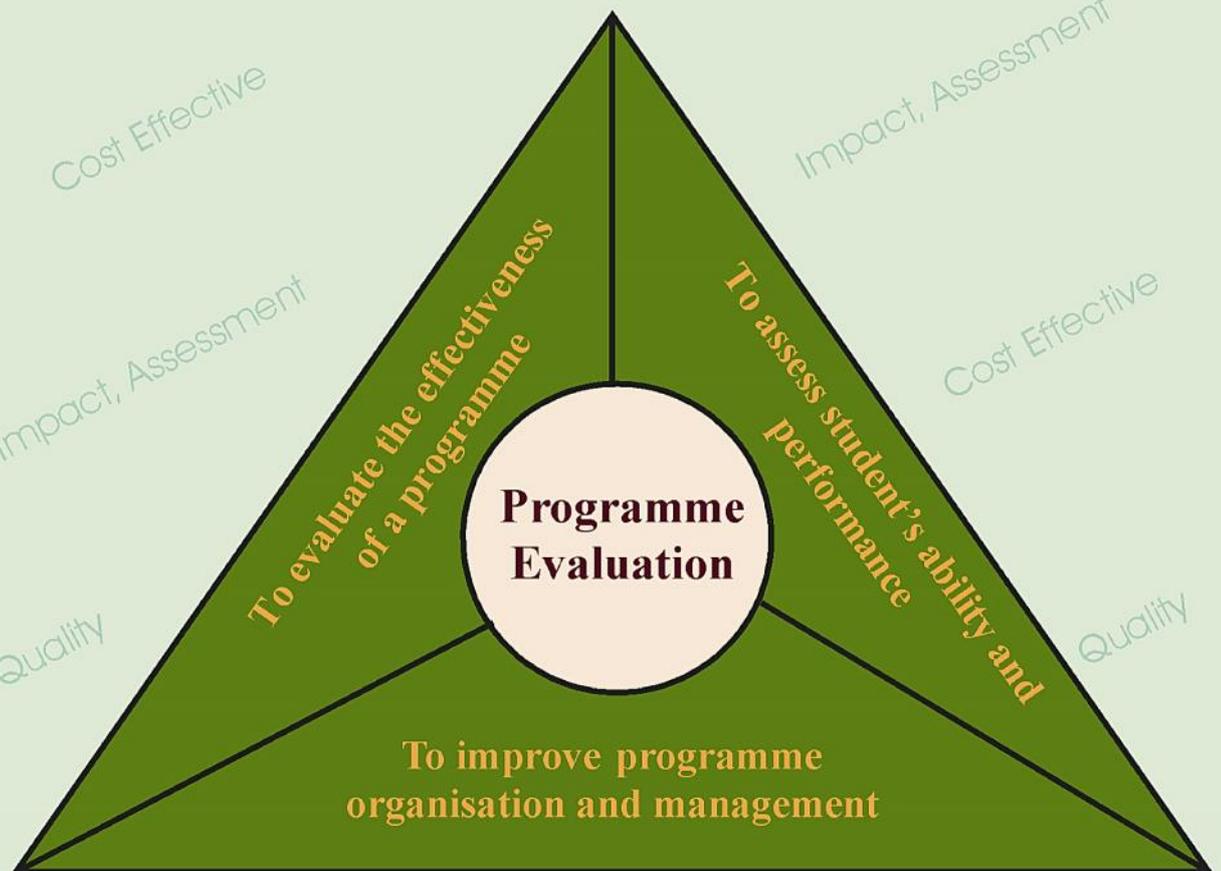


Programme Evaluation in Open and Distance Education



**Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education
Indira Gandhi National Open University
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi - 110068**



STRIDE HANDBOOK 12

PROGRAMME EVALUATION IN OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION



Staff Training & Research Institute of Distance Education
Indira Gandhi National Open University
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068, INDIA
<http://www.ignou.ac.in>

May, 2006

STRIDE HANDBOOK 12

Programme Evaluation in Open and Distance Education

Preparation Team

Sections 1 to 5

Written by

Dr. Basanti Pradhan

STRIDE

Content, Format and Language

Editing

Prof. P.R. Ramanujam

STRIDE

Section – 4.9

Written by

G. Mythili

STRIDE

* We acknowledge valuable suggestions of **Prof. Vijayshri**, School of Sciences during Programme Evaluation Workshop and her consent on this handbook to incorporate her suggestions and recommendations.

*We thank **Dr. Sanjaya Mishra**, STRIDE for his constructive comments pertaining to this handbook.

Typeset and CRC Preparation

Shashi Surendranath

STRIDE, IGNOU

Cover Design and Graphics

G. Mythili

STRIDE, IGNOU

Print Production

C.N. Pandey

STRIDE, IGNOU

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Further information about the courses, programmes and activities of the Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE), Indira Gandhi National Open University may be obtained from the STRIDE office at Block 14, Maidan Garhi, New Delhi 110068, India. Fax: 91-11-29533073

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FOREWORD

Starting from correspondence courses, a few decades ago, teaching and learning through non-conventional and non-traditional modes have undergone very dynamic and effective changes to improve the quality of education through these new systems. These emerging systems and trends are quite open, flexible, widely accessible and endowed with immense capability to cater to the needs of large target groups of learners. In view of the unique and distinctive features of these systems, they are now identified as the open and distance education learning (ODL) systems. It is now very well realized and understood that for effectiveness and success of the ODL system appropriately trained faculty, media professionals and distance educators are required to work together as a cohesive team. In the past decade, the ODL system has attracted considerable attention and acceptance of policy makers with the result that it is getting considerable support. In the absence of any other comparable system, ODL system has positioned itself as the only viable system for training and education for life long learning. The system has been further propelled by dynamic and innovative developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and their applications to the systems of education. Never before, have we witnessed such a great impact of any technology than that of the contemporary developments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the system of education. It is becoming very apparent that in recent years the ODL has very well and meaningfully absorbed the ICT for the betterment of the system, to make it more cost effective and accessible so as to bring in equity of education.

The ODL system has thus witnessed tremendous growth. In the present state of development of the ODL system used for education, skill upgradation and training of a large pool of human resources, the system is required to be handled professionally and efficiently. Keeping in view the above requirements of human resource development, the Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE) has brought out a series of Handbooks on different themes of ODL. This handbook entitled "Programme Evaluation in Open and Distance Education" deals with approaches and methods of programme evaluation. It also involves evaluating components of distance education. I appreciate the efforts made by STRIDE and hope that the Handbook will be immensely useful for different functionaries of the ODL system in the country and abroad.

(H.P.Dikshit)
Vice-Chancellor
IGNOU

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This Handbook-12 entitled “Programme Evaluation in Open and Distance Education” is a new handbook.

While developing this handbook, we took help, advice and suggestions from many people. It is a collaborative effort. We have acquired our knowledge from many sources (print-based materials, internet, face-to-face discussion, and so on). We wish to acknowledge all the individuals who have helped us directly or indirectly in developing this handbook. The authors express special appreciation to those faculty members who have provided their valuable suggestions during the preparation of this handbook.

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New Delhi
May, 2006

Basanti Pradhan and G. Mythili

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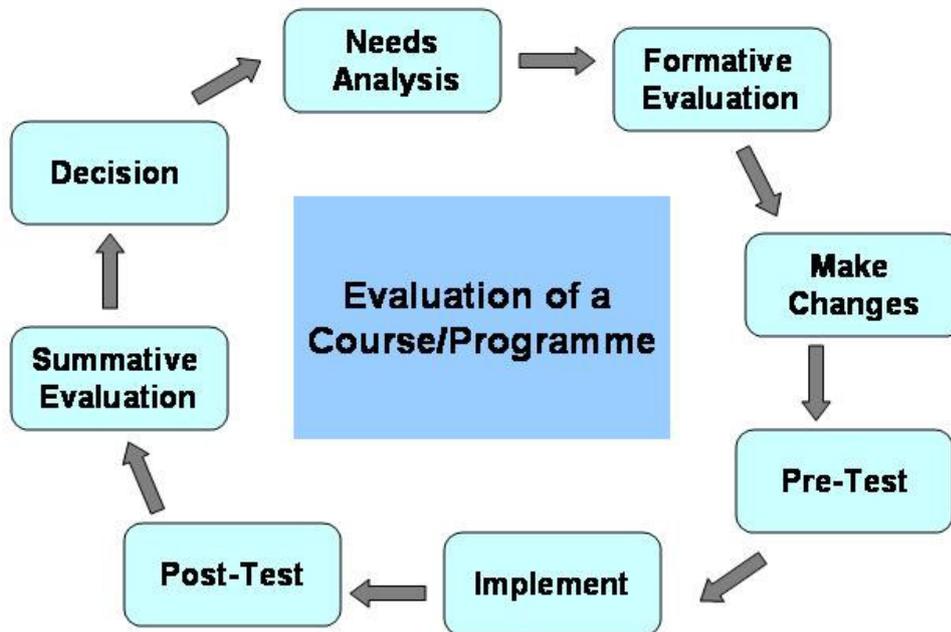
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Section 1

Concept of Programme Evaluation in Open and Distance Education



Objectives

After going through this section, you should be able to:

- Explain the concept of evaluation;
- Describe the features of a programme;
- Discuss the purposes of programme evaluation;
- Describe the process of programme evaluation.

Programme evaluation: An exposition

Programme evaluation is a management tool. It is a time-bound exercise that attempts to assess systematically and objectively the relevance, performance and success of ongoing and completed programmes and projects. Programmes must be evaluated to decide if the programmes are actually useful to the learners and whether they are achieving their stated objectives.

Programme evaluation is about carefully collecting information on a programme or some aspects of a programme in order to make necessary decisions. Programme evaluation can include different types of evaluation, such as needs assessment, accreditation, cost effectiveness and formative or summative

evaluations. Evaluation is undertaken to guide decision-makers and/or programme managers/coordinators, in order to provide information on, whether the underlying theories and assumptions used in programme development were valid; or to see which of them worked and which did not, and why. Evaluation commonly aims to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a programme or project. Before we discuss in detail the concept of *programme evaluation*, let us focus on the terms ‘Programme’ and ‘Evaluation’.

What is a Programme?

A programme is a set of activities designed to produce certain desired effects or outcomes to meet some set standard or norm, a recognized social need or to solve an identified social problem. For example, human resource development programmes aim at increasing the employability of their employee while at the same time meeting employers’ needs of getting workers trained in specific skills. Mental health programmes, for example, may be aimed at improving the social functioning of differently abled (mentally retarded) clients. Child welfare programmes, on the other hand, try to prevent child neglect, and reintegrate the broken families. Total literacy programme, may be aimed at providing education and developing the skill of reading and writing in illiterate population.

Programmes are, above all, the embodiment of “ideas” about *means of achieving desired educational and social objectives*. How ideas get implemented and what is their impact on society are the dual concerns of programme evaluation, as we see it.

A few key questions stated below may be raised by the programme manager and the evaluator offers his/her professional help in getting answers to these questions in order to enable the Manager to take the right decisions about the programme concerned. The key questions are:

- What are the outcomes of the programme?
- Is the programme being implemented in the prescribed manner?
- Is the target population being reached?
- Are they consistent with the objectives of the programmes?
- How could the programme be more effectively delivered to the client population?

