Report on
Vocational Lead Tutors' Training on Academic Support for BOU Learners

An Activity of Project:
Impacting Education and Open Schooling through OER- Making a Difference among the Learners

Date: 21-22 January 2020

Organised by:

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)
&
Bangladesh Open University (BOU)

Prepared by:

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&
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1.   Introduction

Open Distance Learning (ODL) is expanding fast in the developing world and the change is visible especially in the South Asian Region. The Governments in these countries have laid significant thrust on ODL, linking this to national development priorities. Blended learning (BL) for vocational education and training (VET), the niche of ODL, is growing quickly in open universities and in conventional universities as well in accordance with technological innovation. That is why School of Education and Open School of Bangladesh Open University (BOU) have partnered to impact in education and open schooling through implementing the VET using technology driven learning i.e., e-Learning, OER and MOOCs under the sponsorship of the Commonwealth Educational Media for Asia (CEMCA).

Bangladesh Open University (BOU) in association with the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) organized a lead tutor training workshop on 21 – 22 January 2020 at BOU Dhaka Regional Centre. This workshop was organized to train the lead tutors, who are engaged in providing tutorials for learners of HSC and education programmes (BEd/MEd) being implemented under the project entitled 'Impacting Education and Open Schooling through OER-Making a Difference among the Learners by BOU' from July 2018 under the technical and financial assistance from the CEMCA. This report documents the activities of the event and finally the project team recommends some actions for considerations.

2.   Objectives

The workshop aimed to build the capacity of the lead tutors of the vocational programmes of the BOU Open School and the School of Education. The specific objectives of the workshop were:
   i)   to familiarise the participants with theories and practices of tutorials for vocational education and training (VET) through open and distance learning;
   ii)   to acquaint participants with the Open and Distance Education (DE) in 21st Century and 21st Century ODL Learners;
   iii) to deliver the nature, characteristics and importance of learning materials (in different format) in distance education;
   iv)   to give overview on roles and responsibility of the tutors (academic councillor) in ODL
   v)   to prepare tutors to organizing student support services using various modes (face-to-face, online, using audio-visual media, computer, LMS, etc.) at BOU;
   vi)   to familiarize tutors with the technology in Distance Education: Moodle LMS, MOOC, e-Content, OER Repository (General and BOU perspectives);
   vii) to give technical knowhow to search, find and integrate to OER materials;
   viii) to get tutors ready to search and reuse OER to develop new materials.

3. Methodology

Proactive approach was adopted in the workshop where learning-by-doing strategy was exercised by the participants. They were mainly from the School of Education and Teachers' Training Colleges (TTCs) as the BOU-CEMCA project aims to develop the pedagogic programmes for VET teachers. Rests were selected from the Open School, School of Agriculture and Rural Development, and School of Science and Technology (SST) as they are involved in the VET material development. Initially, training responded to the needs of the end-users, institutions, and countries. Based on the needs, capacity building activities were reflected, and support activities were underway by the Open School and the School of Education. In order for impacting training session, social media network of lead tutors was created, through which further communication were made and training materials were delivered. PowerPoint presentations and flipcharts were used as key training aids to convey subjects in an easy-to-understand format.

4. The Sessions

4.1 Inaugural Session

Prof Sanat Kumar Ghosh, an internationally renowned distance educator from NSOU-India (Netaji Sobash Open University, India), on invitation from BOU, provided expertise support to all participating lead tutors to design tutorial support services for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) leaners through OER and MOOCs in the programme. The project already brought VET to the mainframe curriculum of the Open University especially for open schooling and in pedagogy school.

Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi - Program Officer, CEMCA – was also a resource person in the workshop. Dr. Manas said, in his inaugural address, "Characteristics of 21st Century learners are of Creativity and Innovation, Collaboration and Communication. ...Critical Thinking & Problem Solving. ...Global Citizens. ...Technology Literacy.....Lifelong Learners.' Faculties and tutors of School Education, School of Science and Technology, School of Agriculture and Rural Development and of Open School attended the Lead Tutor Workshop. The VET courses were dominated by in the field of agriculture and health technology. At the end of the workshop, participants were distributed with certificates.
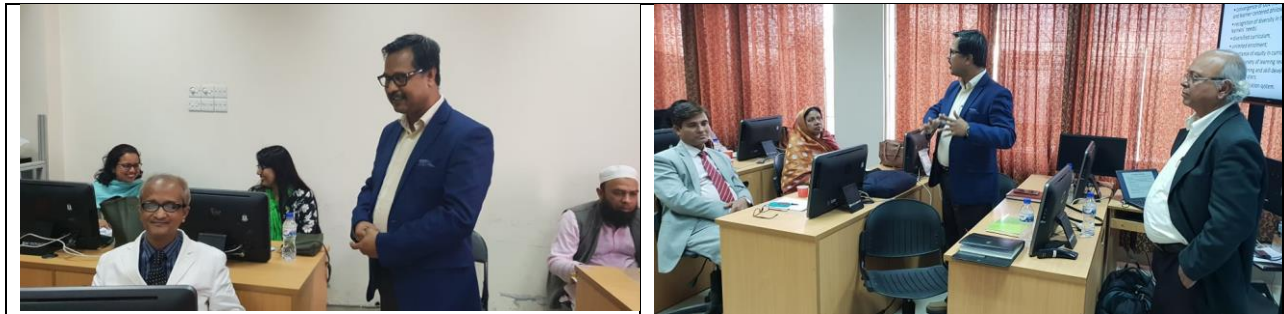
The workshop was inaugurated by Prof. Sufia Begum, Dean, School of Education and Project Director, BOU-CEMCA VET Project, while panel speakers included Prof. Dr. Sabina Yeasmin, Dean, Open School of BOU, Dr. Md. Mizanoor Rahman, Coordinator, BOU-CEMCA VET Project and others. The event provided an inclusive platform for all stakeholders of vocational education and training (VET) at BOU to work together and develop guidelines for Lead tutors on topics of VET through ODL.

Photographs of Opening Session

4.2 Working session

This session was commenced with the lively presentation from Dr. Manas on Open and Distance Education (DE) in 21st Century and 21st Century ODL Learners' and another presentation from Prof. Sanat on 'Nature, Characteristics and Importance of Learning Materials (in different format) in Distance Education'. The session was followed by group work.
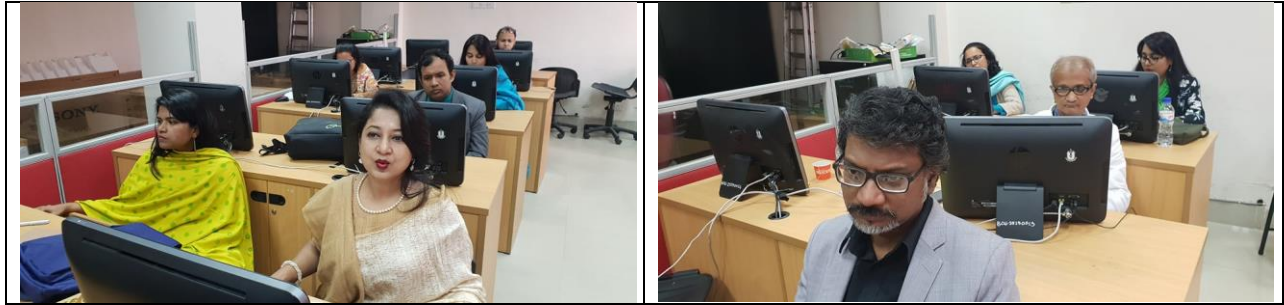

Working sessions were concentrated on following 4 questions:

i)   How to make publicity of OER Repository?

