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Notable Quotable

"Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way."

–Edward de Bono

Monitoring of Practical Course and Tutor-marked Assignment in "B.Ed." programme of IGNOU

Introduction

The B.Ed. programme of IGNOU is a professional programme offered through distance mode to graduate in-service teachers working in schools. The major objective of this two-year B.Ed. programme is to impart a variety of knowledge and skills to in-service teachers to make them competent teachers in the classrooms of schools.

In the two-year duration of the B.Ed. programme, the student-teachers enrolled have to undergo 10 theory courses and three compulsory practical-based courses namely, School-based Activities (ES-381, 4 credits), Workshop-based Practical (ES-382, 4 credits) and Practice Teaching (ES-383, 8 credits). For theory based courses, the student-teachers enrolled have to submit one Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA) per course as part of continuous assessment system.

Monitoring is an important component to determine the expected outcome of any programme for quality maintenance in delivery to stakeholders. One of the academic activities of the Regional Centres of IGNOU is to monitor the counselling/ practical course activities of the academic counsellors as well as the TMA responses evaluated by them in order to verify the parameters that determine the quality in delivery of B.Ed. programme at IGNOU Programme Study Centres (PSCs).

Monitoring of Workshop-Based Practical

Among the three practical courses, the Workshop-based Practical (WBP) is carried out at the Programme Study Centre (PSC) of B.Ed. to which learners are attached, whereas the School-based Activities (ES-381) and Practice Teaching (ES-383) are done at the Work Centres, namely schools. The practical WBP is to be monitored by the Regional

Centres (B.Ed. Student-Teachers' Handbook, 2012). The duration of WBP course is 12 days each during 1st and 2nd year of the B.Ed. programme and the student-teachers have to compulsorily attend the practical activities at the PSC. Therefore, the monitoring of the WBP by the Regional Centre concerned is carried out by visiting the PSCs in the region.

In Regional Centre, Madurai, at present 43 B.Ed. PSCs are functioning. In RC, Madurai it is a customary practice for the PSCs to hold the WBP in the month of May every year as it is summer vacation for student-teachers and therefore, it is convenient for them to attend WBP at PSCs. All PSCs plan WBP-I and WBP-II schedules for 12 days in advance during the month of April and communicate it individually to student-teachers and the Regional Centre, Madurai.

This author has made visits to the PSCs during the conduct of WBP practical activities in the Madurai region. The details of visits made and the average attendance of Student-Teachers at PSCs during WBP course is as follows:

Table1: Details of Student-Teachers at PSCs

Year	Number of PSCs visited for monitoring WBP	Attendance of student-teachers (Average) observed
2012	8	99%
2013	7	99%
2014	7	98%

During the visits to the PSCs during WBPs, following have been checked and ensured:

- Attendance and punctuality of student-teachers during the sessions.
- Activities conducted as per the day/session-wise schedule planned in conformity with IGNOU B.Ed. Student-Teacher Handbook.
- The presence of workshop Director and the required number of teacher educators/ resource persons.
- Presence of part-time supporting staff.
- Physical infrastructure facilities and classrooms with ICT facilities like LCD projector, etc.
- Adequate arrangements for individual and group work.

During the visits, sit-in monitoring was done during the sessions and various aspects like presentation by the resource persons, interactivity, enthusiasm of learners, participation level in individual/group work, preparation of teaching aids were assessed.

Table 2: Monitoring at PSCs

Academic Parameters Evaluated during Monitoring at PSCs	Very Good	Good	Average
Presentation of academic content by resource persons	#		
Interactivity during the sessions		#	
Participation level in individual activity by Student -Teachers		#	
Participation level in group activities by student-teachers		#	
Use of ICT like PPT presentation during the sessions		#	
Participation level in preparation of Teaching-Aids by Student- teachers	#		
Overall performance of student-teachers in activities in WBP		#	

According to the author, the sessions/ activities which require improvement and proper inputs from resource persons/teacher educators are:

1. Micro-teaching skills in 1st year WBP

2. School-budgeting in 2nd year WBP

The overall impression gained during monitoring visits to PSCs for WBP is good. Therefore, in WBP course, quality to the satisfactory level is maintained.

Monitoring of Tutor-Marked Assignments

The Tutor-marked Assignments (TMAs) are compulsory component in B.Ed. programme and each student-teacher has to submit one TMA responses per theory course. One of the main academic activities of the Regional Centres is to monitor 2% of the evaluated TMA responses from each Learner Support Centres. Assignment responses are important instrument for teaching and learning at a distance. Comments by distance teacher on TMA responses minimise spatial distance and effect successful distance learning, besides enhances academic closeness for the learners (Koul & Panda, 1989). Therefore, the monitoring of evaluated TMA responses help to find out whether tutor comments are written by academic counsellors as per distance education requirements for two-way communication and feedback to learners.

