



Massive Open Online Course On 'Understanding Neurodiversity'

Duration: 5-week
(7th February - 14th March 2022)

Organized by

Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU)
In collaboration with
Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)

Report Prepared by

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&

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Netaji Subhas Open University

Report

About Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU)

Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) is the premier State Open University in India and only Open University in West Bengal established in the year 1997 [W.B. Act (XIX) 1997] and recognised by UGC-DEB and RCI (www.wbnsou.ac.in). At present NSOU is offering Under Graduate, Post Graduate and Ph.D. programmes and also a good number of vocational courses. NSOU is the first Open University in India to apply for NAAC A & A process and the first State Open University in India to be accredited by NAAC with Grade- 'A' in its first cycle. NSOU operates through three Regional Centres (Kalyani, Durgapur, Jalpaiguri) and 162 Learner Support Centres across the state of West Bengal.

About Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)





The Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) {cemca.org} serves as the regional educational media centre of Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver (<https://www.col.org/>) for Commonwealth Asia, established at New Delhi in 1994. CEMCA promotes the meaningful, relevant and appropriate use of media and technology to serve the educational and training needs leading to Sustainable Development through learning in Commonwealth member states of Asia. The Govt. of India by a Gazetted Notification, dated 10th February 2000, notified CEMCA as a diplomatic mission under provisions of the United Nations (Privileges and Immunities) Act, 1947.

MOOC-Understanding Neurodiversity: Background

There is no question that when it comes to the process of democratizing educational opportunities, the internet has delivered in spades, often through massive open on-line courses (MOOCs) offered by universities, organizations and individual instructors. These courses can offer work-at-your-own-pace flexibility, efficient information delivery, and broad reach to anyone with an internet connection. To secure the right to education of every child, schools/Academic Institutions are required to identify and accommodate neuro-divergent children and young people along with neuro-typical students. The inclusion and equal participation of all children within the schooling system has been accorded the highest priority in the Government of India's National Education Policy 2020. There is a critical need to provide increased awareness, knowledge and training regarding teaching students with neurological differences.

Need of the Course

Neurodiversity is a scientific concept arising from brain imaging. Several brain studies have shown that people with learning or thinking differences are “wired” differently than their peers. In other words, some children are born with brains that think, learn and process information differently than others. The term neurodiversity is an umbrella term that refers to a spectrum of conditions, not any single group and has since come to include the following variations:

-  Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
-  Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD or dyspraxia)
-  Dyslexia
-  Dyscalculia

- ✚ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- ✚ Other neurological conditions

Addressing the need to create a level play field and develop an inclusive perception, CEMCA and NSOU have come forward to jointly develop and offer a 5 Week MOOC on “Understanding Neurodiversity”.

Course Objectives

- ✚ To impart knowledge about the concepts of neurodiversity and building positive mind-sets.
- ✚ To create sensitive processes and essentials for Neurodiverse learner/young people.
- ✚ To enhance human resource professional's ability to understand and connect to Neurodiverse learner/ young people.
- ✚ To increase awareness about the social, psychological, and academic implications for neurodiverse students; and to increase the capability of implementing inclusive education practices.
- ✚ To share, develop, and embed existing good/ best practices for accommodation and intervention among professionals both nationally and internationally, to support neuro-divergent students/neuro-diverse learners or young people.

Course Developers

Ms. Manobina Chakraborty
Ms. Kavita Sharma
Dr. Papiya Upadhyay
Ms. Antara Choudhury
Dr. Abhedananda Panigrahi

Course Coordinators

Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU
Dr. Shiffon Chatterjee, CEMCA

Course Instructors and Facilitators/Mentors

Ms. Manobina Chakraborty, Inclusive Education Expert (UK & India)
Ms. Kavita Sharma, Founder, Prayas
Dr. Papiya Upadhyay, NSOU
Ms. Antara Choudhury, NSOU