A programme in the context of open and distance education refers to either a certificate, diploma or degree programme that consists of a few courses. For example, MBA Programme, BDP Programme etc, are the academic programmes

leading to certification. After some years, we usually would like to see how they are performing.

A programme has some common features. They are:

- Objectives
- Programme design
- Clients/participants
- Processes and
- Outcomes

In the context of Open Distance Education we have to look at the above in specific contexts and with specific meanings (Ref. Page 14) of this section.

Activity 1.1



Jot down at least five features of a programme.

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What is Evaluation?



Evaluation is the collection, analysis and interpretation of the information about any aspect of a programme of education and training, as part of a recognised process of judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcomes it may have (Thorpe, 1990:05).

The above definition of Thorpe (1990) emphasizes that evaluation is a very distinctive activity comprising data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting. In this context the scope of evaluation is not limited to checks on the overt goals of a programme but can encompass any of its aspect and their effects. Therefore, when we think of the scope of evaluation, we have to consider the following components.

What to evaluate in distance education context?

- Programme/course objectives.
- Course content – relevance, adequate body of knowledge, organization and presentation.
- Instructional design – instructional system, distance teaching and learning strategies, methodology, media mix and pedagogical issues.
- Support services – role of a facilitator, use of multi-media, library services, instructor availability and counselling sessions and quality of counseling and effectiveness of counseling.
- Assessment – Formative components (usefulness, degree of difficulty and time required, timeliness of feedback, readability level of print materials); Summative components (frequency, relevance, sufficient review, difficulty, feedback, usefulness, tests, lab activities practical record, field work, project work)
- Student achievement – adequacy, appropriateness, timeliness, student involvement.
- Student attitude – towards counselling sessions, submission of assignments, course materials or self-learning materials, examination system etc.
- Use of technology – appropriate medium, familiarity, concerns, problems, positive aspects, attitude toward technology.

Why Evaluate a Programme?

There can be many answers to this question. For example, in a distance teaching university, course materials of a programme are developed by a core group of individuals. Full time and part-time faculty members write different units of all courses. The adjunct faculty members are required to write the course materials as provided, and are allowed to enhance course content based on their experience and expertise. These are writers from outside the traditional education or training community, but have been brought into the process to assist in designing the curriculum or providing suggestions for programme and course content. Their involvement at many levels is important. In some instances it might be a political necessity, specifically to ensure future contributions to the institution. In many instances accrediting agencies establish criteria that must be satisfied in order for programmes to be universally recognized. The various ISO standards are an example of such recognition. For example, in the United States there are numerous professional accrediting agencies that ensure certain professional standards to determine whether or not they remain valid. Changes in standards must be well documented and ought to include contextual elements. So, a programme has to be evaluated for the following reasons:

- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of a programme;
- To inform decisions on operations, policy, or strategy related to ongoing or future programme interventions;
- To demonstrate accountability to decision-makers (donors and funding agencies of a programme);
- To contribute to the body of knowledge on what works and what does not work in a programme and why;
- To verify programme quality and management;
- To identify successful strategies for extension/expansion/replication;
- To modify unsuccessful strategies;
- To measure effects/benefits of programme and project interventions;
- To give stakeholders the opportunity to have a say in programme output and quality;
- To suggest improvement techniques related to future programme implementation.

Activity 1.2



List at least five major reasons for evaluating a programme.

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Before discussing who should evaluate educational programmes it is important to point out that programme evaluation provides guidance for improvement and development at a number of levels. They are:

- The current programme for current learners;
- The current programme for future learners;
- Future programmes for future learners;
- The course team;
- The policy makers, administrators and evaluators; and
- The institution.

Who should evaluate educational programmes?



A good programme evaluation in education is a *cooperative venture* from the planning stage to recording data, interpretation of data and dissemination of

results. The programme can be evaluated by internal individuals as well as individuals from outside. Obviously, the students should also evaluate a few specific components of a course. Those who have completed a course and those who did not complete the course, the counsellors, the course writers etc., will be involved. In this context, who, you might ask are the stakeholders or who should evaluate? Knox (2002:29) suggests that the administrators, accrediting agencies, course developers, and collaborators are the stakeholders. We may add faculty, counsellors/tutors and students, and in many cases parents to this list as well. It is not unreasonable to assume that sometimes other institutions and individuals must also be considered as stakeholders. When possible, the evaluator has a duty to have all stakeholders represented as part of any evaluation programme. Not all stakeholders, however, will be or should be represented at all times.

Administrators are stakeholders because they are responsible to ensure that the distance learning programme is managed well. Administrators are also responsible for ensuring the necessary resources such as infrastructure, support personnel, and support services to support the learning activities.

Activity 1.3



Jot down a few points pertaining to who should evaluate your programme.

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When to evaluate?

Evaluation is a formal activity and becomes more important because it is one of the few ways of finding out learners' reactions about the materials, counselling sessions and support services. So one of the important aspects to be considered is 'when to evaluate?'. It could be while developing a programme or after completion of a programme. In other words, evaluation can be either formative or summative, or a combination of both or a follow up evaluation. We have discussed about these approaches below.

Formative evaluation

Formative evaluation is an on-going process to be considered at all stages of instruction. This enables the instructor to improve the course as he/she proceeds and facilitates course and content adaptation. This type of evaluation identifies major gaps in the instructional plan or the need for minor adjustments.

Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation assesses overall effectiveness of the finished product or a course. It is used as a springboard in developing a revision plan. The feedback could be used as a baseline of information for designing a new plan, a programme, or a course.

Follow-up evaluation

Follow-up evaluation is possible if

- successful students are contacted after course
- we can survey to see if knowledge learned in a course has been helpful

How to evaluate?

Evaluation methodology comprises many tools and techniques. They are:

- Independent service (third party/external agencies)
 - Within the context of formative and summative evaluation, data may be collected through quantitative and qualitative methods
 - Structured questionnaire
 - Tests and inventories
 - Opinionnaire
 - Checklist and rating scale
 - Open-end questionnaire
 - Interview
 - Focused group discussion
 - Journals/diary/records
- (You could refer to section 3 (three) of this handbook for a detailed discussion).

Programme Evaluation in Open and Distance Education

We all consider open learning an innovative approach to education and training. We have to therefore check whether the aims and objectives of education and

training offered through distance mode are actually achieved, whether or not our expectations are justified in the process of transaction of curriculum and in the use of resources? Therefore, there is a need for evaluating the components associated with a distance education programme.

Part of the problem may lie in the way open learning has been defined at the general level as an approach to put right all the mistakes of conventional education and training which keep many people out of the system and make learning difficult for the few who get in. Open learning has so often been defined in terms of the desirable effects which are its goal, and which incorporate values it would be difficult to reject, like learner centredness, flexibility and autonomy. Programme evaluation is regarded as the process that leads to judgment about the worth, effectiveness and efficiency of an educational programme. In a given institutional context, the aims and objectives of the programmes need to be matched with the overall aims and objectives of the institution as well.

“Programme evaluation is necessarily concerned with the specific programme that has already taken place, i.e., it fairly deals with the retrospective findings. On the other hand, the results of such evaluation certainly feed to the long term decisions of the programme and looked this way, a programme evaluation obviously contributes to planning of the programme. Therefore, this is necessarily an on going process and there is certainly a starting point for both the first planning and the first evaluation of a programme. What we are concerned here with is suggesting and describing the first evaluation of a programme; both processes and products, which obviously contribute to certain aspects of planning of the programme. And, this is a continuous process”. (Panda, 1991)

Purposes of Evaluating Programmes in Distance Education

Some of the *purposes* for evaluating programmes in open and distance education context are as follows:

- measurement of *achievement of objectives* of a programme as a whole;
- judging the *effectiveness* of courses or materials;
- finding out what the *inputs* into a programme were – number of staff, money and time spent, number and content of contact hours, time spent by the learners, and so on;
- ‘mapping’ the *perceptions* of different participants – learners, tutors, trainers, managers etc;
- exploring the *comparative effectiveness* of different ways of providing the same service;

- finding out any *unintended effects* of a programme on learners, clients or staff of an institution of open learning;
- regular *feedback* on progress towards meeting programme goals;
- finding out the kinds of *help that learners need* at different stages;
- exploring the *factors or approaches that affect the outcomes* of a programme or service.

Activity 1.4



Sum up the purposes of evaluating a programme in distance education context.

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Evaluation of programmes is undertaken with two main purposes. They are: *accountability* and *improvement*. Accountability implies that if resources are spent on educational programmes, it is very much necessary to determine whether the programmes achieve what they are designed to achieve and whether resources are used to the greatest benefit. It is also true that no matter how well a programme seems to work, there is always room for improvement. Evaluation provides knowledge and understanding about the aspects of a programme that need changes and helps us to determine as to what sorts of changes are required. Programme evaluation can also be stated as a formal and systematic process of gathering and providing information about the worth of an educational programme to assist in decision making (Patnaik, 2002). Thus, it (programme evaluation) provides the necessary *feedback* to academics, administrators and policy makers to take appropriate decisions about their practices at the right time.

The following ten-step approach can enable a system, including an open and distance education system to opt for programme evaluation by directing attention to answer the following questions:

1. Which is the programme to be evaluated?
2. Why is the programme being evaluated?
3. How prepared are the people for evaluation?
4. What are the major issues and questions with which the evaluation has to deal?

5. Who will do what aspects of evaluation?
6. What are the resources needed for evaluation?
7. What types of data need to be collected?
8. How will the data be collected and analysed?
9. What will be the reporting procedure?
10. How will the report be implemented?

The Process of Programme Evaluation

The aim of evaluating a programme is to develop an appropriate and effective methodology for assessing the learning outcomes at different levels, examining distance learner's views about the quality of the courses or programmes and judging the impact that completing the programme has had on learners. Achieving the aims should allow judgements to be made about the quality of programme and the value and worth of the programmes. So, when a series of activities are carried out at different levels it provide information about the worth of an education programme to assist in decision-making.

The four levels (MacCuish, 2004) for evaluating an educational programmes are:

- Level 1: Document evaluation
- Level 2: Formative evaluation
- Level 3: Summative evaluation
- Level 4: Impact evaluation

Level 1: Document Evaluation This provides a descriptive record of the evaluation process. It facilitates the development of a benchmark system. It also provides the institution with a contextual record of all evaluation events. Document evaluation has two main purposes: documentation of programme and lesson development; and support of the other three levels of evaluation. Documentation of the programme development process, student records, block instruction, anecdotal records, and programme reviews both informal and formal, and evaluation of academic counsellors are all examples of this level of evaluation. This level of evaluation is compiled over a sustained period of time. Documenting changes in the courses is most important for the *revision* of a programme. As can be seen, without proper documentation the other three levels of evaluation cannot be undertaken.

