

Academic Counselling *for* ODL Learners Third Cycle

A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

ON

Managing the MOOC on Academic Counselling for ODL Learners Third Cycle

Academic Support By:

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Introduction

Academic Counselling is an important component of Open and Distance Learning, and the academic counsellors are the pivotal link between the ODL institution and isolated distance learners. Their role in handling face-to-face and online academic counselling sessions at the study centre is very important. The role of an academic counsellor is multifarious and for maintaining quality in academic counselling, the accumulation of multi-dimensional skills, attributes and information is essential on the part of the counsellors in ODL. Among these, possessing information at various levels about ODL system is an enabling factor to effectively support isolated distance learners.

This Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Academic Counselling for ODL Learners (AC4ODL) was planned for Teachers/Students/Educational Leaders/ODL Practitioners who want to learn more about the Academic Counselling in ODL System. The course was run over for four weeks and required approximately three to five hours of time each week. Designed to accommodate learners' busy schedules, the course offered flexibility with options for learning the content. The learning materials included readings, videos, discussions with other respondents and instructors, meaningful exercises, and quizzes apart from the weekly webinar on the concerned week's modules with experts. Certification was available at two levels for those who wished to complete the requirements like active participation in the discussion forums and achieved the required score in the weekly quizzes. The course was launched for 3rd Cycle on demand from various stakeholders.

Promotion of the Course

After the launch of the 3rd cycle of the MOOC, emails were sent to all the Regional Directors of IGNOU across the country and they were requested to encourage the academic counselors of their respective regions to register for the MOOC for their professional development. Personal calls were also made to the Regional Directors of IGNOU for this purpose. SMS were sent to the academic counselors of Regional Centre, Patna with a request to enroll themselves for the MOOC for their professional development. The staff from OSOU were requested to follow up with the academic counselors of OSOU and encourage them to enroll themselves for the MOOC. Apart from the emails announcements were made on social media platforms and WhatsApp groups for reaching out to the target audience. There were nearly 900 registrations for the MOOC for the third cycle.

Review of the Course Contents

The reading materials and videos for the MOOC were critically reviewed in terms of content, language and presentation and necessary modifications were made in consultation with Dr Manas Ranjan Panigrahi, Senior Programme Officer. The reading materials were edited in terms of language as well as contents. The contents in the first two modules were reorganized; the section on Evolution of Open and Distance Education was shifted to the first module to keep it in sync with the contents of the first module. Separate sections on Characteristics, Design and Use of Online materials, Organizing and Managing Online Counselling Sessions, Formative and Summative Assessment and E-Assessment were introduced to make the reading materials more relevant and useful. Likewise, with the technical support from the video editing team under the guidance of Ms Moumita Mozumdar, five videos were redone to enhance the quality of the audio, visual and presentation and four videos on Characteristics, Design and Use of Online Materials, Organizing and Managing Online Counselling Sessions, Formative and Summative Assessment, E-Assessment were newly prepared to make the course more relevant and useful to the respondents in the context of the paradigm shift in the teaching-learning scenario in the post-pandemic period.

Details of the Videos which have been redone or newly produced

Module 4

Module 4 Set 2: Designing and Developing SLM

Module 4 Set 3: Approaches to Designing Self-learning Materials

Module 4 Set 4: Characteristics, Design and Use of Online Materials

Module 5

Module 5 Set 2 of DE2: Organizing and Managing Online Counselling Sessions

Module 6

Module 6 Set 3: Factors Responsible for the Disadvantageous Position of the PWDs

Module 6 Set 4: Empowering the PWDs through ODL

Module 8

Set 1: Formative and Summative Assessment

Module 8 Set 4: Role of Assessors in the Assessment of Assignment Responses

Module 8 Set 5: E-Assessment

Academic Support

- a. **Providing academic support for all the Modules:** Discussion with course writers, review of the course contents were carried out and modifications were incorporated in appropriate places to make the MOOC more relevant and useful. Moreover, the instructors interacted with the participants in the discussion forums and live sessions and provided all possible academic support.
- b. **Development and Administration of the Pre-Course and Post-Course Survey**

A Pre-Course Survey was prepared and administered with all the respondents to assess their acquaintance with MOOCs, tools and techniques related to the use of ICT and different aspects of the contents being covered in the MOOC. The Questionnaire contained 40 questions in all, which included 10 Questions on general information about the respondents, 17 questions on feedback about the course and accessibility of the MOOCs and 13 questions about the contents of the course.

Similarly a Post-Course survey was developed to take the feedback from the respondents along with checking their understanding of the course. The Questionnaire contained 45 questions in all, which included 5 Questions on general information about the respondents, 30 questions on information about the course and accessibility of the MOOCs and 10 questions about the contents of the course.
- (c) **Engagement of the Learners through Announcements:** Regular announcements were made for informing the respondents of the deadlines, requirements for the completion of the course and keeping them engaged through the course.

Image 1 (A&B)

The screenshot displays the 'Academic Counselling for ODL Learners (Cycle 3)' interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'MANAGE', 'ANALYTICS', and 'BACK TO PORTAL'. A sidebar on the left contains menu items: Lectures, Announcements, Resources, Forums, Hangouts, Assignments, and Quiz. The main content area shows a list of announcements with a '+ Add an Announcement' button at the top. The announcements are as follows:

Announcement	Date
Welcome to AC4ODL: Pre Survey for knowing you better	09/11/2021
Welcome to AC4ODL: Pre Survey for knowing you better (Avoid if already filled)	29/11/2021
Inaugural Ceremony of the Launching of AC4ODL(Cycle-3) on 1st Dec 2021 at 3.00 PM	29/11/2021
Week One Lectures and Module I and II Released	01/12/2021
Live Lecture Session to be held on 5th December 2021 at 11 AM	04/12/2021
Academic Counselling for ODL Learners: Week 1 Quiz released	06/12/2021

Final Urgent reminder of the requirements to be completed for Certification of AC4ODL Course	07/01/2022
Date extended for completion of Course	09/01/2022
Gentle reminder of the requirements to be completed for Certification of AC4ODL Course before 12th January 2022	09/01/2022
Gentle reminder of the requirements to be completed for Certification of AC4ODL Course before 12th January 2022	10/01/2022
Complete the course and Fill the Post Course Survey	11/01/2022
Last day to complete the course, Hurry Up...	12/01/2022
Note of Gratitude	12/01/2022
Release of Certificates	24/01/2022

d. Timely Creation and Release of the Quizzes: The quizzes were released on every Monday and were kept open till the end of the course, to give sufficient time to the respondents to attempt them. Each of the quizzes contained 25 questions covering two modules in every week. Option of reattempting the quizzes was also given to provide flexibility to the participants and enhance their performance.




e. Engagement and Participation in the Discussion Forums

Right from welcoming the respondents in the first week of November until the last day 12th of January when the last date for submission of quizzes expired, the respondents were engaged in the discussion forums through the creation of discussion forums and responding to the posts created by the respondents. The respondents were encouraged to create original and thought-provoking threads so that vibrant discussions could be promoted in the forum. Respondents posting good posts were appreciated and given additional inputs to help the respondents get better understanding of the concepts being covered in the forums.



It was observed that some of the respondents were very active in creating new posts, responding to the posts of others and answering the queries raised by others whereas some respondents just created one liner threads for discussion which elicited either wrong responses or confused responses by other respondents. Such respondents were encouraged to create original threads with nice inputs to provoke others to respond creatively and critically.

