TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTUAL DISTANCE EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

The present social revolution into the learning society is surpassing conventional colleges and universities gradually. This is being transformed to become open, flexible, lifelong, which is an important trend of the world universities conform to. The establishment of specialised institutes for distance education like the Open Universities is customarily enthused by the objectives to boost the openness of education for non-customarily groups of students and the realization of economies of scale. In order to perform well, institutes for distance education have to ascertain and uphold an educational system, enclosing an educational model and partisan infrastructure. The profound blend of information technology and education has also become a widespread philosophy and harmony in erecting building for open university; an ingenious syllabus and presentation outlines ; the active environment of social learning provided by a computer with access to local, national, and international networks; broad planning and preparation of technology. MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), SPOC (Small Private Online Course), Flipped Classroom can all together contribute to the qualitative distance education. Further, Element for Teaching Course System (What) , Element of learning course (When), Element of Personalized learning approach(How) and Element of Diversified Teaching Evaluation System(Evaluation) as mandatory elements for effectual distance education are suggested thereof.

KEY WORDS: *Distance Education, Open University, Effectual Distance Education*

INTRODUCTION

The existing social revolution in knowledge-based society is surpassing conventional colleges and universities gradually. This transformation makes learning open, flexible, lifelong, which is an imperative indicator to universities world-wide. The Open universities are being now at the forefront. An open university is a university with an open-door academic policy and with minimal or no entry requirements. Open universities differ in specific teaching methods such as open supported learning or distance education. In its simplest form, distance education can be defined as the delivery of education using distance media. Moore & Kearsley (2012) define distance education as '-- Teaching and planned learning in which the teaching normally occurs in a different place from the learning, requiring communiqué through technologies '.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OPEN UNIVERSITY

Open distance learning (ODL) is effortless and available to all. ODL is a learning distance that can be effortless and available for anyone not considering the age, criterion or the racial group as well. The distance is to study in absentia from the institution or college and the time of teaching and learning is unconnected. The institution or college will organize the course materials in advance. The learning method is the students do self-studying of the course material at home or other places and complete the assigned assignment. The ODL learning does not require the presence of the teacher. For this learning, the method of the communication is through technologies' innovations like self-instructional electronic communication, telephone, printed materials, audio, broadcasting, video and online communication. Its main and imperative attribute is to amenably pull out vision or ideas from global professionals in applicable fields, and to passably multiply the first-rate open sources.

MEASURES IDENTIFIED FOR EFFECTUAL DISTANCE EDUCATION

For high and eminence results, institutes for distance education have to start and uphold an educational system, enclosing an educational model and partisan infrastructure that optimizes education on three scales:

a) **Efficacy:** The educational system should be able to enable the enrolled non-conventional students to attain the determined educational objectives.

b) **Competence:** The educational system should be able to enable to attain determined educational objectives in such a way that it reduces waste of time of students and staff.

c) **Convenience:** The educational system should be unfastening for the beneficiaries.

From time to time it is needed to assess whether the educational system and infrastructure of an institute are still optimal on these scales or should be adapted to changing circumstances. A literature study was performed by the researcher to analyse which measures increased the study performance among non-traditional students. The main **measures that were identified to work for effectual distance education** can be discussed in detail as follows:

▪ The profound blend of information technology and education has also become a widespread philosophy and harmony in erecting building for open university; an ingenious syllabus and presentation outlines ; the active environment of social learning provided by a computer with access to local, national, and international networks; broad planning and preparation of technology; repeating questions and possessing a sense of humour. MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), SPOC (Small Private Online Course), Flipped Classroom can all together contribute to the effectual distance education.

▪ Various authors have suggested communiqué is an vital part of learning and computers can perk up communiqué between learners and teachers and allow interactivity with other learners; the students should be "comfy with new-fangled patterns of communiqué to be adopted in the course" . The dynamic milieu of social learning can be provided by a computer with access to local, national, and international networks multiplies interaction and communiqué among students, their teachers, peers, parents, and other members of the world community can be enhanced.

"A learner support system needs to be put in place to assist students confronting the challenges of distance education…" "faculty training is essential…" "to realize the potential of information technology as a means to take benefit of prospects offered…" (Viswanathan, 2012).

Wilkes & Burnham (1991) agree, stating "those factors which influence good instruction may be generally universal across different environments and populations".

Pre-planning plays a backbone role in effectual distance education. It may require the following:

a) Widespread planning and formative evaluation is essential. The learners require such faculties who are too organised.

b) Learners benefit considerably from a well-thoughtful syllabus and clear-cut presentations.

c) Appropriate Note taking, Using education tools such as interactive study material, Use of video-presentations deep routes the learner's understanding of the course. Further, the teaching techniques must be personalized according to the medium and level of the learner.

d) Teachers must be appropriately trained in the ease of usage of education tools and its effectiveness in the distance education environment. Learners get more from the courses when the faculty seems snugly with the technology, maintains eye contact with the spot- camera, replicates questions, probes them at times and conveys instruction in flowing manner.

