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COUNSELLING AND TUTORING SERVICES

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MDE-413: Learner Support Systems and Services

(New Course in place of ES-313: Learner Support Services)

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MDE-413: Learner Support Systems and Services

Course Outline

Block 1 : Learner Support: An Introduction

- Unit 1 : Learner Support: A Systems Approach
 - Unit 2 : Learner Support: Some Basic Issues
 - Unit 3 : Support Services: Institutional Arrangements and Models
 - Unit 4 : Developing a Self Directed Learner
-

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- Unit 1 : Cognitive Skills
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 - Unit 4 : Problem Solving Skills
-

Block 3 : Counselling and Tutoring Services

- Unit 1 : Counselling
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 - Unit 4 : Organising Counselling and Tutoring Services
-

Block 4 : Assessment of Learner Performance

- Unit 1 : Learners' Assessment in Distance Education
 - Unit 2 : Tutor Comments
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Block 5 : Management of Learner Support

- Unit 1 : Learners' Expectations in Distance Education
 - Unit 2 : Management of Support Services
 - Unit 3 : Monitoring Learners' Progress
 - Unit 4 : Library and Information Services to Distance Learners
-

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This is the third block of the course “Learner Support Systems and Services”. After discussing some basic skills for developing a self-directed learner i.e. cognitive skills, study skills, reading skills, writing skills and problem solving skills in the second block, now we have made an attempt to focus on the issues related to counselling and tutoring services. “Counselling” in distance education is widely used for giving advice both academic and non-academic to learners. Counselling is undertaken by many staff members, but often it forms an important part of the work of the tutors those who help the learners in preparing their assignment responses by providing academic counselling. The functions of correspondence teaching and counselling are, however, distinct and separate ones. Tutoring is the process by which people help and support the learning of others in an interactive, purposeful and systemic way. Tutoring is done either on one-to-one basis or in group. Therefore, we have discussed all the aspects related to counselling and tutoring services such as qualities and skills of a counsellor, supporting learners through tutoring, use of media and technology in counselling and organizing counselling and tutoring services elaborately in the units separately throughout this block.

Many learners experience both academic and non-academic difficulties of some kind during their studies. Many of them encounter problems that are not easily resolvable or, their usual ways of handling problems aren't working well for some reason. Therefore, counselling services can provide assistance in many ways which need to be studied thoroughly. In the first unit we have comprehensively discussed the concept of counselling in distance education. It primarily covers three activities i.e. is informing, advising and counselling. Besides that, we have focused on importance of counselling, forms of counselling and qualities and skills of a counsellor. The second unit is all about tutoring services in open and distance education. We have made an attempt to discuss the concept of tutoring in its depth i.e. importance of tutoring, types of tutoring, difference between tutoring and counselling, supporting learners through tutoring and the factors to be considered while organizing a tutoring session. Apart from this, we have also discussed the role of a tutor in ODL, attributes of an ideal tutor and training of tutors.

The use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) plays a great role in distance education (DE) setup. Because, it not only works for learner support services, but also to prepare, design and deliver programmes on time. Further, it is used heavily by counsellors and tutors to facilitate learners for their effective learning. After discussing counselling and tutoring services in ODL and also various issues involved in tutoring and counselling, in the third unit, we have discussed about the role of media and technology in counselling and tutoring. We have further analysed the use of media and technology for counselling and tutoring and web support in counselling and tutoring. The fourth or the last unit will help you in organising counselling the tutoring services. We have discussed important components i.e. planning, scheduling, budgeting and making infrastructure arrangements for organising effective counselling and tutoring. We have also covered some important aspects like the identification, appointment, orientation and training of academic counsellors in this unit.

UNIT 1 COUNSELLING

Structure

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- 1.1 Learning Outcomes
- 1.2 Supporting Learners through Counselling
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 - 1.2.2 Theories of Counselling
- 1.3 Importance of Counselling
 - 1.3.1 Who needs Counselling?
 - 1.3.2 Why is Counselling Needed?
- 1.4 When is Counselling Needed?
 - 1.4.1 Pre-admission
 - 1.4.2 Counselling during the Course
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 - 1.5.4 Academic and Non-academic Counselling
- 1.6 The Qualities and Skills of a Counsellor
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- 1.9 Feedback to Check Your Progress Questions
- 1.10 References and Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a collaborative process through which individuals are helped to define goals, make decisions, and solve problems related to personal, social, educational and career concerns. In other words, counselling is a special category of human relationship that aims to help an individual to manage his/her problems. It is a conversational process that can be instrumental in the development of skills that help learners effectively to confront and cope with uncertainties and conflicts. Counselling is a chance to talk over what is in one's mind with a counsellor, who can help that person to learn new skills and ways of looking at situations so that he/she will be more capable of solving problems on his/ her own.

1.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss counselling as Learner Support Services;
- explain the need/importance of counselling;
- discuss when counselling is required;
- describe the various forms of counselling;
- list and describe the qualities and skills of a counsellor and give examples of their use; and
- categorise counselling in distance education along two different lines — development/problem-solving and academic/non-academic.

1.2 SUPPORTING LEARNERS THROUGH COUNSELLING

Many learners experience both academic and non-academic difficulties of some kind during their studies. Many of them encounter problems that are not easily resolvable or, their usual ways of handling problems aren't working well for some reason. For example, they may find that talking to friends or relatives about their concerns is impossible or unsatisfying. Some common concerns confronting learners include anxiety/stress, low self confidence, relationship difficulties, self-defeating behaviours, academic problems, sexual identity concerns, and decision-making dilemmas. Issues addressed might also include semester withdrawal requests, alternative readmission evaluations, poor grades, test anxiety, learning disabilities, dissertation support, study skills, and others. Thus, counselling services can provide assistance in many ways which need to be studied thoroughly.

1.2.1 What is Counselling?

Let us start by defining more closely the three activities that constitute counselling:

Informing: Informing means giving appropriate and correct information to learners, e.g. 'I'm sorry, the University's regulation don't allow you to submit that assignment late'.

Advising: Advising involves suggesting appropriate course of action to learners, perhaps offering several options but recommending one, especially for the particular learners, e.g. 'Well, we have two maths courses. You could take anyone but as you want to be an engineer, I suggest you to go for the Applied Maths course'.

Counselling: Counselling is helping learners clarify their needs, feelings or motivations, so that they can make an appropriate decision for themselves, e.g. "So you're not sure what you want to do with your life but you'd like to do something interesting. Describe to me what you mean by 'interesting'". It is about helping learners decide for themselves what is best for them as regards the

choice of course and career, overcoming of obstacles and so on. So, it is entirely learner-dependent rather than knowledge-dependent. As a counsellor you need clarifying skills rather than knowledge skills.

Informing: Informing is about knowledge which is largely independent of the learner-course requirements, regulations, statistics and so on. So, you do not have to take the learners very much into account when offering such information. You do, however, have to have a high level of appropriate knowledge and the ability to communicate it clearly.

Advising: Advising is a mixture of knowledge and learner dependence which is something in between informing and counselling. You can think of these three activities as a 'continuous spectrum' of areas which merge into each other.

1.2.2 Theories of Counselling

Counselling in its general sense can be seen as a branch of psychotherapy, bearing the same relationship to psychotherapy as a local doctor might have with the nearest hospital. Such doctors can deal perfectly and adequately with the most common ailments; occasionally they may have to refer patients to the hospital for much more drastic treatment. However, the medical theories underlying both the doctor's and hospital's works are the same.

Psychotherapy was originally associated with the work on psychoanalysis of Freud, Jung and others — the process of probing the sub-conscious in order to lay bare inner motivations.

Recently, however, there has been a reaction against psychoanalysis in the form of the 'humanistic psychology' movement. In this movement the role of the psychotherapist is as an enabler rather than a prober; the humanistic psychologist helps his or her clients to explore their situation for themselves so that they can move towards understanding and dealing with their problems on their own.

There are various humanistic psychotherapies — gestalt, transactional analysis, psychodrama, bio-energetics and so on, some with a degree of rationality and success, some less well founded. One in particular has been found by many people to be relevant in educational settings and is known as 'Rogering' therapy after its founder Carl Rogers (1902-1987).

The underlying theory of Rogering therapy is essentially simple. It is non-directive, i.e. clients are helped to talk over and clarify their problems for themselves, taking charge of their own therapy. The therapist (are therefore to a lesser extent the counsellors) brings certain qualities and skills to the relationship that enables clients to do this in their own way and in their own time.

We have over simplified the theory, but in a sense it may not be unfamiliar to you. Rogers has re-invented the concept of meditation and prayer, with the support of which troubled persons commune with God and try to move towards finding solutions to their troubles. Roger's contribution is to suggest that a second person with particular qualities and skills can help in this process.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

- i) Define counselling briefly in your own words.

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- ii) Differentiate between informing, advising and counselling. Give some examples.

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1.3 IMPORTANCE OF COUNSELLING

Studying at a distance is both challenging and demanding. Helping distance learners to progress successfully through their studies is even more challenging. Counselling has a crucial role to play in this mode of teaching-learning. It intends to make the learners more effective by initiating the students into distance learning, guiding self-learning in the desirable direction, confirming positive learning and re-enforcing further learning, providing non-print interventions, promoting and sustaining motivation, developing studentship and learning skills, identifying person-specific problems and helping to overcome learning disabilities.

1.3.1 Who Needs Counselling?

There is no easy way of predicting who is likely to seek counselling. A self-sufficient learner can study for years, ignoring the counsellor, until suddenly one day he/she runs into an intractable problem and needs help.

Here are some very general patterns for seeking counselling:

- i) More than half of the learners ask for some counselling support at some point of time in their careers.
- ii) Requests cover the informative, advisory and counselling queries. The most common time for seeking help is at the pre-entry stage and during the first year of study.
- iii) The most common areas of request appear to be divided equally between decision points and barriers.
- iv) The most common topics raised are:
 - a) institution-related problems,
 - b) course/carrier choice issues,

- c) study issues — assessment, exams and so on
- d) withdrawal issues.
- v) There do not appear to be any consistent links between the probability of learners seeking help and their educational background.
- vi) More women seek help than men and more Arts/Social Science learners seek help than Maths/Science & Technology learners. But since more women study Arts/Social Science than Maths/Science & Technology, these may be two ways of saying the same thing.

Let us emphasize that all these statements and statistics are very approximate and that they might well be quite different in a different socio-economic and cultural climates.

1.3.2 Why is Counselling Needed?

Any one who does work directly with learners in distance education is likely to realize that it possesses three characteristics which make counselling important: the characteristics of the learners, of the institution and of the learning process.

The Characteristics of Distance Learners

Distance learners:

- May be isolated, both from other learners and the institution;
- Will certainly have had previous educational experience which may have been positive or negative;
- Are very likely to have other substantial time commitments in terms of their home and work;
- Come from a wide variety of backgrounds, both educational and occupational;
- Are thoroughly committed, provided the courses they are taking are at a suitable level and are meeting their real needs.

Counselling is important because it is the only way of clarifying real needs, reconciling the conflicting demands of home and work, and coming to terms with isolation and with problems resulting from previous experience.

The Characteristics of the Institution

It is clear that distance teaching institutions tend to develop certain common characteristics, particularly during the process of settling down. They are, or can become:

- **Remote:** Even an institution which develops a regional network of services is still likely to have its offices hundreds of miles away from its learners. In countries where communication facilities are inadequate, remoteness is compounded by delays and problems in the delivery of course materials and other support services.
- **Complex:** An institution that is trying to produce course materials of several different kinds, and deliver them to learners as well as provide support services is likely to develop a complex bureaucratic system of administration. Such systems can be very

effective in dealing with large numbers of learners but may be inflexible and damaging when dealing with individuals.

Counselling is important in helping to individualize services to learners and in overcoming the problems of system malfunctions.

Learning Characteristics

The characteristics of both learners and institutions suggest that the nature of the learning process is different in distance education. In particular, a learner must develop an effective set of appropriate learning strategies or study skills. Some learners may already possess these; some may need help. The process of acquiring such skills may be a cognitive one. However, for some learners, for example, those who have a previous history of educational failure, it may be an affective process, consisting in part of coming to terms with that previous failure.

1.4 WHEN IS COUNSELLING NEEDED?

Different types of support services are required in distance education by the learners at various stages. They may seek help at their pre-entry stage, during the course stage, at the examination stage and at the post-study stage. The learners need to take certain decisions while pursuing their studies through distance mode. The decision may be related to: whether to apply for a course or not, which course(s) to opt for, what career possibilities to aim for, whether to withdraw or to keep going or how much time to devote to family/work/course(s). Some learners may need help to take such decisions. Here, counselling plays an important role to help the learners in making the decision and in clarifying their doubts. Along with the above mentioned problems, learners face some other barriers during their studies. These barriers may be study related, time related, personal or institutional. Appropriate counselling and tutoring services can solve the problems of the learners to a large extent in open and distance education.

1.4.1 Pre-admission

The type of support required at the pre-entry stage would include:

- Guidance about the types of programmes and courses available in the distance education institute.
- Pre-admission counselling with regard to selection of courses.
- Information regarding the instructional system, entry requirements, fee structure, duration of the programme of study.
- Advice regarding fee reimbursement and fee concession.

The above are general information given to all those who are interested in undergoing education through the distance mode. Apart from these, some learners require additional support services. It is important to understand their motivational level, their limitations as well as the types of problems they encounter.

As mentioned earlier **at risk learners** lack motivation and are not goal oriented. They probably pursue the courses through the distance mode because of parental pressure or the need to do something but not specifically for developing their intellectual abilities. Hence, they

should be allowed to choose the programmes and courses, which they feel they will be able to complete in the given time frame without any delay. The “at risk” learners should also be informed about the recognition of awards given on the successful completion of the course/programme. These learners also need to be informed about the financial assistance provided by the government to those pursuing the courses/programmes so that they are not reluctant to enroll due to monetary constraints.

The **socially disadvantaged learners** include those who belong to remote or tribal areas. As far as they are concerned, their enrolment in a course/programme is dependent on the accessibility to the Study Centres. Such people may have been isolated from the general society for a long time or may have been discriminated against due to their culture, tradition or religion. They should be informed about the courses/programmes that have close proximity to their culture, and language and are accessible to them without any obstacles. They should also be informed about the Study Centres that are nearest to their homes in order to facilitate enhanced enrolment.

Similarly, **learners with disabilities** come with a number of questions before their admission into the programmes/courses. They may have queries about the accessibility features, and study facilities. The problem of mobility for these learners is the prime impediment which hinders their admission into the institutions in the conventional pattern, whereas distance education which, is imparted with the help of technologies, reaches the learners at their doorsteps and this assists in their learning process. Hence, learners with disabilities should be given prior information about the Special Study Centres and their facilities in order to facilitate more enrollments for further higher education.

