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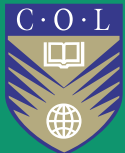
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THE NEWSLETTER

Volume. 05 Number. 03 July 2019



CEMCA

COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia



CEMCA: 25 Years of Eventful Journey

Twenty Five years are behind us. Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) started its journey in 1994 (July 1) with the goal of promoting cooperation and collaboration among educational institutions and media organisations and serve as the regional resource centre facilitating the exchange of audio/video productions. CEMCA evolved over the years under the able stewardship of the predecessor Directors. They brought CEMCA to the present stature of reputation with the guidance, advice and directions from the Presidents and Vice Presidents of Commonwealth of Learning (COL). We gratefully remember and acknowledge their contribution to the growth of CEMCA. I thank them all.

Thanks to COL for trusting me with the baton of CEMCA at the start of the second quarter of the journey. I took charge as Director on 3rd June 2019.

CEMCA lived an eventful life quietly contributing and facilitating educational developments in the Asian Commonwealth Countries. It's time for us to stop, look back and look forward.

Dr. Gopal Saksena (1996–1998), the founder Director of CEMCA, promoted Audio-Visual material by creating videos and organizing workshops in the region. He is credited for publishing the inaugural issue of the CEMCA's Newsletter - Educomm Asia. Dr. Usha V. Reddi (July 1998 - December 2006) succeeded Dr Saksena with her rich experience in Audio Visual Media at the Osmania University, Hyderabad. It was during her tenure that through a Gazette Notification, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India conferred CEMCA the status of international organization with all its rights and privileges. With Dr. R. Sreedher as Director (February 2007-June 2012), CEMCA promoted the use of Community Radio in Learning for Sustainable Development. Dr. Sanjaya Mishra (July 2012 - December 2014) as Director of

CEMCA, brought in OER (Open Educational Resources) movement to Commonwealth Asia that had just begun in the world. CEMCA celebrated its 20th Anniversary in 2014 and showcased its milestones. Dr. Ramesh Sharma (January 2015 - December 2015) contributed in the area of Web Radio and promotion of e-learning. During his term, the title of the newsletter Educomm Asia was changed to CEMCA Newsletter. Dr. Sahid Rasool (June 2016 - May 2019) continued the activities on Community Radio and also introduced projects under the Skill Sector, a priority area of Government of India.

During the last 25 years, CEMCA took many initiatives and worked closely with Governments and Open Universities in Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, for improving quality of Open and Distance Education. We'll carry the flag forward. There are many new challenges and emerging megatrends like the ageing world, skill gaps and mismatch, automation, and fast changes in technology; improving access and quality of open and distance higher education in these countries. Challenge for CEMCA is to be resilient with the fast changes, and support member countries in strengthening and expanding higher education. CEMCA will diversify and expand its footprint by integrating 'quality open education lab'.

CEMCA's story of success will remain incomplete without gratefully acknowledging the contribution of its partners. They are our sources of strength. We will maintain and nurture these long term partnerships with Country Governments, Open Universities and other Academic Institutions and Organizations with great care to achieve our mission.

Look forward to your comments to improve the Newsletter.

Prof. Madhu Parhar

Emphasizing Lower Education

By Professor (Dr.) J. Michael Spector

Abstract

This article emphasizes the importance of developing inquiry and critical thinking skills early in a person's life. An outline of the relevant sub-skills is presented along with a developmental and cross-disciplinary approach that is current being implemented at multiple institutions.

Introduction

Most of my career has involved the application of technology to support adult learning and higher education. Along the way, I have had the good fortune to be tutored by and learn from some of the leading lights in educational research, primarily by coincidence as I started out in higher education teaching computer science. Most notably, I worked with Robert M. Gagné on a system to help technical trainers in the Air Force to become competent instructional designers. As I got to know Gagné, who was already retired from Florida State University at that time, I saw Bob and his wife Pat devote considerable personal time in tutoring poor children in San Antonio in mathematics free of charge. At a professional meeting – think it was in the early 1990s at the annual meeting of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) – I recall Gagné saying; some think like the following in response to low faculty salaries in higher education: “What kindergarten teachers do is most important and they should be paid the most; middle school teachers have a great challenge in directing student interests to learning



rather than other things so they should also receive high wages; high school teachers have to deal with a different set of difficulties and also deserve higher salaries; college professors, however, are doing what they love so they do not need to be paid anything at all.” I was one of a few people who laughed at his remark, but I continued working with adult learners and in higher education for many years after that important remark.

Through a collaboration with Jan Visser, founder of the Learning Development Institute (see www.learndev.org) and his project called “Building the Scientific Mind” in the early 2000s, I had the great good fortune to meet Leon Lederman, Nobel Prize winning physicist who founded the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy in his retirement. I asked him once why he was choosing to work with high school students in his retirement, and he said those formative year were among the most important. Lederman's remark resonated with my

background in philosophy and admiration for Socrates' dedication to teaching younger Athenians how to think rather than how to increase their wealth – a dedication that led to the accusation of corrupting the youth and ultimately to his trial and death sentence.

I share these small anecdotes to indicate why in the waning years of my career I have come to a similar conclusion – the most important years in academic development occur early in life, yet those who are working with young learners are not often highly valued, and they are under-supported and often ill-prepared. As a result, I have slowly come to the belief that Gagné and Lederman were correct and that I should be doing something to address the issue of helping children become more serious and disciplined thinkers. The remainder of this short piece outlines the justification for the work underway in this regard being conducted at the University of North Texas along at the NetDragon Digital Research Centre and researchers at East China Normal University, Beijing Normal University, and the Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur. I draw attention to the issue by using the term 'lower education' and use of 'higher education' can be understood to imply that what has preceded is of lesser importance, which runs counter to the argument herein.