Few researches indicate that the instructional technology has quite less effect on student achievement as long as the delivery technology is appropriate to the content being offered and all participants have access to the same technology.

- The construction system of MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is an important direction with combination of the Internet and Open education resources. Due to characteristics of MOOC like outsized size, open, interactive, rich resources, it can meet the needs of different levels of learners.

  Armando Fox believes that MOOC is only appendage of classroom teaching, and can't completely replace classroom teaching.

- To overcome this limitation, a professor at Berkeley University of California, Armando Fox projected SPOC (Small Private Online Course) in 2013. SPOC can change the status of conventional classroom teaching. It is new amalgam mode of the integration of online learning and traditional classroom for small specific classroom learners. It makes this possible through using MOOC resources and online evaluation, communication and other functions.

Thus, MOOC tends to maximise faculty utilization, maximise learner's output, maximise learner's learning aptitude and their partaking too. SPOC tends for blended learning: blend of advanced MOOC with conventional learning in order to achieve the determined efficacy, competence and consistency.

Flipped classroom is considered to be one of the effectual ways for blended learning. SPOC and MOOC, both carry out filled classroom teaching. This is based on following four modules: fundamental course information, learning substance, teaching action and interaction module.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AS MANDATORY ELEMENTS FOR EFFECTUAL DISTANCE EDUCATION:

Element for Teaching Course System (What), Element of learning course (How), Element of Personalized learning approach (Which) and Element of Diversified Teaching Evaluation System (Evaluation) as mandatory elements for effectual distance education are suggested thereof.

a) **Element for Teaching Course System: (What of Effectual Distance Education?)**

This is the first and very imperative element for effectual distance education. The Teaching Course System consists of designing well-planned course content. The course content has to be designed keeping in mind the specific educational objectives to be achieved in context to blended learning. This requires a module designed considering the learner's characteristics and theory along-with practical activities. The learning objectives to be achieved through the course, time schedule, scoring method, credits, grades etc needs to be specified. The more specific is the element for Teaching Course system specified, the more impetus it becomes for the learner to complete a MOOC course.

b) **Element of Learning Course: (How of Effectual Distance Education?)**

Element of learning course means how the teaching course is to be imparted to the learners. This undoubtedly calls for learner centred learning course. The teaching methods and techniques to be used may be learner centric methods like problem-solving, inquiry training model, conceptual attainment model, Project Based Learning, assignment method etc. Implementation of these learning courses with learner centric methods develop students' interest in learning, master over learning skills, and increase good study habits, to facilitate to explore self-learning after school. This element of learning course helps to perk up students' impetus to learn and enhance learning outcomes.

c) **Element of Personalized learning approach :(Which of Effectual Distance Education?)**

Personalized leaning approach is the input element in effectual distance education. Any learning approach becomes personalised when the diversity of learners in terms of their background, impetus, individual differences, individual needs is considered in teaching learning process. Effectual Distance learning considers Personalized learning approach. The diversity of impetus

and background of learners fix on their learning direction and ultimately learning upshot. Thus the aim of element of personalized learning strategies is to not only meet the individual needs of learners, but also support the diverse participation and learning for learners.

d) Element of Diversified Teaching Evaluation System: (Evaluation of Effectual Distance Education?)

This is the concluding but ultimate element of Effectual Distance Education. The evaluation of Effectual Distance Education is summative evaluation rather than formative. For an effectual and diversified teaching evaluation system, it should include assignments, unit tests, grades in open forums, discussions, practical aspect in order to evaluate knowledge and skills of the learners. . There can be small online tests in a play-way method, exploratory test, etc. to evaluate the understanding and application level of the learners. Summative evaluation of learners is comprehensively accomplished through online and traditional final written exams. Such diversified learning evaluation can fully reflect the effects of learners in the teaching, and more conducive to improve the initiative of learners.

CONCLUSION

MOOC is so a big storm of online education that many educators are full of their passion and desire. Combination with the SPOC and flipped classroom teaching will help open universities to further implement the reforms in learner-centred teaching and learning methods, which is in line with educational philosophy and culture features of many colleges and universities. When we carry out diverse teaching modes including distance education, build a mature network platform full of resources and strengthen the team cooperation of experts and teachers, we can have a more effective diversified mode for distance education. The technology development can change teachers' functions. Teachers need to carry out the design of more detailed course content and learning activities for personalize learning to adapt to teaching mode reform based on SPOC's flipped classroom in the future.

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