# "Management of Technology Driven Strategies for the Educators of Young Students."

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Learning strategies and educator's roles change as per learning need of the environment and there is a noticeable difference between traditional classroom setting and digital environment. The application of new technologies was heralded as a revolution for open learning teaching. It generated new hopes among educators and learners. The computers and information and communication technologies were expected to create an exciting learning scenario to overcome some of the constraints of the conventional system, imposed by limitations of time, space, cost and skill. It was argued that appropriate learning softwares could be an alternative to stereotype and less satisfactory learning resources as these have the potential to opt greater learning opportunity.

## TECHNOLOGY DRIVEN STRATEGIES

The methodology of instruction in open school varies slightly from that of campus centric education. The strategies being followed in mainstream teaching is not very much helpful to the open learner. Therefore, an educator of open learning must imbibe suitable skills within him and develop required capabilities to prove a resource in his profession.

Technology is an enabler. Its adaptation proves to be economic, convenient, time saver, and energy efficient. An ODL educator, when familiar with various technological inputs available to him and is well versed with them, proves to be more professional. In addition to be electronic, interactive technologies, a good understanding of recent concepts of learning derived from research findings, helps the teacher of open learning in planning and presentation of instructions. Concerning to educational technology, earlier, the stress was on hardware aspects and now it is on software development. The present day open learning educator is a studio teacher. He has to perform multi faceted role. The role of mass media in acquiring the skills involved in the preparation, production and evaluation of media programs and comprehending the unique features of radio and TV programs for different segments of learners are crucial for him. Moreover, a tutor of open learning must have an exposure to public relations, advertisements and media usage. Under hardware handling, a teacher is expected to be comfortable in handling OHP, slide projector, VCD, DVD, reprographic equipments or computer. In addition, training in using interactive techniques in software preparation and practice in giving demonstrations by utilizing video, computer based projections, projector TV prove very useful. Exposure of learners to telecommunication system, recent and widely used information technology related to satellite services, such as fax, e-mail, Tele- conferencing, Intranet, Internet, Tele-teaching are proving as added advantage for capacity building amongst distance educators.

## ROLE OF TECHNO EDUCATOR IN NEW PARADIGM

In India, information and communication technologies are sophisticated enough to create the platform needed for virtual classes, self and collaborative learning. The training program can have a serious lacuna if the teaching pedagogy is not matched with the learning environment. Thus the educators in open learning should assist young students towards creating a learning environment where they may make use of learning resources to its optimum ways to achieve the desired outcome.

Technology transforms learning experiences. It plays a crucial role in innovative learning and takes advantage of access to information, knowledge, expertise and its effective dissemination.

Teacher is at the center of transformation in learning process. In distance education, the status of an educator has been elevated and he is supposed to seek the role of a facilitator. However this new role may be justified only through professional training in ICT and E-learning. Techno savvy trainee teachers have ingress to digital repository and make learning customized to meet the specific requirement of

young learners. They have to build a capacity to approach rich, shareable knowledge by assembling and packaging it in innovative and creative ways.

In emerging knowledge societies, where education is the basis of prosperity, teaching has become the most exciting and significant profession. It is believed that no progressive teacher education program and trainee teacher can now afford to remain indifferent and unresponsive to the irresistible aura of technology driven learning. However, the adaptation of these technologies to the sphere of education has been slow and in some cases non-existent in India. Teachers empowered by technology create an environment and conditions in which young students enjoy learning and learn to learn.

The fact that education provides unquantifiable and intangible benefits is enough to plead the case of technology driven training strategies for educators. It is imperative for teachers to become 'digitally fluent' rather than merely 'digitally literate'.

**OBJECTIVES**

In existing open learning scenario educator's training need to be restructured to cover the following objectives:

- To make the trainee teachers capable of using modern technologies to improve learning infrastructure.
- To make teaching - learning process more attractive and interesting by conservation and enrichment of information bank and bringing changes in the delivery system.
- To enrich teacher trainees with adequate information and relevant transfer technologies so that they may solve learner's problems by using professional skills.
- To make educators capable of crossing subject-boundaries and to empower them with new knowledge and also train them to act skilled teachers through attitudinal and behavioral changes.
- To make the teacher- trainee capable of leading multi-directional teaching program and workshops.
- To enable the ODL educators capable of facing the challenges of globalization in the education sector.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS BY NIOS**

In India National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in collaboration with National Institute of Open schooling (NIOS) and IGNOU has made efforts in the use of interactive distance mode technology for in-service training of teachers under Tele-Special Orientation of School Teachers. Established as an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, in 1989, NIOS mainly caters to the educational needs of the non schooling children in general and particularly, school dropouts and socially and economically backward section of the learner population. It started academic courses at secondary and senior secondary levels. However the concept of open schooling has changed considerably in the last few years. The system has become more sensitive to occupational and life related needs of the learners. Hence, the focus of NIOS covers right from the elementary education to courses at pre-degree level, both academic and vocational.