Image 2 (A -D)

AC/ODLMOOC Academic Counselling for ODL Learners (Cycle 3)
Users Online : 1

 Teacher	Dr Abhilash Nayak I must extend my sincere thanks to Dr Wilson for introducing Gibb's Reflective Cycle to the participants and inviting them to post their responses to the challenges involved in the use of this as a tool for assessing formative assessment. The evaluation of an assignment through this cycle is a cyclic one-one stage is closely related to the other and has the potential to impact the overall evaluation of the assignment.  Reflective journals would definitely invite and involve varied responses as the journals are reflection of the personal experience of the learners at a given point or time or frequent experiences in different situations and are mostly subjective by nature. Teachers should encourage creative and critical thinking by inviting independent and open-ended responses so that learners would appreciate their ideas being accepted and enjoy the autonomy of learning.	23/12/2021 22:22 2 Like Like Edit
	BrandonRMohammed Reflective journals and thinking is very useful. It allows one to think about what they have learnt and how it applies to them	24/12/2021 07:57 1 Like Like Go to

AC/ODLMOOC Academic Counselling for ODL Learners (Cycle 3)
Users Online : 1




 Teacher	Dr Abhilash Nayak Our society is constructed by people with capabilities for people with capabilities and it is this that makes people with impairments incapable of functioning(Finkelstein). Normal people do not understand the problems of people with special needs or disabilities(including mental disability, learning disability like autism etc) unless they are aware of the nature of their disabilities and the rights that they have. Providing academic, moral and psychological support to such people helps them come out of the disabling environment and focus on their academic activities. The role of a true and sensitive academic counsellor is to identify the needs of such people, modify the strategies for teaching and assessment to accommodate their interests and facilitate their active participation in the academic programmes and effective performance.	21/12/2021 10:08 2 Like Like Edit
	joywilson Academic Counselling is critical for disabled learners. I have had visually impaired students in my courses. I have had to offer more attention to such students. Yet, it was critical that I understand that they should not patronised.	21/12/2021 19:17 No Likes Like Go to 5



Academic Counselling for ODL Learners (Cycle 3)

Users Online : 1

place day by day, academic counselling is happening through mails, mobile, broadcast, telecast at various social media channels.

 Teacher	Monica YEs, that is true. This phase has been difficult for many to manage it and sail through it. So counselling overall has been an important area to deal understand and guide people.	21/12/2021 10:33	No Likes ↑ Like ✎ Edit
	Anitalal During the covid 19 pandemic, counselling has increased drastically in order to help learners cope. It has been a major challenge for the learners to cope and adapt all the changes in their school life, especially for the younger generation of learners.	21/12/2021 20:31	No Likes ↑ Like
	omodebelu COVID-19 pandemic has changed the narratives of academic counselling all over the world.	22/12/2021 18:08	No Likes ↑ Like



Academic Counselling for ODL Learners (Cycle 3)

Users Online : 1

[< Go Back to Forums](#)

Challenges in Counselling



Raki

Posted on 21/12/2021 00:40

Could any one give some idea how to tackle a hetrogenious and large group (Quallification and Age) in few classes. Not only the counsellor has to create an friendly environment but also has to cover the topics... how it is possible. Again in many cases the students are hardly prepared.

1 Like

↑ Like

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[Post Response](#)

Responses:



Teacher

Monica

21/12/2021 09:37

Academic counselling is not about conventional classroom teaching, rather discussing the topics and answering the questions of learners, if they have gone through the SLM. Counsellor can firmly handle the situation by answering the question and briefly taking up each unit and module. But yes, every group has its characteristics and has different set of solutions

3 Like

↑ Like

✎ Edit

f. Academic Support during the Weekly Live Sessions

The four live sessions were conducted through the Zoom Platform on weekends as per the schedule given to brief the respondents of the concepts covered in the modules for the respective weeks and help them interact directly with the instructors, clarify their doubts regarding the concepts and topics covered in the modules. The timing for the live session was changed from 11 am in the morning to

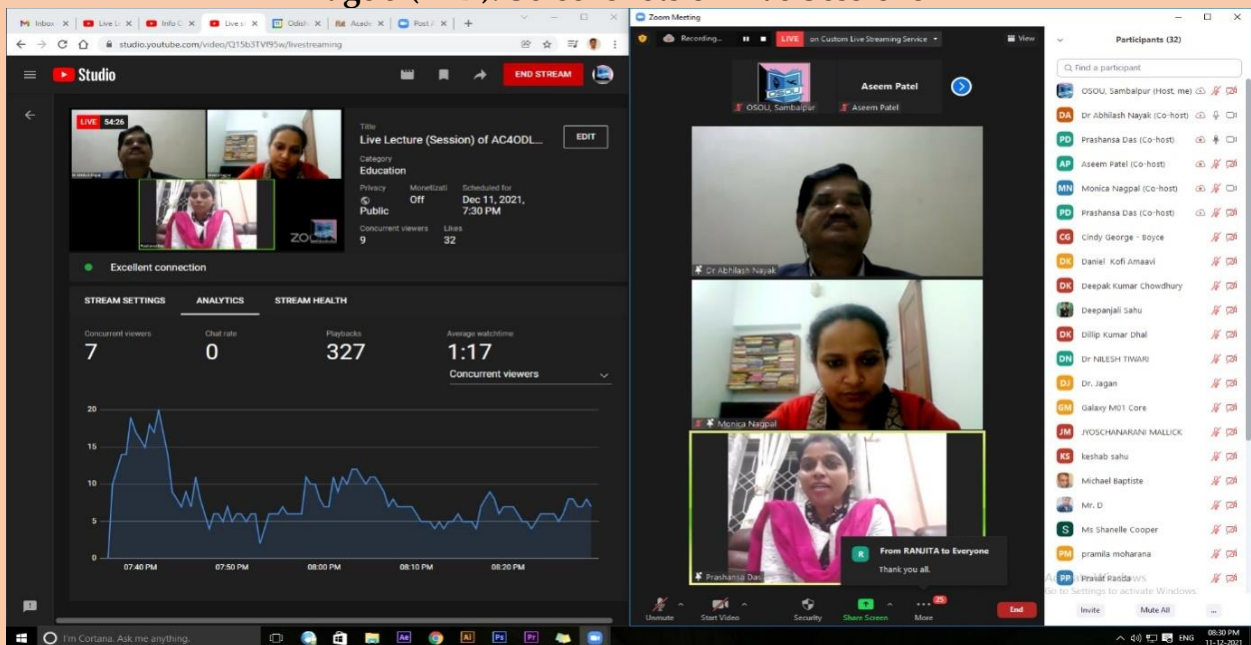
7.30 pm to accommodate maximum number of participants from other commonwealth countries.

Table 1: Schedule of Live Sessions

Date & Day	Time	Modules Covered	Instructors
04.12.2021	11 am	I: Concept of ODL, Changing Nature of ODL II: 21 st Century ODL Learners	Dr Abhilash Nayak Dr Monical Nagpal
11.12.2021	7.30 pm	III: Learning Skills IV: Characteristics of Self Learning Materials	Dr Abhilash Nayak Dr Monical Nagpal
18.12.2021	7.30 pm	V: Academic Counselor & Counselling VI: Support to PWD in Open and Distance Education	Dr Abhilash Nayak Dr Monical Nagpal
27.12.2021	7.30 pm	VII: Technology in Distance Education VIII: Assessment in Open and Distance Education	Dr Abhilash Nayak Dr Monical Nagpal

Though the participation was not very encouraging in the live sessions, the quality of interaction was very good.

