

Report of the

Seven-Day Workshop on

“Creativity and Innovation in ODL”

(3rd, 9-14 March 2016)

National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education
Indira Gandhi National Open University
New Delhi, INDIA

Report of the Seven-Day Workshop
on “Creativity and Innovation in
ODL” (3rd, 9-14 March 2016)

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Executive Summary

Keeping with the objectives of NCIDE for capacity building, a 7-day workshop on “Creativity and Innovation in ODL” was organized at NCIDE from 3rd, 9-14 March 2016 to sensitize the Faculty of IGNOU to perceive and understand creativity and innovation in the ODL system, and to generate creative ideas and implement those ideas in the ODL system. Out of 15 faculty members invited, 14 attended. The 7-day workshop was designed in the ODL format comprising 30 hours duration (=1 Credit), and had both face to face interaction and online interaction as part of its innovative design. The face to face interaction was for two full days (9th and 10th March, 2016) and two half days (3rd and 14th March, 2016) comprising a total of about 14 hours. The participants were working online in the Virtual Training Lounge for the remaining 16 hours. More than a hundred ideas were generated in the workshop on how to develop a self-working material from self learning material, and the development of an ODL theme park for promoting the ODL system. It has also been suggested in this workshop that a policy document needs to be in place for fostering creativity and innovation in the University. As follow up activity of this workshop, these ideas are being analysed, evaluated and developed further for implementation in the ODL system. NCIDE, in collaboration with ACD, the expert resource person and the participants would work towards developing a document for innovation and creativity for the Academic Council.

1.Introduction

One of the activities of the National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education (NCIDE) is to nurture creativity and innovation among the various functionaries of the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system. The NCIDE carries this out through various capacity-building measures from time to time, organizing training workshop on creativity and innovation is one of them. Towards this aim of nurturing creativity and innovation in the ODL system, the NCIDE successfully conducted a seven-day workshop on “Creativity and Innovation in ODL” on 3rd March, 9-14 March 2016 at the Conference Room of the Radhakrishnan Block, IGNOU and the NCIDE Conference Room in Block G, Academic Complex IGNOU, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.

2.Objectives

The objectives of this workshop were to sensitize the Faculty of IGNOU to perceive and understand creativity and innovation in the ODL system, and to generate creative ideas and implement those ideas in the ODL system.

3.Methodology

This workshop was conceived and designed by NCIDE under the vision and mentorship of Prof. Prabir Kr. Biswas, Professor of Distance Education, Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE), IGNOU and NCIDE and has an innovative methodology. This seven day-workshop is essentially a One-Credit workshop of 30 hours, which was conducted

both in face to face and virtual mode in the Virtual Training Lounge, an online platform developed by NCIDE for online training (<http://vtl.ignouonline.ac.in/vtl/>). A gap of five days was kept between the first and the second day of the workshop to provide the participants enough time to think and reflect about the tasks assigned to them on the first day, thus enabling them to incubate their ideas. The face to face interaction and group activities were for two full days (9th and 10th March, 2016) and two half days (3rd and 14th March, 2016) comprising a total of about 14 hours. The participants worked online in the Virtual Training Lounge for the remaining 16 hours. This was essentially a workshop by the participants and for the participants. The Programme Schedule is attached at Annexure I.

Participants and Resource Persons

In this workshop, 14 teachers from 8 Schools of Studies, IGNOU, participated. The list of participants is attached it Annexure II. Professor Prabir Kr. Biswas from STRIDE was the expert for both the face to face sessions and in the Virtual Training Lounge, and Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit (in virtual mode), NCIDE and Dr. Moumita Das, NCIDE facilitated the participants in the Virtual Training Lounge.

Sessions

Pre-workshop session

The first session was conducted on 3rd March by Prof Biswas in which the participants were asked to talk about their creative contributions in the ODL system. Thereafter a few tasks were assigned to them and they were asked to think about those tasks and discuss with other participants and mentors in the Virtual Training Lounge between the 3rd March and 14th March. The first task that was assigned was to think and generate ideas on how to bring in creativity and innovation in the teaching-learning process in the Self-learning material (SLM) (Figure 1). They were asked to keep their learners in view. The distance teachers should know the learners background (demographic, psychological etc.) and their learning styles as well. They were asked to make a note on these components.