Rationale

First, one might ask what is called thinking and then what constitutes thinking. Is having thoughts the same as thinking? One does not have to learn or be taught to have thoughts, but is simply having thoughts what one would consider thinking? That question is easily answered in the negative. As many philosophers and psychologists have long observed, a naturally occurring aspect of being a

person is having thoughts. Wittgenstein (1922) remarked in the “Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus” that people picture facts to themselves (remark # 2.1). Everyone has thoughts. Johnson-Laird (2010) has investigated human reasoning and mental models for years and has noticed that people also have a tendency to engage in faulty reasoning and then picture things that are not factual to themselves. Quine and Ullian (1978) argued that people bring to a situation a collection of beliefs and, as a consequence, they are reluctant to have an entire set of beliefs challenged even when encountering something that runs counter to beliefs one has held for a long period of time.

An additional factor was noted by Wittgenstein (1922) when he remarked that the world of the happy person is not the same as the world of the unhappy person (remark #6.43). That difficult to interpret philosophical remark in the Tractatus seems readily understood by non-philosophers. There is something a person brings to an existing state of affairs (i.e., facts) in addition to prior beliefs, and that something might be broadly characterized as an emotional state. We bring our entire selves to a situation, which is why it is important to consider both philosophy and psychology when trying to understand how it is that people come to reason and respond as they do. All might agree that people have the ability to reason. Philosophers can then specify what constitutes sound reasoning and indicate the limits of reason. Some philosophers might go on to believe that all people could be or become rational all of the time. Psychologists are then quite adept at arguing that people are better characterized as intermittently rational as there are non-cognitive factors that account for much of human behavior (e.g., biases, habits, moods, physical states, etc.). In short, we bring our entire selves to each situation, including those that require solving challenging and complex problems (Spector, 2016).

Based on that naïve interpretation of psychology and philosophy (more specifically, epistemology), it can be tentatively proposed that while it is not necessary to teach someone to have thoughts or even which thoughts to have, one be taught how to reason about the thoughts one has – that is to say that one does not need to learn to have thoughts but that one can learn how to think or reason about those thoughts. This simplistic reasoning may seem non-problematic, obvious or even trivial, but then one needs to consider the implications that follow from the conclusion that one can learn how to think, and more importantly how to become a critical thinker.

It is perhaps not coincidental that the emphasis on the 21st century skills known as the 4Cs (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity; see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/21st_century_skills) has arisen just when social media is having such global impact. In the world of social media, the possibility of alternate facts has arisen. In the world as described by Wittgenstein (1922) there are just the facts – no alternative facts. In the world described by so many psychologists, there are multiple interpretations of facts and those interpretations vary from one person to another. Moreover, what determines a person's response to the actual situation in the world is how one perceives and interprets that situation, and then, on somewhat rare occasions, how one reasons about one's perceptions and interpretations.

It is not by accident that much of this short piece concerns the rationale for a renewed emphasis on developing inquiry and critical reasoning skills in young children. So many years ago when I was teaching computer science, I became fond of the Ada programming language as it separated a function or procedure into two main parts – a specification in terms of (a) what was needed to perform the function or procedure and what the results of the

function or procedure would be in terms of data types, and (b) coding the function or procedure would perform the task of transforming the specified inputs into suitable outputs. Coding and detailed problem solving was delaying causing one to spend more time thinking about the nature of the general problem. I recall my students generally not liking Ada as they generally wanted to create executable code and get results rather than spend more time thinking about the more general nature of the problem.

One last piece of the rationale for this short piece is a reinforcing lesson drawn from “The Logic of Failure” (Dörner's (1996). In that important little volume, Dörner is asking how it is that highly trained and well-motivated people can make such bad decisions in challenging situations (e.g., the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear disaster). The answer involves weaknesses in human reasoning. Three shortcomings are highlighted: (a) a tendency to focus on only a small aspect of the problem with which the person has some familiarity or expertise, (b) the expectation to see immediate results of an intervention and a lack of appreciation for delayed effects, and (c) the inability to reason effectively about non-linear or exponential relationships. Dörner's recommendation is to create learning situations that are realistic and interactive so as to create practical environments in which those deficiencies can be addressed. Dörner's approach focuses on core aspects of critical thinking (observation, explanation, hypothesis formulation, and hypothesis testing). Moreover, it is developmental in nature in the sense that it takes multiple experiences (and failures) to develop those important skills. Another way to put it is to say that those skills (observing and explaining situations, and formulating and testing hypotheses) should become habits of mind. The argument here is that those habits of mind can and should be developed early.

Research and Development Framework

I (Spector, 2018) first presented the research-based framework some time ago with a nine-phase development approach as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1. Principles and associated competencies.