Launching of the MOOC-Excerpts

Centre for Disability Studies & Educational Research (CDSER), under the aegis of School of Education (SoE), Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) organized the launch ceremony of 5-week MOOC on Understanding Neurodiversity, a collaborative initiative of Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata & Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, New Delhi, followed by an orientation on MOOCs-LMS on 7th February, 2022, Monday, 11:30 AM in a blended mode. Dr. Papiya Upadhyay, Assistant Professor of Education, SoE, NSOU was the emcee of the event. As a mark of appreciation, she introduced a few special persons in the blended assemblage: Prof. Madhu Parhar, Director, CEMCA, Dr. Aloka Guha, Prof. Subha Sankar Sarkar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, NSOU, Registrar, NSOU, Prof. Anirban Ghosh, Dr. Shiffon Chatterjee, Dr. A. N Dey, Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi, Ms. Kavita Sharma, Ms. Manobina Chakraborty, among others.

Prof. Anirban Ghosh, Director, CIQA, NSOU & Course Coordinator, MOOC was invited for the formal welcome words to initiate the event. Dr. Shiffon Chatterjee, Sr. Programme Officer, CEMCA & Jt. Course Coordinator was requested to briefly enlighten the participants about the 5-week MOOC on Understanding Neurodiversity. She eloquently presented the course overview

Netaji Subhas Open University & Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia jointly offer MOOC on
Understanding Neurodiversity
 Admission Announcement

Course Content
 MODULE-1: Concept of Neurodiversity
 MODULE-2: Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD), Part 1
 MODULE-3: Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD), Part 2
 MODULE-4: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
 MODULE-5: Neurodiversity and Inclusion: Good Practices

Course Objectives

- Imparting Knowledge on neurodiversity
- Building Positive Mind-set
- Enhancing ability of Professionals to understand the need of neurodiverse learners
- Increasing awareness about the social and psychological implications for neurodiverse learners

Course Coordinators
 Dr. Anirban Ghosh
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 Netaji Subhas Open University
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Dr. Shiffon Chatterjee
 Senior Programme Officer
 Commonwealth Educational
 Media Centre for Asia
 schatterjee@cemca.org

Duration 5 Weeks

This course is for
 Teacher Educators & Professionals
 Admission starts- 30th Dec 2021
 Admission ends- 29th Jan 2022
 Course starts- 7th Feb 2022

Admission link
<https://jmo.ncouict.ac.in/admission/forms>

Please log on for details
<http://www.wbnsou.ac.in/>

Netaji Subhas Open University and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, invite you to the
Launch ceremony of MOOC
"Understanding Neurodiversity"

Duration 5 Weeks

Platform
 zoom YouTube

Date: 7th February 2022
 Time: 11.30am (I/T)

Dr. A. N Dey, Coordinator, CDSER and Director, SoE, NSOU shared his valuable thoughts on the inclusion and equal participation of all children within the education system has been accorded the highest priority in the Government of India's National Education Policy 2020.

Dr. Aloka Guha, Former Chairperson, National Trust, New Delhi & Senior Consultant, RCI, New Delhi, was invited for the keynote address. Professor Madhu Parhar, Director, CEMCA inspired and motivated the academic congregation with her brief speech. She stressed upon the need of this course and a noble drive towards equal participation. C.A. Kishore Sengupta, Registrar, NSOU expressed his contentment and congratulated the entire NSOU-CEMCA team for accomplishing this endeavour and wished good luck for this new beginning.



Prof. Ghosh also lent some technical know-how in accessing the LMS and continues with self-paced learning. Around 215 enthused partakers of the course participated in the event. Professor Subha Sankar Sarkar, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, NSOU delivered the presidential address as a culmination. The event was clinched by proposing vote of thanks by Smt. Antara Choudhury, Asst. Professor of Special Education, SoE, NSOU.

DETAILS OF THE MOOC

Duration of the course

7th Feb 2022 to 14th March 2022

Participants

717 registered (Male-431, Female-284, and Transgender-02) for the course, and 222 participants completed the course with certificate.