Figure 1. Prof. P.K. Biswas interacting with the participants.

The participants were asked to list the activities and functions of the efficient classroom teacher and to think how to incorporate all those functions into SLM. It was noted that most of the SLM give emphasis on cognitive domain of learning. Prof. Biswas suggested the participants to give

emphasis on psychomotor/skill domain and affective domain also. Keeping this direction in view the SLM may also be transformed into Self working material (SWM).

Prof Biswas suggested creation of an “ODL theme park” in IGNOU and also suggested idea generation among the participants. The participants were active in the Virtual Training Lounge since then. An e-mail group was formed as well and the participants generated many ideas on this topic.

Inaugural Session

The Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, Prof. Nageshwar Rao, was welcomed for the inaugural session on 9th March by the erstwhile Director (i/c), NCIDE Dr. O. P. Sharma (Figure 2). Prof. Rao, while inaugurating the workshop, said this workshop on creativity was timely. He said that there is tremendous scope for creativity in ODL. He talked about his own experiences on creativity with examples and said that although there were initial obstacles, eventually his efforts were appreciated. He inspired the participants to be imaginative and creative. He said that creativity should go hand in hand with logic, which would contribute to the quality of services of an organization. He said that the NCIDE should be entrusted with the conduction of more such workshops on creativity and wished the success of this workshop.



Figure 2. Prof. Nageshwar Rao, VC, IGNOU, delivering the inaugural address.

Sessions on 9th and 10th March

On 9th and 10th March, the participants learnt about various creative strategies and discussed, generated, analysed and evaluated many ideas on developing a creative self working material and the ODL theme park. They used various techniques such as brain storming, brain writing, cluster analysis, morphological synthesis, headstand, Dot-mocracy, SCAMPER etc., and generated hundreds of ideas, selected, edited and evaluated ideas and have even written poems, which reflect the highest level of their creativity. Prof Biswas also discussed how the access devices can be used effectively in SLM, how to integrate latest and simple technology, and how the ODL theme park of IGNOU can be used for promotion of ODL, teaching and training purposes, video recording and so on.

Sessions from 11th to 13th March

The participants had continued using the Virtual Training Lounge from 3rd to 13th March. They had been using it extensively to post their ideas and discuss them (Figure 3).

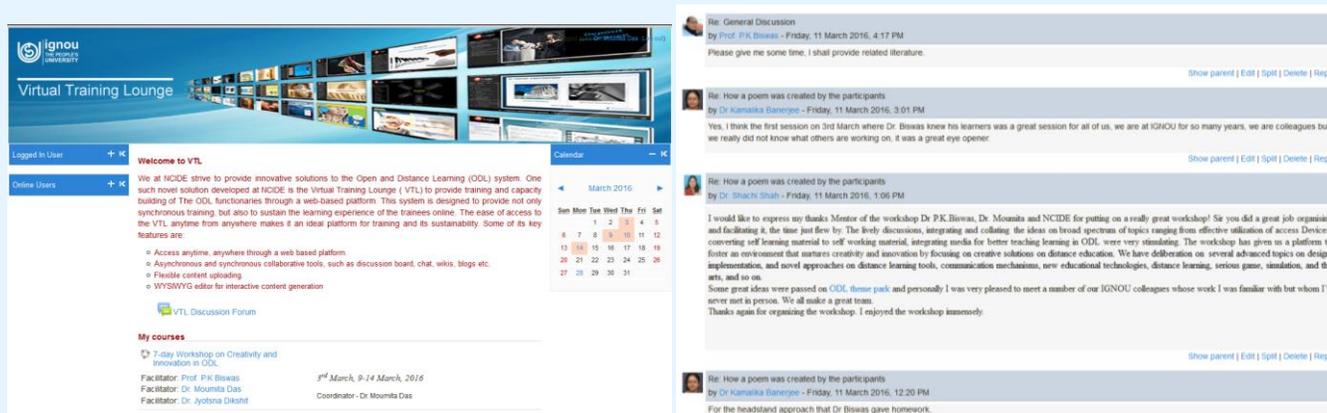


Figure 3. The Virtual Training Lounge was extensively used by the participants.