Principles/Development Phase	Example Competencies
1. Inquiry, observation and puzzlement	Observe oddities; answer questions about oddities; ask about oddities
2. Exploration and hypothesis formation	Identify relevant factors; create an initial explanation
3. Evidence and hypothesis testing	Find relevant factors; predict an outcome of a test
4. Influence and causality	Explain correlation, probability and causality
5. Explanation, communication and collaboration	Explain likely causes and reasoning to others
6. Coherence and consistency	Identify inconsistencies, contradictions and tautologies
7. Assumptions and biases	Recognize unstated assumptions; identify possible biases
8. Perspectives and alternatives	Identify and consider multiple points of view
9. Reflection, refinement and self-regulation	Monitor one's own progress; adjust to new evidence or a different perspective

Critical thinking as addressed herein is multi-dimensional and multifaceted. The developmental approach proceeds from experience (e.g., observing something unusual) and then to various forms of inquiry, investigation, examination of evidence, exploration of alternatives, argumentation, testing conclusions, rethinking assumptions, and reflecting on the effort. Experience and engagement are ongoing throughout the process which proceeds from relatively simple experiences (e.g., observation) to more complex interactions (e.g., manipulation of an actual or virtual artifact and observing effects, according to Dörner's recommendations). This approach treats critical thinking as purposeful and goal directed.

Apart from experience, there are other capabilities essential to critical thinking – namely, metacognition, interest,

motivation, and self-regulation. This is consistent with the notion that each person brings a history and predispositions to each situation. Interest and motivation are clearly related, as are metacognition and self-regulation. Many researchers (e.g., Schraw, Crippen, & Hartley, 2006) believe that metacognition has two components: (a) awareness and understanding of one's own thoughts, and (b) the ability to regulate one's own cognitive processes. Davies (2015) described these two capabilities as the capacity to monitor the quality of one's thinking process, product, and then to make appropriate changes. Although the definition and elaboration of these two concepts have been explored separately and extensively, they are often used interchangeably (Hofer & Sinatra, 2010; Schunk, 2008). These two concepts taken together enable a person to create a self-regulatory mechanism, which monitors and regulates the corresponding

critical thinking skills (i.e., observation, inquiry, interpretation, explanation, reasoning, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, reflection, and judgement).

It is noteworthy that there is a discussion about the generalizability and domain specificity of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Chi, Glaser, Res, 1982; Chiesi, Spliich, & Voss, 1979; Ennis 1989; Fischer, 1980). The research suggests that to achieve high levels of expertise, one must develop high levels of domain knowledge. As a consequence, becoming a highly effective critical thinker in a particular domain of inquiry requires significant domain knowledge. One may achieve such levels in a domain in which one has significant domain knowledge and experience but not in a different domain in which one has little domain knowledge and experience. However, the processes involved developing high levels of critical thinking are somewhat generic. Therefore, when the two additional capabilities of metacognition and self-regulation are coupled with interest and motivation, critical thinking can develop in nearly any domain (Ericsson, Krampe, Tesch-Römer, 1993).

As a consequence, we emphasize a systematic approach to the development of the relevant abilities (see Table 1) that comprise critical thinking. Since our approach focuses on children, we argue that this is best done in multiple domains of inquiry that are likely to be of interest to a child, consistent with criteria established by researchers (see, for example, Paul and Elder, 2006). We adopt a developmental approach because critical thinking abilities and dispositions are mutually reinforcing and progressive. That is to say that critical thinking dispositions can initiate and support the development of corresponding abilities (e.g., argumentation, analysis, evaluation, etc.), and, likewise, the development of those abilities further enhances one's ability to successfully engage in critical thinking (Facione, Sanchez, Facione, & Gainen, 1995; Yang & Chou, 2008; Hitchcock, 2018). Moreover, this mutual

reinforcement notion is consistent with Keller's (2010) model of motivation as a dynamic construct subject to support with instruction and experience.

Conclusion

In concluding this simple analysis of how to better support early education, I want to recall a lesson from my father, Rabbi Joseph Spector, who left me with two important lessons. First, the main task one has as a person is to bring out the best in other people – easy to say but quite hard to do, especially when it requires time and effort. Second, the main task of being a teacher is being the voice that encourages, the ear that listens, the eye that reflects, the hand that guides, and the face that does not turn away. Being a teacher is a demanding task. As Gagné argued, being a teacher of young children is one of the most important tasks one can undertake. We need to lower ourselves to fully supporting young learners in fostering inquiry and promoting the development of their critical thinking skills (observing, explaining, forming and testing hypotheses, arguing, reasoning, considering alternative perspectives, identifying biases and assumptions, reflecting, etc.). The future of this fragile planet is being forged in the minds of our children.

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Case Study

Kishore Manch: A Swayam Prabha Channel for School and Teacher Education

By Dr. Alka Singh

A country with knowledge, skills and resources represents an empowered society. Digital India programme of Government of India, launched in 2015, has vision to make India a digitally empowered society. To achieve this, many Information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives have been launched in education assuring the access, equity and quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning with ICT is interesting, effective and user-friendly. Particularly, the television signifies the role of technology in minimising digital divide. In 2017, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt of India launched the SWAYAM Prabha project to open up television platform for disseminating high quality content to the viewers. There are 32 DTH-TV channels under SWAYAM* Prabha managed by various educational organisations and institutions. A constituent unit of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), is a national coordinator of one such SWAYAM Prabha channel i.e. Kishore Manch. It caters to the objectives and demands of school and teacher education. It aims to bridge the digital divide and to provide access of quality education to the citizens who do not have access to internet or quality resources by any other medium.

CIET provides contents related to secondary and senior secondary students and teacher education for 6 hours which gets repeated 3 times to make it 24X7 Channel.



