

EFFECTIVENESS OF SELF-LEARNING MATERIALS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Distance education systems are more likely to work well and be successful if they have suitable study materials. Writing for distance education is more complex and different from teaching in person or signing up for a book or journal. To meet the needs of learners, self-learning materials need to use different ways to communicate. Self-Learning material can act like real teachers so that a distance learner can have the same learning experiences as a student in a classroom. Self-Learning Material has all the materials to help people study and learn independently. Distance learners have less contact with the school or the teacher, so these specially made teaching materials are essential. Self-Learning It is just as important to revise materials to make them for the first time. Every distance-learning course needs to be updated regularly to keep up with changes in the field of the study area. In addition, evaluation of course performance using feedback from students, tutors, counsellors, experts, and others is an integral part of making the course more relevant, learner-friendly, and academically rewarding.

Keywords: *Self Learning Materials, Revision of Self Learning Material, Academically Rich, Learner Friendly.*

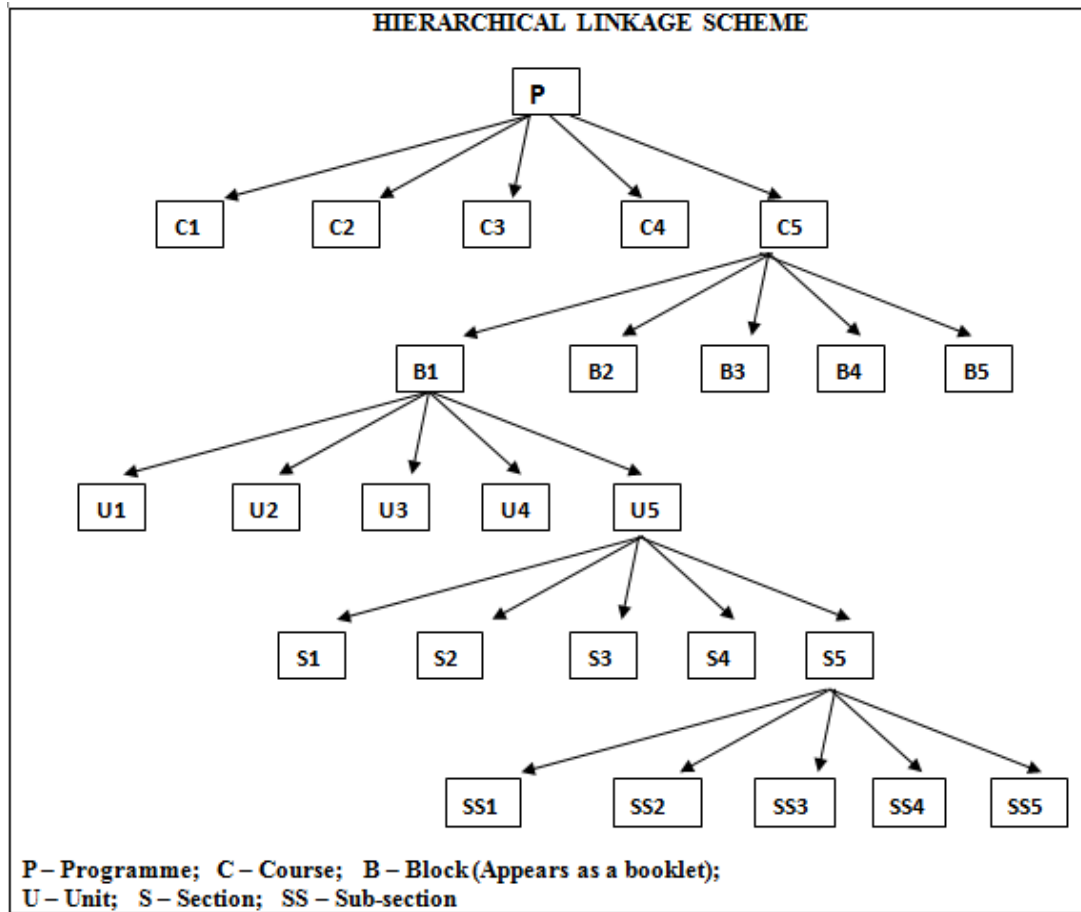
INTRODUCTION

Teaching through the distance education system relies primarily on printed course materials. Even in advanced countries with well-developed Open Universities where mass communication and information technologies have changed the way education works in a big way. Printed course materials are still the most important way to teach thousands of people who are far away. So, extra care must be taken when making course materials to ensure they are suitable for learning. All relevant terms should be known by those who work in or want to work in a distance education system and those who want to know how to create self-learning materials for distance learners and update them regularly. The word "program" refers to a field of study's curriculum or courses. For example, UG/PG/Diploma programs.