Level 2: Formative Evaluation This is a systematic evaluation of distance teaching and learning for the purpose of improving the components associated in teaching and learning process at a distance. Formative evaluation includes reviewing of all instructional materials, including assessment tools and

techniques, prior to instruction to ensure accuracy of instructional content, ensuring all instructional objectives are covered through the instruction, monitoring student performance and learning strategies. For example, at Indira Gandhi National Open University, we have the process of informal peer reviewing the course materials while preparing the materials.

Level 3: Summative Evaluation This refers to the type of evaluation designed to measure the larger outcomes of the instruction. Summative evaluation tools are used to report a student's overall achievement or mastery of instructional objectives, assign marks or grades, predict success in related courses or on the job, provide feedback to students, instructors, and administrators; research on the effectiveness of the curriculum; etc.

Level 4: Impact Evaluation This focuses on how the learning programme has prepared the learner to contribute to the workplace or society. If the learner cannot make a difference once he or she has entered the work place or in the 'real' world, then the instruction has little value. Impact evaluation should be ongoing. It should commence approximately six months after a class has graduated or a programme completed (MacCuish, 2004). This form of evaluation includes surveys and questionnaires, formal evaluation research projects, analysis of incidence data (e.g. reduction in the number or dropouts, unsuccessful in a specific course etc.). The results of this form of evaluation can be used as a means to improve the curriculum, instructional content and practices, and the methods of assessment in each of the other phases of evaluation.

Activity 1.5 

Describe the uses of document evaluation.

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In this section we have focused upon the following issues. They are:

- 1) What is Programme evaluation?

Programme evaluation includes collection, analysis and interpretation of data and information for making judgments about the effectiveness/

efficiency of outcome/impact of a programme. (It may refer to pedagogical management and financial aspects).

2) Why evaluate a programme?

- Improving programmes implementation (through formative evaluation)
- Learning about the progress by making meaningful change (through organisational learning)
- To identify the status i.e. observed value compared to a standard
- To assess the impact/efficiency of the system (through output)
- To take decisions (provide feedback to adopt and/or modify)

3) Who are the stakeholders?

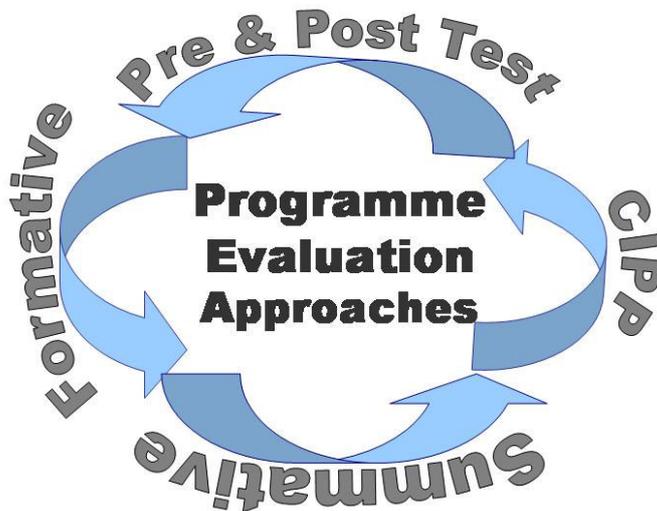
- Those who care for the programmes and their effectiveness (staff members).
- Those who influence decision and environment (funders, administration, management).
- Those who are intended to be beneficiaries (trainees/participants).
- Those who use the evaluation findings (academics/researchers).

At the end of this section we have presented a brief note pertaining to the process and levels of programme evaluation.

The process of programme evaluation has been discussed, focusing on achieving the aims to judge the quality of programmes as well as the value and worth of a programme. The four levels of evaluating an educational programme i.e. 1) document evaluation, 2) formative evaluation, 3) summative evaluation and 4) impact evaluation are also presented in this section.

Section 2

Approaches to Programme Evaluation



Objectives

After going through this section, you should be able to:

- Discuss the *formative approach* to programme evaluation;
- Describe the *summative approach* of programme evaluation;
- Explain the *pre-test and post-test approach* to programme evaluation;
- Discuss the *Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Model* of programme evaluation.

Programme evaluation is a process which can be utilized across a whole range of activities in an educational institution. There are different approaches to programme evaluation. These approaches help the evaluator to draw conclusions and give suggestions to decision makers. The different approaches to evaluation that we have listed below facilitate an evaluator's role. They provide a basis for evaluating a programme in an educational setting.

The approaches to programme evaluation are:

1. Formative approach
2. Summative approach
3. Pre-test and post-test approach
4. Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) approach

Formative Evaluation

The purpose of formative evaluation is to modify and *improve the quality* of the programmes while they are at the development stage and the result of the formative evaluation *feeds into decision making*. Formative evaluation is an ongoing process. It describes the process of collecting information or evidence to improve and refine a programme during its development phase. For example, for a training programme, formative evaluation is done during rather than after the training. It focuses on the design and operational components of a programme. Thus, the thrust of formative evaluation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses and to arrive at decisions regarding the use of appropriate alternatives for improving the programme to maximize strengths and reduce the weaknesses when the programme is on. In other words, formative evaluation is the systematic collection of information for the purpose of making informed decisions about designing and improving educational programmes. Programme or course coordinators should evaluate *how* and *why* the distance teaching programme is designed and developed. After implementation, many issues related to a programme could have changed. Depending on the results of such an investigation a decision could be taken about the relevance and appropriateness of a programme.

The evaluation should focus on models used for instructional design and course development. While designing a programme, the models used are behavioural, cognitive and constructivist, etc. Formative evaluation helps us to determine if the model currently being used is appropriate for a course/programme.

The purpose of formative evaluation is *not to measure the effectiveness* of a programme, but to *identify any changes it may require* which would improve the programme.

Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation usually aims at assessing *the effectiveness* of a programme on its completion. The intention of conducting summative evaluation may be either *reporting* or *validating* a course. The following questions may be considered while adopting a summative approach:

- What did the programme achieve?
- What lessons were learnt for the future?
- Is the kind of programme a model for use?
- How much did the programme cost?

In other words, in a course or programme, summative evaluation is used to *judge the quality* of distance teaching components or effectiveness of support system to see if they have worked as intended.

The evaluators or teachers or instructors may wish to evaluate a ‘bought in’ course or if they intend to modify or supplement those parts, which they consider inadequate for their learners, then, they would be carrying out a formative evaluation. If the course fell below the expected standard, whether technically or pedagogically or academically, then, it might be expected that the evaluator/instructor would decide not to use it at all. In other words, the evaluation would be transformed into summative evaluation (Calder, 1994).

Activity 2.1



Differentiate between formative and summative evaluation.

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Pre-test and Post-test Approach

In the previous sections we have discussed that evaluation is formative when it is used with the intention of developing or improving the functioning of an activity or the effectiveness of a component. Where the intention is judgment or conclusion about the merits and demerits of a course or programme, then, we focus on summative evaluation. In this section, we will consider the pretest - post test or experimental approach through which the students/trainees are tested before and after the programme is implemented. In this approach an experimental design (figure 2.1) is adopted to determine the effect of a programme. It involves

controlled comparison between the programme and other ‘treatments’ and may compare effectiveness of a programme for different types of learners.

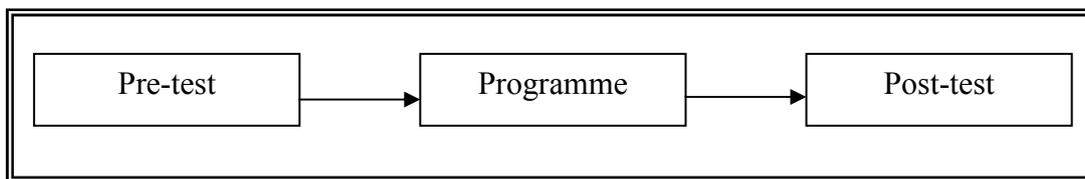


Figure 2.1: An Experimental Design

However, this approach does have limitations because of the problem of trying to control all the variables except for the experimental one. The other drawbacks of experimental approach are: (i) dropouts from the test group, possible effect of other variables, effects on the group of constant test (ii) pre-test and post-test evaluation is inadequate for elucidating complex problem areas and provides little effective input to the decision making process because observation, interviews with participants (students, trainees, counsellors and course writers and administrators) questionnaires and analysis of documents and background information are also essential to evaluate a programme. This kind of approach is concerned with description and interpretation rather than measurement and prediction. It may deal in detail with programme rationale, programme planning and programme operation.

Activity 2.2



Consider any programme of your institution and design a pre-test and post-test approach to evaluate the programme.

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The Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Approach

In this approach of programme evaluation, the processes are delineating, obtaining and providing information and making a decision about the worth and value/merits of a programme. Here, evaluation *facilitates intelligent judgments by decision makers*. This approach involves four stages. They are: *context, input, process and product* (Figure 2.2).

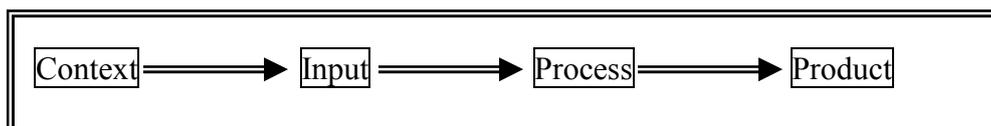


Figure 2.2: The CIPP Approach

- i) **The Study of Context:** For the evaluation of programmes, an evaluation of the context in which it is operating is essential. For example, if, a programme of IGNOU is to be evaluated, then, the context of IGNOU's overall policies, practices etc., have to be considered before going in for evaluation of a particular programme.

This stage deals with descriptive data about the programme objectives, intended outcomes and criterion measures. A few criteria are: access, relevance to needs and expectations, quality, learner outcomes, cost effectiveness, and impact.

- ii) **Input evaluation:** Deals with selected programme strategy.
- iii) **Process evaluation:** This stage deals with implementation of the programme procedures and strategies. (see. table. 2.1 given below).
- iv) **Product evaluation:** This stage deals with success of the programme (same as summative evaluation). (see. table. 2.1 given below).

Table 2.1: A conceptual model showing the components of CIPP evaluation

Context	Input	Process	Output
Descriptive data about the programme	The selected programme strategy	The implementation of the programme (procedure/ strategies)	The success of the programme (summative evaluation)
(What needs to be done?)	(What can be done?)	(What is being done?)	(What is the outcome?)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives of a programme or intended learning outcomes • Criterion measures or dimensions or variables for evaluating a programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning of a programme • Students'/clients' age, sex, attitude, experience, commitment etc. • Study/training material development • Training plan • Whole course print/audio/video/CD/internet • Assessment and evaluation components of a programme • Management of a programme • Monitoring plan • Infrastructure • Time • Financing/budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication strategies through print/audio/video/lecture/demonstrations/discussions • Distance learners interaction with materials • Evaluation processes • Support services • Time management, monitoring and decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in behaviour of distance learners/clients • Successful achievement, positive attitude, perception and skill development • Distance learners satisfaction • Promotion of staff/facility • Effectiveness of the entire system and sub system. • Relevance of the programme in the job market.
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The advantage of the CIPP approach is its comprehensiveness. This approach helps in guiding decision-making, providing records for accountability and promoting understanding of various components of a course/programme.