1.4.2 Counselling during the Course

The types of support needed at this stage are as follows:

- Introduction into the instructional system of the institution
- Distribution of self-learning materials, assignments etc.
- Information about TV programmes, radio broadcasts, teleconferencing sessions etc.
- Provision of library services
- Organisation of practicals at science labs, computer labs, industry etc.
- Organisation of assignment evaluation and providing feedback through tutor comments
- Development of study skills and structuring the students learning skills
- Provision of counselling and tutoring services
- Guidance before examination
- Communication of results of assessment
- Provision of relevant, accurate and unbiased information

The services discussed above are relevant for all the students pursuing education through the distance mode and especially learners who are educationally and physically disadvantaged. Apart from all these support services there are a few additional support services they need.

The educationally disadvantaged learners might want to de-register themselves from a particular course/programme in the middle of the session due to their lack of motivation, problem related to accessibility or mobility. It is therefore, necessary to provide them with counselling on a more frequent basis so that they are able to continue with the study and do not drop out. The academic counsellor should be able to take extra time out for these learners and be able to talk to them at a more personal level without any biases. During the examination season the academic counsellor should advise these learners regarding what to study and how to study. Also, as far as the learners with disabilities are concerned, counsellors need to identify the individual needs of such students and give them information about the different formats in which the self-learning materials are made available to them. For instance, if a person with hearing impairment is unable to understand a certain topic during the course, the academic counsellor should be able to present the topic with the help of graphics/visuals. Besides that, there should be enough flexibility to allow learners in these categories to prepare and submit the assignments according to their own format and information should be given to them beforehand about the use of scribes and provision of extra time during the examinations. The at risk, socially disadvantaged and disabled learners can also be given certain responsibilities within the Study Centres so that they feel that they are a part of the course and work more efficiently towards achieving their goals.

1.4.3 Post-completion Counselling

The types of support services required at this stage include:

- Communication regarding final results/grades/awards, convocation etc.
- Advice regarding career advancement/job opportunities/future prospects.
- Obtaining feedback on the programmes and services provided.

Some learners require additional support services even in the post course stage. For example, if the learner has failed badly in the examination it might lead to depression and complaints about the marking system followed by the university. At this time the academic counsellor has a vital role to play in explaining the procedures to the students. The academic counsellor should be able to guide these students with regard to their future plans. Regarding job prospects for the at risk, socially disadvantaged and disabled learners the academic counsellors should have enough knowledge about the opportunities available for these students in their respective fields. Another support which can be provided to them is by making provisions for collecting feedback from the learners about the services provided to them during the courses/programmes so that their suggestions would result in better and more efficient services to the learners in the future by the institution as well as by the academic counsellor.

At the same time non-academic counselling can also be provided to the learners in terms of developmental and problem solving support. For example, the technologies available to these learners will be of no use unless and until they are able to facilitate the functions of these technologies. Hence, the counsellor can help the learners develop a basic understanding about the technologies available and their uses. Also, during the course/programme if any learner has any problem the counsellor should be able to comfort the person to avoid depression, which may help in preventing him/her from dropping out of the course/programme.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

i) Why counselling is important in distance education?

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ii) What sort of support services are required by the learners at pre-admission stage?

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1.5 FORMS OF COUNSELLING

Distance learning takes place both through an individual's interaction with the self learning materials, and his/her social interaction with peers/tutors. Communication between the learner and the Academic Counsellor/institution takes place through various media. In fact, it may be said that distance education derives its strength from two-way communication, from the types and levels of interactivity it can support.

1.5.1 One-to-one vs. Group Counselling

Counselling services are provided to help the learners to manage any difficulties they face, so that they can enjoy and fully participate in their studies. Some of the learners may find studying in distance education quite difficult to negotiate or they may experience personal or family problems which interfere with their academic and social life. **One-to-one** is an **independent, confidential** and **personal** counselling service. It gives the learners an opportunity to talk to someone about any problem they may be experiencing. This basically means that one needs a caring and patient person to talk his/her worries over with in privacy, knowing that what that person says is confidential. Some learners may have some practical issues that they want help in sorting

out. Here, the counsellors may not use a particular counselling method. Some of the problems for which learners in distance education seek help are often related to stress, lack of motivation, depression, parental separation, loneliness, relationship difficulties, sexual or personal identity, academic or study concerns.

Counselling is possible in a group situation. Normally a group might consist of any number from three upwards, commonly a dozen but it is perfectly possible for it to go up to thirty or more. We have seen counselling attempted in groups of 200, but this really then becomes another activity.

Although a group loses the one-to-one relationship of counsellor and learner, it gains something almost as valuable, the opportunity for learners to share their concerns with each other. Inevitably, in doing so they discover that their concerns are common and find this immensely reassuring.

The skills in group counselling are just the same as one-to-one counselling, except that the counsellor is using them primarily to encourage learners to talk about their concerns (and solutions) with each other, and not with him/her. In addition, the group counsellor must develop some sensitivity to the dynamics of the group.

For example, let us assume that you are a counsellor who has put together a group of dozen or so learners who are about to start their distance education course at a local centre. How would you help them talk about the issues, concerns, anxieties and hopes that will certainly be present in that group? Here is a possibility:

- 1) You introduce yourself within 2-3 minutes.
- 2) You say "Now, I want you to get together with any other learner in pairs. Introduce yourselves and say briefly why you are taking the course and how you feel about it". Take 5 minutes.
- 3) After five minutes you say "Now, I want each pair to get together with another pair and share your introductions and see what motives and feelings you all have in common". Take 10 minutes.
- 4) After 10 minutes you say "Now, let's all come together and share our introductions and all that we've been discussing".
- 5) At this point the learners will have discussed their feelings in pairs and in groups of four. They will have discovered that many of their concerns are mutual and will now have no difficulty in talking about their feelings in the larger group. (Indeed you may have difficulty in getting them to stop talking!) As they talk, you will be able to listen, clarify, reflect and decide upon general consequent action (such as preparation) with the whole group.

This particular group process of discussion in pairs, threes, fours and so on is known as 'pyramiding' or 'snowballing'. It can be used in many different situations.

1.5.2 Face-to-face and Mediated Counselling

Everything that we have said so far applies to face-to-face counselling and in many ways this remains the most important medium for counselling of all kinds. However, it can be extremely expensive in terms of staff, time and travel and could also be inaccessible to distant

learners. One way of at least reducing the first problem is through group counselling.

We have now dealt as comprehensively as we can in a short space with the skills of counselling. But, as you are now well aware, in distance education the varied media, such as face-to-face, correspondence and telephone make a critical difference to everything we do.

For instance, so far we have made at least three implicit assumptions about how counselling is conducted. However, these assumptions may not be true in all media. What are those assumptions?

- i) That counselling is a two-way process between a counsellor and a learner.
- ii) That counselling is directed at individuals.
- iii) That it can be initiated by either the counsellor or the learner.

You may be able to spot other such assumptions. But counselling is possible with the use of different media, though each medium has its own advantages and disadvantages. Counselling can be done through different mediums like telephone, letters, handbooks, audio and video cassettes, teleconferencing, broadcasting and internet.

1.5.3 Developmental and Problem Solving Counselling

This is both an activity and topic-based classification and relates closely to the two main points at which learners raise issues, the decision and barrier points respectively.

Developmental counselling is often the most appropriate response to decision points. It is concerned with the development of learners. So, it covers issues such as:

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| Pre-entry | : For example, course information, alternative course and institutions, preparatory advice, motive clarification, time allocations, institutional information, and entry requirements; |
| Entry | : For example, study skills, institutional requirements, orientation to study at a distance, and preparing assignments; |
| Course choice | : For example, course information, recognition of course, levels of difficulty, possible pre-requisite courses and knowledge, relationship to other courses, and possible career directions; |
| Career choice | : For example, dealing with overall career directions, specific career wishes, qualifications, experience, possibilities of employment, and job-hunting skills; |
| Withdrawal | : For example, clarifying reasons for, helping to deal with the sense of frustration and disappointment, suggesting alternative courses, and encouraging learners to return to study; |

Motivational : Clarification of motives for study, remotivation, relating motives to appropriate courses, organizing and structuring time and social demands.

To some extent developmental counselling is easier than problem solving counselling. It is usually unstressed, the learners are not in a particular hurry to make a decision and so there is time to explore appropriate directions. Withdrawal counselling is, of course, the exception; this can be more difficult.

Problem-solving counselling is often the most appropriate response to barriers in the learner's progress. Sub-categories of this might be:

Institutional : For example, dealing with system breakdowns, discussing cases for exception and appeal against regulations, dealing with unsuccessful appeals, changing tutors and so on.

Personal : For example, illness, disability, marital breakdown, childcare, bereavement, ageing, unemployment, re-employment, work pressures-all in so far as they affect a learner's progress.

Study : For example, developing appropriate study methods, helping to improve concentration and reading speeds, adapting to distance learning, overcoming negative study habits such as late assignments, and developing group study methods.

Assessment : For example, essay writing skills, providing assessment and dealing with exam anxiety.

Time : Organizing and structuring time, prioritizing activities, clarifying motivation and so on.

One of the reasons why we find this classification helpful is that it suggests general approaches to specific issues, particularly in the last four areas. For instance, when dealing with these areas, we carry mental algorithms as follows:

Personal barriers : How far can we help?

Study and assessment barriers : Check anxiety levels.

Time barrier : Check motivation.

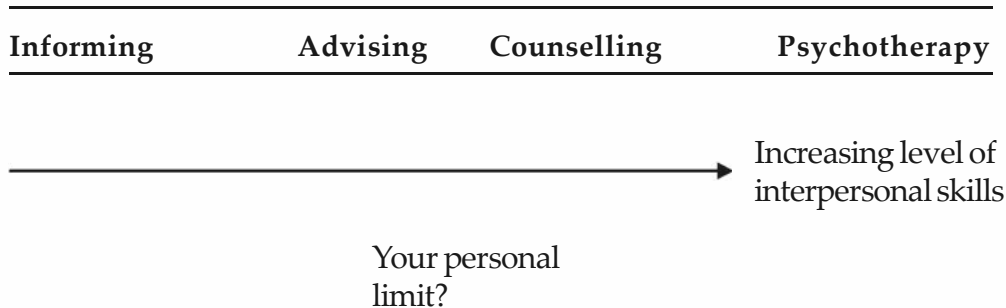
a) **Personal barriers:** How far can we help? If we are trying to help someone deal with a personal problem affecting his/her studies, then we have to remember our limitations especially those of a lack of skill or time. We cannot, for instance, help someone solve a difficult and long-standing marital problem. What we may be able to do is to help them:

- i) contain that problem so that they can continue studying if that is important to them;
- ii) refer that problem to someone better equipped to help such as a doctor, priest or psychotherapist;

- iii) to be enabled to temporarily withdraw (and help them feel alright about it) while the problem is being dealt with.

These processes are together known as '**holding**' — helping someone at least to maintain their position in the face of irresolvable difficulties.

You may find it helpful to think of an extended IAC spectrum, as shown in **Figure 1.1**.



Only you can decide how far you feel able (in the sense of being skilled and qualified) to go. Fortunately learners will always respect that limit and will very seldom ask you to offer skills that you feel are beyond you.

- b) **Study and assessment barriers:** Check anxiety levels. Say someone approaches us with a study or assessment problem, typically, in this form (and you will note some of these are transferring queries):

'It just doesn't get in when I read something.'

'I'm finding it hard to concentrate—can you give me a few tips?'

'How do you get started on an essay?'

'I'm sorry, this assignment is late again.'

'I must learn to read faster.'

First we check that they are actually working in a sensible way. For instance, in the first query, we would get them to describe how they read. Do they survey and question the material to get an idea of what it is about or do they just read straight through? If they have an apparently reasonable approach to reading then we would begin to wonder if some basic anxiety about study is getting in the way.

- c) **Time barriers:** Check motivation. Someone may raise a time related problem such as:

'I just don't seem to be able to find the time to study.'

'Give me a few tips on organizing my time.'

'I'm just getting further and further behind.'

'My tutor says I'm taking too much on.'

Again, we would first check the realities of the situation. What are the demands on their time? How do they organize and prioritize their time? If it begins to emerge that time is available to them, then we would begin to wonder if their motivation was beginning to fail them in some way.

1.5.4 Academic and Non-academic Counselling

This is a topic-based classification and is an alternative perspective that you may find useful. It is particularly helpful when considering the way in which counselling services are organized in an institution and the time of year at which they occur, that is, who does what and when. The informing-advising-counselling spectrum is still applicable.

Academic counselling: This covers counselling concerning all courses and course-based topics. Examples of this might be preparation, specific difficulties related to course study and exam techniques. Academic counselling tends to relate to specific academic and cognitive issues.

Non-academic counselling: It covers all other areas of counselling. Examples here might be course choice, general study difficulties, and exam anxiety. Non-academic counselling tends to relate to general and affective issues.

Academic and non-academic counselling during the year: As this classification is topic-based, examples can be illustrated in calendar form, as shown in Table 1.1 (You will see that we have also retained the IAC classification).

Stage	Academic Counselling	Non-academic Counselling
Pre-entry	• Information on courses, entry requirements, registration procedures etc. • Preparatory course advice. • Course choice counselling.	• Information on alternative instructions. • Advice to special cases e.g. disabled candidates. Return-to-study counselling.
Entry	• Information on course use – tutorial times, assignment dates etc. • Advice on studying the course. Course change counselling.	• Information on regulations and procedures. • Advice on general distance. • Withdrawal counselling.
During the course	• Information about delivery problems. • Advice on dealing with late delivery or incorrect material. Counselling on assignment difficulties.	• Information about other i.e., outside the course) aspects, e.g. summer schools. • Advice about payment difficulties, counselling on personal difficulties, problems between tutors and learners.

Examination	• Information about time/place for conduct of exam. • Advice on exam techniques and revision.	Information about special support available—extra time for disabled learners etc., exam anxiety, counselling.
Post-study	• Information about further related course. • Advice on further course choice. Counselling for results.	• Information on possible career options. • Career advice and counselling. Counselling failed learners.

Academic and Non-academic Counselling (Who does what?):

Depending on the way in which counselling is organized in an institution (see Unit 3) the academic/non-academic split can be useful in deciding who does what.

For instance, academic counselling could be deemed to be the business of the tutors, and non-academic counselling, the business of the central institution. Of course, the learners would not draw this finer distinction. So, both sides would need necessary training.

1.6 THE QUALITIES AND SKILLS OF A COUNSELLOR

Academic counselling is an important support service provided to distance learners. A good Academic Counsellor needs to have certain qualities and skills for providing better services. As counselling is a non-directive venture, a counsellor should have certain qualities like warmth, acceptance, genuineness, empathy and some skills like selecting, listening and structuring. These qualities and skills are discussed in detail below.

1.6.1 Qualities of a Counsellor

Rogers identified four particular personal qualities that appeared to be essential to working as an effective counsellor. They are warmth, acceptance, genuineness and empathy.