Nature of the participants

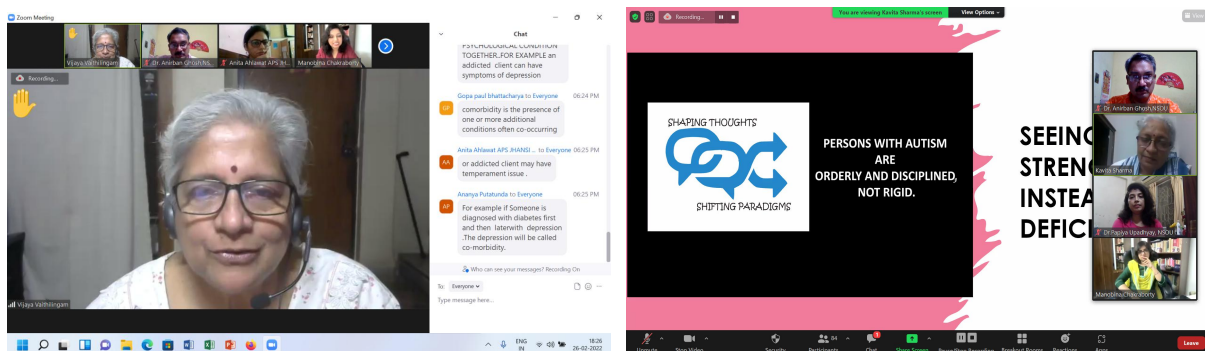
Participants encompassed teachers and teacher educators, college and university faculty with related teaching and research interests, teaching assistants, psychologists, counsellors, speech therapists, parents of children with Specific Learning Difficulties/neurodiversity, and educational leadership including heads of schools/Academic Institutions.

Course Modalities

The course was designed, developed, and delivered following four quadrant approach adopted in SWAYAM on Netaji Subhas Open University Learning Management System (LMS). Total five modules were distributed across five weeks followed by final assessment. Each module contained video-tutorials with transcriptions, e-contents, and quizzes. Several additional web resources were also provided for the learners for enrichment. Technical and academic support has been provided through 24×7 phone call and addressed through two different emails. The participants had to post at least five relevant posts on the discussion forum and submit feedback form as requisites to complete the course.

Proceedings of the course

The 5-week course (7th Feb 2022-14th March 2022) was coordinated by Professor Anirban Ghosh, NSOU and Dr. Shiffon Chatterjee, Sr Programme Officer, CEMCA. The study hours required for this course was four hours per week. The participants interacted through Discussion Forum on various relevant topics on asynchronous mode. Five introductory live session were organized in the weekend evening to deliberate and discuss on each module of the week. In addition to this, interaction with the participants, addressing to their queries related to the course and learning were also taken into account. All the course mentors/facilitators participated in the live interaction to present/deliberate on particular topic of the module and clarify doubts raised by the participants. The NSOU technical team created a WhatsApp group for all the participants to notify relevant information related to the course.



Access to the contents

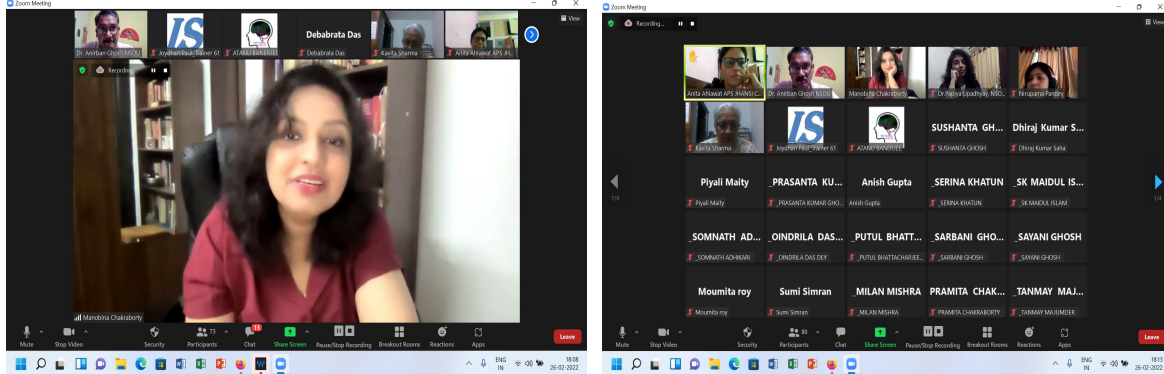
The participants were provided with login ID and password to access the LMS and navigate through the course materials arranged in Week-wise in modules. Each topic of the Module under each week contained video-tutorials with transcriptions, e-contents, and quizzes. Several additional web resources, like external links, glossary etc. were also provided for further enrichment and quench the thirst of knowledge.