The author monitored the evaluated TMA responses of the B.Ed. learners received from IGNOU B.Ed. PSCs in Madurai region, the details of which are:

Table 3: Monitoring of Evaluated TMA Responses

Year of monitoring	No. of PSCs covered	Academic counsellors covered per PSC	Courses per PSC monitored	No. of TMAs monitored
2012-13	12	8	10	120
2013-14	14	8	11	154

The author monitored the 274 TMAs for the availability of tutor comments and suggestion/ feedback written by the academic counsellors who evaluated them. The monitoring yielded the following findings:

Table 4: Details of Evaluated TMA Responses

Types of Comments Studied	No. of TMAs carrying Tutor comments (N=274)	No. of TMAs NOT carrying Tutor Comments (N=274)
One word Comment	269	5
Detailed Global comments	3	271
Margin Comments	0	274
Justification for grades awarded	0	274
Suggestions for Improvement like inclusion of examples, illustrations, figures, flow charts etc.	7	267
Feedback about reference books	0	274
Feedback about language	0	274

Feedback by the Regional Centre for Improvement

The overall impression gained from the study is that the academic counsellors of B.Ed. at IGNOU PSCs in Madurai Region are not writing adequate tutor comments. Hence, the two-way communication required for successful distance learning is found absent. However, Regional Centre, Madurai after monitoring, made a detailed feedback to all PSCs individually, emphasising the need for the academic counsellors to write detailed tutor comments, detailed global comments, margin comments and justification for grades awarded in TMA responses. They were also suggested to give a detailed feedback to the learners about their performance. The academic counsellors are also advised to point out the deficiencies and suggestions for improvement to overcome deficiencies by the learners in future. A model global comment sheet developed by the author was also circulated to all PSCs. The feedback of Regional Centre after monitoring is expected to improve the quality of evaluation of TMA responses in B.Ed. programme in future.

Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Monitoring of B.Ed. workshop-based practical gave a good overall impression about the academic transactions and satisfaction about the quality of delivery at PSCs.

2. In case of monitoring of TMAs, quality aspect is lacking and hence, the academic counsellors of B.Ed. require intensive orientation in writing tutor comments for distance learners.

3. The orientation for academic counsellors of B.Ed. should be frequently arranged by the Regional Centre or STRIDE of IGNOU through in person or teleconferencing mode or through online mechanism for the sake of quality maintenance.

References

- Student-Teacher Handbook for B.Ed., 2012, School of Education, New Delhi: IGNOU.

- Koul, B.N and Panda S. (1989). *Assessment and Evaluation in Distance Education,* STRIDE Handbook. New Delhi: IGNOU.

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Interactive Multimedia Enabled Computer Literacy Programme

CLP is a computer-training programme of one-month duration covering the basics of computer operations and applications such as WINDOWS & MS-OFFICE. The course is spread over five blocks along with one lab manual. A certificate of participation is awarded by IGNOU to the successful participants. NCIDE has integrated the windows and MS-Office components of the Computer Literacy Programme in the form of an Interactive Multimedia CLP as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Interactive Multimedia Rich Course Material
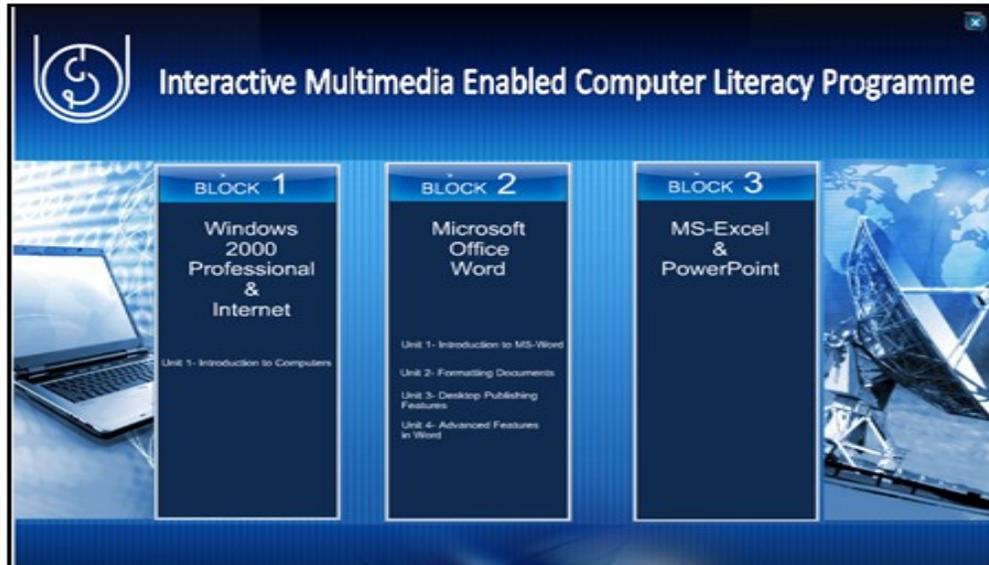
**Interactive multimedia rich (IMMR) course material:**