The course talks about the materials used to teach and other study parts. Typical distance education courses may include multiple printed booklets, audio and video components, counselling sessions or contact sessions, assignments, library work, lab work and project work, among other things. A course is divided into roughly 60–80-page-long modules. Typically, each block has a single theme. Students receive their printed course materials in blocks. When a student finishes a block, it gives them a sense of accomplishment. From a teaching point of view, a single "big" book can be scary. Units are parts of blocks, and they are divided by the theme or topic, while the topic separates them at another level. Each unit is broken into smaller parts to clarify the ideas, information, examples, etc.

All of the units in a block are related to each other logically and by what they are about. Some schools call units lectures, lessons, topics, or chapters. However, today, "unit" is a word often used by people who teach online. Another essential thing to consider is the unit's length, which might have 5,000 to 6,000 words or 15 to 17 printed pages.

Units are pedagogical units a learner can complete within a reasonable amount of time, such as 5 - 6 hours, or at most three sittings. An ideal pedagogical team should be able to be completed within a single session.



Characteristics of Self-Learning Material

Typically, the chapters of a present textbook are in a condensed format. They more closely resemble reference materials than educational materials and are organised by subject matter rather than facilitating learning. On the other hand, Self-Learning materials are learning an instrument.

(1) Self-Motivation

Students should find the study materials very encouraging, like a live teacher. The materials should make them curious, pose problems, connect what they learn to things they already know, and give them a reason to learn. It is difficult for the course writer to develop these situations without extra work. At every stage of learning and remembering, the sense of reinforcement should be stepped up.

(2) Self-Learning

Besides providing information, a Unit offers the learners a study guide, including instructions, hints, references, etc., that facilitate their study. It is accompanied by simple explanations, examples, illustrations, and activities to make the content more understandable.

(3) Self-Explanatory

There is little need for outside assistance for learners to navigate the material. The material should be self-explanatory and conceptually transparent. Before being presented, the content is analysed logically, and this arrangement preserves the consistency and continuity of the content.

(4) Self-Contained

There is no reason why distance learners cannot seek external support or meet with a teacher. Still, many are not in a position to receive assistance due to their geographical, physical, and psychological isolation. Accordingly, to the extent possible, the material should be self-sufficient so that learners will not be

disadvantaged compared to those with access to additional sources and teachers. It is essential to determine the scope of the unit's content.

(5) Self-Directed

Study materials should provide learners with adequate guidance, hints, and suggestions at every stage of learning. The self-directed materials are presented in the form of straightforward explanations, sequential development, illustrations, activities, etc. The role of the teacher in the classroom, who can guide, instruct, moderate, and regulate the learning process. As a result, the course materials should direct the entire learning process.

(6) Self-Evaluation

To achieve optimum learning, learners must know whether they are on the right path. With the use of self-evaluation tools, such as self-check questions, activities, exercises, and so on, learners can receive much-needed feedback about their progress (check your progress), reinforce learning, and motivate them to continue learning. Course authors must prepare "possible or model answers" to the questions, exercises, and activities presented in the unit/lesson so that students may cross-check their answers and evaluate their progress in learning.

Learning Activeness

Obtaining a response is a critical component of learning, and study material should encourage students to become active and responsive. Learner-active units motivate learners to participate in various academic activities, such as writing down points, explaining concepts, collecting material, applying what is learned to a new situation, performing self-check exercises, writing assignment responses, etc. Incorporating such strategies makes a unit learner active and pedagogically purposeful.

Classification of Learning Activities

(1) Introspective mindset

Multiple types of questions encourage the students to think and provide alternative answers. As well as encourage the students to consider, such questions will help assess their learning retention.

(2) Writing

Without additional assistance, students should practise using the information they have just reviewed. Using simple activities such as writing from memory and asking the student to explain the topic is helpful.

(3) Doing

It has been said that doing is the best way to learn. Learners should be given some practical exercises or activities in science courses where they want to develop specific skills. Some courses may consist of group work at study centres where students will be permitted to perform skills, experiments, and other activities. Students must be provided with course materials that detail these activities. These activities include conducting experiments, consulting maps, studying, and participating in field trips.

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Access Devices

The devices allow the course writer to get closer to the learners and the content. Using these devices, learners can locate the content required and make it more personal.