Live Sessions

- One Launching-cum-LMS orientation live session, 7th Feb 2022, 11.30 A.M.

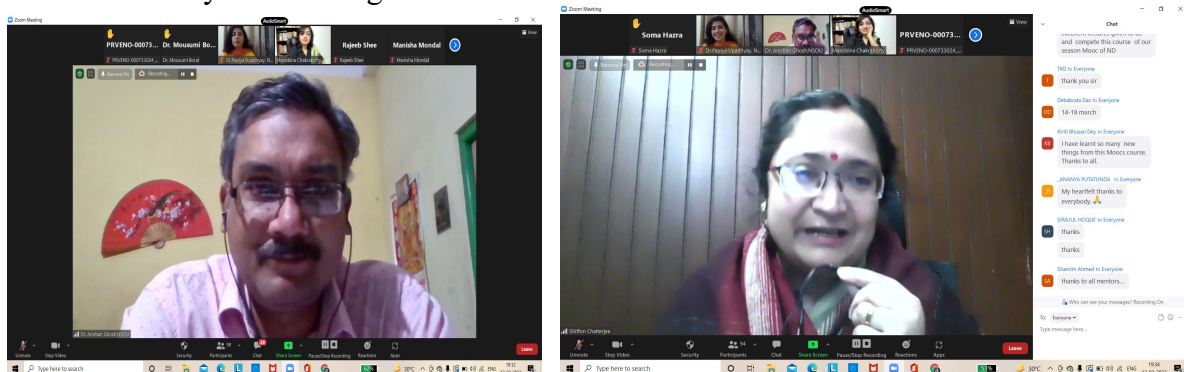
- Five Live sessions on the weekend evening, 6 P.M. (IST) on 10th Feb, 19th Feb, 26th Feb, 5th March & 13th March 2022 respectively.

During these sessions, all doubts and queries were redressed through synchronous mode on Zoom platform. Each live session was lauded with overwhelming participation.



Discussion Forum

There was an overwhelming interaction in the discussion forum throughout the five weeks. The interaction comprised of questions, doubts, queries, exchange of thoughts between peers, mentors, coordinators and participants. In reciprocation to these, Instructors and facilitators replied all the queries and relevant topics raised in discussion forum in asynchronous mode. All the course facilitators disburshed their roles as mentors throughout the programme by guiding and answering all queries/questions and clarifying the doubts posted in discussion forum on a daily basis throughout the duration of the course.



Evaluation

There were five quizzes at the end of each module per week. There were 15 MCQs and the participants were allowed for multiple attempts to finish their self-assessment quiz. There was a final assessment at the end of 5th week. The final assessment was made available from 14th March to 18th March 2022 (24x7). This consisted of 20 MCQs. The time period to finish was 40 minutes. 219 participants have submitted their final assignment and feedback form to qualify for the completion certificates.

Completion and Certification

The Completion certificates were issued to 222 successful participants who scored above 70% in the assessment and participated in at least five discussion forum posts.