Warmth: The ability to communicate personal warmth and to make learners feel welcome and valued as individuals.

Rogers called this ‘non-possessive warmth’ which means that it should be appropriate and genuine but not overdone; it should not make the recipient feel taken over or manipulated in the way that, they might feel by the behaviour of some kind of salesmen.

Warmth means saying ‘Hello, can I help you? No I’m sorry, I’m rather busy, please keep it short’.

People are sometimes not warm for various reasons like tiredness,

overwork, consciousness of status, and may be unfavourable attitude. That apart, without an initial welcoming start, a counsellor is unlikely to have a chance to practice the other qualities and skills.

Acceptance: The quality of being able to accept other people and their feeling for what they are, without criticizing or judging them personally (which of course is different from judging their behaviour).

Criticism, whether in the form of moral injunctions or negative statements, has little role to play in counselling, as it tends to shut down communication.

But let me try to illustrate this: A learner says to you 'I think these regulations are very stupid!' Which of the two following responses would you make?

- a) 'The regulations all have a purpose, you know.'
- b) 'It sounds as though you're pretty angry about this business.'

I hope that you chose response (b), since response (a) is defensive and somewhat critical and is not likely to encourage the learner to think sensibly about how he/she feels.

People are sometimes not accepting because of authoritarian personalities, prejudices about class, race, age and sex, and because of fixed, often wrong ideas about their roles ('I'm a teacher, a teacher's job is to criticize').

Genuineness: The ability to be naturally yourself, open, friendly and undefensive.

It means not adopting a superior role as in the 'white coat syndrome' of the person who has the answers and must be respected. It also means being honest with yourself and your learner, about your own feelings and activities.

Which would be the 'genuine' response to the following comment from a learner: 'I'm just finding this part of the course so boring'?

- a) 'But you chose the course-you'll just have to work at it.'
- b) 'To be honest I've found parts of my job boring sometimes! Do you think you'll be able to carry on through to a more interesting part?'

Again we hope you would choose (b). Response (a) is not likely to help the learner very much; response (b) at least admits that you have the same experience from time to time and will encourage the learner to think about ways h/she can keep going. People are sometimes not genuine because of status-consciousness or feelings of their own inadequacy which are hard to admit.

Empathy: The ability to sense the feeling and experience of another person, and so to fully appreciate them as if you were that person.

This is not quite 'sympathy' in which you take over the feelings for yourself. It is being able to say, 'I think, I can see you feel that', not 'I felt exactly the same when that happened to me'. The latter statement takes over the learner's feeling and in a sense takes it away from them.

Which is the most empathetic response to the following statement 'If I don't pass this exam, I shall have failed completely'?

- a) 'Oh you mustn't feel that. I mean, it's not a difficult exam.'
- b) 'You feel that if you fail this exam all your work will be wasted'.

You may find (b) as the empathetic response that will ensure that the learners feel you understand and appreciate their feelings.

Empathy can be a difficult quality to acquire, sometimes because of the difficulty of understanding that every person's experience is unique and that our own experience can only be a fallible guide to how other people might feel about an ostensibly similar experience. But it is important to try to feel empathy in all circumstances.

These, then, are the qualities of a counsellor. How can a person develop them? If that question is considered objectively as a teaching exercise it sounds faintly absurd. Can you really teach someone to be warm and genuine?

In fact, that is not necessary. Most people—certainly most people who are attracted to distance education—already possess these qualities to a high degree and are already well on the way of being effective counsellors on that count alone. The challenge is to recognize that these interpersonal qualities are essential and to allow yourself to express them professionally.

In order to remember the individual qualities, it might help you to think of the word WAGE (warmth, acceptance, genuineness, empathy).

1.6.2 Skills of a Counsellor

There are three essential skills of a counsellor: selecting, structuring and listening. There are a host of other subsidiary skills, but these are the core ones.

Selecting: We have already mentioned selecting. It is the process of deciding what kind of response from the informing-advising-counselling spectrum is appropriate at any particular stage in an interview or an interaction.

An inappropriate response can halt progress in its tracks. Giving information to someone who really needs advice or counselling may satisfy him/her temporarily but will not answer his/her real or long-term needs; information is likely to be very frustrating for him/her.

We will not give any more examples at this stage. Turn back to Unit 1, and take another look at sub-section 1.2.1 to 1.2.3.

Listening: The skill of *active intelligent* listening is central to counselling of any type, whether informatory, advisory or counselling. As Rogers himself wrote 'I discovered that simply listening to my client was an important way of being helpful. So, when I was in doubt as to what I should do in some active way, I listened. It seemed surprising to me that such a passive kind of interaction could be so useful'.

Does it mean that a counsellor simply listens? Of course, it is not as simple as that; the key lies in the words 'active' and 'intelligent'. The counsellor listens actively by encouraging learners to think through

their queries or problems for themselves: the counsellor listens intelligently by clarifying what is being said and looking (sometimes) for what is not being said—the implications of omitted or unclear statements.

There are some useful but simple techniques to help you listen better. They are open-ended questions, acknowledgements, reflections, and silences.

- i) **Open-ended questions:** Use questions that encourage a learner to think and to develop rather than give straight mono-syllabic answers.

For example, a counsellor asks the same question in two different ways; which do you prefer?

- a) 'So you think you want to be a Maths teacher?'
- b) 'How do you feel about Maths teaching as a career?'

As usual we hope you have chosen (b), the open-ended question. Question (a) encourages the answer 'yes' or 'no' and no further; question (b) encourages the learners to think more about the implications of what they are saying.

- ii) **Acknowledgements:** This simply means that counsellors do not sit listening in inscrutable silence. They are always indicating that they are listening-nodding, saying 'Ah-ah' (or "Umm" if you prefer), and using positive 'body language' (maintaining reasonable eye-contact, sitting alertly on the same side of the desk as the learner and so on). It also means not interrupting the learner unnecessarily.
- iii) **Reflecting:** The most useful listening skill is 'reflecting', sometimes called 'mirroring'. It simply means saying back to the learner something that s/he has just said but in such a way as to clarify it, reassure the learner that s/he is being heard correctly and encourage them to go on. It is best illustrated by a simple example:

Learner: 'So you see I just don't think I can keep up.'

Counsellor 1: 'Oh well, I'm sure it's not really that bad. With a bit of effort....., etc.'

Counsellor 2: 'You're worried that you'll fall so far behind that you'll have to withdraw?'

Counsellor 1 is certainly trying to encourage the learner, but fails to understand and accept the learner's real fears. The learner is likely to feel that the problem expressed simply has not been heard or has been denied. Counsellor 2, on the other hand, has reassured the learner that the problem has been heard and also gives the learner the opportunity to clarify what is worrying him/her. Note that 'reflection' does not simply consist of repeating the learner's words but rephrasing them and clarifying them before reflecting them back.

- iv) **Silence:** This is at once a simple and most difficult skill. It means not feeling compelled to fill every gap in the conversation but

being able to give the learners space to think through what they are trying to say. It means being able to distinguish between the negative silence of someone who is stuck and the positive silence of someone who is just trying to work out how to phrase his/her next statement.

For example:

Learner: 'I'm not sure what kind of course I want' (silence).

Counsellor: Mm?

Learner: 'I suppose I really want to feel I'm helping others.'

This example was taken from a real experience and although it sounds almost trivial it was the start of a useful session on choice of courses.

These then are the practical skills of listening. It may help you to remember them as OARS (open-ended questions, acknowledgements, reflections, silences).

Structuring

By now you may be asking how, after listening to the learner, do we actually move towards solving their problem, answering their query, choosing the right course etc.

This is the heart of counselling. It means to know when, for example, is the right moment to stop counselling and give advice, when a learner has solved a problem for himself/herself or at least come to terms with it, when you have done as much as you can. This is the process of structuring your counselling and the interviews in order to move towards the best solution.

Structuring consists of three stages: clarification, checking and consequences.

- i) **Clarification:** The basic counselling process of clarifying the issue or problem by dialogue with the learner.
- ii) **Checking:** Going back to the learner to ensure that the problem or issue is now completely clear or at least that it is as clear as it is possible to be at this stage.
- iii) **Consequences:** Settling with the learners what will be done by them and by the counsellor (action or advice) as a result of the interview.

These stages can be short or long but they are almost always present even in the simplest 'informing' interview.

For example:

Learner: 'I'm interested in a career in nursing.'

Counsellor: 'Is that mental nursing, district nursing or hospital nursing?'

Learner: 'Oh, I meant in hospitals.'

Counsellor: 'Hospital nursing, right. I have a leaflet about that; I could send it to you if you'd like.'

Learner: 'Oh yes, please.'

Counsellor: 'Fine, I'll put that in the post to you today. And then if you have any questions after reading it, you're welcome to contact me again.'

Learner: 'Thank you very much.'

Clarification is important because it is essential to find out the learners' needs. This is often a short process but can be much longer when, for instance, learners are not fully aware of what they need.

Checking is important before deciding on any action, to be sure that it is appropriate.

Consequences agreed upon mutually are important because any action or advice not mutually agreed upon is almost certain to fail. Think how often you have been given advice which you failed to take because you found it unconvincing or inappropriate.

In a complex problem the stages may well be repeated for different states of the same problem. Think of it as a cycle.

Epilogue

This has been a long and complex section and you should not worry if it feels rather like learning to drive a car. Remember how to steer and change gear simultaneously is not unlike remembering to listen, select and structure all at the same time.

If it helps, remember the various mnemonics:

Qualities: WAGE (warmth, acceptance, genuineness, and empathy)

Skills: SLS (selecting, listening, structuring)

Selecting: IAC (informing, advising, counselling)

Listening: OARS (open-ended questions, acknowledgements, reflecting, silences)

Structuring: 3C's (clarification, checking, consequences)

Much of your counselling will be very straightforward, needing more information than skill. Indeed it is probably true that 80% of your counselling will only need 20% of your skill. But there will certainly be 20% of the counselling needing, 80% of your skill and it is often very difficult to tell at the outset of what sort of query you will get.

So, we hope you have found the emphasis on skills in these last sections helpful, even if you only exercise the whole battery of skills on the rarest minority of occasions.

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit.

- i) What do you mean by one-to-one counselling? Why is it important in distance learning?

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- ii) What are the qualities one should have to become a good counsellor?

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1.7 TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED COUNSELLING

We have now discussed in a short space about the qualities and skills of counselling as comprehensively as we can. If this were a course on counselling in conventional educational settings, then the unit would have almost ended here. But, as you are now well aware, in distance education multiple technologies, such as radio, television, telephone, mobile technology, computer and internet make a critical difference to everything we do.

For instance, so far we have made at least three implicit assumptions about how counselling is conducted. However, these assumptions may not be true in case of all media and technologies used in counselling. Those assumptions are:

- i) That counselling is a two way process between a counsellor and learner.
- ii) That counselling is directed at individuals.
- iii) That it can be initiated by either the counsellor or the learner.

Each technology has its own advantages and disadvantages. But largely, these technologies are found very much useful in counselling.

Telephone as a technology can be used for effective counselling. With the help of telephones and mobile phones counselling can be provided on one to one basis and to a group of learners through teleconferencing. Answerphones also can be used in this regard. Similarly, counselling is also possible through interactive audio-video programmes. Based on the needs of the learners different audio video programmes on CD ROMs and Audio Cassettes can be used instead of face-to-face counselling. Now, various distance education institutions have been using radio and television for counselling purposes. Through live interactive programmes counselling can be

provided to the maximum number of learners at a time. At the same time, internet and email facilities make our work much easier. Counsellors can use email facilities to provide one-to-one as well as group counselling effectively. Even, online counselling can be provided to a large number of learners at a time all across the globe with the use of internet. In this way, technologies can be used effectively for both academic and non academic counselling.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

The unit covers the following topics:

There are at least nine ways of supporting learners in distance education.

Tutoring	}	Teaching
Feedback		
Grading		

Taking action	}	Administration
Advocacy		
Assessment		

Informing	}	Counselling
Advising		
Counselling		

Counselling covers a spectrum of activities like those of informing, advising, counselling. A query can be answered from the most obvious place on the spectrum or from elsewhere, it could be a transferred query.

Counselling is important in distance education because of the particular characteristics of the learners, the institution and of distance learning itself.

Counselling takes place at decision points and barriers and can be initiated by the counsellor as well as the learner.

Counselling can be categorized in two ways:

- Development and problem-solving, or
- Academic and non-academic.

Theories of counselling: 'Rogerian' or non-directive counselling.

Stages of counselling: Pre-admission, during the course, post completion counselling.

Forms of counselling: One-to-one vs. group; face-to-face vs. mediated

Technology Mediated: Telephone, letter, handbook, audio/video cassette, broadcasting, computer and internet

Qualities of a Counsellor: Warmth, acceptance, genuineness, empathy (WAGE)

Selecting skills—informing, advising, counselling (IAC). Listening skills—open-ended questions, acknowledgements, reflecting, silence (OARS). Structuring skills—clarification, checking, consequences (3C's).

1.9 FEEDBACK TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Counselling is helping learners to clarify their doubts and decide for themselves what is best for them as regards the choice of course and career, overcoming of obstacles and so on.
- ii) Informing: Giving appropriate and correct information to learners.

Advising: Suggesting appropriate course of action to learner and offering several options.

Counselling: Helping learners clarify their needs, feelings or motivations so that they can make an appropriate decision for themselves.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Studying at distance is both challenging and very demanding. Counselling has a crucial role to play in this mode of teaching-learning. Counselling helps the distance learners to progress successfully through their studies.
- ii) The type of support required at the pre-entry stage would include:
 - Guidance about the types of programmes and courses available in the distance education institute.
 - Pre-admission counselling with regard to selection of courses.
 - Information regarding the instructional system, entry requirements, fee structure, duration of the programme of study.
 - Advice regarding fee re-imbursement and fee concession.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) One-to-one counselling involves an independent, confidential and personal counselling. It gives the learners an opportunity to talk to the counsellor about any problems that may be experienced by him/her. This basically means that one needs a caring and patient counsellor and the counselling may not always be academic in nature.
- ii) The qualities of a good counsellor are as follows:

Warmth: Ability to converse with personal warmth and to make learners feel welcome and valued as individuals.

Acceptance: The quality of accepting the learner as an individual and not criticizing or judging them personally.

Genuineness: The ability to be yourself, open, friendly and not be defensive.