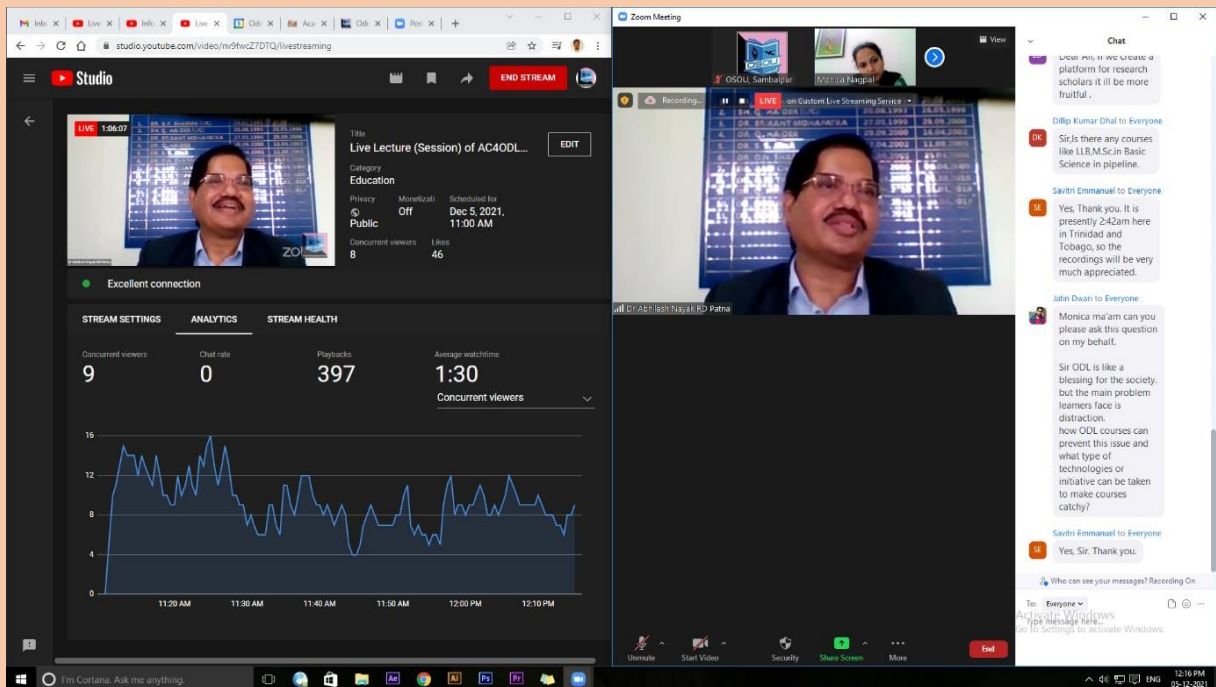
Image 3 (A-D): Screenshots of Live Sessions



The top screenshot shows a Zoom meeting window with a participant list on the right. The list includes 24 participants, with OSOU Sambalpur (Host, me) at the top. Other participants include Dr Abhish Nayak RD., Monica Nagpal, Prashansa Das, Subhra Saraf, Anissa Mohammed Seeth, Anitai alchan, Anitha Prakash, Anumati Deonarine Rampersad, DALE CLARKE VOS GOVERNME..., Deepanjali Sahu, Deochand Bridgemohan, Dr D Deepa MBA PHD, Dr NILESH TIWARI-BASTAR LIN..., Dr Bijayalaxmi, Dr Panankumar D., Gurpreet Kaur, Julia De Vaaz, JYOSCHIANARANI MALLICK, and nithya dala.

The bottom screenshot shows the YouTube Studio interface for a live stream. The title is "AC40DL-3: Live Lecture (Last Ses...". The category is "Education". The stream is currently live, with 12 concurrent viewers, 0 chat rate, 56 playback, and an average watchtime of 1:06. A line graph shows the concurrent viewers over time from 07:35 PM to 07:40 PM.

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting grid with 24 participants. The participants are arranged in a grid, with some names visible: Aseem Patel, Ranjita, Trinath Panig..., Chandrang Pathak, Pramila Moharana, Subhra Saraf, Priyanka Priyada..., Satyanjan, Vidya Sagar Ku..., YUGAJYOTI MO..., Om, Sanatana Ma..., and Daniel Kofi Ama... The meeting is recorded and live on a custom live streaming service.



The participation was from both India and abroad. In order to reach out to the participants who could not attend the live sessions, all the live sessions were recorded and uploaded as resource on the portal.

g. Motivation and Support to the learners for Participation

The respondents' performance in the quizzes was regularly monitored and announcements were made from time to time to encourage them to complete all the quizzes and participate in the minimum number of discussion forums to be eligible to receive the Certificate of Participation/Certificate of Completion. Continuous motivation to the respondents increased their participation as well as performance as a result of which the number successful respondents almost doubled within the last week.

Academic Counselling for ODL Learners (Cycle 3)
Users Online : 1

Invitation for Active Participation in the MOOC

Dr Abhilash Nayak Posted on 1/12/2021 09:20
11 Likes
Like
Edit

Teacher

Dear Participants

Once again, on behalf of CEMCA and OSOU I welcome all of you to another exciting cycle of the MOOC on Academic Counselling for ODL Learners with some additional features. The MOOC through its 8 Modules spread over four weeks aims at acquainting you with the ODL system, Learners of 21st century, Learning skills, Characteristics of Self-learning materials, Academic counsellors and academic counselling, Supporting people with PWD in ODL, Technology in Distance Education and Assessment in Distance Education, with the purpose of equipping you all with knowledge and skills essential for discharging your responsibilities effectively and efficiently as academic counsellors. I am sure you would use the MOOC as an opportunity to interact with the participants from across the world, share your ideas and experiences and enrich yourselves through the understanding of the contents, participation in the discussion forums, the quizzes and successfully complete the MOOC in time.

I encourage all of you to watch the video lessons, read the digital resources, initiate discussion threads, post your responses to the threads initiated by your fellow participants and make the discussion forum academically vibrant with new and brilliant ideas.

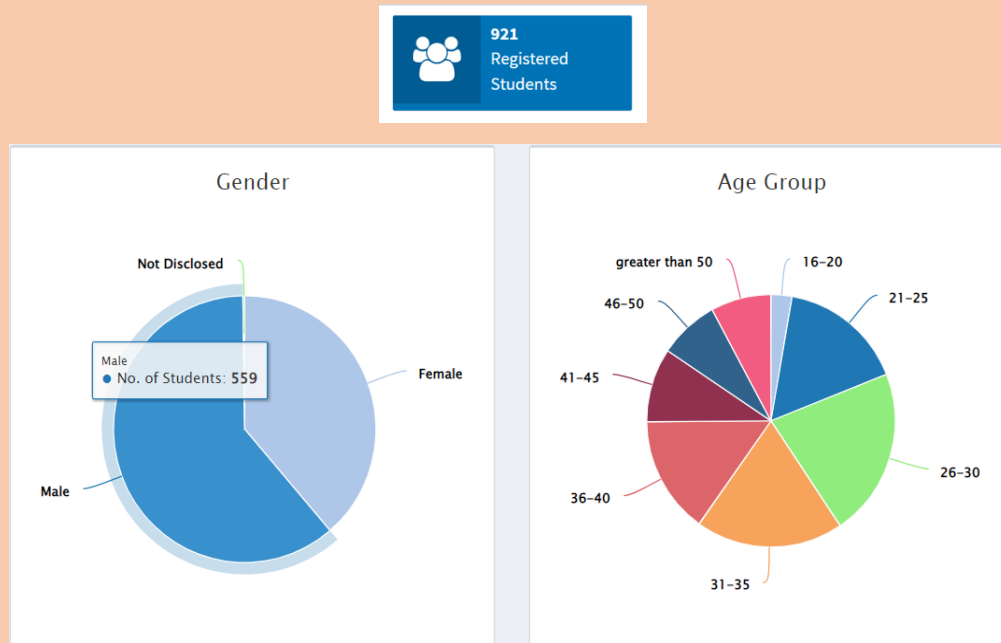
h. Clarification of Doubts

Respondents sometime had doubts regarding various aspects of course completion, certification, quizzes etc. It was tried by the mentors to resolve all their queries through different platforms like discussion forums, personal emails and during live interactions.

