiny
- Main source of knowledge
- Facilitator
- Collaborator
- Leader
- Adaptor
- Learner
- Communicator
- Risk taker
- The model
- Visionary

Cont'

Pedagogical approaches for 21st C learners

Teaching and learning interactions aiming at:

- The development of thinking skills
- Problem solving skills – *using real world problems & embracing interdisciplinary approaches*
- Promoting collaboration –
 - team skills
 - suitable technologies
 - reflection – *self-review & peer review*
 - *Convergence of education, labour markets and students*

Digital divide

in deeply marginalised contexts

Individuals learning at a distance in difficult circumstances & hard to reach contexts

- No connectivity
- No access to public transport
- Limited access to radio
- No service centre

NB: Nomadic communities, refugees, inmates, those living in remote islands, mountains, valleys, deserts, forests etc

Innovative possibilities



Classroom without walls

What is Aptus?

Aptus is

- a device innovation from COL
- a wireless router and computer combination
- a solution for virtual learning in 'unconnected' environments
- able to host a high volume of content and applications



What is Aptus?

The black device is a 'MiniPC'. It can host up to 128GB of content, and comes pre-loaded with collections of OER, and open source applications for educational use.



The white device is a wireless router & 'power-bank'. It provides battery power, and broadcasts a local network that users can connect to in order to access content and applications.



What is Aptus?

Aptus is not

- a solution for connecting to the internet



Aptus in Action

- Aptus has been field tested in over 15 countries across varied learning environments



FAO
Switzerland Jamaica
Nigeria
Cameroon
Tanzania
Vanuatu
Canada
India
Trinidad & Tobago Kiribati
UNESCO Thailand
Madagascar
Solomon Islands
Rwanda
Kenya
France

The Aptus Value Proposition

Aptus delivers

- connected learning in unconnected environments
- a means of mainstreaming open content
- a platform for local knowledge
- an integrated mobile solution
- high impact at a low cost

How can Aptus add value to Learner Support?

- As a mobile hub for student life services?
- As a repository for learner support resources, and OER?
- As a means of knowledge sharing and peer-support among learners? *e.g. sharing lecture notes, etc.*

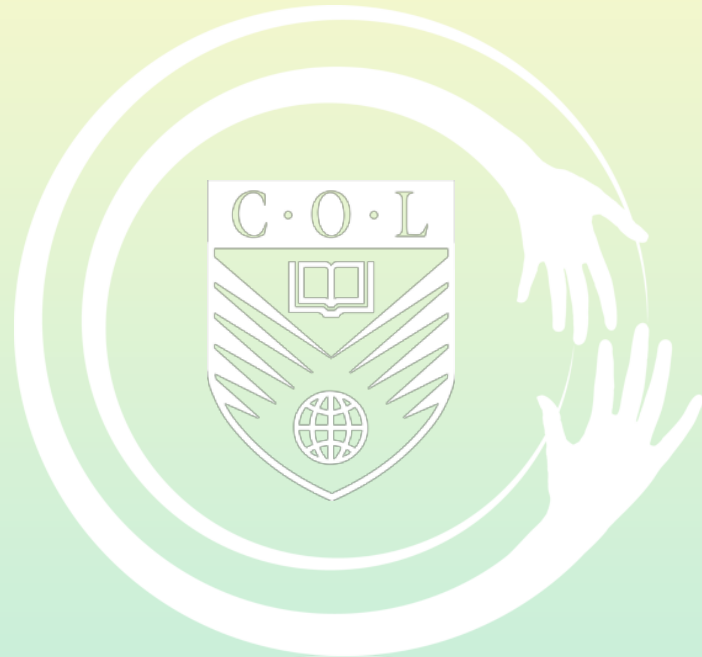


Final remarks

- Learner support is critical for HE learners in all contexts if they are to achieve their goals and if HEIs are to achieve a return on investment - *human capital*
- The emerging technologies and their uptake by learners call for an urgent paradigm shift- *especially by policy makers, administrators, lecturers and the entire student body be it in traditional HEIs or Open Universities and dual mode HEIs*
- Learner support - policy framework, and implementation mechanism are critical for good practice

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THANK YOU