OER has tremendous capacity to provide learning supports to the learners, and some of the open sourced operators e.g. DSpace, have the features of library friendly repository, which give the opportunity for the students in getting information on the subject being learnt. In spite of that, OER is not yet been used in a wide extent. Participants were asked to explore how to make publicity for OER amongst tutors and students. The following issues were jotted down what the participants identified:

- Building network amongst lead tutors, subject tutors and students through social media and online platform;
- Tutors' SMS to students' cell phone is of viable means to popularize OER repository;
- Using top down approach – instructed by the BOU authority maybe of good means for communicating the students about the repository;
- University can advertise in the news or paper media for using repository;
- Discussion of the issue of repository in the tutorial sessions may of good means;
- Using OER as signature of emails of the tutors shall promote BOU repository in the community;
- Admission circulation may include the issue repository;
- Study material may have information about using the OER repository;
- Instruction in the study guide could publicize the use of repository;
- Mass media maybe used for using the repository by the students;
- Leaflet in the RCs could be a good means for disseminating the repository;
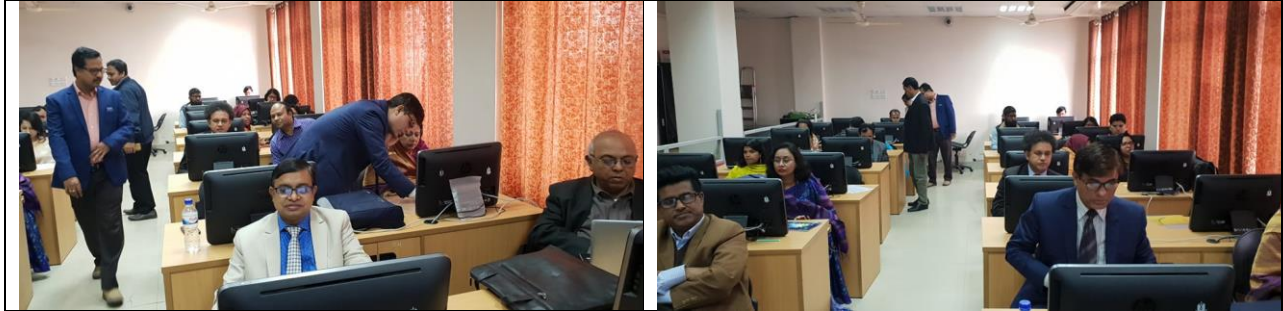- Online publicity through the social media, say Facebook page, can publicize repository;

What are the roles of lead tutors?

Open Educational Resources (OER) have the potential to change the domain of education. However, adoption is still limited. As teachers are the central actors to adopt OER, more insights are needed on their practices with OER and need of support. Informal sharing of resources within teachers' personal networks happens frequently, whereas the use of OER is more limited. Teachers use OER mainly for 'as-is' or for a source of inspiration. This may lead to extensive insights on the factors and sequence of the OER in Bangladesh different contexts. During the group work, the following suggestions were jotted down what the participants identified:

- Lead Tutors (LT) can have counseling programme with students and other tutors;
- He/she have to have supervision on what the other tutors doing;
- Training through face-to-face or online will be of worthy for effective tutoring;
- Motivation maybe of one of the roles of lead tutors;
- Popularizing ICT is very important role of the lead tutors as most of the tutors may have reluctancy in using technology in teaching-learning activities for lack of IT knowledge;
- Lead tutor may be facilitator in the capacity enhancement programme of the different aspect of tutoring, say, virtual tutoring, and/or pedagogy of tutoring;
- As leader LD may increase the community participation in the study centers;
- Keep in touch with the fellow tutors;
- Interact with the tutors for performing the administrative, social and academic roles in the study centres;
- Organize the training of tutors;
- Lead tutor should organize the Model tutoring for other tutors;
- Ensure team work is very important role for the LT;
- Promoting self-study is very vital role of the LT;

Active participants

How effectively can the learners use repository?

In recent years, the presence and importance of learning objects repositories for vocational courses has increased in the educational community. Meanwhile, several trends have gained momentum, notably open education, cloud computing or the web of linked data as a realization of the Semantic Web. Educational repositories have encompassed all these trends to maintain high levels of service. Participants were requested to give a set of best practices to the VET Learning Object repository for effective use.