i. Analysis of the Participation of the Respondents

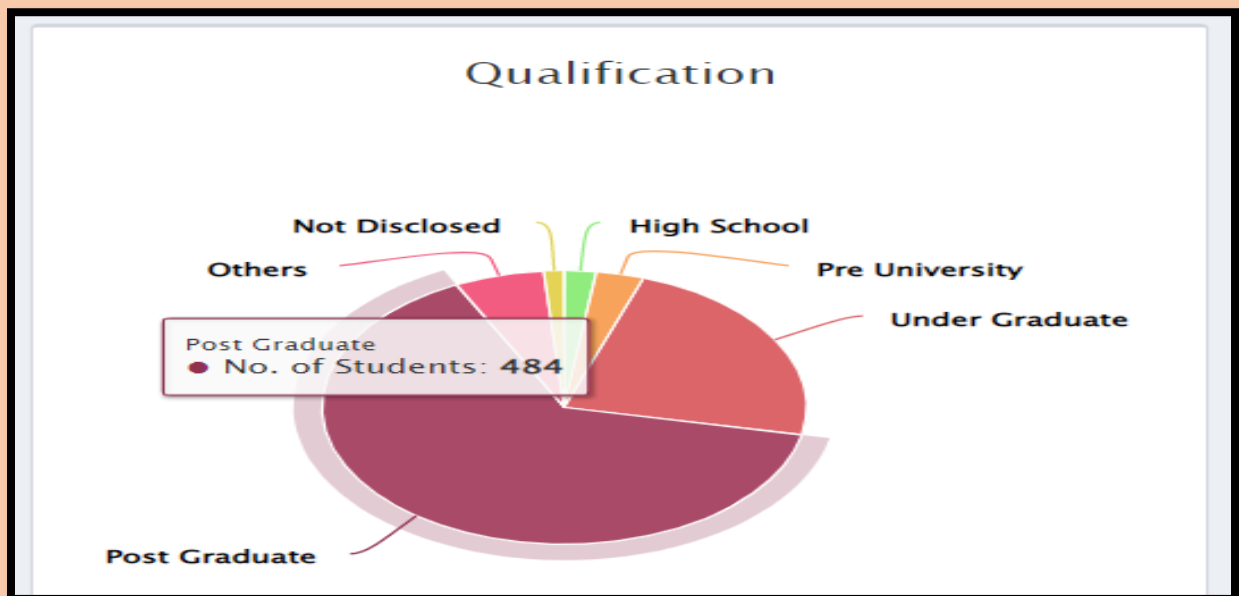
It was found that 921 respondents registered for the course from across the globe out of 559 were male and 362 were female. Image 4 on the following page depicts that 75% of the respondents belonged to 21-40 age group.

Image 4: Details of Respondents



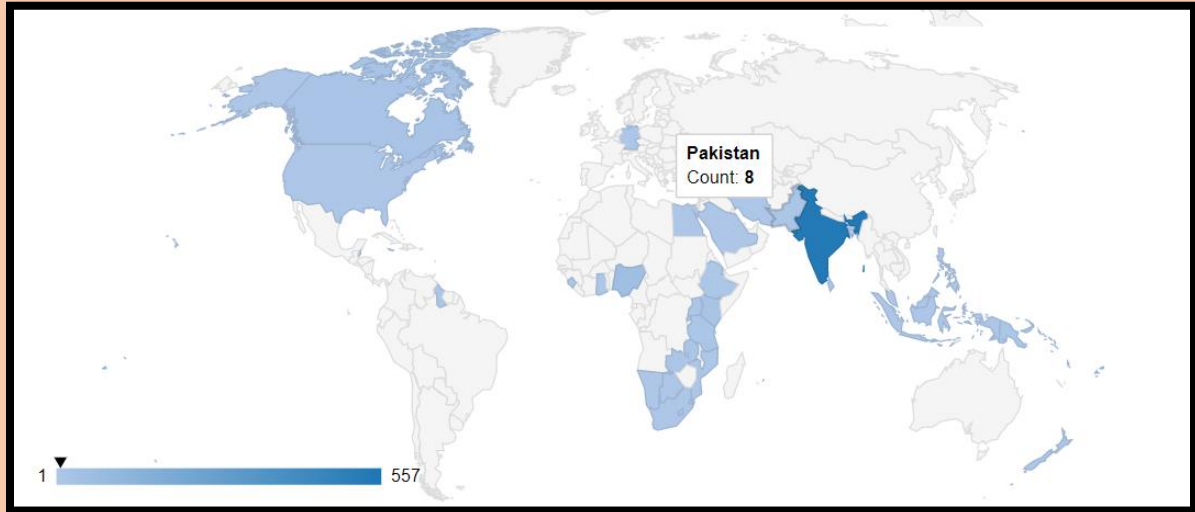
Further the data revealed (Image 5) that more than 50% respondents were post graduates.

Image 5: Qualification of Respondents



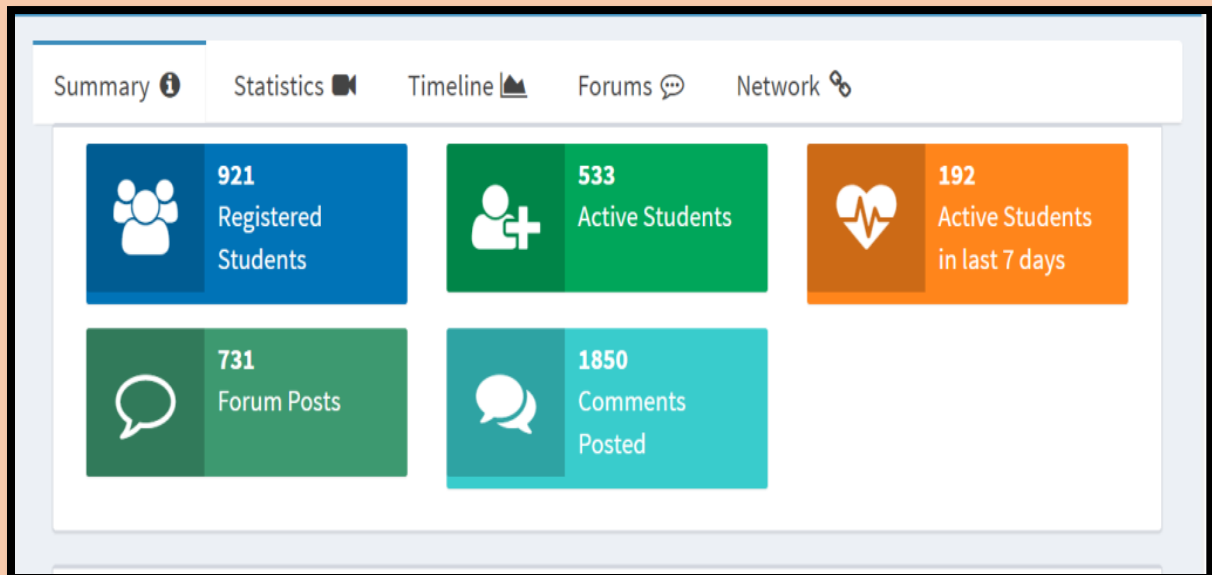
Participants from approximately 35 countries participated in the MOOC out of which the most registration came from India (Image 6).