**Study Webs of Active–Learning for Young Aspiring Minds*

As a pre-planning, the syllabus and schedules of secondary and senior secondary school level are examined month-wise and accordingly programs are arranged for telecast on the channel. A weekly plan has also been developed for making this process more relevant and cover all the subjects such as arts, languages, science, commerce, social sciences and humanities. The programmes on performing arts, crafts, physical education, teacher education etc. are also included in the schedule. Apart from

scheduling syllabus-based programmes, the programmes related to special days, festivals, national and international days/events are taken into consideration while developing weekly and monthly schedules. Thus, the telecasts are synchronized with the academic calendar of the schools and presented on the basis of weekly schedule prepared subject-wise for placement of every subject. The motive of the channel is to provide access of quality education to every child of the country.



Figure 1 : Process of Transmission on Kishore Manch

CIET is also transmitting half-an-hour of live programme on working days from 04:00 pm to 04:30 pm. The topics are related to secondary, senior secondary classes, teacher education and other relevant areas such as career counselling, vocational education, current affairs etc.

Apart from daily live telecast, CIET has conducted an examination helpline w.e.f. 20th February 2019 to 3rd April 2019 for the purpose to resolve the issues, problems and challenges of students and other stakeholders related to examinations. Another weekly live program has been

initiated on school leadership in collaboration with National Centre for School Leadership, National Institute of Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi.



Figure 2 : Kishore Manch watching & Feedback mechanism

The feedback, queries and suggestions of the viewers are being received regularly through the calls on toll free telephone numbers (180011265, 1800112199), email (ciet.kishoremanch@gmail.com), ePathshala Kishore Manch App and social media platforms. The ePathshala Kishore Manch App, developed by the researchers of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA, provides detailed demographic analytics to provide insights into growing viewership of Kishore Manch. Social Media such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc. are also being used for promoting the channel. A new feedback mechanism for connecting viewers is initiated i.e. 'Question with Selfie' in which students, teachers and other viewers can send their

question/query/feedback/suggestion with their selfie photo or video recording through their mobile phones.

CIET, NCERT has identified the gap areas through conducting a week-long workshop with school teachers and experts of the specific subjects. The experts of the subjects analysed the syllabus of secondary and senior secondary level as per NCERT text-books and classified the themes and sub-themes of the content of chapters. Further, the gap areas were identified with justifying the need to produce programs based on these themes/topics and schedule those for telecast on the Channel. It is noted that secondary school level programs are less covered in video programs with having priority to produce more programs for

telecast at this level.

Considering the gap areas and viewers' feedback on different platforms, CIET is regularly producing programs for telecast on the channel. As, production is a regular activity in CIET, NCERT, the subject and level-wise gap areas are being communicated to the content departments of NCERT as well as all five Regional Institutes of Education and State Institutes of Educational Technology (SIETs). The video programs are being produced on regular basis to cover the gap areas. The produced programmes are validated on weekly basis (on every Friday) and through special validation/content curation workshops/meetings. After this process, the programs are scheduled for telecast on the channel.



Live Studio of CIET



Visit of Joint Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, MHRD



Panellists of Exam Helpline Live

It is concluded that educational television can serve the wider population with easy access and flexibility in learning. SWAYAM Prabha channels cover the students, teachers, teacher educators, and other citizens of India from school education to higher education including curriculum-based high-quality educational programs. The programmes are recorded and produced by academic experts, qualified teachers and experts of subjects. The major challenge is to popularise the

channels and spread awareness about the subjects covered under the telecast of SWAYAM Prabha. It has potential to provide access, equity and quality of education. As the population is increasing and we are facing lack of resources, such channels are gateway of knowledge bringing our citizens the educational opportunities in cost-effective way. The television can serve the purpose of teaching and learning in easy and effective way.



Figure 3 : Glimpses of Telecasts on Kishore Manch

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CEMCA received Telecom Manthan 2019 Award



Telecom Sector Skill Council recognized the efforts of CEMCA towards enhancing the skill ecosystem through its Innovative Ideas by felicitating with the “Outstanding Contribution” award in the event of Telecom Manthan 2019 organized by TSSC in association with Voice & Data on 28th June, 2019 at The Lalit, New Delhi.



SEVEN Attributes of Online Learner

By Ashutosh Taunk

Let's say you have a unique online course idea and the idea is awesome. However, taking it to the learner demands a lot more. You need to work on the framework, the layout, and probably talk to a subject expert. But the most important aspect is knowing your learner.

The success of online courses depend on the rate of retention and the rate of completion and also adding value to a learner's profile. But an important challenge is to develop a framework that could meet the expectations of the learner. And the key to this is knowing the learner well.

To develop and deliver a successful online course we should consider following aspects:



1. The Learner

Knowing the learner, their ability, age, demography, gender, education level, professional status and reasons to pursue the course. The clearer the picture about your learner the better can you deliver and market your course.

2. Pricing

Pricing of the courses is within the budget of the learner. It is a crucial component of online course design. Over-pricing might end up to dampening the marketability of the course and under-pricing could impact the brand value. Pricing should be decided in relation to the market trends and demand for the particular type of courses.

It is all about push and pull concept, the price should be well balanced between convincing and attracting someone to pay. Convincing someone is tough to pay an x amount but the convincing becomes easy when it is attractive.

3. Time

Another important aspect, which is mostly overlooked while identifying the target audience, is the time your Learner can devote. You have a rich and elaborate content, but, what if your learner does not have enough time to complete the sessions and submit the assessments? A targeted study of the potential learners and their time constraints is important in designing and delivering the course.