In this section, we have looked at some of the key approaches to evaluation, but in practice you may like to consider a specific approach depending on the particular aspect of a course/programme.

Activity 2.3



We have provided a few graphics pertaining to evaluating a programme. You may go through these diagrams and discuss them with your peer group and write about the utility of these steps in programme evaluation in your own context.

A.



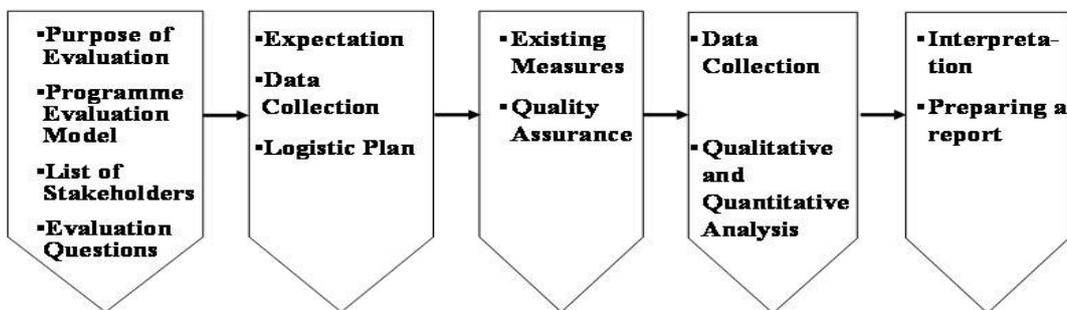
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B.



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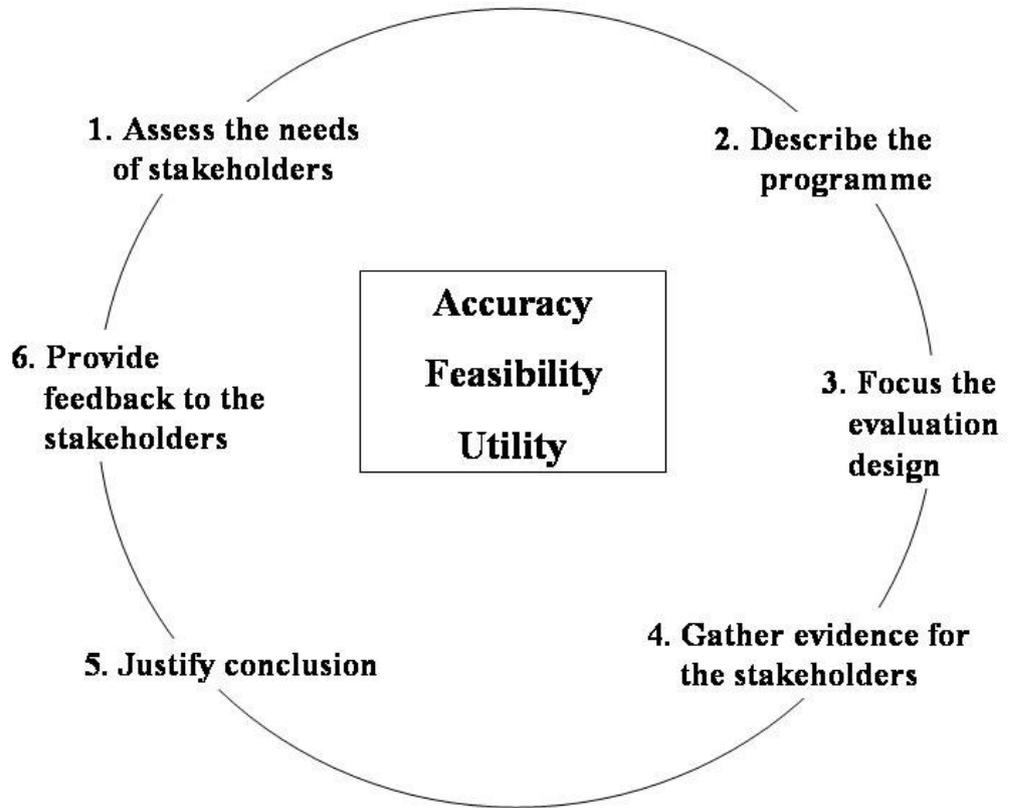
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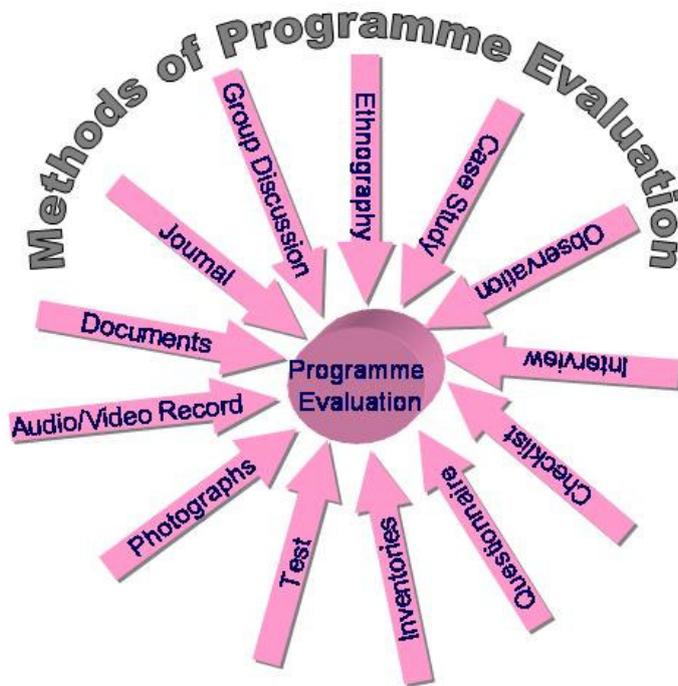
C.



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D.





Objectives

After going through this section, you should be able to:

- Describe the *various methods* of programme evaluation in the context of distance education;
- Discuss the *quantitative* and the *qualitative methods* for collecting data.

In section 1 of this handbook we have discussed the concept of programme evaluation, its importance and purpose in the context of open and distance education. This should help us gain insights into the meaning and need of programme evaluation. If you recall section 2 of this handbook we have touched upon a few approaches to evaluation. You may choose any or all of the approaches, depending on which aspects of a programme you want to evaluate and for what purpose. You may like to consider any approach or a specific approach depending on the particular aspects of a course or programme.

In this section, we will focus on the tools and methodologies that help us carry out the evaluation process. In this context, we emphasize the need for a well

designed *evaluation plan* which should focus on the key areas of a system. A well designed evaluation plan should focus on the following main areas:

- *Situation factors*, e.g. administrative climate, content of the course/ programme, student expectations and demands.
- *The teaching-learning process*: what actually happens during distance teaching.
- *Outcomes*; e.g. students experience, change in behaviour and performance.

Box 1

We have provided here an evaluation plan for organising group discussions in a training programme.

An Evaluation Plan

Purpose : Why evaluate?

Audiences : Who are the target group?

Issues : What questions should evaluation address?

Resources : What are the resources (money, human, physical) available for evaluation?

Evidence : What evidences should the evaluation collect?

Gathering Data: How is the data to be collected?

Reporting : How are the evaluation findings reported?

Activity 3.1



Prepare an evaluation plan for evaluating your courses or programmes.

(Kindly use a separate sheet of paper for this activity.)

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods of Programme Evaluation



1. Quantitative Methods

Quantitative method refers to describing data by numerical methods as figures, numbers or scores obtained by using different tools. The tools that are useful for collecting quantitative data for programme evaluation are:

1. Structured questionnaire
2. Tests and inventories

Structured questionnaire



A structured questionnaire is the most widely used tool for data collection in education and training. Data gathering through this tool is done as the respondents answer the questions or respond to a statement. It is used to get factual information. A structured questionnaire is normally given with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ type or multiple choice of responses to collect information. These are very easy and quick to answer. Through such questionnaires opinions, experiences and reflections concerning a programme are collected. Surveys of views, reaction and self-assessment also can be obtained through questionnaires.

The questionnaire is administered personally by the evaluator involving a group of individuals. Questionnaires can be mailed to individuals from whom response is desired but can not be contacted in person. But this kind of data gathering is highly criticised. A properly constructed and appropriately administered questionnaire is considered as a useful data gathering tool.

Opinionnaire



When we need opinions instead of facts, an opinionnaire is used. A programme evaluator has to take into consideration the profile of participants’ opinions (i.e. their feelings or beliefs) about a programme. With this tool, the students/ participants are asked about their feelings/reactions/ statements about a course/a programme.

Checklist and rating scale

Both checklist and rating scale are close-ended questions with multiple choices. In a checklist the respondent is asked to mark the chosen item and sometimes has to rank them (see Box 2). In a rating scale (see Box 3) the respondent has to rate the situation / material / individual / project by responding to multiple responses.

Box 2:		
Example of an item of checklist:		
Which of the following presentation techniques were used during your training? Put a (√) against the item..		
Demonstration	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentation by OHP	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lecture	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lecture-cum-discussion	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group activity	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer based teaching	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

Box 3:		
Example of an item of a rating scale:		
What is the quality of the training material provided to you?		
Not at all good	Average Standard	Very Good
1	2	3

Tests and inventories:

As data gathering devices, tests are instruments to describe and measure a sample of certain aspects of behaviour. Tests contain a fixed set of items and procedures for administering and scoring. Mostly tests yield the status or the changed status produced by a modified factor. We have different types of tests such as

diagnostic, formative and summative tests which can be administered to an individual or a group during the initial, intermediate and final stages of evaluation.

Several kinds of tests can be used for evaluating various components of a course/programme. They are as follows:

- achievement test
- aptitude test
- intelligence test
- creativity test
- achievement motivation test
- anxiety test

Depending upon the requirements of the evaluator i.e. which type of sample of behaviour he/she wants to measure, accordingly the type and kind of tests are chosen.

For example, the evaluator wants to measure the fluency, flexibility and originality of distance learners. So, he/she can use creativity test for this purpose. Inventories attempt to measure the typical behaviour of an individual in an ideal situation. They also try to measure the status of behaviour/changed status due to modifying factors during a programme.

The following are the inventories which can be used for evaluation of the effect of a course/programme on distance learners.

- interest inventory
- personality inventory
- attitude scale

The achievement test, aptitude test, intelligence test, anxiety test, creativity test and some of the inventories can be used during pre and post-test to see the effect of the course or programme on the learners.

The test of creativity, achievement motivation, interest inventory etc., can be used to see the effect of a course. Many other instruments such as commitment scale, perception scale, self concept scale, value scale and investment scale can be used for evaluation of a programme.

2. Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods of evaluation came into existence as a result of some of the criticisms of quantitative method. Qualitative methods permit the evaluators to study cases/ events/issues in depth and in detail. Therefore, in qualitative methods preference is given to qualitative data – *words rather than numbers* which help in-depth understanding of the individuals and situations. In the case of qualitative data, importance is given to subjective experience of individuals i.e. the evaluator tries to understand what is unique and particular to the individual or the situation rather than what is general (Patnaik, 1997).