1.10 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 TUTORING

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Learning Outcomes
- 2.2 Role of a Tutor in ODL
- 2.3 Attributes of an Ideal Tutor
- 2.4 Types of Tutoring
- 2.5 Importance of Tutoring in Distance Education
 - 2.5.1 Benefits of Tutoring in General
 - 2.5.2 Benefits of Tutoring for the Learners
 - 2.5.3 Benefits of Tutoring for the Tutors
- 2.6 Difference between Tutoring and Counselling
- 2.7 Supporting Learners Through Tutoring
- 2.8 Implementing a Tutoring Programme
- 2.9 Training of the Tutors
- 2.10 Factors to Keep into Consideration while Organising a Tutoring Session
- 2.11 Role of Support Services Staff
 - 2.11.1 The Role of Support Services Staff Aims to
 - 2.11.2 The Role of Support Services Staff does not Aim to
- 2.12 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.13 Feedback to Check Your Progress Questions
- 2.14 References and Further Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

As a student, down the ages, you would have learnt certain things from people whom you might have met outside your School/College/Institution. Such learning would be in an informal way, in which you are relaxed all the time and can raise any doubt without having any preference for the people around or the situation where you are placed. Actually, while you are learning, the person who is imparting you the learning is actually doing the task of tutoring. Are you surprised? Many a times, you yourself have rendered the process of tutoring irrespective of your position and that too when you are not aware that you are imparting some learning.

The process by which people help and support the learning of others in an interactive, purposeful and systematic way is called as Tutoring. Such persons are called Tutors. People who could render tutoring generally include teachers, parents or other adult carers, brothers and sisters, other students from the peer group, and various kinds of volunteers. Even young children can serve as effective tutors. Everyone can be a tutor—

everybody can help somebody with something. In helping others to learn, tutors often learn themselves.

Tutoring is done either on one-to-one basis or on pairs. When Tutoring is done on one-to-one basis, intimacy is enhanced, which helps the learner to raise any doubt without any hesitation. Tutoring, when done in a group, enhances peer learning and may lead to a healthy competition aimed to excel each other.

Scholars like Walberg & Haertel (1997); Topping & Ehly (1998); Rohrbeck et al. (1999) have revealed that tutoring is highly effective. The fact that tutoring is highly effective has its implications to educators in general and learners in particular. This can be of great help for those places where there is lack of professional teachers. Even when there are sufficient teachers, because of the fact that the growth of knowledge is rapid even in economically advanced countries, and hence the learners in addition to relying on professional teachers, can seek the help of people around them, who can enhance the learning process.

Being a student of distance learning you would agree that the ODL learners have different characteristics, different circumstances and reasons for learning. These characteristics have their implications for how you learn and face the challenges while pursuing the distance education course. Can you identify some of the characteristics of an ODL learner?

O'Rourke (2003) identified following characteristics of an adult distance learner:

- a) They are adults with busy lives, family and work commitments. This means that they have little time for learning and other commitments may disrupt their learning schedule too.
- b) ODL learners have a clear goal for learning. This means that they are more committed to achieving their goals and continue their learning if at all possible.
- c) ODL learners may have been away from formal learning for some time. This means that they may need some orientation to formal learning processes like academic writing, research, use of library etc.
- d) ODL learners may not be able to reach libraries or other academic resources. This means that they may need to have resources made available in different ways (sent from libraries or at Study Centres).
- e) ODL learners are often interested in implications of their learning for their life and work. This means that they are more likely to be motivated to continue; they may want to explore how learning relates to work or life situations in assignments.

Having understood above characteristics, now you may be able to visualise why an ODL learner would need a tutor? But this does not in any way construe that making provision of tutoring is an imperative for a distance learner. There may be other factors and other kinds of instructional help like tutoring through a face-to-face tutor or a digital tutor, to be provided to the learners.

This unit introduces you to the tutoring and its different aspects. Lets study tutoring in detail.

2.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After reading this unit, you shall be able to:

- Discuss the concept of tutoring;
 - Describe the role of a tutor;
 - Differentiate between tutoring & counselling;
 - Explain the role of support staff in tutoring & counselling; and
 - Discuss the importance of tutoring services.
-

2.2 ROLE OF A TUTOR IN ODL

In open and distance learning a tutor may have different responsibilities. These may pertain to academic, administrative or support area. O'Rourke (2003) listed the following roles of an ODL tutor:

a) **Academic advising**

- Advising learners about course choice, options for continuing for completing a study programme
- Advising learners about courses for specific qualifications or career choices

b) **Academic instructions and coaching**

- Responding to questions from learners
- Clarifying course material when necessary
- Developing additional resources or tutorial materials
- Helping learners develop specific skills

c) **Academic facilitation**

- Providing remedial help, or advice on where to obtain it
- Providing information about additional resources for learners who want to pursue a particular interest in greater depth
- Planning and guiding discussions among learners, whether face-to-face, or mediated through a conferencing technology (audio, video, computer)

d) **Academic assessment**

- Setting assignments for learner assessment
- Clarifying assignment tasks and options to learners
- Assessing grading and providing feedback to learners on their assignments
- Setting examinations
- Marking examinations

e) **Maintaining supportive communication with learners**

- Initiating contact with learners at the start of the course
- Maintaining regular contact with learners for the duration of the course

- Helping learners address issues that may impede their progress in the course

f) **Administrative record keeping and communication with administrative staff**

- Verifying student records at the beginning of the course
- Maintaining accurate records of each learner's work, including assignments and exams, and submitting these records to the appropriate departments.
- Learning about administrative procedures and deadlines that affect learners, such as procedures and deadlines for changing or withdrawing from a course.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Now that you have understood the role and responsibility of an ODL tutor, please list out various knowledge and skill attributes the ODL tutor would possess based on the area of responsibility under academic, support and administrative field.

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Even though, the process of tutoring is being increasingly used, it can not be taken as granted that every attempt at tutoring would be effective everywhere. In order that tutoring is to be effective, it needs to be thoughtful, well structured and carefully monitored. Tutors must be obvious about how they can help, and how not.

What should tutors need to be? Can you think of a few of the qualities, which you expect in a tutor i.e., in a person from whom you have to learn informally.

Some of the qualities and skills, which are very helpful to a tutor, may be summarized as below:

- reflection
- individualized help
- questioning
- modelling and demonstration
- providing relevant examples
- better understanding of learners
- prompting and self-correction
- immediate feedback and praise

- opportunities for generalization
- insight into learning (meta-cognition)

Both the learners and the tutors are benefited from the tutoring process. They can learn to give and receive praise, develop social skills, develop communication skills (listening, explaining, questioning, summarizing), and develop greater self-esteem.

Before moving on to the next section, let us have a break and attempt this Check your Progress.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

What are the various skills which help a tutor for effective tutoring?

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Having done the above activity now let us find out the attributes of an ideal tutor.

2.3 ATTRIBUTES OF AN IDEAL TUTOR

You would agree that being an ideal tutor would not be quite an easy task, yet there are some attributes which we can adopt and imbibe in our life in order to become good tutors.

O'Rourke (2003) gave an account of an ideal tutor based on the feedback obtained from learners and tutors:

"The ideal tutor is a paragon; she or he is consistent, fair, professional in standards and attitudes, encouraging but honest, unbiased, kind, positive, respectful and accepting of students' ideas, patient, personal, tolerant, appreciative, understanding and helpful. Marking by a tutor of this sort will provide the best possible feedback, a crucial, and for most learners, central part of the learning process. A good tutor or instructor:

- provides clear explanations on his or her expectations and marking style
- welcomes extra questions
- locates one's faults but corrects them kindly and explains why marks have been lost or awarded
- makes thorough but cheerful and constructive comments
- gives an extra boost to encourage a student in difficulty
- clarifies points which have not been easily grasped or correctly learned
- is helpful in achieving the student's objectives

- offers flexibility when it is needed
- shows a genuine interest in motivating learners (even those who are beginners and so perhaps at a less interesting stage for the tutor)
- writes all corrections legibly and with meaningful details
- returns assignments promptly.

In a nutshell it can be said that an ideal tutor is the one who treats his or her students the way he or she would like to be treated himself or herself, who is approachable as a real person and who provides the most extensive and encouraging comments."

Check Your Progress 3

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

What are the various attributes of an ideal tutor?

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2.4 TYPES OF TUTORING

Tutoring generally is of three types. More than getting to know about the types of tutoring, it is important to note the differences between these three types of tutoring.

First of all, let us have a look at the types of tutoring. They are

- Peer Tutoring,
- Cross-Age Tutoring, and
- Parent/Adult Volunteer Tutoring.

I am sure, you would be curious to know about these types in detail. Let's move on to know the types of tutoring in detail. Each type of tutoring has attributes specific/unique to it.

1) Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring can be defined as a one-on-one teaching process in which the tutor is of the same general age, grade, or academic status as the learner (Gaustad, 1992). As you read the definition, I am sure, you would recall your group study which you might have done in school/college.

The specific attributes of peer tutoring are:

- a) Avoids disruptions in schedules that other forms cannot avoid. It is contained within one class with one group of children (Rekrut, 1994).
- b) Provides tutors and learners with a similar language. They feel freer to express their opinions and take risks (Kalkowski, 1995).
- c) Is cost effective.

2) Cross-age Tutoring

When the tutor is an older student, cross-age tutoring is the appropriate term to use. If you have studied in boarding school, generally, the school authorities encourage a student of a lower class be attached to someone from the higher class, in other words, cross-age tutoring is facilitated.

The specific attributes of cross-age tutoring are:

- a) Takes advantage of the higher status inherent in the age difference (Gaustad, 1992).
- b) Can increase learner's self-esteem as a result of having an older, higher-status friend (Topping, 1988).
- c) Prevents feelings of inferiority that children may experience if they are of a same-age or peers (Gaustad, 1992).

3) Parent/Adult Volunteer Tutoring

The third type of tutoring is Parent/Adult Volunteer Tutoring, where adults outside the school tutor students.

The specific attributes of Parent/Adult Volunteer Tutoring are:

- a) Keeps the parents and other community members in touch with the school.
- b) Creates advocates of the tutoring process in general.
- c) Reduces distractions—adult-student pairs generally do not get easily distracted.

Before moving on to know about the importance of tutoring in distance education, let us have a break and attempt this Check Your Progress.

Check Your Progress 4

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Name the major types of tutoring.

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Having done the Check Your Progress, now let us move on to know about the importance of tutoring in distance education.

2.5 IMPORTANCE OF TUTORING IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Over the years, priority among distance educators and researchers has been the issue of the drop out problem. There may be many different reasons for a student to drop out like work-related engagements, social life pressures or financial commitments. When a learner takes a decision to take advantage of an educational opportunity, one of the objectives is to improve the quality of life by making most of their abilities through

education. In distance education, other challenges can be in the form of a physical disability, returning to school as an older student and feeling odd-man out in the group, and getting adjusted to the cultural and communication differences in a diverse student community etc.

Tutoring in distance education has a number of benefits. Irrespective of the type, scope of tutoring, individual differences of the tutors, there are common benefits that result from tutoring in nearly any setting. A tutor in distance education is more than just a source of information. They are valuable resources for the distance learners to consult. Learners ask the tutors to clarify course materials or explain homework assignments. Tutors advise the distance learners regarding right course selection, educational and career guidance or even introducing them to the professionals in their chosen field.

Tutors in distance education have time-draining responsibilities outside of their normal teaching duties. They engage themselves in the research, prepare lectures and sometimes they themselves are students too, if they are enrolled for some course. Let's see what is the importance of tutoring in distance education in general to the tutors, and to the learners.

2.5.1 Benefits of Tutoring in General

Tutoring:

- 1) Heightens sense of competency/adequacy in conforming to new role.
- 2) Encourages higher levels of thinking. Kalkowski, (1995) found that tutoring improves students' attitudes toward school: reduces dropout rates, and truanancies.
- 3) Permits more advanced students to study below-level material without embarrassment.
- 4) Increases motivation to learn in order to maintain new role and thus improves self-esteem and self-confidence.
- 5) Enhances the ability to manage own learning and study strategies.
- 6) Increases subject specific knowledge, related general knowledge and thereby enhances the understanding of subject area which leads to the improvement in the attitude toward subject area.
- 7) Provides more empathy with students. Tutoring breaks down social barriers and creates new friendships. Martino, (1993) reported that tutoring provides emotional support and positive role models.

2.5.2 Benefits of Tutoring for the Learners

Tutoring is beneficial to the learners in many different ways. It:

- 1) Offers more individualized, systematic, structured learning experience. Martino (1993), revealed that tutoring facilitates individual instruction, wherein lessons are tailored to individual student's learning styles and levels of understanding.
- 2) Provides greater congruence between teacher and learner, closer role model and increases the companionship.
- 3) Improves academic performance and personal growth. This is mainly due to the closer monitoring (from the teacher and tutor) that maximizes time on task.

- 4) Improves attitude toward subject area as it enables private instruction, apart from whole class instruction.
- 5) Generates stronger effects than other individualized teaching strategies. In tutoring, the skills are demonstrated instead of just verbalized.
- 6) Motivates self-paced and self-directed learning.
- 7) Provides intensive practice for students who need it.
- 8) Improves self-esteem. Tutoring facilitates increased praise, feedback, and encouragement over what they might receive from one teacher, which improves the emotional wellbeing of the individual.

2.5.3 Benefits of Tutoring for the Tutors

Tutors also enjoy various benefits out of tutoring practices. Some of the benefits enjoyed by them are as follows:

- 1) The tutor enjoys a sense of pride and accomplishment for having helped someone else. Tutoring increases self-esteem, confidence, and sense of adequacy as a result of being named a tutor.
- 2) Tutors gain an increase in their academic mastery as the result of the process of helping somebody with the academic matter.
- 3) The tutor develops a sense of self-assessment/self-appraisal, which is manifested by a greater sense of dedication to their own instruction, so they can effectively transmit it to the learner.
- 4) Tutoring helps in standardising the teaching methods so that optimum result is obtained by the tutors. Gaustad (1992) found that as a result of tutoring, a new or increased sense of responsibility and awareness for what teachers must do to transmit knowledge to students.
- 5) Tutoring helps the tutors to understand the learners better and to follow their learning behaviours amidst their commitments and shortcomings. The tutors develop empathy for learners for whom learning may be much more of a struggle.

Before moving on to know about the importance of tutoring in distance education, let us have a break and attempt this Check Your Progress.

Check Your Progress 5

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

What are the benefits of tutoring?

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Hope you have done the Check Your Progress taking into account the benefits of tutoring for the tutor, the learners and institutions. Now let us move on to know the relationship between tutoring and counselling.

2.6 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TUTORING AND COUNSELLING

Having read about the basics of Tutoring, now let us know the difference between counselling and tutoring.

Counselling

As far as the distance learning/education is concerned, the term “counselling” refers to the following:

- 1) Student-tutor communication, involving functions like marking and commenting on assignments, face-to-face teaching, telephone tutoring, audio cassettes and video-phone, computer-mediated communication.
- 2) Tait & Sewart (1983) argued that counselling refers to interactions between student and institute which are not directly subject related. The counselling function thus covers advice on general problems related to part-time and distance study, course choices and further training, examinations, registrations, financial support and payment. In other words counselling in distance education covers activities which under another broad term can be described as Student Support Services.

In short, it can be said that providing support to students facing difficult personal circumstances which are specific (social, psychological, integration in the student life...) is done through counselling.

Tutoring

Tutoring is rendered to give support to students facing difficulties in their studies.