- **IMMR Lessons:** The multimedia rich course material enables the learners to understand difficult concepts in a self-paced, flexible learning environment.
- **IMMR Ms-Office Simulation:** This component will enable the learners to actually practice the various Ms-Office packages like Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc. through simulations.
- **Glossary:** The glossary is an alphabetized collection of computer related terms with their meanings. This will help the learner to understand other computer terms while going through the course material.

- **Resources:** This component consists of various resources like free software, articles etc. which would be distributed to the learners on CD-ROM.

- **Quiz-bank:** This component consists of multiple choice, true false, drag-drop and simulation based questions to help the learner evaluate himself/herself.

Future Application-Virtual Lab elements for the Computer Literacy Programme

Effective and efficient learning especially for science, computer science and engineering courses requires a mixture of both theoretical knowledge and hands on experience or practical work. The revolution in internet technology and the boom of e-learning and virtual environments have enabled a number of web-based software systems to provide remote hands-on-experiences to the learners through computer simulations.

Figure 2: Screen of Assessment Session
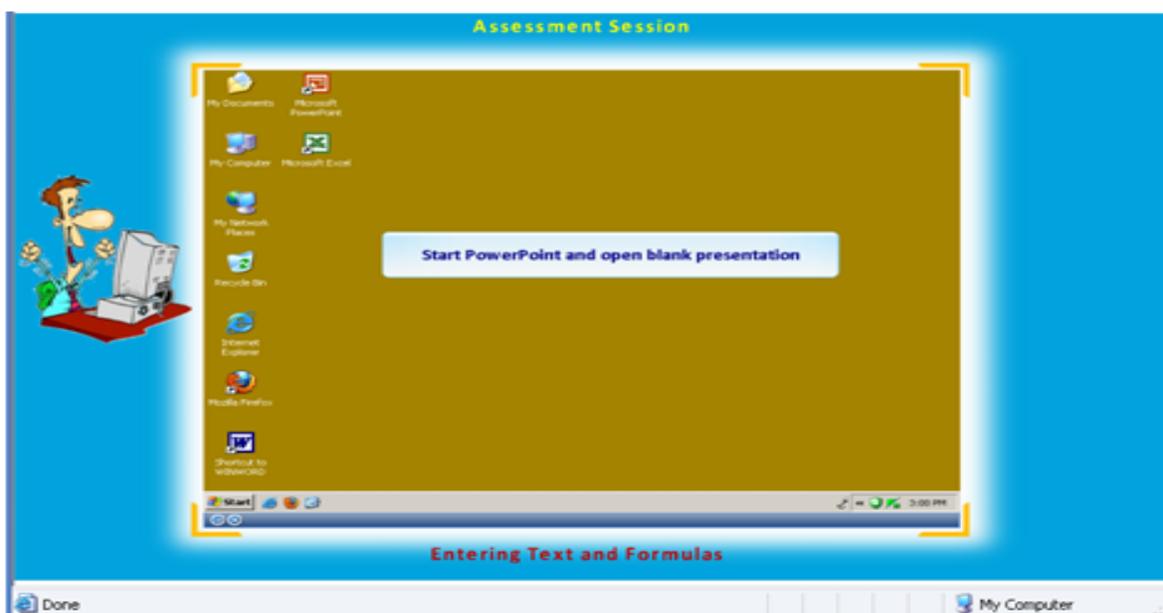
The web-enabled Virtual Lab module of the computer Literacy programmes consisting of simulations, demonstrations and assessment (see Figure 2)for the learners to experience hands on training to the lab component of the Computer Literacy Programme Online. This platform is useful for the learner to gain information and knowledge just when it is required. It is more interactive and can send information and receive feedback. The main features of the Virtual Lab Module for the Computer Literacy Programme are:

- Virtual Lab & learner Management

- Online hands on practice through computer simulation with resources and references

- Asynchronous & Synchronous Communication

- Collaborative Learning

- Online Evaluation System

The RCs offering Computer Literacy Programme can harness the potential of this package to provide offline and online training to the learners.