Qualitative evaluation data begins as raw and descriptive information about courses and the learners enrolled in the programmes. The evaluator visits a field to collect first-hand observation data pertaining to programme activities, sometimes even engages him/herself as a ‘participant observer’. The evaluator talks to the participants/learners and staff/trainers about their experiences and perceptions. He/she also *examines records and documents*.

A typical qualitative evaluation report provides the following:

- Detailed description of the programme implementation
- Analysis of programme processes
- Description about participants/learners and their way of participation in the programme
- Description of how the programme has influenced/affected participants/learners.
- Presentation of observed changes/outcomes/impact of the programme (as reported by learners/participants/trainers/staff, funder etc.).

In qualitative method the data can be obtained through:

1. Open-ended questionnaire
2. Interview
3. Observation
4. Case study
5. Focused group discussion
6. Journal/Diary/Log
7. Records/Documents
8. Audio/Video Recording and Photographs

Open-ended questionnaire

The open-ended responses to a questionnaire represent the most elementary form of qualitative data. The narrative comments from open-ended questions are meant to provide a form for elaboration, explanation, meanings and new ideas. The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended responses permits the evaluator to understand and capture the perspective of programme participants. The open-ended questions (see Box 4) of the questionnaire reveal the learner's level of emotion, their reaction, experience, perceptions and feelings about the counselling sessions/counsellors/study materials/teaching methodology.

Box 4:

Example of an open-ended question:

Please give any personal comments you would like to provide about the self-learning materials (print) of PGDDE.

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Interview

An interview is a conversation with a purpose. The interview may be completely structured in which interviewer (trainer/evaluator) may use a questionnaire which he/she take the learners/trainees/participants through, item by item or it may be semi-structured based on some key questions. In this, the learner/trainee/participant is encouraged to elaborate on anything that especially concerns him/her related to programme. Interviews can also be held over telephone, if the evaluator can not meet the learners/trainees/participants face-to-face. An evaluator who uses qualitative analysis tries to understand the knowledge, perception and feeling of learners/trainees/participants of a programme through in-depth and intensive interviewing. The interview helps in gathering high quality information from trainees/learners which reveals experiences with programme activities and programme impact.

The ideal interview for qualitative data is normally semi-structured. During the interview, a protocol is followed, allowing maximum flexibility during the process. Keeping in mind the topic of an interview, two or three leading questions are prepared before the interview. These questions help to open up the topic. Those leading questions are followed by a list of questions to continue the process of an interview.

In an interview process the evaluator acts as a facilitator in the beginning. He/she provides a supportive/safe environment and helps learners/trainees to explore issues with their own ideas and in their own words. He/she actively listens to what the interviewee (learner) talks about the programme.

Observation

Though what people say is a major source of qualitative data, some times the data obtained through interviews has limitations. Even if people say many things about a programme, the complexities of the programme situations are not understood fully. To overcome these lapses, direct participation in and observation of the programme by the evaluator is considered as one of the best methods.

The data obtained through observation should always be in-depth and detail. It must be highly descriptive or sufficiently descriptive so that the other person who reads it can understand what occurred during the programme and how it occurred.

The description of the observation must be accurate, based on facts and without any irrelevance. The validity of observational data depends on the skill and competence of an observer (evaluator) as he/she is the instrument for observation.

Case study

A case study is undertaken by an evaluator when he/she wants to understand a situation/an individual/a social group/a community/a programme in more detail or in depth. The data gathered for case studies is through observation, interview, opinionnaires, questionnaires, tests, inventories and records. For example, a case study of a distance learner who is staying in a remote area can be taken up during programme evaluation.

Focus group discussion

Focus group discussion is a technique in which a group of people (trainees/students) explore a question or issue identified by the evaluator/ trainer.

During the discussion the evaluator discovers the feelings and opinions of trainees about the given problem and other matters.

Focus group discussion provides qualitative data, which is more significant and can't be analysed through quantitative technique. Focus group discussion can also be audio/video recorded and later transcribed and analysed.

Journals/diaries and logs

Sometimes student/trainees and/or trainers keep or are asked to keep a precise and factual record about the activities of everyday (morning and evening) related to teaching, learning and assessment. These are called *logs*.

When the record is prepared with some comments and reflections it is called a 'diary' and when the record is associated with analytical or evaluative thinking, with implications of events, then, it is called a 'journal'.

In all the three cases the learners/trainees/trainer record their actions, thoughts and feelings.

The journals/diaries/logs can be kept at three different events. They are:

- Pre-event i.e. before the group has met
- During event i.e. record impressions and feelings as the programme goes on
- After-event i.e. record how the experience of the programme was.

Journals/diaries/logs help in learning more about the programme. Some of the information which could be collected during the programme can be separated and responded as developmental activity (formative evaluation). These records can also be used at the end of the programme (summative evaluation) for final judgement about its quality.

Records and documents

The programme records and documents such as agenda of meetings, time tables, syllabus, written reports/prospectus, news letters of institutions etc. can be used to gather data/information for qualitative analysis.

Audio-video recording and photographs

Programme evaluation is aimed at and achieves a range of goals. A more ambitious and even more difficult goal is understanding the clientele of a programme. A video programme helps to record the thoughts/expressions of clientele groups. In other words video provides a vehicle for interpretation and reinterpretation of the events and allows for interactive feedback. The audio recording programmes and photographs are also used for collecting qualitative data.

From the above discussion we could note that there are a variety of methods for evaluating a programme. Each method of programme evaluation has a corresponding way or means of preserving and presenting the information. So, an evaluator has to choose an appropriate method as a tool for collecting information.

Activity 3.2

Discuss the differences between a journal, a diary and a log.

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Section 4

Evaluating Open and Distance Education Components

Evaluating Distance Education Components



Objectives

After going through this section, you should be able to:

- Describe the process involved in the assessment of distance teaching components.
- Explain the process of assessment of admissions and entrance tests, student learning and course evaluation etc.
- Describe the evaluation process of on-line technologies.

In the previous section we have discussed the methods and tools of programme evaluation. In this section, we have selected a few key areas, suitable for programme evaluation. Here, you will find how evaluation practices are carried out in these key areas in open and distance education systems.

Evaluation of Admission to a Course/Programme

The issues of distance education policies and the calls for accountability point towards the need for greater attention to methods of student assessment. One of the ways to improve distance teaching is through adopting various ways of testing. Mere collection of information about the distance learner does not mean that this information is of sufficient value to use in our decisions about courses/

programmes/learners: the quality of information is vital. One of the methods of student assessment for registering in a course or programme is an entrance test.

Flexible course entry means student admittance is not dependent upon specific qualifications. However, a few courses/programmes may require certain level of expertise, because of their content-demands, therefore, an entrance test for admission to a programme is a necessity. Normally, the entrance tests assess a prospective student's general awareness about the situation he/she lives in, his/her language competence and his/her skills at numeral and analytical abilities. Success at such tests does not qualify a candidate for any kind of certification. Instead, achieving a predetermined minimum norm at such tests entitles the candidate to seek admission into the programme for which the entrance test is held. The objective is to simply help a distance learner get admission to a programme offered by an open and distance education institution. For example, IGNOU conducts the entrance examinations for MBA and B.Ed. programmes, but not for other programmes.

Assessment of Student Performance

Students often feel that they can learn by remembering the required knowledge and practicing the required skills to get minimum marks. Indeed, the students who have properly understood the principles involved and try to think problems through, may find themselves at a disadvantage in the limited time allowed in an examination. There seem to be good reasons, therefore, to test students' understanding, knowledge and skills with different kinds of tests.

Knowledge and skills expected of students can usually be identified quite easily against fixed performance "objectives". The assessment test should assess student performance against these objectives. Objective type questions can efficiently test certain types of knowledge and tasks related to skills, such as numeracy, literacy, communication and interpersonal skills. These questions can be devised without much difficulty. Testing the affective domain is, however, more difficult because the level of understanding and the feelings cannot be inferred from a learner's performance with certainty. Due to this reason, some conduct oral examinations after completing a project work or a practical/laboratory work. These type of tests can be designed to test understanding and application of knowledge, though they are very time consuming.

Assessment Process at IGNOU

Assessment is a matter of judgment, not simply of computation. Marks, grades and percentages should not be treated as absolute values but as symbols to be used by evaluators to communicate their judgment of different aspects of a student's performance. The purpose of assessment is to enable distance learners to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programmes or courses of study and that they have achieved the standard required for the award of a degree/certificate.

Assessment helps to determine knowledge, ability, competence and experience in distance learning settings. These assessment activities range from informal questioning during tutorials, counselling or working on in-text questions to formal assessment such as continuous assessment, term-end examination, project work, field visits, case studies, practical work etc.

At IGNOU student evaluation takes place continuously. A distance learner while working through a course is expected to work out the self-assessment questions. He/she submits assignments and receives the tutor comments and grades/marks. He/she then appears in the term-end examination. You can note that IGNOU has a three-tier system of evaluation of learner performance. These are:

- Self-assessment (not graded)
- Assignments (awarded grades/marks)
- Term-end examination (grades/marks)

Self-assessment

The first component of student assessment comprises answering in-text questions/check your progress questions provided in the course materials which are self-instructional in nature. A distance learner is expected to work on these in-text questions on their own and having worked on a question the learners look for *reinforcement* in the answers provided in the materials themselves. These are the questions or exercises which do not carry any weight for passing the examination. The responses to these questions are not to be sent to the university or any study center for evaluation. This component is called *self-assessment*. In other words, we can say that the process of self-assessment serves the purpose of *formative evaluation*. In this process the learner is provided with tools to assess the learning processes he/she has been engaged in. A learner does have an important role in the evaluation process not only as a provider of feedback but also as an evaluator of their own learning.

Evaluation can be more effectively conducted by creating a specific opportunity for the learners to reflect on their reasons for learning, what they are achieving out of learning and where they want to go next.

Continuous Assessment: Assignments

The second component of student assessment is operated through assignments. Assignments form a part of the total evaluation of the students' progress and provide the student feedback on how well he/she is progressing throughout the course. Students are expected to work on assignments sent along with the self-instructional materials. These assignments demand written responses which are evaluated by the distance education institutions. These assignment-responses are commented upon and/are also graded with a view to helping the students improve their performance and also to learn about the drawbacks or weaknesses of their responses. The comments are expected to be elaborate and of teaching type. Thus, besides being a vehicle for two-way communication, assignments serve as tools for assessment of student performance. In other words, assignments are used for two purposes. They at one and the same time serve the purpose of (a) *formative* evaluation and also the purpose of (b) *summative* evaluation. The grades or marks scored in assignments constitute a component of the overall score a student acquires in a course. This component is called 'continuous assessment'.

Term-end Examination

In open and distance education institutions the measurement of whether adequate learning has taken place is usually left to formal examinations and continuous assessment systems. The overall student assessment is based on the term-end examination which in the case of IGNOU is a three-hour written examination. At IGNOU the term-end examinations for various courses/programmes are held in the months of June and December every year. Students are free to appear at any of these examinations (June/December) either for specific courses or for whole programmes, provided that they complete the minimum period of study and the required number of assignments. This component serves the purpose of *summative evaluation*.