Image 6: Participation from the World



The respondents were found to be active on the course and in discussion forums. More than fifty percent (50%) were found to be active on the course. Participation in the discussion forums was one of the criteria for certification and it was observed that respondents were actively involved in discussions happening on the course portal even after the criteria for the course completion was reached, discussion forums received new posts and also discussions on the threads created by others. Image 5 below depicts the details of registration, active participation and discussion forums.

Image 7: Details of Engagement of the Participants



j. Analysis of the Performance of the Respondents

As criteria for certification the one quiz having 25 questions was released at the end of every week and a total of 4 quizzes were released during the course. Week wise quiz data has been presented along with the analysis of the performance of the participants in terms of the percentage of marks.

Image 8: Week 1 Quiz

Results of this quiz					
Total submissions for this quiz: 262					Calculate Score
Sr.No	Username	Score	View	Delete	Recalculate Score
1	bulletgrm	60	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
2	ayu10091	96	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
3	safdar	100	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
4	vsharma471	88	View	Delete	Recalculate

As we can see from Image 8, 262 respondents submitted the responses to the quiz for Week 1. Out of the 262 participants, as many as 161 participants scored more than 90% and more than 100 (103) secured cent percent score (100 out 100) and the pass percentage was as high as 94.6%. This might have been possible due to the initial level of motivation for learning from the course.

Image 9: Week 2 Quiz

Results of this quiz					
Total submissions for this quiz: 243					Calculate Score
Sr.No	Username	Score	View	Delete	Recalculate Score
1	princy flora	100	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
2	Fredkwanairaranafu	100	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
3	Snehasish96	52	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate

As we can see from Image 9, 243 respondents submitted the responses to the quiz for Week 2. Out of the 243 participants, as many as 156 participants (64%) scored more than 90% and the number of participants scoring cent percent score (100 out of 100) was close to 100 (97) and but the overall pass percentage was slightly higher 95.06%. This might have been possible due to the regular reminders given to participants through the announcements.

Image 10: Week 3 Quiz

Results of this quiz					
Total submissions for ths quiz: 228					Calculate Score
Sr.No	Username	Score	View	Delete	Recalculate Score
1	Soumen91	88	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
2	Yagambal	92	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
3	yadavamit	96	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
4	Pramod12	100	View	Delete	Recalculate

As we can see from Image 10, 228 respondents submitted the responses to the quiz for Week 3. Out of the 228 participants, as many as 131(57%) participants scored more than 90% and more than 100 (103) secured cent percent score (100 out of 100) and the pass percentage (94.7%) was almost the same as the percentage for Week 1 (94.6%). This might have been due to the continuous support and encouragement provided to the participants through the announcements and live sessions.

Image 11: Week 4 Quiz

Results of this quiz					
Total submissions for ths quiz: 228					Calculate Score
Sr.No	Username	Score	View	Delete	Recalculate Score
1	Pramod12	100	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
2	vsmit	96	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
3	Yagambal	88	View Answers	Delete this	Recalculate
4	deepak.pciu	84	View	Delete	Recalculate

As we can see from Image 11, 228 respondents submitted the responses to the quiz for Week 3. Out of the 228 participants, the number of participants who scored more than 90% was 146 (64%) and nearly 100 (96) secured cent percent score (100 out 100) and the pass percentage (94.7%) was surprisingly the same as it was for Week-3(94.7). This might have been due to the continuous support and encouragement provided to the participants through the announcements and live sessions.

It is surprising to notice that out of the 921 participants registered for the course, 228 participants submitted the responses to the quizzes for all the weeks. Out of these 228 participants, only 188(81.5%) have been found eligible to receive the certificates. Out of this, 186 have achieved Certificates of Completion and only 2 have been issued Certificate of Participation, which is indicative of the fact that the overall rate of success of the respondents in the MOOC was satisfactory.

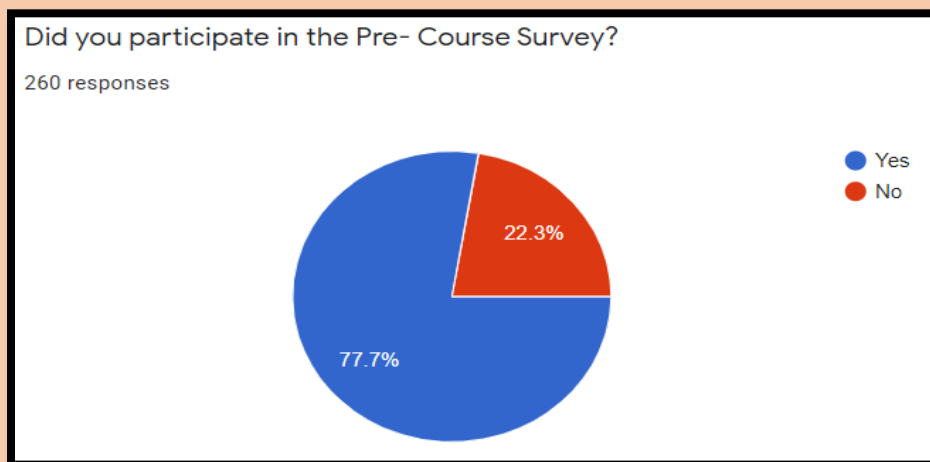
Analysis of Pre-Post Course Survey

Before starting the course, a pre-course survey was launched to understand the background of the respondents, their friendliness with the technology, the source of information for the course and the content knowledge related to the course. Similarly, to understand the improvement in the content knowledge and to take feedback about the course a post course survey was released.

Background Data

A total of 215 responses were received on pre-course survey and 260 responses on Post Course Survey. To know about the common participant in both the surveys, one question was raised. It was observed that more than 75% participated in both the surveys (Image 12).