4. Support

While launching a course, adequate and appropriate support material and contact information should be provided so that touch points are maintained and the possibility of learners dropping out of the course is minimised. Whether learners select a course by choice or in order to fulfil an external compulsory requirement, they require support of various kinds such as accessibility of concepts, assignment, grading, and technical aspects.

Understanding the learner's background and ability to access the course, facilities, the support guidelines and setups can be planned better to ensure quick resolution of issues that crop up for the learner.

5. Learning Level

While developing the course we often consider the eligibility criteria or basic requirements, but often we lose track of that as the course progresses. Subject experts may make courses jargon-ridden, making it difficult for the learners to access the material or even complete the course.

Having details about the learner's learning ability, and their academic and professional background helps us design the content in a consistent manner, catering to the needs of the specific audience and meeting the expectations of the learner while joining the course.

6. Challenge

Online education is over a decade old now. But motivating someone to join an online course is still a challenge, especially in an adult learning framework. Most of the learners are working professionals with a busy schedule.

The one significant factor that motivates a learner to enrol for an online course is the aspirational value it might give to a learner. Flexibility and the freedom to learn the way one prefers to during hours that one is comfortable with are what make online courses desirable. If your course design forces someone to radically change their prior commitments and schedules, that is clear recipe for failure.

7. Outcomes

Presenting the outcome can only happen, once we have understood the challenges a learner face. Our objectives should be such that it serves the challenge, for example, make a learner feel confident about a skill, monetary raise at work, professional growth, status and achieving a life-long aim to complete studies.

Online learners are from several walks of life, a variety of backgrounds, and come with many different objectives in mind. A course should cater to such multiple audiences and their multiple demands.

Accommodating the learner's needs and the learners' perspective are the very first and final steps in a successful course design.

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25 Years of CEMCA





the Community Radio stations
on
Science for women's health & nutrition
Organised by
National Council of Science and Technology-Communication (NCSTC)
DST, Ministry of Science and Technology
Government of India
in Collaboration with
Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)
New Delhi
April 30 and May 01, 2015
Venue: ASCI, New Delhi

**Roundtable of Vice Chancellors
of Open Universities in Asia and Africa**
Theme: Open Universities in 21st Century

Organised by :
Commonwealth of Learning, Canada in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, India
Supported by :
Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India
Venue : Hotel Connaught Place, New Delhi. Dates : 23rd-24th April

Brainstorming on Development of Framework and Guidelines for Quality e Content Development



CEMCA and Centre for Educational Technology, IIT Kharagpur are developing a set of guidelines, which will be used to prepare quality e Content for different type of courses. This meeting was conducted on 10th, June 2019 at CET Seminar Room, IIT Kharagpur with an objective to receive significant suggestions on the draft guidelines. Following eight experts working in this area participated in the brainstorming meeting:

- Prof. Rajib Mall, Centre for Educational Technology, IIT Kharagpur
- Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi, CEMCA
- Prof. Jayanta Mukhopadhyay, Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Kharagpur
- Prof. O.P Saha, Ocean Engineering & Naval Architecture, IIT Kharagpur

- Prof. Siddhartha Mukhopadhyay, Electrical Engineering, IIT Kharagpur
- Dr. Barnali Roy Choudhury, Netaji Subhash Open University, West Bengal
- Dr. Somdev Chatterjee, SRFTI
- Prof. Prabina Rajib and Dr. Vinod Gupta, School of Management, IIT Kharagpur

The morning session was initiated by Dr. Kaushal Kumar Bhagat, from CET. He greeted all the experts and invited Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi, CEMCA to provide a brief introduction about the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA).

Dr. Bani Bhattacharya, CET, presented draft guidelines for quality e Content development. Dr. Bhattacharya started the

presentation by explaining the reasons why we need to embed eLearning in current teaching and learning process. During the meeting, many feedback/comments were exchanged between/among participants. Prof. Jayanta Mukhopadhyay commented on scalability, which is one of major challenges of eContent. He suggested not to commit any unrealistic thing to student community.

Prof. Siddhartha Mukhopadhyay suggested to build the content for peer learning or collaborative learning, so that learners can upload the problems or solution on the forum. He proposed to have a content overflow and to add a connection between the modules (at module level), so that scheduling could happen. Dr. Barnali Roy Choudhury introduced about the vocational training, lab-based approach, i.e Blended Learning approach which has been used in NSOU. In her view, learning analysis should be there which can be feedback system after every module of the course or at end of course.

Dr. Somdev Chatterjee queried about the learning materials and suggested to develop the eContent within three levels on interactions of teaching-learning. He listed the difficulties from his experience on eLearning. Some of those were, inability to drive student engagement, more ppts and teacher-camera communication. Prof. Prabina Rajib asked about the classroom setup and suggested that video lectures can be used as learning method.

Enhance Better Learning using Radio Enabled Learning

CEMCA is supporting Sri Sankara Arts & Science College, Enathur, Kanchipuram for a project on “Enhance Better Learning using Radio Enabled Learning”. Under this project a two day workshop was organised during 17th and 18th May, 2019 in Sruthi CRS Community Radio Station in order to work out the modalities and for the successful implementation of the Project. Since it was the first time in India, the proposal of enhancing better learning using Radio Enabled Learning which is embarked upon, special care and guiding principles were thoroughly analysed during this workshop with the help of the experts and exponents in the relevant fields. Total 32 participants attended the workshop. The following resource persons were present and shared their ideas and expertise during the two days' workshop:

1. Dr R. Sreedher, Media Expert & Community Radio Practitioner, New Delhi.
2. Sri. K. Jayamkondan. Former Announcer, AIR. Chennai.
3. Sri. U.M. Kannan, Former Deputy Director, Doordarshan.
4. Sri. M.S. Perumaal, Former Director, AIR and Doordarshan.