Through tutoring we help students help themselves. The tutor assists or guides the students to the point at which they become independent learners, and thus no longer need a tutor.

To conclude, it can be said that Tutoring is study-related and counselling is related to everything. In general, an individual can serve as both the tutor and the counsellor. However, individual preferences do decide on the roles they want to play.

Before moving on to know about how learners can be supported through learning in distance education, let us have a break and attempt this Check Your Progress.

Check Your Progress 6

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

How will you compare tutoring and counselling?

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Hope you have done the Check Your Progress on the basis of the aspects covered in counselling and tutoring. Now let us move on to know about how learners can be supported through tutoring.

2.7 SUPPORTING LEARNERS THROUGH TUTORING

Time is the crucial agent for a variety of tasks to be declared as “successfully completed”. Even in studying, time plays an important role, evident from the fact that no one would appreciate if a candidate successfully completes the first standard in an age due for the completion of the eight standards. A major factor in effective learning is Time-on-task. However, when it comes to the content of learning, maximum intake/retention of the materials learnt prevails when learning is done in frequent short sessions. This is more effective than in occasional long sessions.

In addition, learning is successful if the motivation of the learner is triggered first. It should also be remembered that motivation will be highest for real-life goals of the learners. Hence, it can be said that learning is optimised if it is need driven. The disadvantage of such need driven learning is the thirst for completion rather than the thirst for knowledge.

In lines with the need-driven learning, tutoring should also start from the learners point of need rather than the skill of the tutor. The understanding of the subject matter from the point of the learner also matters a lot.

Tutors must establish the knowledge known to the learners first. From there on, they should move on to the content area specified in the syllabus besides uncovering misconceptions from the minds of the learners. The methods used to impart learning i.e., learning strategies must be accorded priority over making students to memorise subject content. Tutors should have enough time to talk with individual learners about their strategies, or explore deep understanding so that the learning process is fruitful.

While practising tutoring the following should be kept in mind:

- 1) Both the Tutor and learner should agree upon the consistent and regular time to facilitate the learning process. They should remember that coming together is the beginning point for working together. The duration of the tutoring process decides on the quantum of learning transaction that can happen. Frequent tutoring sessions facilitate the feeling of belongingness and remove inhibitions from the learner to openly raise the queries in the mind.
- 2) The real-life goals of the learner should be targeted. The key areas where the learners need help should be identified first. However, the tutor should take extra effort to understand the hidden motive of the learner so that both the completion of the task and the means to make the learner self-sufficient are targeted. In addition, the tutors have to start with the learner’s immediate concerns and slowly navigate to what is best for the learner over a longer period of time.
- 3) The tutors should first assess what the learners already know about the subject and should not be carried away by what is actually posed

by the learner. Applicability of the learning imparted to the learner and further utilisation of the language gained in different contexts is directly proportional to the effort and ability of the tutor.

- 4) Learners often need to learn in very small steps. It is not practical on the part of the tutor to expect the learner to make big leaps. Tutors should remember that there is individual variability in the capacity of learning and learning is person specific even though it is goal oriented in terms of personal, economic, social satisfaction.
- 5) In order to counteract the challenge posed during the learning process, an equal amount of self-confidence and support from the immediate circle of associates is a must. Tutoring is intended to be supportive to help the learners in their struggle to successfully complete the task related to the learning process.

Before moving on to know how a tutoring process can be implemented, let us have a break and attempt this Check Your Progress.

Check Your Progress 7

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

How will you support learners through tutoring?

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Hope you have done the Check Your Progress. Now let us move on to know how tutoring can be implemented.

2.8 IMPLEMENTING A TUTORING PROGRAMME

Tutoring programme is institution specific and highly depends on the tutor who handles the programme. Uniformity in the implementation of the programme is not prevalent and the high diversity makes the tutoring programme unique and special which suits the target group. Irrespective of the size and scope of the tutoring programme, there are basic steps which may be followed to conduct a tutoring programme.

The following steps may be implemented to organize a tutoring programme.

- 1) Consider what the objectives of the tutoring programme are:
 - What is the target age group?
 - What subject area(s) will be the focus?
 - Is academic improvement the main goal, or will the focus be also on self-esteem and student attitudes?
- 2) A person should be earmarked to coordinate the tutoring programme preferably by the occupational designation. The tutor can be recruited either from amongst the employees or specifically hired for this job or chosen one among the volunteer, irrespective of the recruitment procedure used.

- 3) Total support of teaching staff and administration for the implementation of the tutoring programme need to be ensured.
- 4) Stock of available human, physical, time, and financial resources for the purpose of tutoring should be taken.
- 5) The parents or guardians should be informed about objectives, policies, and procedures. If needed their permission should be obtained in writing.
- 6) A plan for evaluating the successfulness of the programme should be chalked out.
- 7) Since the tutors and learners are key players in the tutoring programme, their identification process should be objective and should be grounded as per objectives of the tutoring programme.

Having read the steps to be taken in organizing a tutoring programme, now let us have a quick look at the procedures for identifying the tutors and the learners, who make or break the tutoring programme.

Identifying the tutors

Ellery (1995) suggested the following to be taken into consideration while identifying tutors for a tutoring programme:

1. A panel can be made either by advertising in the media or seeking nominations from faculty and students
2. Potential tutors must be subject experts of the field in question
3. Dedication, patience and willingness are significant qualities of a tutor. They must be able to lead the learner
4. Suitable incentives may be offered to the tutors.

Identifying the learners

In a tutoring programme, a learner is equally important as a tutor. Martino (1993) suggested selecting such students who are in actual need of some help in a specified subject and feel difficulty in learning within a group. But he cautioned against those students who may have attendance problems or have deviant behaviour. He further advised that the learners need to accept, respect and not feel threatened of the tutoring from a peer.

Before moving on to know how tutors can be trained, let us have a break and attempt this Check Your Progress.

Check Your Progress 8

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

How will you identify tutor(s) for a tutoring programme?

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Hope you have done the Check Your Progress. Now let us move on to know how tutors can be trained.

2.9 TRAINING OF THE TUTORS

Training is important to get the best out of a tutor. Training augments the utilisation of the know-how of tutoring which is generally theory-based with the personal experiences. Training prevents the tutors to resort to damaging practices such as threats, put-downs, or guilt.

Factors for effective tutor training

Kalkowski (1995) gave some suggestions for effective implementation of a tutoring programme:

- The tutors should be provided a bird's eye view of the whole programme.
- Detailed training content may be distributed in advance.
- A pre-assessment of the tutor's skills should be carried out.
- Tutors may be provided general background of the learners (but avoid any personal or sensitive information)
- Good work done by tutors must be appreciated. This shall motivate them for further good job.
- Continuous monitoring and supervision throughout the course of tutoring may be maintained.
- Proper records may be maintained by the tutors related to learner's assessment and overall evaluation of the programme.
- A model format may be decided to be followed by tutors for practising interpersonal, management, and content skills.
- Tutors may be trained in error correction procedures.
- Tutors should have the ability to locate the potential area where learners require extra assistance.
- As tutors need appreciation of their good work, the learners should also be provided feedback, encouragement and appreciation.

Before moving on to know the factors to be considered during the conduct of the tutoring session, let us have a break and attempt this Check Your Progress.

Check Your Progress 9

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

What steps we may keep in mind while implementing a training programme for tutors?

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Hope you have done the Check your Progress. Now let us move on to know the factors to be considered during the conduct of the tutoring sessions.

2.10 FACTORS TO KEEP INTO CONSIDERATION WHILE ORGANISING A TUTORING SESSION

Tutoring is beneficial to all the stakeholders involved. However, the following factors should be taken into account to make the tutoring session have optimum result:

- The classrooms must be noise free.
- Effective instructional strategies should be used.
- Authoritarianism should be avoided.
- Tutoring must be conducted in a happy environment.
- Tutors and learners must feel engaged in the programme.
- Tutoring must not be taken as a substitute of what a teacher has accomplished in a classroom.

Before moving on to know the role of the support service staff, let us have a break and attempt this Check your Progress.

Check Your Progress 10

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

What are the factors to be taken into consideration while conducting the tutoring sessions?

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Hope you have worked out the Check your Progress. Now let us move on to know the role of the support service staff.

2.11 ROLE OF SUPPORT SERVICES STAFF

While it is evident that the tutoring programme is of real use in the learning process, it should be made clear of what the scope of the tutors, so that the role of the support services staff (SSS) in the tutoring process is not misunderstood.

2.11.1 The Role of the Support Services Staff Aims to

- Conduct the case history of the learner right from the course choice to the fulfilled prerequisite courses to the schedule agreed upon by the learner and the tutor to the arrangement of the infrastructure already available/accessible to the learner.

- Clarify confusing parts of a lecture or text.
- Solve problems by suggesting possible approaches or working similar problems.
- Help the learner with a course they are currently enrolled in.
- Engage the learner in the specified/allotted time for the duration agreed upon.
- Facilitate the tutoring process, so that the optimum benefit is derived by the learner.

2.11.2 The Role of the Support Services Staff does not Aim to

- Do the homework problems for the learner. (Remember the tutor enables the learner to do the homework)
- Correct papers for the learner.
- Help the learner with take-home tests.
- Repeat the classroom lecture for the learner.
- Help the learner with a course they are NOT currently enrolled in.
- Force the learner to be engaged in the learning process (Remember, the learner has to opt for being benefited by the tutoring process)

While talking about the role of the support services staff, it is also worthy to mention that they can serve as personal tutors. However, it would be apt to review the suitability of the staff to serve as the tutors. It would be a wise choice to put the support services staff as the tutors for their own subject(s) in which they have specialised. They should also be made aware of the student's total situation and the complete teaching system so as to give maximum support. For optimum results, a meeting between the support services staff and the student should be facilitated to achieve a better mutual understanding.

Check Your Progress 11

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Explain what the support services staff are not expected to do in tutoring.

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2.12 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you learnt about tutoring and student support systems. Tutoring has a significant place in distance education as the distance learner has characteristics which need to be addressed in a specific manner. In this unit, you further analysed and discussed how tutoring

and student support systems in ODL and workplace learning are used to fulfil functions associated with both academic and non-academic support. You were also explained the difference between counselling and tutoring. One of the important aspects of tutoring is how to identify suitable tutors, learners and how to organise an effective tutoring session. These were also discussed in detail. Finally you studied how the support service staff can extend help to the learners in distance education setting.

As you noticed, a good tutor must have the capacity and willingness to help learners. Building a positive interpersonal relationship in a tutoring programme benefits the tutor and learners. Rekrut (1994) pointed out that almost any subject can be taken up in a tutoring context, and students and adults of all ages can be participants. The important lesson learned from this unit is that an effective tutoring programme is one where the tutors are receptive to the learners questions and concerns and learners feel comfortable in participating.

2.13 FEEDBACK TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

Check Your Progress 1

- a) Advising learners about which course would be beneficial to them.
- b) Advising learners about courses they can join as per their qualifications.
- c) Responding to student's queries.
- d) Keeping regular contact with the students.
- e) Verifying student records.

Check Your Progress 2

- Reflection
- Providing individualized help
- Questioning
- Offering relevant examples
- Having better understanding of learners
- Prompting and self-correction
- Providing immediate feedback and praise

Check Your Progress 3

- Provides clear explanations.
- Encourages students to ask questions and clear their doubts.
- Provides constructive and positive comments on the work of students.
- Provides timely feedback.
- Shows genuine interest in promoting learning in learners.

Check Your Progress 4

- Peer tutoring
- Cross-age tutoring, and
- Parent/adult volunteer tutoring.

Check Your Progress 5

- Reduces dropout rate
- Increases motivation to learn
- Builds up empathy with students
- Improves self-esteem and self-confidence
- Motivates self-paced and self-directed learning

Check Your Progress 6

Tutoring is provided to students to help them in their studies, whereas through counselling we try to help a student on not only study related issues but on other aspects as well (like social, psychological etc).

Check Your Progress 7

- Arranging frequent tutoring sessions.
- Identifying key areas where the student needs help.
- Making an assessment of what the learner already knows and then proceeding accordingly.
- Taking into consideration the individual's capabilities and providing support.

Check Your Progress 8

- Seeking nominations from faculty or students
- Advertising in the media

Check Your Progress 9

- Detailed agenda must be prepared in advance and circulated among the concerned.
- Pre-assessment of the skills of tutors to be trained
- Knowledge of child psychology should be provided to the tutors
- Continuous monitoring during training programme should be carried out
- Training is to be provided in error correction procedures.

Check Your Progress 10

- Noise free classroom
- Effective instructional strategies
- Make tutors and students feel engaged in the programme.

Check Your Progress 11

- Doing homework of the students
- Repeat the classroom lecture for the students
- Forceful engagement of student in learning.

2.14 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3 MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY IN COUNSELLING AND TUTORING

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Learning Outcomes
- 3.2 Using Media and Technology for Counselling and Tutoring
- 3.3 Role of Print Medium in Counselling and Tutoring
- 3.4 Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Counselling and Tutoring
 - 3.4.1 Broadcast Media in Counselling and Tutoring
 - 3.4.2 Answer Phone
 - 3.4.3 SMS Services
- 3.5 Web Support in Counselling and Tutoring
 - 3.5.1 Online Discussion
 - 3.5.2 E-mail
 - 3.5.3 Blogs
 - 3.5.4 Wiki
 - 3.5.5 Chat
 - 3.5.6 Podcasting
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Feedback to Check Your Progress Questions
- 3.8 References and Further Readings

3.0 INTRODUCTION

You have studied counselling and tutoring in the previous units. You have also learnt various issues involved in tutoring and counselling. Now, in this unit, you will know how media which incorporates technology supports counselling and tutoring. The information and communication technologies (ICTs) play a great role in distance education (DE) setup. Because, it not only works for learner support services, but also to prepare, design and deliver programmes on time. Further, it is used heavily by learners for their necessity and enhancement of their skills.

Counselling and tutoring are the parts of the support services to distance learners. As it has been discussed learners are heterogenous in character and belong to different geographical, economical, cultural, and religious background, they need support services differently. In addition to that different programmes demand different types of support services. To provide on time services to learners, media and technology are the so far best methods to be adapted in distance educational institutions across the globe.

It is generally misunderstood that media means only computer. This is not so, it includes various other tools such as, print machine, broadcasting, computer without internet, and computer with enabled internet. The detail analysis of media and their use in counselling and

tutoring services will be discussed in this unit. In the fourth or the last unit we have focused on organizing counselling and tutoring services. We have discussed about various components i.e. planning, scheduling, budgeting and infrastructure arrangements for organizing effective counselling and tutoring sessions.

3.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Identify the technologies used in counselling and tutoring services;
- Explain the significance of print medium in counselling services;
- Elucidate the use of broadcasting in tutoring services;
- Discuss the use of telephone instrument in counselling services; and
- Analyze the web supports for counselling and tutoring services.