(1) Cover Page

It is the responsibility of the course coordinator to identify an attractive and suitable cover design for the course. It would communicate a more comprehensive view of the course to the learner and act as an aid for access.

(2) Title

We should provide our unit with a clear title to clarify what the team is about to our learners.

(3) The Unit's Structure

Each unit is assigned a title specific to the content presented in that unit. The learner should clearly understand what the unit entails by reading the title. Sections and sub-sections should be arranged following the order in which they appear in the material.

(4) Objective

Behavioural objectives should be clearly outlined for the unit.

(5) Division of Content

The sections are identified by bold capital letters and the sub-sections by small but prominent type.

(6) Illustrations

It should be accompanied by appropriate illustrations, charts, graphs, photographs, flow diagrams, etc.

(7) Glossaries

It is recommended that the summary of the unit be followed by a glossary of keywords, new concepts, and technical terms.

(8) Instructions

Provide precise and unambiguous instructions on how to navigate the unit.

Developing a Unit

Course material should be designed to facilitate self-study so that the student can learn regardless of whether the teacher is present. Therefore, we must integrate the teacher into the course content. Educators should be aware of the different approaches to presenting the subject matter. A classroom teacher's functions must be included in the self-learning materials.

A Unit has Three Parts: The Start, The Body, and The End

(A) Beginning of the Unit

The function of the "beginning" is to provide learners with a decisive orientation. The students require direction on approaching the unit and what to expect from it.

(1) Structure of the Unit

Distance-learning materials have one "contents" page for each unit, whereas textbooks typically only have one. The term for the list of things to learn is structure. The logical arrangement of sections and subsections makes the material more learner-centric and easier to comprehend. The subsections and paragraphs of a unit are numbered sequentially with a single point, such as 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, etc. The number on the left represents the unit, while the number on the right represents the section. It is important to remember that we do not number more than two things. If you think a subsection's parts are essential and need to be in the structure, can put them in the subsection without giving them a number. Instead, they can be drawn attention to with bold type.

(2) Introduction to the Unit

In the introduction, you need to greet, welcome, and motivate the learners by making them think that the material in the unit is easy to understand. Most of the time, the introduction should not be more than one page long. Since the introduction talks about the whole unit and connects it to what came before, it can be written after the entire unit is done.

Introduction of Essential Components

(1) Structural Component

In an introduction, we provide information about the prior content; in doing so, we connect what a learner has already learned and what they will study in the current instruction unit.

(2) Thematic Component

It is an overview that talks about the main parts. The best way to do this is to talk informally about the unit's theme and the item in the structure.

(3) Guidance Component

In providing study guides, we should instruct learners on what they should do before commencing reading. Study requirements, including time, activities, references, types of equipment, books, etc., should be outlined in the introduction.

(4) Defining Objectives

We define objectives as what the learner should be able to accomplish once the unit has been completed. Objectives are distinct from goals, and objects are derived from aims. An instructor defines the goals he wishes to perform or convey through teaching activities. On the other hand, the objectives refer to the behaviours expected of the student. In other words, the 'aims' represent a teacher's goals, and the 'objectives' represent a student's goals. When defining objectives, one must identify the ultimate outcomes of instruction in terms of the visual performance of learners. The learning outcomes are to be formulated in behavioural terms, also known as 'learning outcomes.'

Components of Objectives

(1) Condition

Certain circumstances may cause displacement of behaviour. After viewing the video series, the viewer can explain the concept after attending the workshop. Therefore, an objective statement will always begin with a condition or situation.

(2) Behaviour

i.e., Action: It instructs the learner on what to do after completing the unit. Determine the difference between living and non-living things.

(3) Standard

Level: Learners should be aware of the level of performance. This level of objective attainment is expected of the students. If you are writing for the UG level, your objectives must focus on knowledge, comprehension, and application; your goals can include synthesis and evaluation if you register for the PG level or higher.

CONCLUSION

Self-Learning material can act like real teachers so that a distance learner can have the same learning experiences as a student in a classroom. Each distance-learning course needs to be updated regularly to keep up with changes in the field of the study area, and revising materials to make them for the first time is just as necessary. According to Wedemeyer (1977), in his article on constructing a distance education system, Distance Education is an unorthodox means and method of educating all who are willing to learn. In his view, education includes various forms of teaching and learning. The significant difference is that teachers and learners stay apart, and oral and written communication occurs in various ways. He views distance education as a tool for continuing education.

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