Formative assessment is possible by ensuring that each assignment contains plenty of opportunities for learners to receive detailed, positive and timely feedback, with lots of advice on how to improve. This not only informs distance learners' activities but also enables them to develop continuously and to achieve

better results. Self-evaluation where they are asked to make a review of their own studies, they learn a lot about the processes of assessment and learning and this gives them insights into ways of improving their work.

Course Evaluation

Quality control in distance education frequently centres upon the review, evaluation and subsequent redesign of distance learning materials. The evaluation of distance learning materials is an umbrella term which encompasses evaluation of a single course or whole courses or a programme(s), or curriculum. The aim of course evaluation is to identify whether a course is *well managed*, *well presented* and *up to date*. When undertaken periodically, evaluation helps statements to be made about the appropriateness, worth, coherence and relative balance of the learning situations provided in relation to their intended outcomes. The aim of course evaluation is to improve the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and learning that takes place (Koul, 1991).

Reasons for course evaluation

It is worth noting that courses are designed and developed under ideal/lab conditions. This has to be improved for real-study conditions of a distance learner. The reason for this is that investigations into the behaviour of human beings under quasi-experimental conditions yield only limited information about real-life conditions. For this reason, it seems absolutely necessary to evaluate course materials under real-study conditions, because only then will its true value become clear.

For evaluation of the effectiveness of the whole course, we need to collect information from —

- Students
- Course writers
- Buyers/users/employers
- Other stakeholders

For evaluating a course we need feedback/information from different audiences and we have to use various tools and techniques to collect the feedback. Now let us discuss the approaches in the context of course evaluation.

Formative evaluation: This approach refers to the process of evaluating the courses to provide feedback and information that can be used during course development. This can be conducted in the following two ways:

- i) Critical commenting
- ii) Developmental testing

Critical commenting includes reviewing of course design, course objectives, learning experiences, instructional materials, student assessment, etc, by subject specialists, instructional designers, teaching technology experts and psychologists. This requires a clear framework against which feedback is sought. Further, in open/distance education context peer review of draft materials is a common process. At an informal level this may simply involve one or more colleagues reading or looking at draft materials and providing comments in terms of the suitability of content, the style of presentation and so on. On the other hand, arrangements may be made for systematic critical commenting, with tutors or course writers reviewing the materials prepared by others working on the same course or programme. The reactions of colleagues can also be augmented by adopting the more formal procedure of collecting data with the help of a questionnaire or inviting one or more experts in the field to act as assessors to comment on the draft materials or both.

The aim of **developmental testing** is to get students to work through the materials while they are in draft form in order to identify problems related to:

- Clarity of aims and objectives;
- Sequencing and logical arrangement of the content ;
- Retention of interest;
- Comprehension;
- Difficulty level;
- Work load;
- Feasibility of student activity.

Developmental testing takes place during the preparation phase and involves trying out draft teaching materials with students. The feedback obtained is used to guide and inform course writers' revisions of materials before they are committed to print or tape. Such testing may range from a fairly informal student try out of a single unit to an elaborate procedure for testing draft materials for a whole course of instruction.

The use of review of learning experiences of the learners at the developmental stage of a course is very helpful in itself and it is a way of getting learners to identify their own problems as well as any weakness in the course. Feedback questions with tutorial support could be used to improve the learning conditions and to make changes for the benefit of prospective learners.

In the conventional/face-to-face provisions, a classroom teacher receives a whole range of informal feedback from students about the relevance and quality of a course. The attendance of the students at the tutorials, the enthusiasm and knowledge they display in their oral, practical and written work, their comments to the teacher and their success in assessment will all combine to give the teacher a great deal of information about the learning effectiveness of the course. However, with open distance learning, it is likely that there may be little or no direct contact between the course designers, the course providers and the distance learners. Course feedback may be the main, if not the only channel of communication between the students and those who carry the responsibility for their distance teaching. In effect, course evaluation at the presentation stage has to act as the students' voice. At the same time, there may also be support staff working with the students who will have their own views on the learning effectiveness of the course and on the role they are expected to undertake.

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

The evaluation of distance teaching materials provide information that can be used during the process of developing or preparing materials – formative evaluation procedures. Information about how well the 'finished' instruction has worked in normal use refers to summative evaluation procedures.

Evaluation of instructional materials comprises the following aspects:

- Didactic aspects : Suitability of materials for self-study, degree of difficulty, interest and clarity of texts, graphic presentation, audio-video programmes, etc.
- Scientific aspects : A balanced presentation of varied scientific approaches, updating of materials, relevant bibliography, research studies, etc.

Nevertheless, these criteria are to some extent abstract. While evaluating instructional materials it is essential to examine a "live course" in order to assess the effect it has upon students. Data therefore should be periodically collected with regard to all course components and made available to course teams.

For the evaluation of instructional materials, we may have any one or more of the following approaches of evaluation:

- Piloting
- Special evaluation
- Routine evaluation

Piloting: In this approach, the materials are tried out with the first batch of students and revisions brought out subsequently. This is a well known approach and very often the management takes to it almost without giving any thought to its utility in relation to its cost. There are also reasons for not adopting this approach for each and every self-learning material.

- It is not advisable, as far as educational *ethics* is concerned, to use the first batch of students as guinea pigs.
- Financial as well as human resources may or may not be adequate for conducting piloting and then provide an improved course to the second batch of students.
- Operationally, bringing a revision immediately after the first launch affects distribution and support services adversely.
- The cost of course design and rate of course production also get adversely affected by this approach.

Special evaluation: This should come in whenever needed and proposed as a project for which the resources are requested for or they are available from a source other than the institution. Obviously, such evaluation will need to have a purpose and therefore, resources should be available for fulfilling the purpose. Such evaluation is obviously not a matter of routine and so it has to be selective.

Two main considerations for opting for special evaluation of instructional materials are:

- In case of unusual and inexplicable poor performance of students including adverse reaction by students/counsellors and academics about the materials.
- In cases when an external funding agency asks for such evaluation.

Routine evaluation: Routine evaluation is best done as a part of management process. This approach keeps the faculty/schools in constant touch with the students and the materials, resulting in appropriate and timely feedback to the Schools of Studies, course writers and academic counsellors. It will eventually feed into the process of course maintenance which can be carried out through supplementary materials without wasting resources. In addition to instructional materials, assignments and the term-end examination question papers are also evaluated. The data collected through this approach may provide reliable and valid data for evaluating self-learning materials.

Evaluation of Print Materials

Print material is utilised well in distance education courses as this form of technology is the cheapest and most accessible to students in our country. It is also the only form of technology that can reach a wider range of learners and especially those in the very remote areas. Print medium remains by far the most widely used medium for tertiary level distance education. These are made up of many textual components and design features with psychological inputs. Various research studies have been conducted on how the presentation of texts (both content and format) for distance education could be improved by seeking opinion from theoreticians, practitioners, psychologists, distance learners and other users so that the texts could be effective from a pedagogical point of view.

You may note that by its very nature, distance education print materials are subject to re-drafting and updating with the aim of improving their usability and textual design. We have different types of tools for evaluating this specific medium. Many tools for evaluating this medium include attitude scale, rating scale, checklists (an example of a *checklist* for evaluating the self-learning print materials is provided below), questionnaires, interview schedules and tests. We can also conduct the quasi-experimental design (pre-test/post-test evaluation and follow-up evaluation) for evaluating the materials.

It is essential to know what questions to be asked during evaluation to ensure that the print materials will serve the purpose well. While designing learning materials of your own or adapting packages that are already available, it is important to keep in mind a few points such as the ways in which the materials are intended to function, and how students will react to them. We have presented below a few questions which can be applied to judge the values of self-learning print materials. These questions can be clustered under major sub-headings as follows:

- Structure and layout
- Access devices
- Objectives or statements of intended learning outcomes
- Introduction
- The content material
- Diagrams, charts, tables, graphs, illustrations etc.
- Self-assessment questions, in-text questions and activities
- Responses to self-assessment questions
- Summaries or reviews

While evaluating the print materials the course writer/editor/external or internal evaluator may refer to the following questions to know the expected effect (what ought to be learnt by a distance learner).

A checklist for evaluating the self-learning print materials

- *Structure and layout*
 - i) Is the material visually attractive?
 - ii) Does the material include the requisite features of self-instruction, such as self-directed, self-motivating, self-learning, active-learning, individualized tutoring, updated content and self-paced learning?
 - iii) Is there sufficient blank/white space to jot down teaching points or notes, answer self-assessment questions posed by the learning materials and do calculations and exercises?
 - iv) Is it easy for learners to find their way backwards and forwards with the help of icons and signposts?

- *Access Devices*
 - i) Is the title clear?
 - ii) Is the concept map appropriate?
 - iii) Is the content easily accessible?
 - iv) Are all the components of self-learning materials embedded in the text?

- *Objectives of statements of intended learning outcomes*
 - i) Are the objectives stated in behavioural and measurable terms?
 - ii) Is there clear indication of any pre-requisite knowledge or skills?
 - iii) Do the objectives presented cover the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains?

- *Introduction*
 - i) Is each unit/section introduced in an interesting and stimulating way?
 - ii) Are three essential components (thematic, structural and study guide) available at the beginning?

- *Diagrams, charts, tables, graphs and illustrations*
 - i) Is each diagram/chart/table/graph self-explanatory?
 - ii) Do the learners know what to do with each illustration?
 - iii) 'A sketch can be more useful than 1000 words'. Is the material sufficiently illustrated with the help of pictures?

- *Content material*
 - i) Is it readable, fluent, simple and unambiguous?
 - ii) Is the content relevant and adequate?
 - iii) Is it presented in personalised style using words such as ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘we’ etc.
 - iv) Is the material broken up into manageable chunks?
 - v) Is the material prepared for all types of learners (good/average/below average) and as per the needs of these learners?
 - vi) Will the learners enjoy reading the text?

- *Summary or review*
 - i) Are there clear and useful summaries or reviews?
 - ii) Do the summaries or reviews provide useful ways for students to revise the material quickly and frequently?

(Source: ES-312, Block-03, Preparation of Texts pgs 72 & 73)

While evaluating the self-learning print materials, the following *criteria* should be considered. They are:

- Appropriate for the level of the target group
- Pertinent to the curriculum and the objectives of the programme
- Content adequacy and accuracy
- Appropriate SLM format (self contained, self motivated, etc.)
- Acceptable literacy style
- Cost effective

Electronic Materials

Some instructional objectives, especially those concerned with acquiring skills and/or attitudes can't be realized by written materials alone. For achieving skill oriented objectives, audio and video programmes and computer-based electronic materials could be used. Here, we focus upon the audio broadcast and computer-based electronic materials, while keeping matters such as functionality, costs, feasibility and compatibility with the principles of distance education constantly in mind. Audio tapes are a simple, unsophisticated medium. In terms of accessibility the audio tape runs almost equal to print-based materials. Despite its inherent simplicity and the ubiquitous availability of cassette players, audio tapes are a much under-used medium for the delivery of educational materials. (ES-316, Block-05 Evaluation in Distance Education, 1997).

While evaluating the audiotapes, the following *criteria* should be considered.