Image 12

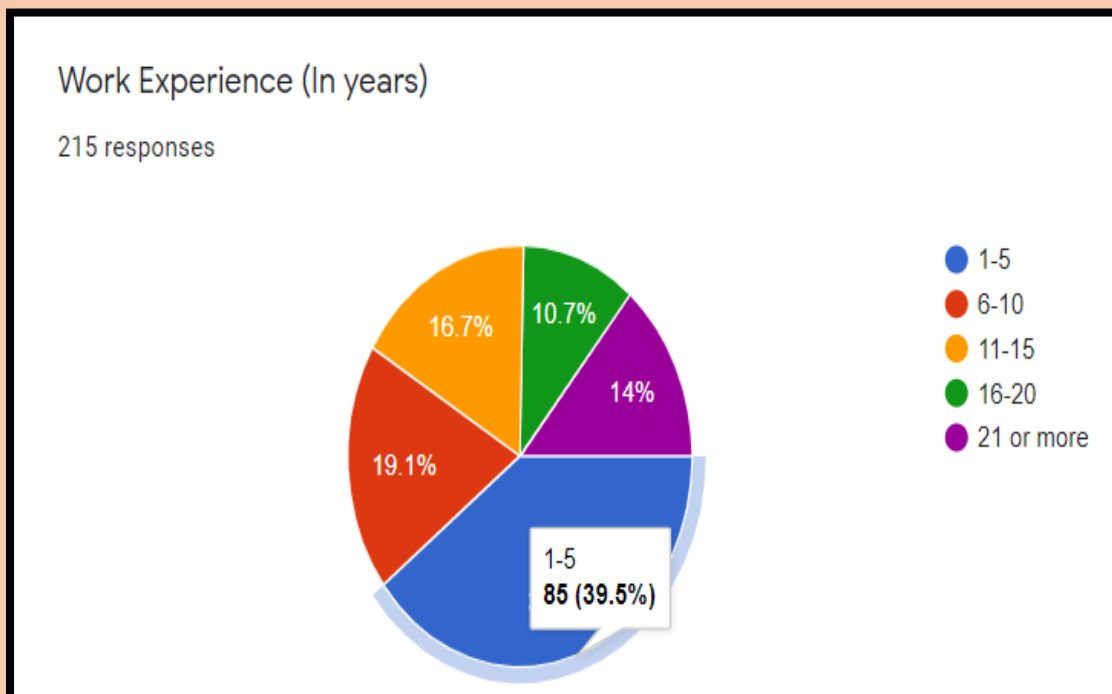


Analysis of the Responses of the Participants in Post Course Survey

From the Pre-test participation of 215, approximately 60 percent of the respondents were from India and approximately 16% and 6% were from Trinidad & Tobago and Nigeria. The respondents came from different levels of education around 25% were doctorates and Graduates whereas 36% were post graduates.

The data indicated that most of the respondents i.e 60% had 1-10 years of experience and remaining 40% had experience above 10 years (Image 13).

Image 13: Work Experience



The image 13 above indicates that the younger population is keener to learn through technology.

Further an attempt was made to find out the response of the participants in regard to various aspects related to the course and ODL on a rating scale and the data has been presented in the bar graph given Image 14.

Image 14

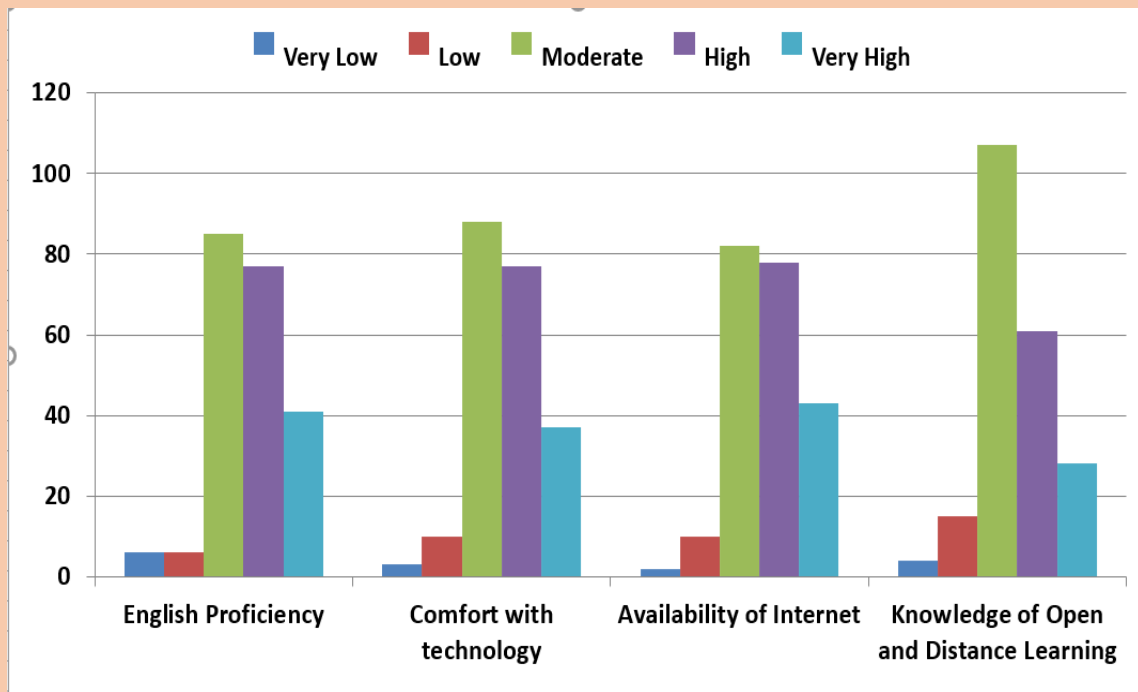


Image 14 above depicts that the English proficiency of 85 respondents was moderate, 77 had higher proficiency, 41 had very high level of English proficiency whereas only 6 respondents had low level of proficiency and 6 had very low level of proficiency. Similarly, against the second aspect (Comfort with technology), 88 of the participants were found to be moderately comfortable with technology, 77 were highly comfortable with technology, the comfort level of 37 was very high and 10 respondents had low level of comfort with technology and only 3 had very low level of comfort with technology. As far as Availability of Internet was concerned, 82 participants had moderate level of internet connectivity, 78 had high level of internet connectivity, 43 had very high level of internet connectivity, 10 had low level of internet connectivity and only 2 had very low level of internet connectivity. In regard to the last aspect (i.e Knowledge of Open and Distance Learning), 107 had moderate knowledge, more than 61 had high level of knowledge of ODL, 28 had very high level of knowledge of ODL, 17 respondents were found to have low knowledge of ODL system and only 2 were found to be having very low level of knowledge of ODL.

Acquaintance with MOOCs

MOOC is a new platform for learning and conducting courses, Familiarity with the online learning environment is an important aspect before enrolling oneself for the course. The data was collected on the same and has been presented in table 2.

Table 2: Experiences with MOOCs

No of MOOCs	0	1	2-4	5-7	8-10	More than 10
How many MOOCs have you enrolled?	47	48	85	19	6	10
How many MOOCs have you completed?	76	49	63	16	4	7
How many MOOCs certificate have you earned?	87	46	55	17	3	7

The data in Table 2 above indicates that 47 respondents were completely new to the MOOC but rest had some experience even though the completion has not been indicated. More than that when asked about MOOKIT platform, 60% were already aware of this platform and got themselves registered on this platform. While mentioning about the source of information for this course it was found that Email, WhatsApp, OSOU Website, CEMCA Website Facebook were the major sources. An effort was made to explore the reasons of joining the course and the related data has been presented in the Table 3 below.

Table 3: Reasons for Enrolling in the Course

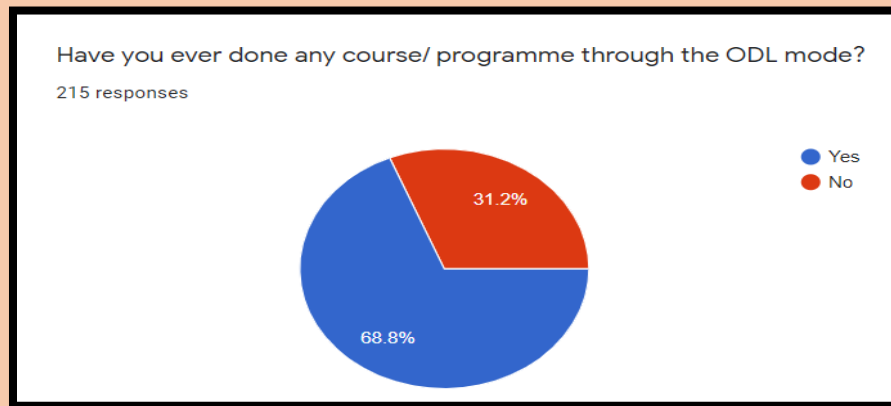
Items	True	Not Sure	Not True
This course will facilitate my personal development	170	30	12
This course will facilitate my professional development and capacity building	176	27	11
This course will expand my current knowledge	174	30	9
This course is relevant to my academic field of study	155	39	16
Completion of this course will help me obtain a job relevant qualification	104	60	33
I am advised or ordered to take part in this course	79	31	84
I have enrolled in this course out of curiosity	119	35	44
The subject of the course is relevant to my college/ university class	125	42	35

The data in Table 3 shows that most of the respondents joined the course for their personal and professional development and very less number was found to be joining the course because of pressure or compulsion for doing the course.