3.2 USING MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY FOR COUNSELLING AND TUTORING

We have already discussed about the qualities and skills of a counsellor in the first unit of this block. In distance education the varied media, such as face-to-face, correspondence and telephone make a critical difference to everything we do.

For instance, so far we have made at least three implicit assumptions about how counselling is conducted. However, these assumptions may not be true of all media. What are those assumptions?

- i) That counselling is a two-way process between a counsellor and a learner.
- ii) That counselling is directed at individuals.
- iii) That it can be initiated by either the counsellor or the learner.

You may be able to spot other such assumptions. But let us look at the different media and ask how far counselling (informing, advising, counselling) is possible in each medium, and what are the relative advantages and disadvantages.

Counselling activities are although not completely different from tutoring but there are a few clear differences marked by them. These are as follows:

Counselling services

- i) It is often a learner centred activity
- ii) In most of the situations learners contact to their counsellor for their academic and non-academic help
- iii) To be a counsellor one must be a good listener
- iv) A counsellor must analyze all the issues raised or posed by the learners

- v) Sometimes counsellor takes initiative to make the counselling sessions interactive.

Tutoring services

- i) The discussions are centered on the course materials/contents
- ii) A teacher has to give lecture to his/her students
- iii) In this case, a teacher should be a nice talker
- iv) Tutor's initiative in this service is given primary importance
- v) The discussions between teacher and student should not fall outside the subject of study.

If these are the situations, then we will discuss which forms of media will cater the need of counselling and tutoring to the learners. In counselling and tutoring domain, there are four assertions which are well accepted. These are:

- i) Counselling is a two-way process between a counselor and a learner whereas tutoring supports this phenomenon of learning.
- ii) Conselling is directed towards individual and tutoring often endorses this fact.
- iii) In both the domains either a learner or a counsellor initiates the interactions.
- iv) In tutoring, a tutor plays two roles; didactic (formal lecturing, explaining, and presenting study content) and facilitative (allow learners to explore on their courses) whereas counselling is all about to facilitate learners.

You may add some of the other assertions. Counselling incorporates the tutoring. Hence, discussion on counselling implies consideration of tutoring issues. Now, let us list the media and technology used for counselling and tutoring services:

- Face-to-face counselling
- Group counselling
- Telephonic counselling
- Counselling through assignment responses
- Counselling by letter
- Counselling by handbook
- Counselling by audio and video cassettes
- Counselling by broadcasting
- Counselling by computer or interactive video disks
- Virtual counselling
- Counselling by internet
- Counselling by mobile devices

These are the technologies used for counselling purposes across the distance educational institutions which depends on their learners'

strength, institutional financial stability, faculty numbers, educational management approaches, etc. See the table below for the characteristics of interactivity and flexibility of media used in counselling purposes.

Table 1: Media of counselling distance learners

Medium and Types	Characteristics of Interactivity and Flexibility							Types of counselling
	One alone	One to one	One to many	Many to many	Time	Place	Pace	
Face-to-face								Both
Telephone								Both
Teleconferencing								Developmental
Answer phone								Problem solving
Letters								Usually developmental
Handbook								Usually developmental
Audio/video tape								Both
Radio								Usually developmental
TV								Usually developmental
Computer								Developmental
Internet								Both
Virtual Conferencing								Usually developmental
Mobile device								Both

3.3 ROLE OF PRINT MEDIUM IN COUNSELLING AND TUTORING

When print medium is used for counselling and tutoring, immediately two concepts figure out; a) Self learning print materials, b) Handbook for counselling services. Let us discuss these two ways of counselling in the context of DE with examples. To remind you further, when people talk about media or technology intervention in DE, it should not be understood as the computer with internet technology, rather, it must be understood as both print and non-print media of technology intervention in the DE settings.

Self Learning Print Materials (SLPM)

SLPM is a dominant medium to offer distance education programme across countries till today after the development of technology based instructional materials in the open university system. It is an irreplaceable medium because of its unique features, quality control measures, assessment and evaluation pattern, and the acquaintance of both learners and teachers to the domain. Chapters/units of distance education course materials are generally well structured. It is designed in such a manner that a few self exercise questions are given for learners to work on those and receive feedbacks of their learning growth by comparing the possible answers provided at the last part of units. By doing the self-check exercises in the unit, they enhance their knowledge on the subject domain. Hence, the possible answers given at the end of the unit play the role of tutor/counsellor.

Counselling through assignments is a part of SLPM. A counsellor comments on learners' assignment responses and grades them. This is the most important aspect of a counsellor/tutor in DE settings. The comments given on the assignment-responses provide feedback, guidance and support to the learners in their study activities. The basic purpose of an assignment is not to solely turn it into a component of examination, but to create a platform on academic communication between learners and counsellors where they can exchange their views and receive teaching in some extent. The reasons for adding a certain percentage of assignment marks/grades in the final examination grades/marks are to retain learners' motivation in the study tasks, otherwise they may not do the tasks seriously.

Handbook for Counselling Services

Handbooks (programme guides) are created for each programme in DE setup. These handbooks are sent to the learners along with their study materials. These handbooks explain the required information for the learners at their pre-entry stage and admission time of distance learning. These handbooks are prepared by considering the target group and their characteristics such as socio-geographical conditions, power to grasp contents, etc. Mostly these are written in an 'interactive style'. They carry the texts which encourage and motivate learners in distance learning. However, in this case no two way communication is possible. Many DE institutions have developed counselling materials in handbook form. These handbooks provide clear, straight and economical information to a large number of learners for their motivation, needs, and so on.

3.4 ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN COUNSELLING AND TUTORING

ICT intervention in DE is not a new concept as of today. This is so because DE adopts technology as it changes from time to time. For example, the recent technological researches on DE are probably on mobile devices, i.e. how mobile devices can be used to cater to the educational needs of large segments of the distance learners. There are no such aspects of DE left where technology did not intervene. Counselling and tutoring services are no exception to this. Thus,

technology plays an important role to provide these support services to learners. ICT incorporates the communication both in synchronous and asynchronous forms which can be derived from various technological instruments, such as; radio, telephone, audio/video cassettes, computer, mobile devices, etc.

3.4.1 Broadcast Media in Counselling and Tutoring

There are different media used for tutoring and counselling services in distance education. Out of these a few are of broadcasting in nature. These are:

- a) Telephone teleconferencing
- b) Teleconferencing
- c) Interactive Television
- d) Interactive radio counselling

Broadcasting facilities give more information to learners and is used for less interaction with learners. Thus, it is claimed that broadcasting is used for information purposes.

In this technologically advanced world, learner can also equally interact with the concerned resource persons while sitting at their home. So there are many possibilities of two way interactions which may take place between teacher concerned and the learners. However, it would be very difficult to make the broadcasting session interactive in its full form. This is so because, the features of broadcasting are such that it cannot be stopped and started, and proceed at its own pace.

Broadcasting nevertheless encourages, inspires, and motivates learners to attend it. A few open learning institutions across the globe use teleconferencing for counselling sessions. Mostly it is two way audio and one way video. While teleconferencing is on, learners who are in a distance place can communicate to the concerned teacher(s) by phone.

Telephone Teleconferencing

Telephone teleconferencing is actually audio conferencing. In this, the speakerphones are available in the classrooms. This system can be used for up to ten participants. If there are more people, more sophisticated speakers can be used. Audio conferencing is used because telephones are available all over the world. Also conferences can be arranged at a short notice. Compared to other technologies, the cost is low. There are different types of audio conferencing like; Dedicated Conference networks; Dial up Networks; Meet Me conferencing and Direct Dial conferencing systems. There is another type of audio conferencing known as Audio graphic information through telephone line.

Video Teleconferencing

This is a combination of audio and visual media which provides interactive voice communication and television pictures. This system comprises one-way or two-way video and two-way audio networks. Motion video is the most common technology but other options also exist, such as freeze-frame television, compressed video systems and

full motion video systems. Video conferencing is a national conferencing format but involves high cost.

Interactive Television

Another area of research and experimentation with the educational media is the use of interactive television. The interactive television has been used extensively since 1983 by a large number of organizations, like IGNOU, UGC, AIMA, NCERT, NIEPA, NIOS, IIT Delhi, etc.

The two centrally sponsored schemes PMOST and SOPT for in-service education of primary teachers used interactive television in the training of primary teachers in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh in 1996. Both the experiments showed a positive impact of interactive television on learning by the teachers (Dash 1997, Prakash and Lal 1998). Dash studied the reactions of the participants on the content and its presentation, the interaction and technology whereas Prakash and Lal studied presentation and production aspects in relation to the effectiveness of the medium for orientation of primary school teachers. Phutela (1998) reported the SOPT experiment in the state of Karnataka in India. The evaluation of the experiment indicated significant gain on the learning of concepts and practices relating to the large number of themes covered in the programme. The teachers liked the technology for training a large number at a distance.

Taleem Research Foundation (1999) evaluated the effectiveness of teacher training through teleconferencing for primary school teachers of District Primary Education Programme (DEP-DPEP) in the state of Tamil Nadu. The study revealed that majority of teachers was positive towards teleconference as a mode of training. The technology has the potential for training large number of teachers located at different sites. The quality of interaction among the teachers and learners was reported to be high.

An experiment of Higher Cognitive Learning for the Engineering College Teachers by IIT Delhi was professionally evaluated on a pre-test, post-test format. Results showed that the post-test scores were higher than the pre-test. Participant's reaction was positive towards the course and the technology.

Classroom 2000+ was another experiment where lessons were telecast, palmtop computers and STD were used for feedback and interaction. Evaluation of the experiment showed that the technology could deliver quality education to remove existing disparity in education among different sections of the society. The findings of the study Mukhopadhyay and Parhar (1993), Panda (1998) and Goel (2000) revealed that in Physics and Maths the achievement of the experimental group was significantly higher than the control group.

Many organizations and institutions have used Interactive Television to train their workers. In the state of Gujarat, the adult education trainers were trained through satellite. National Productivity Council trained its senior technicians and supervisors. There were nine learning ends. Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering (IETE) located in Delhi trained a large number of engineers through interactive television. Extension workers were trained in Bhiwani district of the state of Haryana. All these experiments conducted were found to be effective as it gave interactive experience to the participants.

The Indira Gandhi National Open University is the first university, which started the ITV in India for educational purpose. Interactive Television is part of IGNOU's instructional system. It gives the learners who are at far ends a direct access to the experts who are at the studios. The satellite based one-way video and two-way audio teleconferencing was first conducted in 1993 in collaboration with the ISRO on experimental basis. The target audiences were the Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors and Academic Counsellors posted at different regional centres. This experiment was successful and since then interactive sessions are regularly held by various schools of IGNOU for distance teaching. Teleconference sessions are also conducted for orientation of academic counsellors of management and commerce disciplines. In the certificate programme on "empowering Women through Self Help Groups", women interact directly with the experts through teleconference sessions. The women empowerment project has established 150 programme centres all over the country. School of Education conducts teleconference session in their Post Graduate Diploma in higher Education (PGDHE) programme. PGDHE programme was launched by IGNOU in 1992 for teachers who aspire to teach in universities and colleges. The programme comprises five courses and a project. One of the course is the Extended Contact Programme (ECP). The ECP is partly organized through teleconference mode. IGNOU has experimented the ECP through teleconferencing in 1993. The faculty of School of Education and other outside experts conducted discussion and have video presentations. The teleconferencing assigns an activity that a learner is supposed to undertake following the session. At the end of the session, which is approximately of one hour, 30-35 minutes are devoted for interaction where all the learners and resource persons take part in the ECP linked through the teleconferencing network. Learners ask questions, raise issues, share experiences and apprehension.

IGNOU telecasts interactive sessions. Satellite communication with interactive mode of teaching is an additional input in some programmes. These programmes are mainly syllabus based. Teleconferencing has become a part for instructional system. According to Rao and Khan (1998), IGNOU uses teleconferencing for approx. 246 hours in 1995, 483 hours in 1996 and 495 hours in 1997. They reviewed the teleconferencing sessions conducted by IGNOU over a period of three years. It was found that professional courses are appropriate for teleconferencing sessions, as learners in these courses are mature and motivated.

In education, interactive television is useful as it:

- Offers uniform, quality instruction to learners scattered over many sites or over a large area;
- Allows learners at multiple location to interact with the expert and with each other; and
- Provides counselling without leaving the workplace.

Interactive Radio Counselling

In May 1998, the IGNOU-AIR interactive radio counselling was stated for students of open/conventional universities. IGNOU collaborated with AIR Bhopal and started this service. The experiment was

successful and therefore extended to other AIR stations. The focus of the counselling sessions is the academic subjects. At present, these sessions are broadcast from 189 AIR stations in India. IGNOU is using this mode to reach the isolated and remote area. On the first and third Sundays of every month, IRC is on National Broadcast Network. The session is for one hour. Similarly, on the second and fourth (fifth) Sunday of every month, the session is of one hour in all the AIR stations, except Srinagar where pre-recorded lessons are broadcast at night for one hour. The state open universities conduct the IRCs from Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Bangalore, Patna, Jaipur, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Mumbai on the fourth Sunday of every month.

A few evaluation studies on interactive radio counselling have been reported. Chaudhary and Bansal (2000), Sukumar (2001) and Sharma (2002) found that the participants appreciated the interactive radio counseling session. However, it was found that there was need to encourage interactivity amongst the listeners. Non-students also make use of these programmes. Learners suggested the use of local language for interaction.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Imagine you have groups of learners at the following stages of their studies. Devise a suitable counselling activity for each.

i) About to tackle the first assignment.

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ii) Choosing future courses.

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iii) Coming up to the exam.

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3.4.2 Answer Phone

Telephone answering machines which give an automatic taped message when dialed are now in relatively common use in many parts of the world. Since most offices have more than one telephone line, it is easier to use one of those lines out of office hours to provide an appropriate counselling message.

3.4.3 SMS Services

For last few years, SMS (Short Message Service) is playing major role in exchanging information among people especially students. State Open Universities and other institutions started using SMS services for sending important information to learners immediately. IGNOU utilizes the advantages of SMS to reach to their students. The information about admission notice, counselling sessions, term-end results, and training programmes are being informed to the students from time to time. As a result it has been found that students as well as IGNOU got the following advantages from SMS (data provided below is based on the software report which is used to send SMS to learners and others):

- Attendance to counselling sessions has increased, in some cases, from 10% to 90%
- Pace of pickup of course material by students at Regional Centers has increased
- Results of examinations reaching students within a few minutes of their declaration at headquarters
- Admission notification being sent
- Workshop intimations
- Student Support Services strengthened as RCs are able to send critical information to students who are otherwise contacting Headquarters.

Various schools, divisions and regional centres of IGNOU are using the SMS alerts to provide information to the students.