- i) Simplicity – easy to use, can be played, paused and stopped for a period.
- ii) Flexibility – can complement a variety of other media.
- iii) User control – the learner can use whenever she/he needs.
- iv) Humanizing tutor – student relationship.
- v) Stimulating and motivating learners by using sense organ (ear) and variations in voice.
- vi) Time

Depending on the above criteria, audio cassettes can be pilot tested with the help of a questionnaire administered to the tutors and students.

The various forms of television-based materials used for distance teaching are: broadcast, cable, satellite, video tape, video disc etc. A video programme is a potentially powerful component because it has the capacity to integrate the two most important senses in information transfer: visual and aural. Broadcast television has the potential of reaching mass audiences. The video tape medium allows storage of information for individual, group or mass audience. These can be used or repeated as often as required. Combinations of video tape, satellite, microwave, and cable technologies allow targeting of specialized groups and audiences, and the possibility of two-way communication and even interactive networks.

While evaluating video programmes the following *criteria* should be considered:

- i) relevance,
- ii) picture quality,
- iii) efficiency of operation,
- iv) access,
- v) correctness,
- vi) reliability,
- vii) validity,
- viii) maintenance,
- ix) life-span,
- x) documentation and,
- xi) user-friendliness.

Three main areas considered for evaluation of computer-assisted learning (CAL) are:

- ease of use (user evaluation)
- programme performance (functional evaluation)
- accuracy, clarity and depth of evaluation (content evaluation).

The major purpose of user evaluation is to determine whether or not the interfaces are consistent and easy to use. Functional evaluation consists of determining whether or not the programmes are performed as specified. The evaluation of content will ensure accuracy and determine whether or not students are able to meet the objectives.

Student Support Services



The student support services provided to distance learners is an aggregate of the organisation of distance teaching learning processes to enable him/her to acquire learning skills. This also includes individual tutoring and group tutoring, counselling, contact programmes, two-way communication between the learners and tutors. The evaluation of tutoring and counselling will help improve the support services and the course design and thus will help to meet the needs of distance learners.

While evaluating student support services we seek answers to the following questions:

- Do these services cater to the information needs of a distance learner promptly, adequately and convincingly?
- Do these services provide for advice at pre-course, on-course and post-course stages adequately and effectively?
- Do these services provide for academic counselling adequately and conveniently? This includes the effectiveness of tutors with regard to their work on assignment responses and face-to-face situations.
- Are these services easily accessible?
- Are the staff members involved in these services attitudinally tuned to the kind of work assigned to them?
- How do the students rate the support services?

- Do the support services make a pedagogically rational use of various media in operation?
- Do the support services help the learners get a good score in the examination?

These questions pertaining to evaluation of student support services involve a number of variables. These variables are:

- i) Coordinators, academic counselors, facilitators, and students.
- ii) Geographical situations such as towns, remote areas, rural areas etc.
- iii) Pedagogical factors such as teaching and learning techniques, (discussion, explanation, group presentation, demonstration, question and answer technique, clarifying the difficult concepts) counselling, advising etc.
- iv) Physical resources such as study centres, electricity, transport etc.

The above discussion gives us an idea that evaluation of support services is a complex area and so, should be dealt with carefully.

As you know, in most forms of distance learning, face-to-face tuition has a voluntary aspect. It is provided with the assumption that learners should use them. But do they, in fact use it, and for how long and how often? Whether the facilities are adequate? Is it for better learning? Do the arrangements match learner convenience? These are important questions, particularly for providers where tutorial attendance is not made compulsory in most of the programmes.

Evaluation of face-to-face tuition is essential for two main purposes: first, to ascertain the nature and distribution across the year of tutorial and counselling tasks; second, to provide indicators for its effectiveness as a medium for teaching and learner support. In this case, the attendance serves as indicators. This requires the cooperation of learners, clerical staff and tutors depending on the system. Monitoring attendance can help us know how often students have used the session. This is vital for organizing tutorial sessions.

The role/task of a tutor/counselor in open and distance learning is to:

- inform, advise and counsel students
- meet students in face-to-face situations for a number of sessions during an academic year
- to assess assignment responses
- to help distance learners learn to learn

Correspondingly, evaluating the tutoring/counselling sessions involves:

- Understanding the nature of communication between academic counsellors and the students – through letters/telephone calls/or in face-to-face situation and during counselling sessions.
- Assessing the quality of their comments on assignment responses.
- Evaluating the reliability and validity of the assessment of assignment-responses.
- Analysing the turn around rate of assessed assignment responses.

As far as face-to-face counselling sessions are concerned, we evaluate academic counsellors’ competencies, clarity of presentation and handling of discussions, punctuality, regularity, nature of rapport with students, quality of the conduct of sessions, motivation or enthusiasm and students’ satisfaction.

For example, we would like to explore the value of tuition and quality of the role of the tutor in general. For this purpose, we can design a questionnaire or an attitude scale (see table 4.1) and students can be asked to respond to a very wide range of statements both about the course and about their experience in the tutoring sessions. For this we can develop a 5 point attitude scale as given below:

Table 4.1: Evaluating the role of a tutor – by a distance learner

Attitude Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. A good tutor can make a course more interesting					
2. Some aspects of most courses can only be taught effectively on a face-to-face basis					
3. If the amount of tutor support reduced it would adversely affect my ability to cope with open university studies					
4. Without the help of a tutor I would probably have dropped out from at least one course that I stuck with.					

Distance education practitioners turn to evaluation of counselling to provide clues about the need for counselling, perhaps more realistically, evidence of the demand for it, which can inform decisions about how best to provide it. Thus, the major issues in evaluating counselling sessions are:

- How much is counselling used and by how many learners?
- Should tutors also offer counselling or should there be a separate counsellor?
- How well do part-time staff counsellors as well as full-time staff perform these functions effectively? What training do they need?
- Is it possible to counsel a distance learner using telephone or written communication or both?

Two-way communication

Tutoring and counselling and communication through assignment-responses facilitate personal interaction between a tutor and a distance learner. Tutor comments (written on assignment responses) provide feedback to students about their own progress. Although grades awarded on assignment responses are very important to the learner, the purpose of the assignments includes the assessment of the student's progress in a course. Tutor comments are thus a vehicle for two-way communication between a distance learner and tutor. In a distance teaching context, monitoring of tutor comments requires that assignment responses already evaluated by a tutor may be assessed by a different person. A particular percentage of evaluated assignment responses may be used for this purpose.

The reliability and validity of the assessment of assignment-responses: The speed with which tutors mark and return assignments is not the only important issue. There is also the issue of reliability and validity in awarding grades. In the present case, we are concerned with how truthfully an assignment question measures what it purports to measure. We know that reliability is a pre-requisite of validity that is to be valid a test must be reliable. Reliability controls validity. Some of the most effective measures for improving the reliability, however, revolve around opportunities for tutors to discuss their expectations together, the marking process. (ES-316, Block-05, Evaluation in Distance Education, 1997, page 52).

The turn around rate of assessed assignment responses: In this process, we evaluate how quickly does the learner get back an assignment, after posting or handling in, and how much time is taken by the tutor in marking. Many distance learners mail/submit their assignment responses direct to the institution. The

institution knows and records, therefore, when the tutor should have received what, and can 'chase' late returns, if there are any. However, when the student number is more, it does pose operational problems.

Evaluation of Staff Development

In a staff development programme, we generally evaluate two things: learning and performance. Although these two components are related, each need to be considered separately. If you are not clear even at the start of the programme about what you intend to find out from evaluating each area, it is impossible for you to get this information when the staff development programme ends. Since, evaluation deals with change, you will need to determine the distance education practitioners' current level of performance. In this way, you will be provided with information about what has changed and what changes you can expect when the trainee returns to his/her work place. (ES-316, Block-05, Evaluation in Distance Education, 1997).

A staff development programme delivered through a distance mode should have specific objective. These are stated as training objectives, but a programme coordinator is more concerned with anticipated changes in performance than with whether the training objectives have been met. This being the case, the practice in staff development programme is that the objectives are stated in terms of change in performance. One should not, however, ignore the learning aspects, as without this the performance cannot be expected to change much. Various methods for identifying training needs are:

- Task group,
- Consultation of experts, clients and target audiences,
- Quantitative analysis of demand for existing programmes,
- Studies of employees to identify current anticipated training needs.

As a coordinator of staff development programmes you may be required to collect base-line data. This data will help you plan the training programme as well as show how performance has improved after the training programme. If you do not have the information it is impossible to compare performance after the training experience. Qualitative data usually takes the form of narrative reports, journals or other verbal assessments. It is possible for the institution where the staff is employed to give you more information than you need or give it in a form that is readily comprehensive or usable. The institution in this way can prepare a qualitative report before the training and after the training.

There are a few criteria which are useful for evaluating a staff development programme.

1. What information is essential to know about performance evaluation?

This deals with transferring the new knowledge from the learning situation to work situations. You will want to know, through a systematic evaluation, whether the trainees' performance has changed. You may need to have some assessment: how much did performance change? Too often a course coordinator feels that once the employee has returned to work from the training programme, it is difficult to assess his/her performance in the actual work situation. So the coordinator/organiser of the training programme needs to know enough about the change in performance to determine the relative success of the programme with the help of follow-up activities.

2. Was the cost of the programme worth the results?

To answer this question you and the institution must first know what the total cost of the programme is. You can count the rejected materials and wasted time or the need for additional services of experts or resource persons. Assessing costs becomes difficult to measure when we are dealing with the performances and the training output.

At the end of a staff development programme you will have to decide whether providing training will cost more than benefits you can derive from it. If you did not make that decision before providing the training programme, it should be done afterwards and used as a basis for future training programmes and decision-making.

3. What kind of data should be collected?

The two categories of data are classified as quantitative data, things that can be counted or measured, and qualitative data, where counting is not possible but observation can be effective. That is, after a training programme an individual can be observed to determine if his/her performance is improved or up to the set standard.

4. How much change can we expect in a training programme?

For example, if a job requires delivering of course materials, no amount of training pertaining to writing course materials will be able to bring about the desired change. Your expectations have to be realistic.

Evaluation of staff development involves:

- Training needs analysis,
- Prioritization of training needs,
- Continuous assessment of training programmes,
- Follow-up of training programme to see the effectiveness/quality of a programme.

We should note here that evaluation of staff development programmes ranges from the use of financial measures to subjective measures of change seen in the behaviour of participants after training. For this, several measures can be used. They are:

- Information provided to participants (on content, formal material provided, etc.)
- Observation of the training activities
- Using questionnaires (open and closed type) to get feedback
- Follow up

Evaluation of Online Technologies in Open and Distance Education



What is an Online Programme?

Traditional classrooms have used, objectivist model of learning which is based on transfer of knowledge from teacher to the learner. In this model, the instructor controls the material and pace of learning. Here instruction is directed to the whole class as a large group the pace of learning is controlled by the teacher, and curricular and instructional decision making is guided by the textbook as the primary medium.