NIOS has developed into the largest open schooling system in the world with 1,427 thousand student on its roll. It attempts to reach out the physically, mentally, socially and geographically disadvantaged groups through suitable learning material and delivery mechanism. NIOS uses emerging technologies for training and teaching purpose mainly to increase access and ensure quality.

In India the professional development of in-service school teachers using Interactive Television was undertaken in joint collaboration of UNESCO-ITV and Government of India, utilizing one way video and two way audio tele-conferencing techniques. The Teacher's Education and Extension Department (TEED) is also working for professional development of mainstream teachers so that they can act as tutors for open school study centers. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, through NCERT, is utilizing EDUSAT for teachers' training at District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), under Educational Technology Department. In addition, the district level institute is also extending Computer On Wheels (COW) Lingua Lab, and Computer Added Learning Program (CALP) to empower educators and ultimately to benefit the students. Given the technology constraints and its access, inadequate financial

and infrastructural support, non-availability of skilled teachers and supporting staff at local level, NIOS, is experiencing the shortage of appropriately trained tutors.

**THE PROBLEM**

Open schooling system in the country expects the learners to be independent in their learning tasks using the package of self learning material provided to them. However they need support from variety of sources, so as to achieve success in their endeavor to continue learning and also to make use of available multi-packages effectively.

For most of the open schooling programs, the distance educators are selected from the formal mode, who teach courses to the students of main stream system. Yet to assist the learners of distance mode, some additional skills and capabilities are required from educators to make the learning interesting, tangible and learner friendly.

For this NIOS provides them planned and live human support through its certified tutors. This support is given at the study center level by utilizing the services of teachers from Accredited Institutions (AI's) - which are usually reputed educational institutions, voluntary organizations catering to the need for education and training, all over the country. At present NIOS have partnership with more than 25,000 AI's. The AI's pass on some of their resources to the study centers viz. class rooms, laboratories, office support, and utilities. This arrangement enabled the NIOS to extend its reach to large number of locations without much non- recurring cost. On an average one NIOS study center engage the service of more than 20 AI educators. Therefore more than 50,000educators are to be trained. It is physically impossible to train such a large number of teachers without utilizing multimedia technology. Moreover, it is now recognized that to accomplish effectiveness training be trainee focused and that training be provided at the place, time and in the area of the tutor.

Keeping this aspect into consideration the cascade model of training is being utilized at NIOS. Under this model a group of master trainers pass on inputs to teachers through an intermediary known as study center coordinator. The transmission loss occur in the process is compensated through multimedia support and by increasing the frequency of training. The training methodology utilizes short duration induction courses, training through tele-conference mode, guides and manuals. One-way video and two-way audio tele-conferencing through communication satellite is also being used. Under this, trainees communicate through long distance telephone lines and fax.

Though all efforts have been made to imbibe distance tutoring skills amongst the AI teachers, there are certain inhibitions of utilizing local support, which are:

- Conventional teachers consider it difficult to understand the open schooling learner's aspirations, needs, attitudes and perceptions.
- Often educators in such institutions show indifference in utilizing available technology related resource. This results into lowering the interest and motivation of the young learners.
- Less emphasis is given to practical work, guidance assignment, project work, workshop and newer technologies of learning.

Contrary to above, the educator of open schooling system should be a linking pin between the planners at headquarters and the learners who are scattered across the country. He must be an all inclusive resource, capable of intuitively understanding the basics, processes and technologies of the system. He should be a knowledge disseminator, informer, counselor, mentor, coach, assessor, feedback provider and user of modern educational devices.

**TRAINING OUTCOMES**

The post training practices and behavior of professionally trained tutors is reflected in the following outcomes:

- Children's interest in learning reveals that with the use of multimedia technology, instructional system has been improved and the same is confirmed through their active participation in learning.

- Effective teaching strategies have been incorporated. This includes teaching vocabulary and language necessary for the task, accurate models with examples, additional graphics, diagrams, icons, maps, setting of achievable task, activities, repeat instrument etc.
- The use of media for the teaching-learning transaction assures two-ways communication. It stimulates all senses of students and involves them in learning through animation, audio, and visuals.
- Multimedia programs provide a mix of education and entertainment i.e. "edutainment." This also results into active and engaged learning.
- There is an increase in student support for checking learner's understanding, constant stimuli, and reinforcement. This helps in maintaining student enthusiasm by presenting challenges.
- Fostered group interaction results in solidarity amongst learners. They used to watch TV collectively, accessed CD- ROM and appreciated the problems and achievements of each other.

**CONCLUSION**

The use of technology in educator's training for open schooling requires all efforts at every stage. The new technology if exploited and implemented effectively can bring sea change in teaching-learning process thereby solving many problem of young students, such as wastage and stagnation, mass failure, delinquency and truancy. Emerging technology has immense potential and can herald as major force for effective learning, but it is possible only if those who are involved in (educator-learner) are willing to make optimum use of it.

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