5. Dr. Rajendra Mishra, Former Director, IMC, Mannu, Hyderabad. Former Research Scientist (Rtd.) UGC – CEC, New Delhi.
6. Dr. K.R. Venkatesan, Principal and Director Sruthi Community Radio Station, Sri Sankara Arts & Science College Campus, Kanchipuram.

Dr. Rajendra Mishra said in his address that, there is a strong need of Radio Enabled Learning. He trained the participants how to teach the new young generation students in this technological

world. He gave a lot of informative examples for how to teach in the Radio Enabled Learning.

After a formal introduction about Radio Enabled Learning, about CEMCA, about the project, the topic, and the resource persons, Dr. R. Sreedher, the media expert and the Resource Person elaborately discussed and finalised the course contents, module structure, number of episodes, script development, title songs, date and place of recording etc.

Instructional Design for OER-based Blended Learning Workshop held at BOU

Bangladesh Open University (BOU) organized three-day workshop on 'Instructional Design for OER-based Blended Vocational Education and Training through Distance Education' from 08-10 May 2019 at the BOU Campus Gazipur with the support from Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi under the project 'Impacting Education and Open Schooling through OER- Making a Difference among the Learners'. The aim of the workshop was to enhance capacity

of content developers and faculties with theories and practices of ICT-based open and distance education system with a view to implement OER-based blended vocational education programme.

BOU Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor (Dr.) Khondoker Mokaddem Hossain inaugurated the event as the



chief guest. He urged that BOU's VET project has been contemporary as the government currently has given the drive to increase the number of vocational education in the country for economic development.

Prof. Hossain facilitated the two sessions in the workshop. Thirty three (33) faculties from the Open School (OS) and the School of Education (SOE) participated in the workshop. The event was presided over by the SOE Dean Professor Sufia Begum. Technical and working sessions were facilitated by Md. Mizanoor Rahman on “Open and Distance Learning: International Development and Diversification”. Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi conducted session on “Instructional Design and OER Learning” and Kazi Sharmin Pamela on “Audio-Vision through PPT Slide Show”. Prof.



Dr. Sabina Yeasmin was present in the inaugural session as one of the members of the project implementation committee.

The participants came out with 30 units of a module, 30 PPTs and 30 videos on course introduction for the Higher

Secondary Certificate (HSC) and eB.Ed. programme. These videos were uploaded as trial materials to the OER Repository using D-SPACE for BOU developed with the help of Dr. Barnali Roy Chowdhury (as CEMCA Consultant), NSOU, Kolkata.

IDEAS for Dark Areas in Higher Education of Bangladesh



IDEAS' is the acronym which is the process of identifying needs and requirements of Dark Areas through a baseline survey, based on the results of designing the interventions as per the needs using multimedia, engaging best experts for developing the content, adapting the available OER materials, and finally, ensuring the social inclusion

through media. Therefore, IDEAS is – I for identify, D for design, E for engage, A for adapt, and S for social inclusion. IDEAS concept is now being used for uplifting the quality of higher education. This has been initiated by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) and is now piloting in India, and has plan to do the same in

Bangladesh. In line with this, the then CEMCA Director Dr. Shahid Rasool, commissioned a meeting on 1 st May 2019 at Dhaka, Bangladesh with selected faculties of Bangladesh Open University (BOU).

At the very outset of the meeting Mr. Mizanoor Rahman gave an overview of higher education (HE) of Bangladesh and he said, “The country has two kinds of HEs – one directly through the university (public and private) and other through the colleges under the affiliation of universities – both suffer from many problems and face difficulties to ensure the quality. This has been acute in the rural areas where the colleges have limited infrastructure and quality teaching staff”. Mr. Khalid described the social

aspects of the higher education. Prof. Sufia put emphasis on pedagogic training for rural teachers. In reply, Dr. Rasool said “IDEAS is only for students' perspectives, not for the teachers' viewpoints”. Mr. Jahed Mannan also emphasized the comprehensive survey to identify the problems at the micro level. Mr. Reza from the education ministry, who is the Focal Point of the Commonwealth of Learning, assured the

all-out support for this green project.

After a comprehensive discussion on the issues in higher education of Bangladesh, the meeting recommended the following: 1. The participants shall form a group and develop the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for allocating the responsibility of the group members; 2. The Group shall identify couple of colleges which are delivering the higher education under the affiliation of a university, say, National University –

the affiliating University in Bangladesh; 3. Identify their need and requirements through baseline survey; 4. Plan for subsequent intervention through multimedia approach such as MOOC, OER, apps, platforms etc.; 5. Advocacy initiatives for large scale implementation with the support from government body, for instance, a2i project; 6. The group shall submit a project profile (PP) to CEMCA for necessary support.