On the other hand, constructivist model is student centered. Here the instructor acts as a moderator primarily responsible for facilitating learning. In this model, most instruction occurs in small groups, students help choose the content to be organized and learned, teachers permit students to determine the rules of behavior, classroom rewards, and punishment. Because of the capability of Internet to use discussion groups and text, graphics, audio, video, file transfers over electronic mail, in asynchronous format and also videoconferencing, whiteboards, chat in synchronous real time modes, a different learning medium has evolved that is closely based on constructivist approach to learning. Since Web Based Instruction is such a new medium having different teaching styles,

adapted to new learning environments, evidence of effectiveness of online courses compared to traditional instruction needs evaluating the programme.

Online courses that are offered simulate learning environment by using syllabus, schedule, course notes, assignments, discussion rooms. In addition, students are also provided the opportunity to communicate with the instructor or other students by using e-mail, bulletin boards, and live chat rooms. Capabilities such as online assessment, simulations, multimedia, course delivery, access to external resources provide potential advantages over lecture-only classes. Web-based testing represents a cognitive behavior modification technique designed to help students develop goal setting behavior, planning, and self-monitoring and provides opportunity for students to master the concepts.

The most important ingredient for a successful online course is effective teaching with clear course objectives, progression, basic information about student management and course interactivity.

Successful institutions often team teachers with instructional designers as the instructors are providing their courses online. A large number of online courses with many instructors will need to have more than one instructional designer. Generally the instructors will require intensive assistance when developing their first online course, but will require less and less with each successive course. Depending on the course load or number of students participating in an online course, the educational institution may also wish to provide additional support in the form of teaching assistants.

Box 4.1

A few tips are given below for evaluating an online programme:

- Check out and adapt the already published questionnaires; there is no need to re-invent the wheel
- Draft and revise questions; change them, if necessary
- Make use of follow-up probes
- Place open-ended questions after quick answer questions. This approach gives students built-in thinking time
- On summative evaluation, assure anonymity
- Use evaluation as a method for understanding teaching and learning
- Get both positive and negative feedbacks.

Criteria for evaluating online programmes

Many of the same methods used to evaluate sources of print materials, such as journal articles and books, also apply to the evaluation of resources on the Internet. In addition, there are some evaluation criteria that are unique to online courses (internet resources). The following points are intended to provide assistance in evaluating resources on the internet. Unlike most books and journal articles, which undergo a peer review process prior to publication, anyone can publish anything on the internet. For that reason, it is imperative to critically evaluate all information taken from resources on the internet.

Five Criteria for Evaluating Online Courses	
Evaluation of Online courses	How to Interpret the Basics
<p>1. Accuracy of Online courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who wrote the page and can you contact him or her? • What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced? • Is this person qualified to write this document? 	<p>Accuracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure author provides e-mail or a contact address/phone number. • Know the distinction between author and Webmaster.
<p>2. Authority of Online courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who published the document and is it separate from the "Webmaster?" • Check the domain of the document, what institution publishes this document? • Does the publisher list his or her qualifications? 	<p>Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What credentials are listed for the author(s)? • Where is the document published? Check URL domain.

<p>3. Objectivity of Online courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What goals/objectives does this page meet? • How detailed is the information? • What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author? 	<p>Objectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if the page is a mask for advertising; if so, information might be biased. • View any web page as you would watch an advertisement in a television. • Ask yourself why was this written and for whom? <p>(www.library.cornell.edu/ilinuris/ref/webcrib.html)</p>
<p>4. Currency of Online courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was it produced? • When was it updated? • How up-to-date are the links (if any)? 	<p>Currency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many dead links are on the page? • Are the links current or updated regularly? • Is the information on the page outdated?
<p>5. Coverage of the Online courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the links (if any) evaluated and do they complement the document's theme? • Is it all images or a balance of text and images? • Is the information presented cited correctly? 	<p>Coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the page requires special software to view the information, how much are you missing if you don't have the software? • Is it free, or is there a fee, to obtain the information? • Is there an option for text only, or frames, or a suggested browser for better viewing?

Economics of Programme Evaluation

The economics of programme evaluation refers to the issues how best a programme already implemented should be evaluated to reflect the effectiveness of the programme or its realization of the identified objectives, and to measure

qualitatively and quantitatively both the costs and benefits of a programme in financial terms by means of a rate of return.

A framework of programme evaluation includes components such as inputs and outputs. The inputs determine educational outputs. The inputs are critical for assessing the cost effectiveness of a programme. Here, input refers to the cost invested for a programme and output refers to the effectiveness of a programme. So, it is essential for analyzing the costs involved in a programme. The two major criteria for cost effectiveness analysis in evaluating a programme are:

- i. Identification of the audience for the evaluation
 - Programme coordinators
 - Policy makers/funding agencies
 - Clientele

- ii. Selection of the types of cost analysis
 - Cost allocation analysis
 - Cost effectiveness analysis
 - Cost benefit analysis.

In other words, the cost effectiveness analysis is a technique for assessing the relationship between the total input or costs of a programme/project, and its outputs. It also attempts to measure both the costs and benefits of a programme in financial terms by means of a rate of return. (For a detailed discussion about this issue you can refer to Handbook-11 entitled “*Cost Analysis in Open and Distance Learning*”, STRIDE, IGNOU, 2004).

Activity 4.1



Identify the main criteria for a cost effectiveness analysis in evaluating a programme.

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Preparation of Programme Evaluation Reports**Objectives**

After going through this section, you should be able to:

- Discuss the framework of a programme evaluation report;
- Identify the different means of dissemination of a results of programme evaluation.

This section focuses on preparation of reports and dissemination of the results. Once a programme evaluation project is completed, an evaluator is expected to write the report. A programme evaluation report is a precise presentation of the work done by an evaluator while evaluating a programme. Whether the evaluation activity is carried out by a single individual or by an institution, the results/findings of programme evaluation should be reported. The purposes for preparing a report are:

- to encourage utilization of the results of programme evaluation;
- to provide resource material for other evaluators;
- to help the academics (who are involved in the process of designing and developing the programme) to judge the effectiveness;

- to enable the researchers/practitioners in the field of open and distance education, who can apply, test and retest the results of a programme evaluation report;
- to utilize and implement the results of programme evaluation by the policy makers or those who had sponsored the programme evaluation project.

The report also provides information about the purposes of evaluation, target audiences, answers pertaining to evaluation questions; methods, findings obtained, and recommendations for further studies or implementation.

How to Prepare a Report?

A programme evaluation report should be developed based on the standard approaches used for programme review. The standard approaches are:

- (i) Overview of programme features, which presents the main rationale and background of a programme. At this point the overall aim of the existing programme and the objectives, targets, indicators etc. should also be stated.
- (ii) Need for evaluating a programme, which should focus on the problems addressed or the questions to be asked while evaluating a programme.
- (iii) Resources and management aspects, considering key factors influencing programme implementation and results.
- (iv) Implementation results, which focuses on key activities, and especially outputs achieved, including their extent and quality.
- (v) Effects and impact, which assesses the programme's effectiveness by capturing results in terms of effects (use and application of programme outputs and services by users) and impact (significant development changes induced).
- (vi) Summary covering main issues of a report.
- (vii) Suggestions and recommendations for the policy makers, programme managers and the institutions.

Writing the Report

Writing the programme evaluation report is done mainly to encourage utilization and implementation of the results. So, while writing a report a few important issues are to be considered. They are:

- Think about the main information you want to share with the audience.

- Keep in mind the expectations of your audience. Readers expect to find sound analyses backed with data and qualitative feedback. In other words, provide clear messages that support the decision making.
- Use diagrams, figures or tables in a report to illustrate points more clearly.
- The report should be precise and annexes should be used for all relevant back up data.
- The results should be stated clearly and the findings are to be linked to the stated goals/objectives.
- Pay special attention to the section that the target audiences are most likely to read – the *executive summary*, the lessons learned and the *conclusions* and *recommendations*.

A programme evaluation provides a qualitative vis-à-vis quantitative data and analytical in-depth description of selected programmes and activities. A programme evaluation report is prepared in consultation with the programme committee. Usually, a number of people are involved to make decisions and take action if programme evaluation results are to have their full effect. So, an evaluation work to be useful has to be reported or communicated in ways understandable to the intended audiences. For example, a faculty of staff development unit assessing its programme would probably disseminate results internally. When results are reported internally, there are usually few problems. Difficulties can arise, however, when results are reported externally. The right of people to know about evaluation results must be balanced with the right to privacy or confidentiality. For example, in reporting the evaluation results of a specific programme, it may be improper to disclose the scores of an individual student. Although members of the evaluation board may have a right to know about how students scored. Generally, the performance of individual student is kept confidential. The method of communicating the report of an evaluation work varies depending on the nature of the audience, who receives the data and the purpose of the programme. For example, oral presentation may be effective in some settings, while in some video tape may be helpful (Patnaik, 1997). A precise report could be prepared as a synthesis of all reports submitted by the committee. It could be prepared following a framework.

A sample framework of a report is presented below:

Box 5.1

Framework of a Report

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Results
- Summary, conclusion and recommendation
- Annexes

Submission Procedures

Evaluation reports on individual programmes and thematic topics are prepared by the concerned evaluator or an evaluation team, either internal evaluator or external evaluator. These draft reports are submitted for review and discussion with the schools/divisions. An individual programme evaluation report can also be reviewed by external peer groups, or internal peer groups.

Individual report after incorporating the comments and suggestions by the peer group are submitted to the programme committee. The programme committee reviews the programme evaluation reports and submits the reports with the comments to the institution. In this context, you may like to know about a programme committee. A programme committee is the primary body which receives an evaluation report. It reviews the quality of evaluation, including the methodology and process involved as well as the performance and achievement of the programme. A programme evaluation report comprising a synthesis of individual evaluations reviewed by the committee and its comments is reviewed by the institution for implementation.

Dissemination of the Programme Evaluation Report

Before dissemination, the report should be presented to the project team and management as well as to institutions which are directly affected by the report to

check for accuracy of the information presented in the report about their programme(s).

The results could be disseminated effectively and appropriately to the various target audiences. This could be done through written, oral and visual presentations according to the nature of the audiences.

For dissemination of the results planning has to be done for synthesizing results into formats suitable for different audiences and different media and create a strategy to disseminate the results.

There are many alternatives for dissemination of evaluation activities. So, discussions should be initiated with the recipient to determine how the results might be used, who could make most effective use of the results, and how best the results could be communicated to the audiences. The possible means are:

- Articles in peer-reviewed journals;
- Notes in special interest newsletters or magazines;
- Topics for discussions in on-line forum;
- Face-to-face meetings and conference presentations;
- Articles and features in mass media (e.g. radio, television, audio and visual materials and newspapers);
- Briefs for policy makers;
- News Bulletins;
- Publishing information brochures.

The dissemination of results could be also through other media. They are:

- PC Network transmission and by internet (a special site on programme evaluation internet server)
- Websites
- If the financial resources permit, at the end of the programme evaluation a CD could be prepared for dissemination.

It is essential to write a good evaluation report. Yet, at the same time, it is very challenging to do so for a number of reasons. They are:

- Writing a complete report could take a long time – sometimes even longer than collection and analysis of data.
- The important messages or information that the writer wants to convey may be misrepresented.

Activity 5.1



Jot down the submission procedures for a report of programme evaluation.

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