- Frequent visit of Website;
- Use of web-broadcast;
- Use of smart-phones
- Use of PCs;
- Use of Study Center lab
- Relay on repositories for learning;
- Repository should have a comment box, and the operator should answer accordingly which would motivate students in using repositories;
- Students must have free time to use repositories;
- User manual may be helpful for students in using repositories;
- Linked to other e-libraries may be more effective use of repositories;
- Incentives may be provided;

Active participants

How will other tutors use the repository?

One thing was identified in the workshop that tutors' use of repository should be mandatory, and he/she should refer to the repository in the tutorial sessions for learner's use.

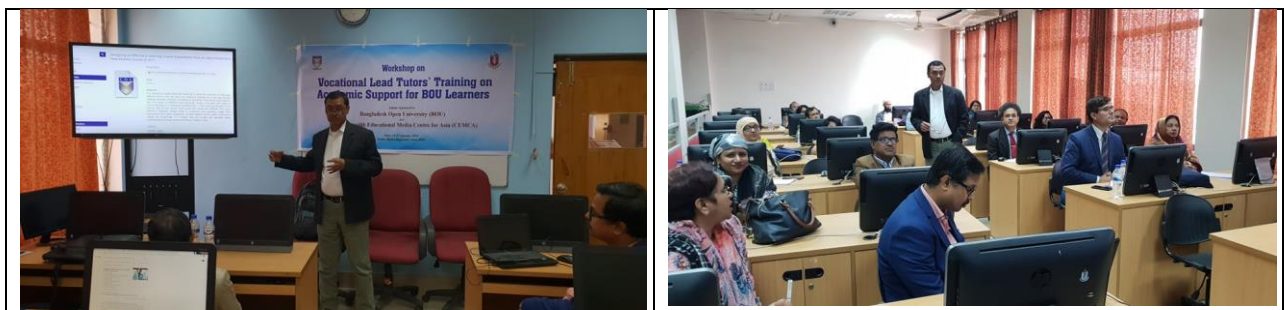After the presentation of group work, 3 experts had following presentations:
- i) Dr. Manas Ranjan Panigrahi presented the paper on "Organize student support using various modes (face-to-face, online, using audio-visual media, computer, LMS, etc.) at BOU".
- ii) Professor Sanat K Ghosh presented paper on "Roles and Responsibility of the Tutors in ODL, and Counselling in Distance Education".
- iii) Dr, Md. Mizanoor Rahman presented the paper on "Technology in Distance Education: Moodle LMS, MOOC, eContent, OER Repository (general and BOU perspectives)".
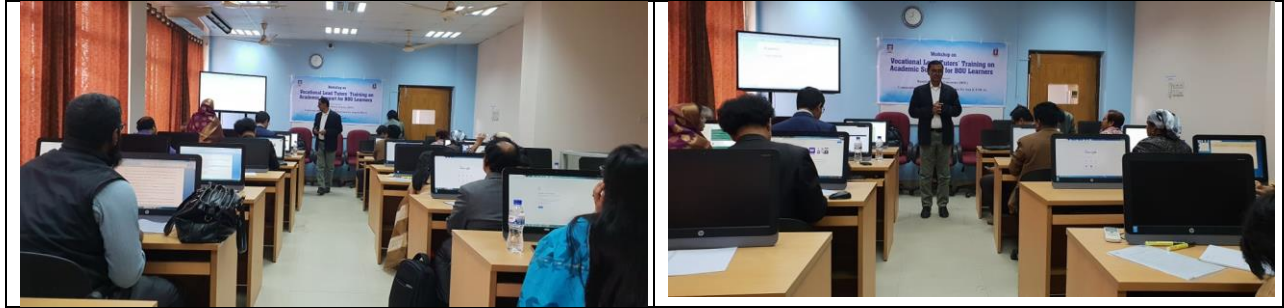
Facilitation

Presentation by Dr. Md. Mizanoor Rahman

Presentation by Dr Sanat Kumar Ghosh

4.3 Closing session

Dr Sanat Kumar Ghosh, CEMCA commissioned facilitator from NSOU, stated that this training workshop would only serve to help both Open School and School of Education to stay updated with VET implementation. The workshop developed the roles and responsibilities of the Lead Tutor for implementing the VET programs through open and distance learning.