3.5 WEB SUPPORT IN COUNSELLING AND TUTORING

The internet as a counselling medium for distance education programmes remains as a largely untapped resource. The use of the internet needs access to both computers and telecommunicating equipment. The lowest level of connection to the internet requires dial-up telephone access, which remains problematic for many distance learners. Even those located close enough to highly developed telephone infrastructure may find that long distance tolls or hourly connection charges restrict access to those with limited disposable income.

Let us look at the methods and devices that internet based distance education can use for counselling distance learners.

3.5.1 Online Discussion

Method used by the counsellor to reach out in a 'one-to-many' is by the use of the World Wide Web (WWW). WWW can be used to put out articles, study guide and whole textbooks and slide shows. In the context of counselling it could be used for posting information, messages, assignments etc.

The most interesting part for distance education is group communication, (many-to-many communication), for which we could use the device of computer conferencing. Computer conferencing connects the counsellor and distance learners present at different locations, through computer networks. If a camera is attached to the computer, the computer conferencing gets converted into video conferencing. All the participants can be seen on the monitor whenever they log-in. In this way the counsellor can see the distance learner and the learners can see the counsellor.

Videoconferencing is similar to regular face-to-face interaction except that the learners and the counsellor are located at different locations, thus providing an opportunity for group discussion and team learning and is independent of space and time.

It is interesting to note that this medium has the potential to offer opportunities for collaboration between institutions across the globe.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Imagine that you are setting up a counselling system for the new college. Which media would you adopt and what would be your priorities?

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The counsellor interacts with one or more learners simultaneously at different terminals. The counsellor announces his/her "contact time" in cyberspace, and distance learners log-in to discuss questions in that period. The counsellor acts as the chairperson of the discussion. It is known as bulletin board systems because the 'chat room' or 'talk room' which holds one-to-one or to many conversations respectively.

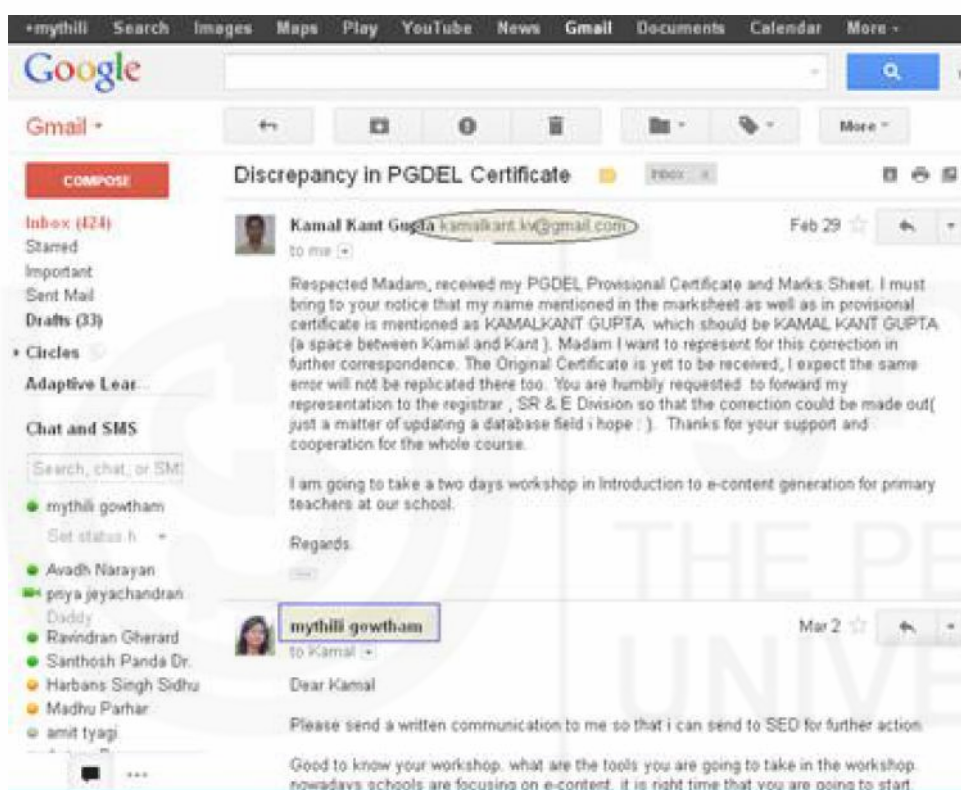
3.5.2 E-mail

E-mail is another commonly used example of correspondence or an asynchronous interaction between counsellors and distance learners. Email counselling is online counselling which uses email to communicate. You and your counsellor can send e-mails to each other. Group e-mail is also possible to interact with your peer group.

Instead of writing letters and waiting for several days to get the reply by post, counsellors can post assignments, announcements, supplemental materials, as well as give feedback or responses to distance learners individually or in a group. Distance learners who are 'quiet' and 'shy' are able to respond in a comfortable and private atmosphere.

Since it is over the internet, counsellor and you do not need to be in the same town or even country. This increases frequent interaction between you and your counsellor. Counsellor and you work together to resolve problems.

The following figure shows the dialogue between a student and a counsellor/coordinator of a programme.



Dear Kamal

Please send a written communication to me so that I can send to SED for further action.

I am happy about your workshop. What are the tools you are going to take in the workshop? Nowadays schools are focusing on e-content, it is right time that you are going to start.

All the best. If you want any help please let me know.

Regards

Mythili

Situation:

A student of PG Diploma in eLearning wanted to clear the discrepancy in his certificate. So he sent an e-mail to his coordinator cum counsellor.

From: kamalkant.kv@gmail.com

To:mythiligowtham@gmail.com

Subject: Discrepancy in PGDEL Certificate

Respected Madam, received my PGDEL Provisional Certificate and Mark Sheet. I must bring to your notice that my name mentioned in the mark sheet as well as in provisional certificate is mentioned as KAMALKANT GUPTA which should be KAMAL KANT GUPTA (a space between Kamal and Kant). Madam I want to represent for this correction in further correspondence. The Original Certificate is yet to be received, I expect the same error will not be replicated there too. You are humbly requested to forward my representation to the Registrar, Student Evaluation Division so that the correction could be made out (just a matter of updating a database field I hope). Thanks for your support and cooperation for the whole course.

I am going to take a two days workshop in introduction to e-content generation for primary teachers at our school.

Regards.

Kamal

Reply to Kamal

In this way you can avail the e-mail features to interact or get information pertaining to your requirements. Now, let us discuss some social networking media and how these may be useful for counselling in the online environment.

3.5.3 Blogs

First let us talk about blog. A blog is a personal diary; a daily pulpit; a collaborative space; a political soapbox; a breaking-news outlet; a collection of links and your own private thoughts. You can design the Blogs as per your choice. There are millions of Blogs, in all shapes and sizes, and there are no real rules.

In simple terms, a blog is a website, where you write message on an ongoing basis. New message shows up at the top, so your visitors can read what's new. Then they comment on it or link to it or e-mail you.

A blog allows a single counsellor (or sometimes, but less often, a group of counsellors) to write and publicly display time-ordered articles (called posts). Learners can add comment to posts.

A Blog can be use in the following way:

- Counsellor can build up a blog to share knowledge via posts and comments. There might be a group of learners in a class, encouraged and facilitated by a counsellor, or a group of relatively dedicated life-long learners.

- Counsellor can use a blog for course announcements, news and feedback to learner.
- Blogs can be used with syndication technologies to enable groups of learners and counsellors to easily keep track of new posts.

The following figure shows a blog. This blog was created and maintained by IGNOU to find the student satisfaction on various academic activities.



This blog was created by using www.blogger.com and placed in IGNOU website. A request was sent to all the learners to access the blog. You can also notice in the figure that the blogger/faculty created a post to seek the suggestion from learners to improve academic counselling and learners commented on that post.

In the similar way, counsellor can create many blogs to maintain course wise interaction among learners.

3.5.4 Wiki

Now, let us discuss about wiki a collaborative social networking which is being used very frequently. Wiki is widely used in the academic community.

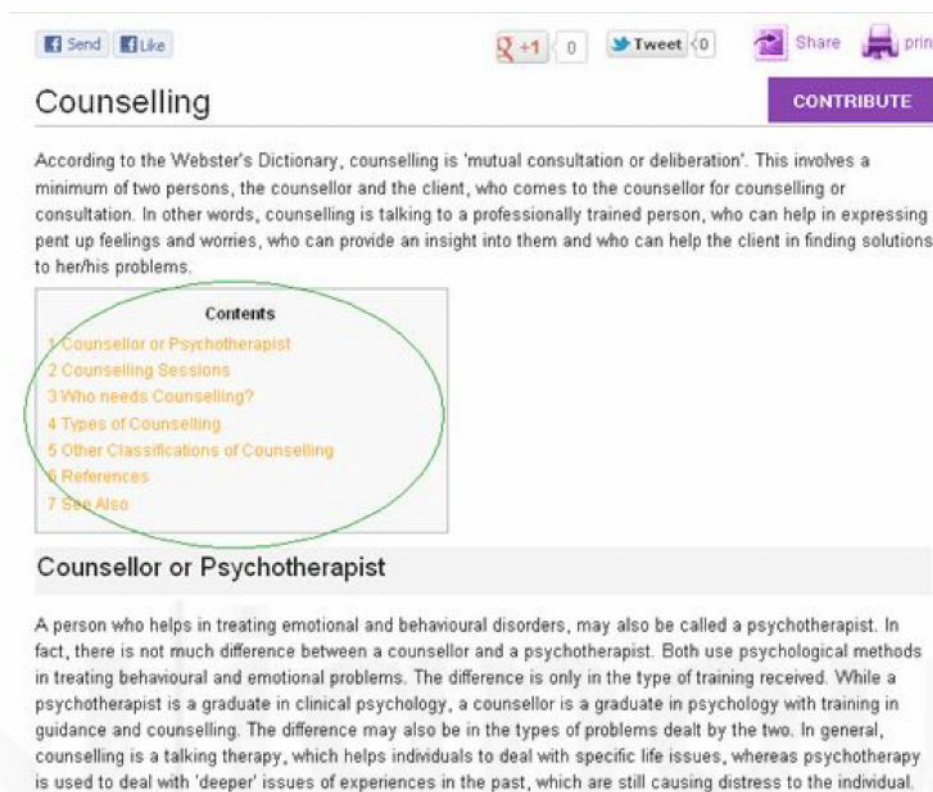
A Wiki is a system that allows one or more people to build up a quantity of knowledge in a set of interlinked web pages, using a process of creating and editing pages. The most famous wikis are Wikipedia and Wikieducator.

A Wiki can be used in the following way:

- Wikis can be used for the creation of annotated reading lists by one or more counsellor.
- Wikis can be used in class projects and particularly suit the incremental accretion of knowledge by a group, or production of collaboratively edited material, including material documenting group projects.
- Wikis can be used by counsellor to supply scaffolding for writing activities – thus in a group project a counsellor can supply page structure, hints as to desirable content, and then provide feedback on student generated content.

- Learners can flag areas of the wiki that need attention, and provide feedback on each other's writing.

The following figure shows a Wiki page on counselling.



Counsellors from various regions can collaboratively contribute their experience in Wiki that can be viewed by learners. Learners can also share their experience in Wiki.

3.5.5 Chat

Chat is another online facility which is used in real time or synchronous interaction between counsellor and learners. As a learner you can use instant messaging and text chat and internet forum to interact with counsellor in real time situation.

Instant Messaging

An instant messaging application allows you to communicate with another person over a network in real time in relative privacy. Popular, instant messaging providers are Gtalk, Skype, Meebo, ICQ, Yahoo, Messenger, MSN Messenger, Pidgin (formerly Gaim) and AOL Instant Messenger.

Text chat

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and other online chat technologies allow users to join chat rooms and communicate with many learners at once, publicly. Users may join a pre-existing chat room or create a chat room about any topic. Once inside, you may type message that everyone in the room can read, as well as respond to messages from others.

Internet forums

Internet forums allow users to post a "topic" for others to review. Other users can view the topic and post their comments in a linear fashion, one after the other. Most of the forums are public, allowing anybody to sign up at any time. Examples are Yahoo Groups and Google Groups.

Check Your Progress 3

- Notes:** a) Space is given below for your answer.
b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Imagine you have groups of learners at your region. Devise a suitable group counselling using social media.

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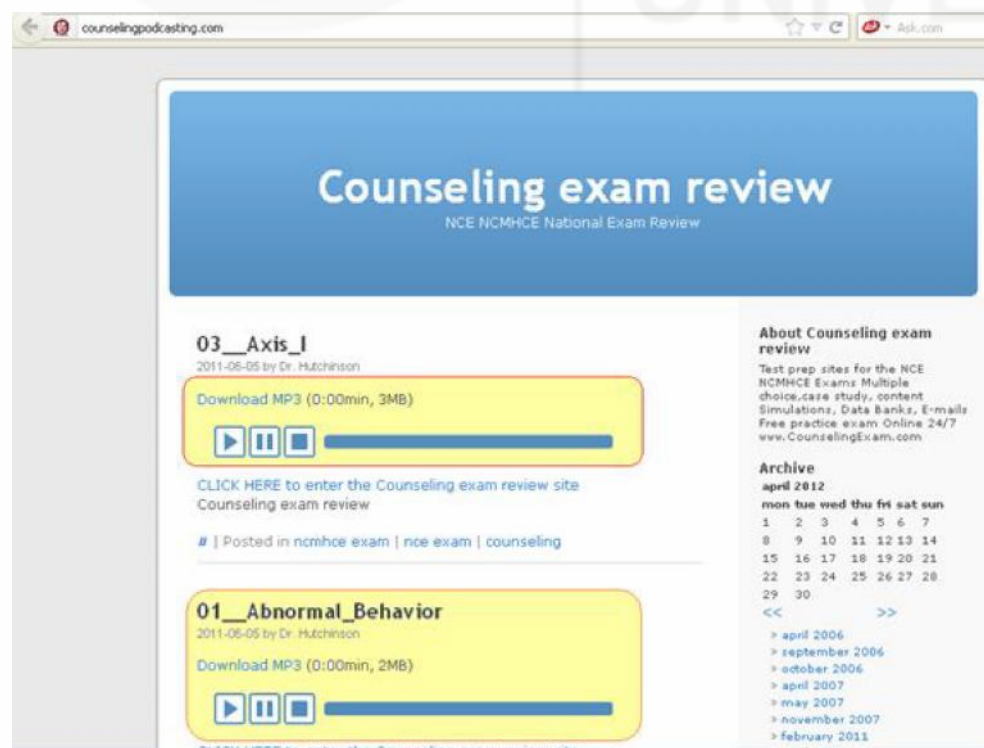
3.5.6 Podcasting

A podcast is a series of audio digital media files which is distributed over the Internet by syndicated download, through Web feeds, to portable media players and personal computers. Though the same content may also be made available by direct download or streaming, a podcast is distinguished from most other digital media formats by its ability to be syndicated, subscribed to, and downloaded automatically when new content is added.