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Report of Half Day Seminar on
Sharing Creative Technological Interventions in ODL

The Innovation Club@IGNOU, NCIDE organized a half day seminar on Sharing Creative Technological Interventions in ODL on 22nd September, 2015 at IGNOU. The seminar was attended by 21 members of the innovation club. The half day seminar had two presentations.

1. **Presentation on SLM LIVE - An Innovative Intervention in SLM**

The first presentation on "*SLMLIVE-An Innovative Intervention in SLM*" was given by Dr. Sanjiv Kumar, Associate Professor, SOS. SLM-LIVE consists of an annotated and approved Self Learning Unit and provides a quality assured learning support to the learners. The annotations provide contextual linkages to relevant animations, simulations, video lectures, quizzes, events, and presentations, from the open source as well as the ones developed specifically for the Unit. The objective of these annotations is to do e-

augmentation (value addition) of the content and to engage and facilitate the learner in achieving the desired outcomes.

Dr. Kumar began his presentation by sharing the rationale behind the intervention. Herein he highlighted the fact that despite a variety of mediums used by IGNOU to reach out to the learners, the print material remains the main stay. He argued that the distance learner has concerns that need to be addressed - the learner needs hand holding in her/ his endeavor to learn and SLM-LIVE is an effort in this direction. Thereafter he shared a prototype of the SLM-LIVE in which the annotations are introduced as QR codes in the Self Learning material in print. These QR codes can be accessed with the help of a smart phone using simple apps like QR code reader/ QR code scanner and need web connectivity through Wi-Fi/Data card. Further he justified such an intervention with the help of data on accessibility of smart phones and improving web connectivity.

The innovative intervention in SLM, presented by Dr. Sanjiv Kumar was highly appreciated by the participants. A number of constructive suggestions emanated from the discussion that followed the presentation.

2.   Presentation on V-Lrn

The second presentation was on "*V-Lrn*" by Mr. Anil Aggarwal and his team from the PCTI, Pitampura. While presenting about V-Lrn, the presenter from the V-Lrn team told that this is a web based teaching-learning platform being used to supplement the face-to-face counseling of the IGNOU students of Regional Centre -2, Delhi. She informed that the V-Lrn has enabled the learners to access the study material online, watch the videos of online classes, and interact with the teachers in a live session. Further she highlighted that the V-Lrn has several other useful features such as learning management system, e-content, glossary, provision for online assignment, online exam, feedback, etc. She said that the platform has learner centric modules. She mentioned special security measures have been taken. She mentioned that there is a provision for live classes also. Looking into the features of the V-Lrn, it was suggested that it could be experimented as an integrated approach of web support along with the offline courses. In this context, Prof. Anu Aneja proposed to take up it as a pilot project.

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A meeting of the Innovation Club @ IGNOU was held on 14th October, 2015 in the Conference Roof of SOCE. In this meeting Dr. Shubha Gokhale, Associate Professor, SOS gave a presentation on "Living in Intellectual Property Right Era". While talking about intellectual property rights, she highlighted how innovation is related to intellectual property rights. She mentioned that in context with the increasing emphasis on innovations, it becomes imperative to know about protections of intellectual property right and patenting of the innovations.

Further, she mentioned about the conditions and criteria of patenting which includes novel, inventive step, and industrial applications. She also gave an idea about trademarks, service marks and trade name etc. with the help of common examples. She also mentioned about the concept of trade secrete highlighting in which cases trade secrete is preferred. Further, she gave a presentation on copy right which includes moral rights and economic rights. She mentioned about durability of copy rights of authors, translators etc. in various situations. In this context, she also talked about Open Education Resources (OER) highlighting its meaning, possible uses and licenses under Creative Commons. The presentation was followed by interaction with the participants who asked questions related to IPR and clarified their doubts.

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The National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE) was established in December 2005. It is a facility for promoting, supporting, re-engineering and disseminating innovations in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. The NCIDE is a ground for nurturing bright and inquisitive minds whose ideas and explorations are expected to revolutionise the ODL system to suit the needs of Gennext. The Centre's goal is to develop a culture of continued search for new and innovative solutions to offer seamless education for all, achieve cost efficiency in its operations and provide borderless access to quality education and training.

We look forward to receiving your suggestions for this e-newsletter. We also welcome your contributions for the future issues. Please send us your emails addressed to the Director, NCIDE at: ncide@ignou.ac.in.