Dr. Mizanoor Rahman said, "The training is largely aligned with the government's mandate to increase VET up to 20% by 2021, which aims to create employability. The workshop came out with some policy recommendations for BOU such as existing VET materials of the regional open universities to achieve the cost-effectiveness for the planned VET program".

Open School Dean said that BOU VET Project, financed by the CEMCA, has been working on upgrading the nation's VET infrastructure that includes building VET model, linking storage facilities in the repository, as well as setting up an integrated model system for impacting employability of the youths. Based on research findings and recommendations from project team, the project intends transforming curriculum of the existing HSC program and e-BEd/e-MEd program. AKM Iftekhar Khalid discussed regarding the national VET policies and the inherent responsibilities of the BOU for implementing the VET in Bangladesh through open and distance learning.

Dr. Manas said, "This workshop has been proactive in coming to grips with important changes taking place in education around the world, such as increased unskilled workforce, the new generation has a different relationship to technology, greater numbers of entrepreneurs in the country".

Prof Sufia said, "I personally wish to express my gratitude to you all for coming to Dhaka and sharing your experiences and thoughts in popularizing and using BOU OER repository. I hope you all have safe journeys home, who particularly came from outside Dhaka." Participants also expressed their views.

Professor Khondoker Mokaddem Hossain, in his closing remark, said, "It is a great pleasure to join you for the closing ceremony of your two-day workshop on Lead Tutor Training for VET programme. Thank you for your enthusiastic participation in this activity."

"As lead tutor, you have to play a key role in shaping the quality and content of VET programme. This workshop has provided you with new ideas and strategies that you can take back to your workplace to inspire and empower other tutors. We look forward to hearing how you are implementing these strategies of the BOU-CEMCA project to your own teaching and learning activities and your initiatives will ultimately impact on the effectiveness of VET project," he added.

Prof. Hossain thanked the CEMCA for their strong support for this initiative. He looked forward to continuing collaboration between the BOU and the CEMCA in other endeavors. The organizing committee distributed certificates among the participants.

Certificate awarding

Annexures

1. The Workshop Schedule

Workshop Schedule: 21-22 January 2020

Date/Time	Activity	Resource Person and material support
Day-1: 21 January 2020		
10.00-10.30 hrs	Registration	
10.30hrs-11.15hrs	Opening Session: • Introduction by Dr.Mizanoor Rahman • Welcome Address by Prof. Sufia Begum • Inaugural Address Prof Sabina • Address by CEMCA Resource Persons:Prof. Sanat K. Ghosh and Dr. Manas R. Panigrahi	
11.15hrs-11.30 hrs	*Tea/Coffee Break*	
11.30hrs-12.30 hrs	• Introduction to the workshop • Participants' Expectations from the Workshop • Open and Distance Education (DE) in 21st Century and 21st Century ODL Learners	Dr. Manas R. Panigrahi
12.30hrs- 13.30hrs	• Nature, Characteristics and Importance of Learning Materials (in different format) in Distance Education	Professor Sanat K Ghosh
13-30hrs-14:30hrsLUNCH		
14-30hrs-15:30hrs	Roles and Responsibility of the Academic Counsellors in ODL	Professor Sanat K Ghosh
15:30hrs- 15:45hrs	Tea/Coffee Break	
15:45hrs-17:15hrs	Counselling in Distance Education	Professor Sanat K Ghosh
DAY-2: 22 January 2020		
10:00hrs-11:15 hrs	Introduction to Day-2 and Planning the work for the day. Organize student support using various modes (face-to-face, online, using audio-visual media, computer, LMS, etc.) at BOU	Dr.Mizanoor Rahman /BOU Dr. Manas R. Panigrahi
11:15hrs-11:30hrs*Tea/Coffee Break*		
11:30hrs-12:30hrs	Technology in Distance Education: (General and BOU perspectives)	Dr.Mizanoor Rahman
12.30hrs-13:30hrs	Technology in Distance Education: Moodle LMS, MOOC, e Content, OER Repository(General and BOU perspectives)	Dr.Mizanoor Rahman /BOU
13.30hrs-14.30hrs	*Lunch*	