VET Integrated HSC and eBEd/eMEd Curriculum Development in Bangladesh Open University



Bangladesh Open University (BOU) organized a day long workshop on VET Integrated HSC and eBEd/eMEd Curriculum Development on 2 May 2019 at BOU Campus Gazipur with support from Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi. Under the project on 'Impacting Education and Open Schooling through OER-Making a Difference among the Learners' the then CEMCA Director Dr. Shahid Rasool, in his inaugural speech, focused on BOU's drive on use of technology for

promoting linking of traditional or Industrial skills with higher education and vice-versa for increasing the employability of learners and also support recognition of prior learning as there is a greater desire and aspiration for degrees. He said that "Open School (OS) and School of Education (SOE) will try to create an opportunity for skills development, but complete feasibility is required whether the practical tutorials are possible or not". Former CEO of National Skill Development Council (NSDC) ABM

Khorshed Alam appreciated BOU for taking initiatives of integrated approach. Dean of Open School Professor Sabina Yeasmin and Registrar of BOU Dr. Md. Shafiqul Alam were also the speakers in workshop.

BOU Vice Chancellor Professor M A Mannan inaugurated the event as the chief guest. He urged the students to be skilled through this intervention. This shall impact on the employability for the youths. The event was presided over by the SOE Dean Professor Sufia Begum. There was a keynote address, technical sessions and working sessions. The participants came out with a draft vocational education and training (VET) integrated curriculum for the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and eBEd Programme.

BOU Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Khondoker Mokaddem Hossain facilitated the sessions which was participated by about 30 faculties from OS and SOE. ABM Khorshed Alam, Ex Chairperson of NSDC was the resource person in the workshop.

Roundtable of Vice Chancellors of Open Universities in Asia and Africa

With the support of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India, Commonwealth of Learning (COL) collaborated with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to organise a two-day Roundtable of Vice Chancellors of Open Universities in Asia and Africa from 23 to 24 April 2019 in New Delhi, India. Nineteen Vice Chancellors from eight countries including Bangladesh, Botswana, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Tanzania were in attendance.

Professor Asha Kanwar, COL President and CEO, in her keynote address, flagged the issues concerning open and distance learning (ODL) institutions in the 21st century and suggested some possible solutions for staying relevant to digital learners. Professor Kanwar also highlighted COL's activities across the Commonwealth in helping institutions develop policies and practices to make the best use of the latest technology for teaching and learning for sustainable development. She emphasised the need to improve learners' cognitive skills, soft skills and industrial skills to address the issue of employability.



Dr Shahid Rasool, the then Director of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), underlined the opportunities offered by the convergence of conventional and ODL institutions in terms of delivery and engagement with learners in the digital age. This convergence, he said, will help increase the credibility and level of acceptance of ODL degrees if institutions take full advantage of the cutting-edge technology for teaching and learning.

The inaugural event was presided over by Professor Nageshwar Rao, Vice Chancellor of IGNOU. Dr B K Bhadri, from MHRD, also spoke at the inaugural session. Professor Madhu Parhar presented the background note which was followed by other technical sessions covering various issues (Impact of Technology, Student Support Services, Quality Assurance, Assessing Outcomes and Competencies, Using Open Educational Resources and Employability) in the ODL system.

CEMCA Think Tank Meet for finalisation of Guidelines for “Linking the Skill Programme with Academic Programme”

The 2nd CEMCA Think Tank Meet was organised on 11th April 2019 for finalisation of Guidelines for “Linking the Skill Programme with Academic Programmes” at India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi. The opening session began with a welcome address by Dr. Shahid Rasool, then Director CEMCA where he welcomed all the participants and shared rationale and need for the guidelines. Think Tank Members introduced themselves. Prof. Nageshwar Rao VC, IGNOU gave opening remarks,



on why such a meet is very important in the fast-changing dynamic world where employability is a serious concern. Prof. Santosh Panda gave a presentation on “Revised guidelines for linking the skill programmes with academic programmes” He emphasised on having a flexible framework of horizontal and vertical mobility, with lateral entry and exit option, with vocational education and general education. He further suggested that we can learn more from the European, British and Australian models. The proposed action plan is to focus on 3 broad skill areas- discipline competencies, occupational skills and social and life skills. Thereafter, Ms. Sanjogita Mishra, the then Program Officer CEMCA shared about “Kaushal Mitra” which is a Counselling kit and an online tool

developed by CEMCA for self-assessment of one's personality and interest based on a small questionnaire. The house was then open to all the invited and acclaimed dignitaries to discuss and reflect on the “Draft guidelines for Linking the Skill Programme with Academic Programmes”. There were multiple perspectives and views shared on the topic. The closing remarks were given by Prof. Nageshwar Rao, VC, IGNOU, Delhi followed by Vote of Thanks by Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi who heartily thanked the distinguished guests to have taken time from their valuable schedule for a cause which is going to help nation a lot. Some of the key recommendations were • That there should be more involvement and synergy between academicians and experts from skill

industry in designing the National Framework for specific sectors. • There should be regular review of curriculum, so as to identify the existence or absence of the skills in the existing conventional discipline courses. • The skill universities should also have academic departments, or vice-versa, so that both programs can interact. Apart from this there were major concerns raised that the reforms are being implemented through the existing systems which are either inefficient or lack training and it is important that we should not dilute the aura of a graduation or master's degree as it is important to keep the sanctity of these courses intact along with giving due importance to skills domain.