Participants' Feedback

The participants sincerely expressed their gratitude for having gained an understanding of the philosophy and true spirit of Neurodiversity in all settings of life space. This course has

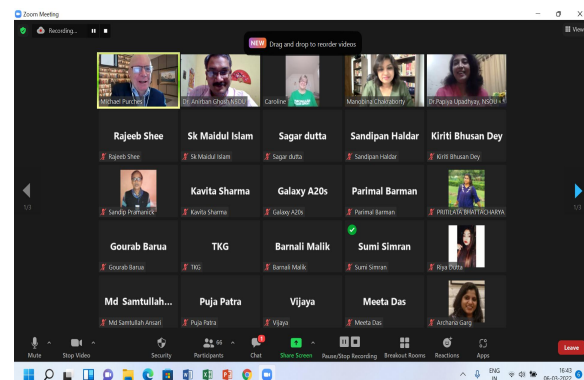
helped them to build a strength-based approach and a positive mindset to look at diversity/differences/difficulties through the lens of sensitization, advocacy, celebration and finally inclusion. Some of them added that this Course was very helpful for them to identify and act towards their job with responsibility and not mere controlling or treating the neurodivergent students or groups of people with mere sympathy and label. Many school teachers were confident to disseminate the neurodiversity movement through string message in their respective workplace and educational settings. They extended their acknowledgement to the Coordinators, Team of Instructors and facilitators who made this course fascinating, engaging, enriching and informative. The participants came out to consider it as a very well-knitted programme as the lectures are kept short and crisp that brings out a true essence of online learning. Overall, they put into record that it is worth pursuing this course as it was intensive and very professionally crafted. The quality of the MOOC was outstanding, according to almost all participants.

International Webinar on “Celebrating Differences and Inclusion”

As a part of enriching the experience of the participants on Understanding Neurodiversity, an International Webinar on “Celebrating Differences and Inclusion” was organized by CIQA in order to-

- ✚ To create an atmosphere of accepting the beauty of differences and act strategically
- ✚ To deliberate upon the aspects of celebrating inclusion *vis a vis* differences/diversity
- ✚ To promote a platform for candid interaction

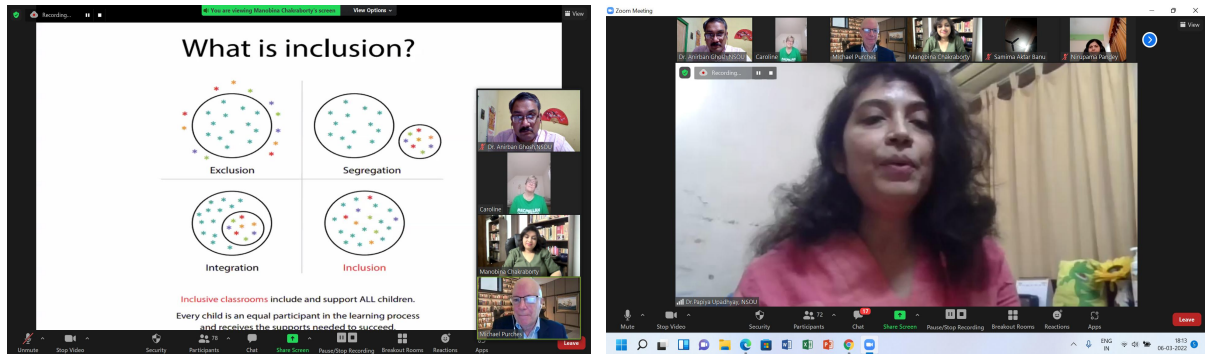
Two **illustrious speakers**, **Mr. Michael Purches**, School of Education, Leeds Beckett University, UK and **Ms. Caroline Hill**, Education Consultant, UK led the deliberation to sketch upon their works and interest in the realm of Inclusive Education. **Ms. Manobina Chakraborty**, Inclusive Education Expert (India & UK) & Founder, i for Inclusion Global moderated the session. The intertwined deliberations volunteered to view every ‘out-of-the-box’ practice and perhaps more importantly, the celebration of inclusivity in a tide of righteousness. This was followed with a session summary by Dr. Papiya Upadhyay. Prof. Anirban Ghosh added a few laudatory wishes with high hopes to collaborate and keep in touch with the erudite academicians for future endeavors. The Webinar grasped that differences/diversity and inclusion is critical components of innovation, productivity and ultimately success for an ever-evolving society. The webinar harnessed that it is a pride in fostering a diverse and inclusive environment for our people to grow. It has become imperative to recognize each individual’s unique personalities, harness diverse strengths, and celebrate the success of everyone as one, both professionally and personally.