Valedictory Session on 14th March

The workshop concluded with the Valedictory session on 14th March in which the erstwhile Director (i/c), NCIDE Dr. O. P. Sharma welcomed the Chief Guest, Prof. Manjulika Srivastava, Director Academic Coordination Division (ACD), IGNOU (Figure 4). Prof. Srivastava, while delivering the Valedictory Address shared her experiences and motivated the participants to be creative. The participants interacted freely with her on the academic related matters, such as research projects, and API scores. Prof. Srivastava said that she has taken proactive action on several matters, such as simplifying the processes related to the research proposals, and the attending of international conferences. She said that she is taking steps while considering the interest of each and every individual teacher and academic of IGNOU. She also suggested that if a proposal regarding the Self working material evolves in this workshop, it could be put up in the Academic Council by NCIDE for approval and implementation. She also suggested that a committee could be formed by NCIDE, ACD, Prof. P. K. Biswas and the participants of the

workshop to develop a document pertaining to the needs in the areas on creativity and innovation in the University and suggestions on how to address those needs. The documents could be put up in the Academic Council by NCIDE for approval and implementation.



Figure 4. Prof. Manjulika Srivastava, delivering the valedictory address.

Selected inputs from the participants during the workshop

The response from the participants was positive and creative. Dr. Ruchika Kuba of the School of Health Sciences, IGNOU penned a poem and she said “A small poem I have innovated after motivation from today’s workshop.” The poem is presented below:

Walking down memory lane

The child in us
You awakened today !
These priceless moments
Can't be traded any day !!

We laughed and joked,
Throwing away each worry !
Together we sat and worked,
For once, there was no hurry !!

Little joys in life ,
Are the ones that matter!
Each little stride,
Will make us better !!

The ability to create
Is best in a child,
Don't try to be elite ;
To innovate, just be wild !

The other participants were equally inspired and their comments are presented below:

1. *The workshop has given us a platform to foster an environment that nurtures creativity and innovation by focusing on creative solutions on distance education. --Shachi Shah,*
2. *Thanks sir for helping us to put our energies in positive direction which would help us a long way. --Satya Raj*
3. *I am really enjoying every moment of the workshop, truly now I feel I want to be in IGNOU!--Sushmitha Baskar*
4. *The themes that we discussed were not only creative but also innovative and made me ponder over my capacities to develop a creative mind. --Rohini Sharma*
5. *Great learning and thought provoking too! --Subodh Kesharwani*
6. *It was awesome to be a part of such workshop, which truly gives a sense of freedom. Freedom of voicing your ideas & opinions and opportunity to realise them in the field of ODL and beyond. --Shivaji Bhaskar*

Results of evaluation of the workshop by the participants

A. Pre-workshop assessment

Out of 14 participants who attended the workshop, only 10 responded to a questionnaire about the workshop. The results are summarised below:

1. *Necessity of an environment of creativity and innovation:* All the participants (100%) opined that there is a necessity to create an environment in creativity and innovation in the University.
2. *Expectations from this workshop:* The participants expected the following from this workshop:
 - i. *Would be able to think creatively and innovatively in ODL*
 - ii. *Would get to know about advanced creative strategies for developing SLM*
 - iii. *Would get to know how to creatively design courses, student support, evaluation*
 - iv. *Would be able to provide inputs to the University to take necessary steps to facilitate innovation*
 - v. *Would be able to create a programme in fast track mode on creativity and innovation in ODL*
 - vi. *Not to limit themselves and be in touch with NCIDE to do something constructive.*

B. Post Workshop assessment

Out of 14 participants who attended the workshop, only 12 responded to a questionnaire about the conduct of the workshop. The results are summarised below:

1. *Timely information about workshop events:* All the participants said that they received the relevant invitations, intimations and information related to the workshop events on time.
2. *Methodology of the workshop and resource person:* The participants were satisfied with the format and methodology of the workshop with about 58 % saying that the ODL format, duration and content were useful to them. More than 75 % of the participants were highly satisfied with the resource person of the workshop. About 68 % said that the workshop was thought provoking and would help them in their future activities.
3. *Domains:* All the participants opined that the workshop catered to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills.
4. *Virtual Training Lounge:* The participants were satisfied with the VTL saying that was accessible in various devices (92%), anytime (75%) and from anywhere (92%). It enabled them to post their comments (83 %). However, they found that the design was not easy to navigate (42 %) and were not able to access the resources posted there (42%). The participants have suggested that the VTL needs to be improved further (75%). They have suggested measures such as i) addition of synchronous audio interaction, ii) allowing increase in file size for uploading in VTL, iii) VTL should be made more navigable, so that new posts could be located.
5. *Venue:* The participants were satisfied with the venue saying the ambience (75%), sitting arrangements (83%), and support of NCIDE staff (67%) were good. However the food and beverages (42%) needed to be improved.
6. *Overall rating:* The workshop was rated very good by 42 % and good by 42 % of the participants.
7. *Any other comments/suggestions:* In addition to the above, the participants gave the following feedback:
 1. A group of participants from the same discipline should come together for developing the Self working material (SWM). Workshops specifically designed for each discipline should be organized on creativity and innovations for developing SWM.
 2. More such workshops needed periodically to check individual status and their updation.
 3. I want to place on record my deep appreciation for the manner in which the workshop was conducted.

A participant, Dr. Shachi Shah, summed up the workshop through an email in the following words:

“I would like to express my thanks to our Mentor of the workshop Dr. P.K. Biswas, Dr. Moumita and NCIDE for putting on a really great workshop! Sir you did a great job organising and facilitating it, the time just flew by. The lively discussions, integrating and collating the ideas on broad spectrum of topics ranging from effective utilization of access devices, converting self-learning material to self-working material, integrating media for better teaching learning in ODL were very stimulating. *The workshop has given us a platform to foster an environment that nurtures creativity and innovation by focusing on creative solutions on distance education.* We had deliberation on several advanced topics on design, implementation, and novel approaches on distance learning tools, communication mechanisms, new educational technologies, distance learning, serious game, simulation, and the arts, and so on. Some great ideas were passed on ODL theme park and personally I was very pleased to meet a number of our IGNOU colleagues whose work I was familiar with but whom I’d never met in person. We all make a great team.”

Conclusion

The workshop was able to sensitise the participants towards creativity and innovation, which is evident from the hundreds of ideas for the ODL theme Park and for development of SWM, and also the poems by the participants, which exhibit the highest level of their creativity. Their ideas have been analysed and evaluated to some extent in the workshop, but each idea would be further developed into project proposals in time. The NCIDE, in collaboration with ACD, Prof. P. K. Biswas and the participants of this workshop could develop proposals related to addressing the needs and their possible solutions in the areas of creativity and innovation, such as developing Self working material, and other subjects, and submit it to the Academic Council for approval and implementation in the University.

Future Activities

The NCIDE, taking forward the spirit of the workshop, now plans take up the following activities:

1. Develop the ideas of the participants into proposals for further action and submit to the competent authority.
2. As an outcome of the suggestions of the participants,
 - a. several workshops would be organized that are
 - i. discipline based workshops
 - ii. follow- up workshops
 - b. A fast track course on creativity and innovation in ODL.
3. Constitute a committee with members from Academic Coordination Division (ACD), NCIDE, Prof. P. K. Biswas, and the participants of the workshop for approval of the

competent authority. This committee would discuss the need areas of creativity and innovation in the University and enlist the possible solutions. Then a document will be prepared and submitted to the ACD for seeking approval in the Academic Council.

4. The ideas of the participants will be uploaded in the interactive site Navdharana for documentation and for further interaction and enrichment.

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