14:30hrs-15:30hrs	• Introduction to OER- Raising issues for discussion
	  • OER Search, find and integration to develop new OER materials
	  • OER Search and reuse to develop new materials
		Dr. Manas R. Panigrahi

15:30hrs – 15:45hrs	Tea/Coffee Break	
15:45hrs-16:30hrs	Assessment of ODL Learners	Professor Sanat K Ghosh
16:30-17.00hrs	*Closing Session*	

2. The Participants

School of Education
1. Professor Sufia Begum, Dean, School of Education, BOU;
2. Mr. Amirul Islam, Associate Professor, School of Education, BOU;
3. MS Arifa Rahman Ruma Associate Professor, School of Education, BOU;
4. MS Sakiba Ferdowsi, Associate Professor , School of Education, BOU;
5. Mr. Rezwanul Alam, Assistant Professor, School of Education, BOU;
6. Mr. Mohammad Rezaul Islam, Assistant Professor, School of Education, BOU;
7. Ms Rubaia Rahman, Lecturer, School of Education, BOU;
8. Ms. Jobeda Begum, Assistant Professor, TTC, Dhaka;
9. Ms. Jesmin Naher, Lecturer, TTC, Dhaka;

Open School
10. Professor Dr. Sabina Yeasmin, Dean, Open School, BOU;
11. Mr. Zahed Mannan, Associate Professor, Open School, BOU;
12. Ms. Ananya Laboni, Associate Professor, Open School, BOU;
13. Dr. Most Shirin Sultana, Associate Professor, Open School, BOU;
14. Mr. Md. Mizanoor Rahman, Assistant Professor, Open School, BOU;
15. Ms. Umasree Dhar, Assistant Professor Assistant Professor, Open School, BOU ;
16. Ms. Ridita Tasmin, Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Open School, BOU;
17. Dr. Md. Zakirul Islam, Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Open School, BOU;
18. Ms. Shahina Akter, Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Open School, BOU;
19. Ms. Kazi Sharmin Pamela, Assistant Professor, Assistant Professor, Open School, BOU;
20. Mr. Md. Dulal Mahmud, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Open School, BOU;
21. Mr. Md. Omar Faruk Bhuiyan, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Open School, BOU;
22. Ms. Shahnaz Beauty, Assistant Professor, Jubilee School & College, North Lane, Dhaka;

School of Agriculture and Rural Development
23. Professor Dr. Shah Alam Sarker, School of Agriculture and Rural Development, BOU;
24. Professor Dr. Md. Abu Taleb, School of Agriculture and Rural Development, BOU;
25. Dr. Md. Touhidul Islam, Associate Professor, School of Agriculture and Rural Development, BOU;
26. Dr. Md. Abdul Hamid, Assistant Professor, School of Agriculture and Rural Development, BOU;

School of Science & Technology
27. Professor Dr. Sharker Md. Numan, Dean, School of Science & Technology, BOU;
28. Professor Dr. Farida Easmin Shelly, School of Science & Technology, BOU
29. Dr. Mohammad Habibur Rahman, Lecturer, School of Science & Technology, BOU;
30. Dr. Md. Sheikh Arif-Uzzaman, Core Faculty, Public Health Nutrition Dept. Bangladesh Center for Communication Program, Mirpur, Dhaka;
31. Dr. Apu Shaha, Dhaka, 01712-703056

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