Acquaintance with the Course Contents

An attempt was made to know the familiarity of the learners with the course contents and data was collected on the same. The first thing was their familiarity with the course.

Image 15: ODL Awareness



The data in the above Image 15 depicts that a higher percentage of the participants (68.8%) had been associated as a learner with ODL programmes.

Pre- Post Test Data Analysis on Contents from the Course

One of the module of the course focuses upon the 21st Century Learners and responses from pre and post survey have been presented in the images 16 and 17.

Image 16: Pre-Test Data

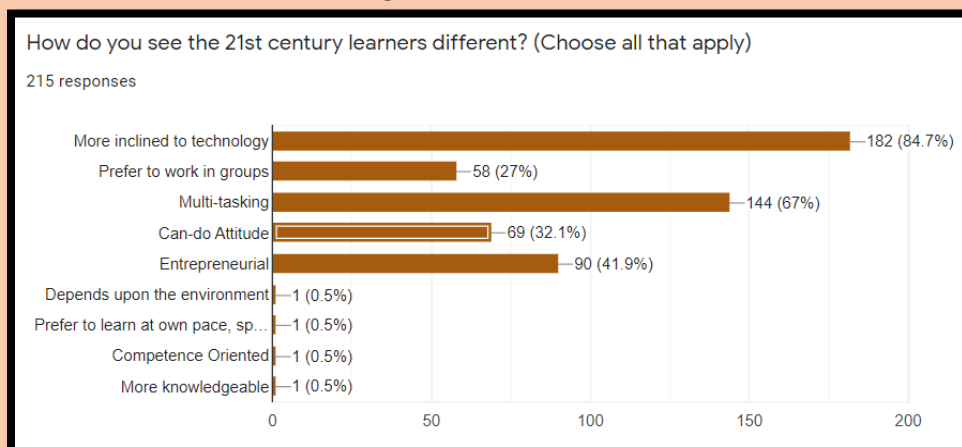
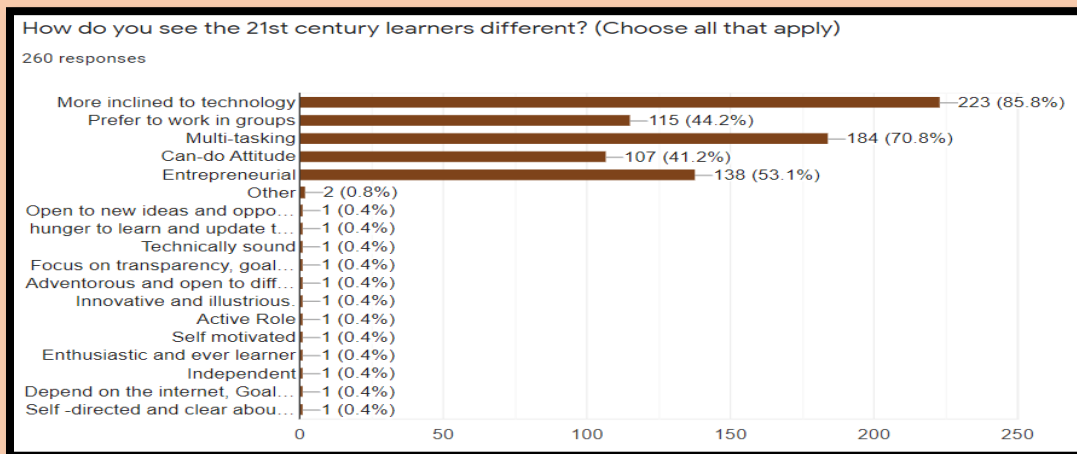


Image 17: Post Test Data

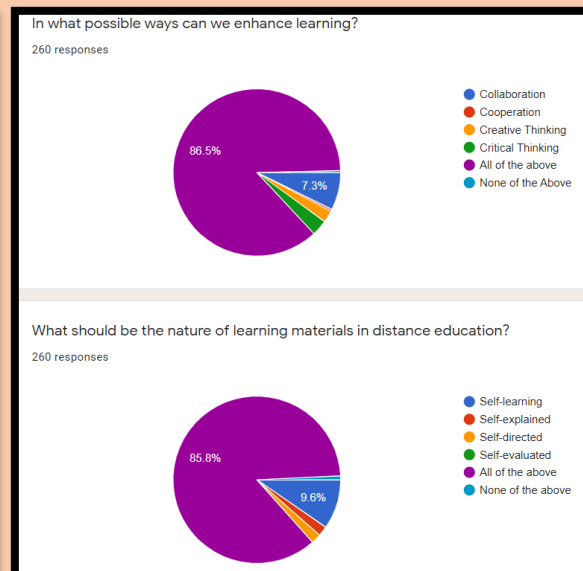
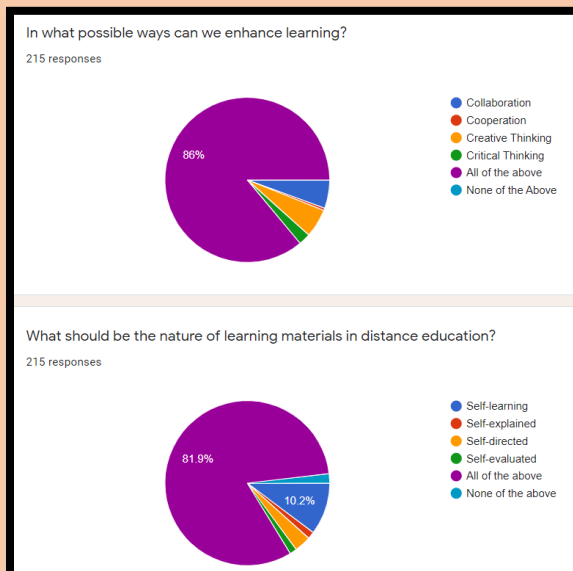


The data in the images 18 and 19 indicate a similar trend towards the characteristics of 21st Century learner, whereas the no of respondents supporting for all the emerging characteristics have increased. The major emerging categories are: More inclined to technology, prefer to work in groups, Multi-tasking, Can do attitude, and Entrepreneurial.

Further the participants were asked about the possible ways of enhancing learning and about the nature of learning materials for distance education and for both the questions list of option were given. The data has been presented in the images 18 and 19 below.

