M.A. DISTANCE EDUCATION

Term-End Examination

00947   **December, 2014**

MDE-413 : LEARNER SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

Time : 3 hours   *Maximum Weightage : 75%*

Note : *Attempt all the **three** questions. All the three questions carry equal weightage.*

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

    (a) What are learner support services ? Identify the need of support services in distance education. Explain diagrammatically any one model of learner support in distance education.

    (b) Define the term 'Study Skills'. What study skills do you suggest for an average distance learner, and why ? Justify your answer with suitable examples.

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

(a) What do you mean by Supplemental Communication ? Discuss its pedagogical purposes.

(b) Discuss briefly the components of self-directed learning.

(c) List at least five categories of media used in counselling. Explain in brief the way of using them.

(d) Discuss the tasks of a distance tutor.

(e) What is SWOT technique ? Discuss the use of SWOT in problem solving, with examples.

(f) Discuss the role and major functions of a Regional Centre in Open and Distance Learning system.

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

(a) Discuss the significance of tutor comments. Elucidate your answer with the help of suitable examples.

OR

(b) The following is an excerpt from an actual assignment response (see Appendix-I). Write your marginal comments in the margin provided and global comments on the assessment sheet enclosed. Award a grade on the assignment response on a five-point scale, using letter grades, A, B, C, D and E. The notional correlates of these letter grades respectively are excellent, very good, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. After evaluation attach the evaluated script and the 'Assessment Sheet' with your examination answer sheet. Award a grade in the box provided and also write the global comments on the assessment sheet.

Your Roll No. :

Grade :

APPENDIX I

MDE-413 : Learner Support Systems and Services

Space for Comments	Assignment Response

Question :

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

Although learning does not necessarily depend on teaching, it is important that those who are primarily preoccupied with teaching posses 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 results 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 theories of learning and communication teaching distance a 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 contributions of behaviourism to education are programmed instructed and teaching machines. The 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 pace. In using these devices each step the learner is provided with positive reinforcement on a form of questions and exercises followed by relevant answers and this in a way can help the distance learner to do independent learning.

Also, assignments 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 conceptualizing problems and the comprehension of concepts and rules is transferable to the solution of new problems or form one situation to another.

Congnitrusts 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 made 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 the learners to find out things for themselves.

Jerome S. Bruner (1966) a proponent of cognitive learning also supports 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 behavior 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, learners' 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, 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 educations should be used to improve upon all the subsystems i.e. 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 theory has 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
(To be filled in Duplicate)*

Enrolment No. _____   Programme _____   Assessment

Student's Name _____   Course _____   Grade [ ]

Assignment No. _____

Study Centre Code No. _____

Evaluator's Comments

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

Please tick ✓ in the relevant box below	
CONTENT	STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION

CONTENT		STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION	
Accurate Information □ □ □ □ □ Inaccurate Information		Well Planned □ □ □ □ □ Inadequately Planned	
Adequate Coverage □ □ □ □ □ Inadequate Coverage		Concise □ □ □ □ □ Too long or Too short	
Good Conceptual Analysis □ □ □ □ □ Poor Conceptual Analysis		Clearly Expressed □ □ □ □ □ Not Clearly Expressed	