Workshop on Piloting of Quality Assurance Toolkit for ODL Institutions in Commonwealth Asia at Uttarakhand Open University

CEMCA organised two days Workshop on Piloting of Quality Assurance Toolkit for ODL institutions in Commonwealth Asia from 27-28 March 2019 at Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani. Dr. Jeetendra Pande welcomed all the participants. This was followed by opening remarks by Prof. Durgesh Pant in which he emphasized that assuring the high-quality of education is a fundamental factor of gaining and maintaining credibility for programmes, establishments and country wide structures of greater training worldwide. The Vice Chancellor Prof. OPS Negi also participated in the workshop and in his inaugural address stressed that in the present times, Institutions of Distance Education are increasingly required to develop performance indicators by which their institutional performance can be measured by the Government. Quality Assurance facilitates recognition of the



standards of award of degrees, serves public accountability purposes, helps inform learner choice, contributes to improved teaching-learning and administrative processes, and helps disseminate best practices with the goal of leading to overall improvement of ODL.

During the two days workshop all the stakeholders including University leaders

discussed each aspects of Quality Assurance Toolkit. All the participants engaged in different groups, analysed the data along with evidences gathered as part of its implementation. They prepared an action plan for a year.

Vote of thanks was delivered by Prof R.C. Mishra, Director, Centre of Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA).

VC Round Table Major Recommendations

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Rethinking System

- Universities must take a re-look at their Vision and Create an ODL Vision for Lifelong Learning.
- Decision making should be driven by facts and supported by a system.
- Bring in as much automation as possible in regular functioning of the university which will lead to accountability and reduce human labour.
- Think of collaboration rather than competition.
- Continuous professional development to create ODL teacher and Academic Counsellors.

Technology in ODL

- Build Data Literacy which helps learners to deal with data which is increasing day by day.

- Build Technology Literacy which builds the ability of learners to learn, unlearn and re-learn the skills to use technology platforms.
- University must have strong wi-fi and internet connectivity and teacher and student must be provided technological infrastructure.
- Technological applications like ERP and LMS should be available to manage all processes like admission, examination, etc. from end to end.

Student Support Services

- Adopt a Bottom Up approach to understand students' needs and preferences with a system in place to capture, analyse and use.
- Create facility for e Counselling and eTutoring for learners.
- Create and provide digitized learning resources.

- Ensure availability of LMS and connectivity at learning centres.

Programmes and Teaching & Learning Strategies

- Move from Skills & Competencies to Transformational Learning where learners not only learn how to deal with the changes and circumstances of the world but will also develop the ability to change the circumstances and be leaders.
- Entrepreneurship programmes must be emphasized upon facilitation for financial linkages and incubation support by university.
- Online platforms must be adopted to support ICT / mobile based learning and peer learning.
- Hands on training and practical oriented learning must be added to as many courses as possible.

Quality Assurance

- Try to move from QA to Quality Excellence.
- Students to have self-organized learning using the existing content.
- Learners to decide their own curriculum.
- Human Literacy which builds Empathy and Decision-Making Values.
- Continuous transformation for lifelong learning opportunities.



Dr. V. Balaji, Vice President, COL visited CEMCA Office on 3rd and 4th July 2019. For two days he interacted with CEMCA staff. Past projects and future activities were discussed with the members. He also visited officials from MHRD and UGC. We thank him for his guidance and encouragement.



Prof. Madhu Parhar joined CEMCA as Director on June 3, 2019. Prof. Parhar has been working in the higher education sector for over 25 years as an academic, researcher and in management with a focus on scaling education and enhancing sustainable learning by using media and new technologies in open learning institutions. She is the author of many publications on distance education. She holds a Ph.D in Education from Jamia Millia Islamia, M.Phil in Education from Delhi University, M.Sc. from M.S.

University of Baroda and B.Ed. from Delhi University, India. Best Wishes to Professor Parhar for the new responsibility and look forward to her contributions in the region.



Dr. Shahid Rasool completed his tenure as Director of CEMCA on May 31, 2019. Dr. Rasool joined back his parent institution University of Kashmir as the Director of the Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMRC). During his tenure, he initiated several projects under the Skill Sector. We at CEMCA and COL congratulate and thank him for his initiatives and contributions to fulfilment of the motto of Learning for Sustainable Development in the Commonwealth Asian Countries.



Ms. Sanjogita Mishra worked as Programme Officer: Skills at CEMCA from January 4, 2016 to June 30, 2019. She resigned from CEMCA to take up another employment opportunity. She was passionate about contributing towards shaping the Skilling ecosystem of India. We at CEMCA acknowledge her contributions towards the Learning for Sustainable Development in the Commonwealth Asian Countries.



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Innovations for Quality Education and Lifelong Learning

Venue: BT Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh, Scotland

Date: 9-12 September 2019

For more information: <https://pcf9.org/>

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International Conference on Distance Learning: Research and Innovation for a Digital Society

Venue: Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) main campus in Nonthaburi, Bangkok, Thailand.

Date: 1-3 August 2019

For more information: <https://stouconference.stou.ac.th/>



International Conference on Livelihood Issues in Developing Countries - Role of ODL

Venue: NEDFI Convention Centre, Guwahati, Assam, India

Date: 20-21 December 2019

For more information: <https://conference.kkhsou.ac.in/>

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ICDL 2019: Digital Transformation for an Agile Environment.

Venue: India Habitat Centre Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi, India

Date: 06-08 November 2019

For more information: <https://www.teriin.org/events/icdl/>

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4th All India Media Conference-2019: "Digital Communication and Empowerment: Emerging Opportunities and Key Challenges"

Venue: Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Date: 27-29 September 2019

For more information: <http://www.aimec.in/>

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