Image 18: Pre Test Data

Image 19: Post Test Data



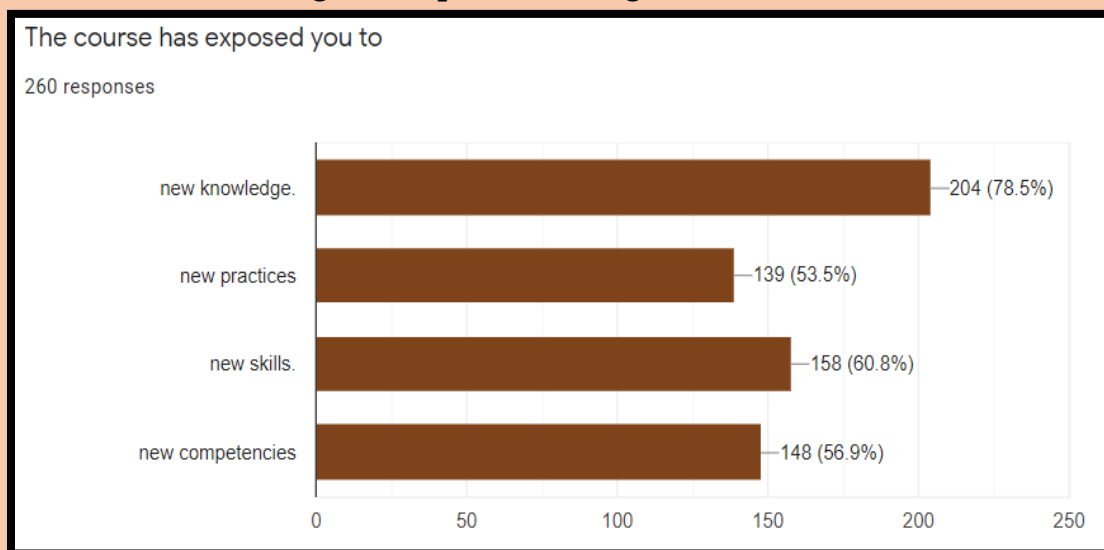
The data in images 18 and 19 reveal that Collaboration, Cooperation, Critical and Creative Thinking all play an important role in enhancing learning. Similarly for the learning materials it was found that more than 80% said that the material should be self-learning, self-explained, self-directed and self-evaluated. When the respondents were asked about the role of an Academic Counsellor, around 87% and 93% responded in favour of Informer, Advisor and Counsellor in both the pre and post test respectively. While answering for constituents of Academic Counselling, 90% and 94% mentioned both tutoring and counseling during the pre and post test respectively. The results on various aspects like Needs of PWDs, Organization of content, Prerequisites for an Academic Counsellors, Use of technology in education, Turn-around time in ODL System, and Right mode of assessments indicated that the respondents were quite aware of the ODL System and Academic Counselling component of the ODL system. The results for the same got further enhanced during the post survey.

Feedback on the Course

Feedback of any programme or course is an important component of the improvement process. It was tried to know the feedback of the respondents on different aspects of the programme. The respondents were asked about their experience regarding the communication mechanism during the administration of the course and more than 90% participant found it timely and accurately.

The respondents also shared their inputs on exposure from the course they got. Image 20 below shows the data:

Image 20: Exposure through the Course



The responses displayed in the image indicate that they gained new knowledge, and developed new practices, skills and competencies. When they were asked about the course contents and objectives of the course more than 90% respondents find it appropriate and good quality along with the presentations.

Suggestions were invited from respondents for improving the course and the major suggestions are shared in Table 4:

Table 4: Suggestions by the Participants

Some important suggestions by the Respondents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More live sessions should be there.</i> • <i>The presenters can vary to make the sessions interesting and engaging.</i> • <i>Video length should be 8-10 minutes at least. One feels like taking a break after watching 1 video so 5 minutes is very less in this context.</i> • <i>Try to give some online tasks like make a ppt on this topic presenting yourself as a teacher.</i> • <i>I found the last two Modules were very heavy, I would suggest splitting them and making the course 5 weeks.</i> • <i>There is a need of little more skilled Audio Recording and avoid of Noise disturbance in some videos</i> • <i>If course is offered in Hindi or local languages, it may be very helpful for learning</i> • <i>The navigation from one page to another page is not easy and user friendly</i> • <i>Please add some interviews of eminent persons involved in Distance Education</i> • <i>One module should be there where learners could discuss case studies, thereby empowering them to better conduct academic counselling sessions.</i> • <i>Maybe create a progression meter to better motivate students to complete their requirements</i> • <i>Build a personal connection with your students</i> • <i>Make the course more creative and illustrative with the addition of animation and practical videos</i> • <i>Need more interactive, proactive administration and effective delivery</i>

The respondents were asked about recommending this course to others and it was found almost all the respondents were keen to recommend the course to others.

Recommendations

- The length of the course could be extended to five weeks with two additional modules on the study of ODL as a system of systems and Roles and Responsibilities of Academic Counselors in the ODL System.
- As the success rate of the participants is less than 20% (188 out of 921), alternative modes of interaction and engagement with the participants other than group mails and discussion forums need to be introduced to facilitate better and faster interaction and enhance the rate of success. Telegram groups can be created for instant communication and dissemination of information.
- Instead of sending group mails and making announcements to remind the participants of the deadlines and their responsibilities as participants, some mechanism needs to be devised to send weekly reminders to the defaulting participants and encourage them to complete the requirements in time.
- Participants who complete all the requirements of a week can be issued a Letter of Appreciation or Badges and the lists of such participants can be displayed on the portal to encourage the slow-starters.
- There should be one authorized person to make the announcements and the contents of the announcements should be very clear and unambiguous. The announcements should be vetted by MOOC administration at CEMCA before they are released. Announcements by different persons containing misleading information can be demotivating.
- Some of the participants have suggested that attempts should be made to build a personal connection with the students and help them maintain focus through proper engagement. Mentors and instructors can be allotted groups of students for focused interaction and providing appropriate moral and academic support to facilitate higher rates of participation and performance.
- As suggested by one of the participants in the Post-Course Survey, participants can be encouraged to produce PPTs with voice over on topics of their choice and such submissions of the participants can be included under the Resources for the benefit of the Participants.
- In this age of technology, when technology has pervaded every sphere of life, academic activities need to be recast. Hence the Module VII on Technology in Distance Education can be redesigned with focus on the design and development of MOOCs, courses on the SWAYAM Platform and short non-credit online courses which shall help the academic counsellors grow professionally.
- The course structure and contents can be shared with the Open Universities in India and the Commonwealth Countries and suggestions may be invited from them and incorporated before the fourth cycle of the MOOC is launched.

Conclusion

Academic Counselling constitutes an important component of the Open and Distance Learning System. In the post-pandemic scenario, when the demand for online, open and distance learning has been on constant increase and online education has seamlessly got integrated with the conventional mode of education, capacity building of the teachers in terms of skill and knowledge enhancement has emerged as an imperative. Unless the institutions of higher education, particularly open and distance learning institutions gear up to meet the increasing demand with the required ICT-infrastructure and trained human resources in place, quality education cannot be ensured. The present course with Modules on 21st Century Learners, Evolution of ODL, Learning, Self-Learning Materials, Academic Counselling, Support to PWDs in ODL, Technology in DE and Assessment in ODL has the potential to cater to the academic needs of the teachers engaged in teaching the distance learners or willing to take up ODL as a career. Capacity building of the faculty from open and distance learning institutions from the Commonwealth Countries through this MOOC on Academic Counselling for ODL learners has been appreciated by the participants as a laudable initiative of COL-CEMCA and OSOU. However, with the implementation of some of the recommendations in regard to the redesigning of the structure and contents of the course, the course can prove to be a boon to the practicing and aspiring academic counselors to enhance their skills and knowledge about academic counselling to ODL learners and contribute to the academic growth of their respective universities and institutions.