

POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN
DISTANCE EDUCATION

Term-End Examination

December, 2013

ES-313 : LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

Time : 3 hours

Maximum Weightage : 75%

- Note :** (i) Attempt all the *three* questions.
(ii) All the *three* questions carry *equal* weightage.

1. Answer **any one** of the following questions in about **1200** words :
 - (a) Discuss the institutional context for change in the nature of support services

OR

 - (b) Describe the need for face-to-face sessions in the distance education system. List the role of human factor in the face-to-face sessions.

2. Answer **any four** of the following in about **300** words each :
 - (a) Describe the major tasks of a distance teacher. List the difficulties faced by these teachers.
 - (b) Explain the three types of support services available in an open and distance learning system.

- (c) Define the term Quality assurance : In your own words, write down how quality can be maintained in the self instructional materials designed for open and distance learners
 - (d) Explain in brief, the three levels of communication between a learner and a distance educator.
 - (e) Write a short note on positive (PE) comments. Give examples.
 - (f) Describe the term 'Consumer preference for flexible learning', in your own words.
3. The following is an excerpt from an actual assignment response(see Appendix-I). Write your margin comments and global comments on the space provided. Award a grade to the assignments response on a five point scale, using letter grades, A, B, C, D and E with national correlates as Excellent, very Good, Good, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory respectively. After finishing the task attach Appendix-I to your answer script.

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

Your Roll No :

Grade :

APPENDIX I

ES-313 : Learner Support Services

Space for Comments

Assignment Response

Question 1 :

Theories of learning and communication have helped the distance teacher to design better self-learning materials. Justify this statement with suitable examples.

Ans :

Although learning does not necessarily depend on teaching, it is important that those who are primarily preoccupied with teaching possess a body of knowledge on the concept of learning and the conditions which favour or impede learning.

This body of knowledge, it is hoped will to a considerable degree provide the requisite guidance to teachers to enhance their bid to promote learning through teaching.

Learning according to Slavin (1991) is “a change in an individual behaviour that result from experience”.

The efforts of educators are directed towards providing experiences for students so that culturally and personally relevant learning will occur. The management, direction and facilitation of learning in the classroom is central in importance for formal education. However, learning goes on all the time whether it is directed or not. For this reason the distance teacher needs to design better self-learning materials so that effective learning can take place.

The designing and development of self - learning materials demand a basic knowledge and understanding of the importance of the theories of learning and communication. Teaching distance learner through self-learning materials is different from formal classroom teaching. In the same way the process of designing, developing and providing these materials is quite different from that used in the production of textbooks, lecture notes, journal articles and training manuals.

As distance educators, we are interested not only in knowing about but also in applying the different principles of human learning in the process of distance education. We are also concerned with how distance learners learn and in what ways we may facilitate them because their plight is different from learner in the conventional education system.

Theories of learning have actually helped in this direction because for instance, the two practical contribution of behaviourism to education are programmed instructed and teaching machines. The end technology of programmed instruction has direct bearing on the process of teaching and learning in distance education. Thus, in programmed learning, the learning situation is programmed, without the teacher in person and here the learner play an active role in learning and proceeding at his own pace. In using these devices at each step the learner is provided with positive reinforcement on a form of questions and exercise followed by relevant answers and this in a way can help the distance learner to do independent learning.

Also, assignment form an integral part of the packages of learning materials in distance education because of the purposes they serve in learning. Therefore, when the distance teaching or educator uses machines or electronics devices the exercises they will produce for the learner would provide reinforcement to the distance learner. Thus when assignments are given and marked, the feedback encourages the distance learner to study hard and improve on his or her lots.

Besides, according to the cognitive theories, people learn by perceiving, comprehending and conceptualising problems and the comprehension of concepts and rules is transferable to the solution of new problems or form one situation to another.

Cognitruists believes that learning is a question both of insight formation and of successful problem solving and not a mechanical sequence of struck and responses. And therefore teaching according to them, should encourage understanding based on problem solving and insight formation. With this in mind, the distance teacher can design a self-learning material which can make the

distance learners to discover things for themselves. And the importance of discovery learning cannot be over emphasized.

Thus, when learners learn through discovery, the learning activity becomes their own and thus make them able to retain it and produce it at any given time they are asked to do so.

Also, when teaching materials or self learning materials are planned on the basis of the theory of discovery, it motivates learners to find out thing for themselves.

Jerome S. Bruner (1966) a propend of cognitive learning also support the idea of discovery learning. To him, learning should be flexible and explanatory and therefore educators should arouse learners curiosity minimise the role of failure and make activities relevant and this is what distance education certainly do. Bruner defines learning as a process in which a learner achieves instructional objectives with little or no help from the learner and this being one of the characteristic of distance education can help the distance teacher to design a self

learning materials which can help to achieve maximum benefit from learning.

Gagne (1984) has described learning as a change in the behaviour of an individual that is retained and makes possible a corresponding change in his or her behaviour in a particular situation. According to him, learning is a process that takes place inside an individual brain. He identifies nine stages of cognitive processing that are essential to learning and which need to be executed in a sequential order. This implies therefore that, the individual must be prepared for the learning task, acquire and perform and be able to transfer the learning at the end of the learning situation. Gagne's idea advocated that the distance teacher in designing his self-learning material should plan it in such a way that it proceeds from simple to complex to ensure understanding. His theory also implies that, learner's individual differences, readiness and motivation to learn are important issues to instructional activities especially, for distance learners. He also stressed on transfer of learning the self managerial skills of the learner and teaching learners, the skills of problem solving and all

these when taken into consideration, when designing a self-learning material can promote effective learning in distance education. A typical example is the way their modules are written.

Theodorson and Theodorsan (1969) defined communication as a process of transformation of information, ideas, attitudes or emotions from one person or group to another or other primarily through symbols. Since education itself is a process of communication, the information theory of communication has greatly contributed to the process of teaching learning in terms of the effect of the teacher and even the minds of learners. The process of feedback being provided by learners to the teacher to improve teaching and also by the teachers to learners for effective learning is important because communication is a two way process and response given by each studies.

Feedback in the classroom can take many forms and similarly, feedback in the case of distance education should be used to improve upon all the subsystems be it administrative. academic or industrial. Here, it therefore means that the knowledge

of communication theory can help the distance teacher to design a self-learning material which can provide feedback for future improvement.

Shanon and Weaver (1949) came out with the mathematical theory of communication. Their views were based on developments in electrical system and electronics. To them, three main channels of communication were the telephone, cables and radio waves. In the process of teaching and learning information is passed on from the teacher to the learner. The mathematical thoery have helped in improving the electronic media through which information could be distributed to a larger population. With the help of developed communication technologies information is widely used in distance education for effective teaching and learning processes. For example, radio broadcasting can be used for quick transmission to learners in distance education.

In, sum, it could be seen that theories of learning and communication play a very important role in helping the distance teacher to design better self-learning material.

ASSESSMENT SHEET

Grade :

Tutor's Global Comments

| Content | | Presentation | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Accurate Information | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Inaccurate Information | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Comprehensive | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Lacking in content | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Good Conceptual Analysis | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Poor Conceptual Analysis | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Well Planned | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Inadequately Planned | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Concise | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Lengthy | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clearly Expressed | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> | Not Clearly Expressed | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signature _____

Date _____