Conclusion/Recommendations

This MOOC with its percept to create awareness on understanding neurodiversity has extended its scope to continuous professional development of teachers in various levels of

education. This course benefitted not only the school teachers but also parents, counselors, scholars to think differently and take the baton to the society. The contents of this course not only taught or brought into light that being different is neither a curse nor a boon but definitely it is a matter to celebrate focusing on the strength and overcoming the challenges through proper diagnoses. Oversimplification of difficulties was strictly adjourned as this may ruin the well-being of someone who has the right to live with a difference.



Feedback analyses

Out of the total participants, 222 participants appeared in the final assessment and submitted the feedback form to get the completion certificate satisfying the qualifying criteria. The responses received from participants are depicted below:

My role
222 responses

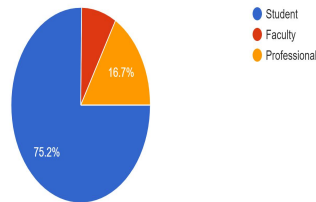


Fig 1

Gender
222 responses

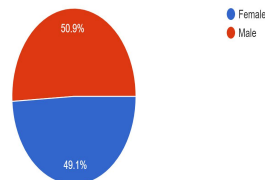


Fig 2

My age
222 responses

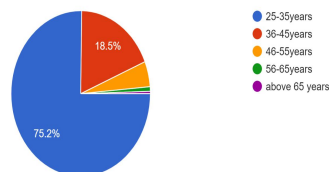


Fig 3

Educational background
222 responses

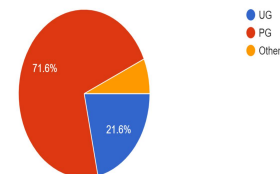


Fig 4

Stream of Study
222 responses

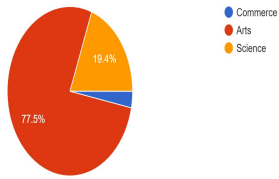


Fig 5

What is source of information about NSOU_Understanding Neurodiversity
222 responses

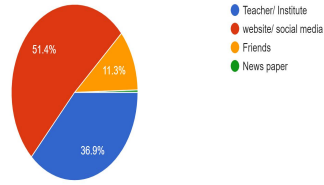


Fig 6

Reason for enrolling in NSOU_Understanding Neurodiversity
222 responses

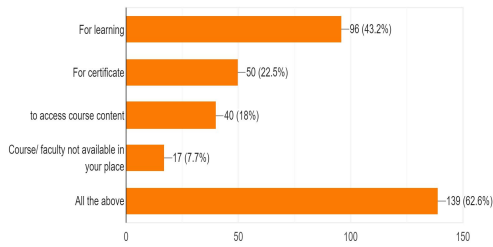


Fig 7

Through which device do you access NSOU_Understanding Neurodiversity
222 responses

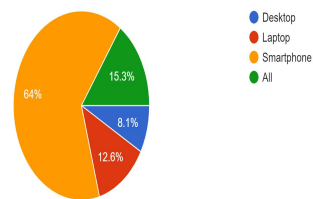


Fig 8

Frequency of accessing your MOOCs
222 responses

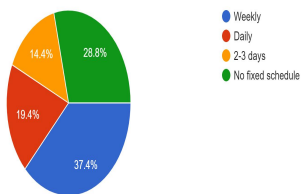


Fig 9

Which element of the course was most effective and efficient from learning grasping point of view
222 responses

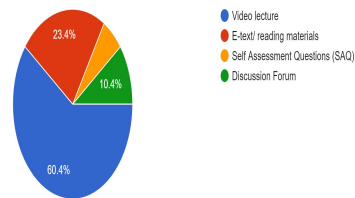


Fig 10

How do you find design, layout, convenience of NSOU_Understanding Neurodiversity interface
222 responses

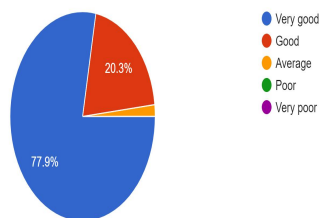


Fig 11

What is your experience in accessibility to internet for studying the MOOCs
222 responses

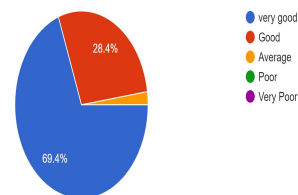


Fig 12

Did you have clarity on course objectives and learning outcomes before joining the Course
222 responses

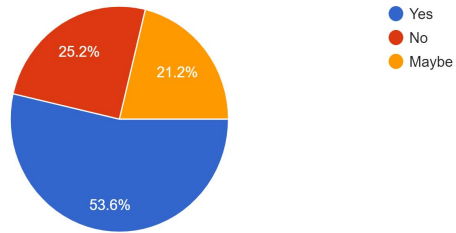


Fig 13

Were all relevant topics well covered and explained in the course content
222 responses

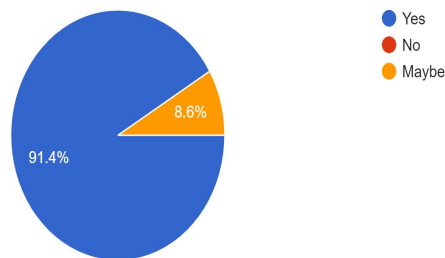


Fig 14

How was the delivery of the course coordinator
222 responses

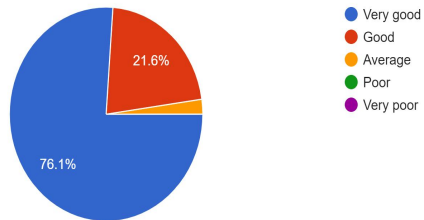


Fig 15

Were the elements provided in the course (video/ e-text, addl. resources etc.) enough for concept clarity
222 responses

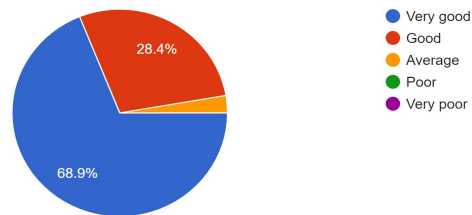


Fig 16

Was the online/ LIVE class helpful/ effective
222 responses

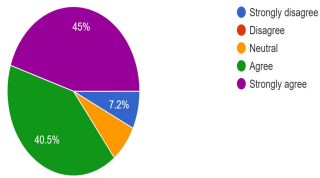


Fig 17

How do you find interactivity and participation in the discussion forum
222 responses

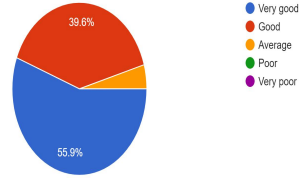


Fig 18

How active was course coordinator on Discussion Forum for resolving the doubts and queries
222 responses

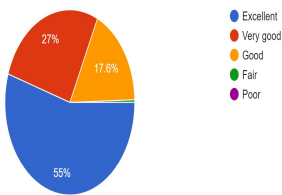


Fig 19

Were your learning expectations met at the end of the course
222 responses

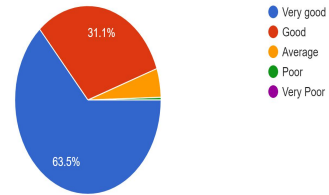


Fig 20

Rate your online learning experience
222 responses

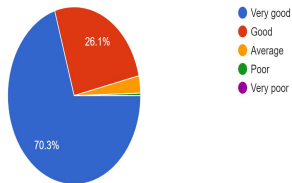


Fig 21

Rate your technical support and academic support experience
222 responses

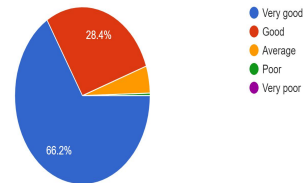


Fig 22