Podcasting can be downloaded to your computer so that you can listen to them at your convenience while at home or work. They can also be added to your iPod for use while taking a walk, on the treadmill, in the car, or whenever you have time. Examples are <http://podcast.ucsd.edu/> and www.podcast.com

Counsellor can record his/her counselling sessions and upload on the podcasting website. Learner can download the sessions and listen while travelling or anywhere and any place.

Visually impaired learners can get major advantage of podcasting. The following figure shows one of the podcasting websites.



3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed how the information communication technologies are used for counselling and tutoring for support services in distance education. We have also analysed various technologies like counselling through teleconferencing, telephone, e-mail and SMS services. We have discussed how the social media can be used for counselling sessions. Technology based counselling sessions help the learners not only in understanding the subject matters but also to improve the writing skills. You will learn how to create wiki page, blog and other social media in the course MDE-418 on Educational Communication Technologies.

3.7 FEEDBACK TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Learners will require some practical help with this, but there will be some learners for whom it is the first thing they have done since leaving school which will be assessed in this way. So it will be helpful to demystify the assessment process.

Find an old assignment answer (or part) and give copies of it to the learner. Tell them 'pretend you are the teacher and mark this assignment on your own' (5 minutes). Now get together with another person and compare your results. What things did you find yourselves looking for? (10 minutes).

In the ensuing group discussion by using any media/technology like teleconferencing, online chat, etc. (see the accessibility) it should be possible to bring out the importance of answering the question, planning the essay and so on.

- ii) For some learners moving to the next course may be intimidating. Therefore, invite some experienced learners to your group to talk about how they choose their future courses and to lead a discussion of course choice.
- iii) There is always a lot of anxiety among the learners before the exams. In that sense, focusing on exams and group sessions can be very helpful in sharing and ameliorating this anxiety.

Asks the learners to report about the exams they have appeared this year. Try to identify the reasons for losing marks. This can be run as a simple 'brainstorming exercise', with learners calling out items for you to list on the board for subsequent discussion.

The list might end up including:

- a) Not following the paper's instructions about how many, and which questions to answer.
- b) Misreading the questions.
- c) Spending too much time on some questions and not enough on others.

Check Your Progress 2

The media you would adopt will depend on the situation of new College. In a technically advanced society with a reliable and accessible telephone system you might place most emphasis on telephone counselling, and on usage of the internet, which has several devices for counselling distance learners.

In a developing country, the most important counselling medium would be correspondence both by letter and handbook and perhaps your most important initial task would be to write such handbooks.

Check Your Progress 3

E-mail: Create e-mail account using Google mail, service or yahoo mail service (you can use any other mail services).

- Ask your learner to create e-mail account in the same mail services.
- Create a group mail and include all the learner mails.
- Use the group mail for discussion.

Blog: Create a blog using www.blogger.com or www.wordpress.com create post on it. Sent the blog URL to your learners, ask them to reflect their view on the blog.

3.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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www.blogger.com

www.podcast.com

www.wikieducator.org

UNIT 4 ORGANISING COUNSELLING AND TUTORING SERVICES

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Learning Outcomes
- 4.2 Planning Counselling and Tutoring Services
 - 4.2.1 Counselling and Tutoring Services and the Institution
 - 4.2.2 Open University vs. Dual Mode University
 - 4.2.3 Tutoring and Counselling in Open Universities
 - 4.2.4 Tutoring and Counselling in Distance Learning of the Dual Mode Universities
- 4.3 How to Plan a Counselling/Tutoring Session?
- 4.4 Identification and Appointment of Academic Counsellors
- 4.5 Orientation and Training of Academic Counsellors
- 4.6 Scheduling of Counselling and Tutoring Sessions
- 4.7 Budgeting and Infrastructure Arrangement
- 4.8 Implementation
 - 4.8.1 Need Based Counselling
 - 4.8.2 One-to-one Counselling
 - 4.8.3 Face-to-face Counselling
 - 4.8.4 Group Counselling
 - 4.8.5 Online Counselling
- 4.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.10 Feedback to Check Your Progress Questions
- 4.11 References and Further Readings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Most of the Open universities and distance education institutions all over the world blend face-to-face contact programme with online counselling programmes. Those learners who are geographically and economically disadvantaged heavily rely on the face-to-face contact sessions because they are neither able to use audio-video disks sent to them in their learning activities nor can they study in isolation from their peer groups and counsellors/distance teachers.

In the previous unit, you have read and understood the various aspects of counselling and tutoring. By now, you must be familiar with the definition, importance, and other aspects of counselling and tutoring. You have also learnt how various media and technology are used in the counselling and tutoring services in distance education (DE) settings.

In this unit, you will know the organizational aspect of counselling and tutoring services of DE institutions/universities across the globe. If you

observe closely you may notice that face-to-face (F2F) counselling sessions often play a vital role for distance learners. Distance learners look forward to counselling next to printed learning materials. They eagerly wait for the face-to-face interaction (counselling) with their teachers. Majority of the learners even do not open the printed materials till they attend the face-to-face counselling session. This implies that learners look for an opportunity to meet other persons related to their study activities and the institution. The interaction with the fellow learners and tutors stimulate them for further learning. Though, study materials in distance education are self explanatory in nature still, face-to-face sessions provide an opportunity for social interaction viz. interaction with fellow learners and the teachers. Hence, it is prescribed that we need to pay special attention to the organizational aspects of face-to-face counselling and tutoring sessions.

In this unit, you will be explained the planning and organizational aspects of various forms of tutoring and counselling. Again, you will be explained the principal factors which influence organization of counselling and tutoring services, in other words, factors which are to be considered while organizing counselling and tutoring services.

4.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After working on the unit, you should able to:

- Discuss various issues connected to planning the counselling and tutoring services;
- Identify the factors for selecting the academic counsellors;
- Describe the process of organizing orientation programme for the counsellors;
- Define various factors connected to scheduling the counselling and tutoring sessions;
- List the items of budgeting and infrastructure arrangements for counselling session; and
- Explain the measures to be undertaken while implementing actual organization of various counselling sessions viz. need based counselling, one-to-one counselling, face-to-face counselling, group counselling, and on-line counselling.

4.2 PLANNING COUNSELLING AND TUTORING SERVICES

The planning for counselling and tutoring in a distance education institution largely depends on the nature of the institution itself. Since distance education is an “industrialized form of education” (Otto Peter, 1973), the organizational planning also resemble to an “industry”. Probably, because of this unique feature of distance education, management is the central issue here rather than pedagogy, which is central in a conventional educational institution.

4.2.1 Counselling and Tutoring Services and the Institution

Organising counselling for different learners mostly depend upon the nature of the institution. You are already aware that three different types of ODL institutions exist in today's world:

- 1) Open and distance leaning universities
- 2) Dual mode universities
- 3) Virtual universities (online platform)

These institutions follow various methodologies while organizing counselling and tutoring services. The methodologies adopted by the open universities are radically different from that of the Distance Education Institutes of the dual mode universities, counselling and tutoring services in both the institutions are managed by the people largely belonging to the conventional system.

4.2.2 Open University vs. Dual Mode University

Open and Distance Education (ODE) Universities mostly organize limited face-to-face session. These sessions are generally organized throughout the academic sessions; on weekends, or during holidays, or in the evening hours. But personal contact programmes are mostly organized by the distance education institutes during the end of the academic session in order to prepare the learners for the term end examinations.

The planning of counselling and tutoring depends upon the institutional support services. You are very much aware that in an Open University support services play a crucial role in teaching-learning activities. Counselling and tutoring usually take place at the Study Centres. Hence, the planning of counselling and tutoring is the responsibility of the coordinators and other officials of a Study Centre. Whereas, in a dual mode university the support services are mainly provided at the distance education units only Counselling and tutoring are organized both at the headquarters and the Study Centres. Hence, the planning of the counselling and tutoring sessions largely depend upon the distance education units. Though counselling and tutoring are organized at the Study Centres, the planning is done mostly by the units/centres. Study Centres are normally consulted to ascertain the availability of space and human resources.

4.2.3 Tutoring and Counselling in Open Universities

Most open universities in the world follow either two or three tier Learner Support Services system and organize counselling and tutoring at the Study Centres. It is often observed that most of the open universities in India following either the UK Open University, or Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, or Indira Gandhi National Open University model of support service with a modification the demand of respective institutions/universities. In the following paragraphs we shall briefly discuss the salient features of the counselling and tutoring services of UKOU, Dr. BRAOU, and IGNOU in order to give you some insights about organizing counselling services.

Alan Tait (2003) enumerated the basic characteristics of the counselling and tutoring services of the Open University, UK as follows:

- Each student had a personal tutor, in a group with no more than 25 or so other students in order to allow personal knowledge, support and understanding to grow up through the lifetime of a course.
- The tutor gave teaching feedback and the mark for work completed during the course, thus having a pivotal role in supporting student learning and progress (and which gave rise to the serious development of the teaching skill known now as correspondence teaching).
- All students were offered the opportunity but not the obligation to take part in face-to-face tutorials, and more recently computer-mediated tutorials, managed by their own tutor (online courses still only remain a tiny minority within the overall provision of the UKOU).
- A network of some 260 Study Centres were established throughout the UK in order to provide such tutorial opportunities, supported by 13 Regional Centres, thus ensuring that the student felt 'nearer' the university whose headquarters are in central England.
- A limited amount of residential school experience on a conventional campus was essential, at a minimum one week.
- From 1971-1997 all undergraduate students – i.e., the great majority, had access to a personal tutor-counsellor who offered them support and advice throughout their career with the university whatever course they were on, providing for what was called 'continuity of counselling' (Tait, 1998).

While there has been substantial revision of the UKOU system since the original blueprint, the core role of the tutor who works with a group of students of no more than 25 in number, and who teaches and grades their work, continues to be seen as at the heart of learner support.

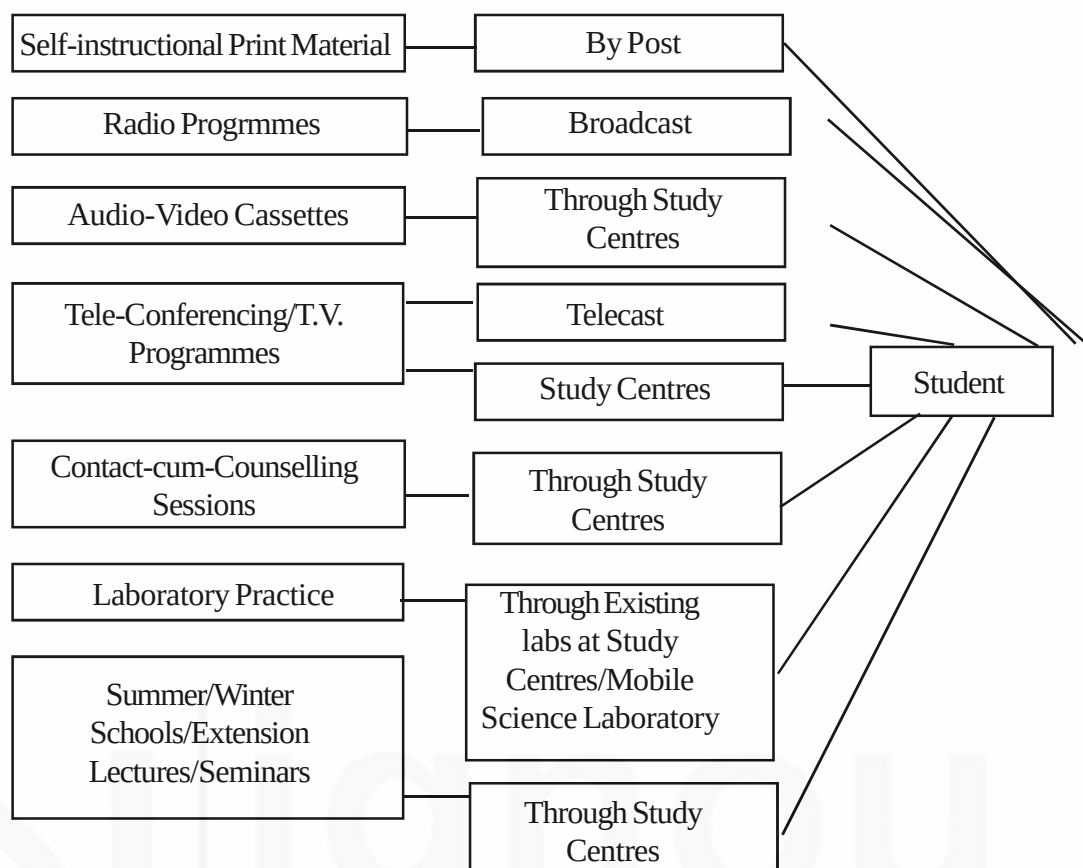
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU)

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University uses multimedia for its instructional purposes. Self-learning printed materials are supplemented by other media, which include, TV, Mana-TV, Audio, Video, Radio, Radio-phone-in programme, TV teleconference (Saptagiri Channel, DD-8) and Mana-TV teleconferences). Apart from these media, the University also organises, contact-cum-counselling classes, winter/summer classes, assignments, practical training programmes and project work. The multimedia instructional system of the university is shown in a schematic diagram given in Figure 4.1 (Reddy, 2008).

Contact-Cum-Counselling Classes

The most important component of the Dr. BRAOU counselling services are the face-to-face personal contact-cum-counselling classes. The face-to-face counselling and tutorial classes are arranged on Sundays at the Study Centers. The important point to be considered by the Study

Multi-Media Instructional System



Centre Coordinators while organizing these sessions is that the students get an opportunity to interact with academic counsellors and also with their fellow students. Apart from contact-cum-counselling classes, the Study Centre Coordinators and Coordinators of Regional Centres also organize guidance and advisory support services (Reddy, 2008).

Model structure of a 02 hour Contact-cum-Counselling Session of the Dr. BRAOU (Reddy, 2008):

Matter for Discussion	Time (in minutes)
1) Introducing the topic	5
2) Asking the students to identify the problems/cases/concepts/doubts which need discussion/explanation in the session	10
3) The subject matter under discussions may be divided into 4 or 5 sub-units, and for each Sub-unit there should be a presentation for 15 to 20 minutes and opportunities for students to raise questions/doubts for about 6 to 7 minutes	90 (60 explanation 30 discussions)
4) Discussion related to probable questions in Examination and their answers	10
5) Summing up of the discussion and indication of areas for discussion in the next session	5
	120 Minutes

The Counselling and tutoring services of IGNOU are organized through its network of Regional Centres, Study Centres and Partner Institutions. Various media are used for counseling distance learners, viz.: face to face sessions at Study Centres, tele- counselling through teleconferencing, phone-in-radio counselling, TV counselling through Gyan Darshan, FM Radio counselling through Gyan Vani, e-mail, chat mode on internet. The latest addition to these services is the IGNOU flexi-learning at www.ignouflexilearn.ac.in

Face-to-Face Counselling Sessions

The face-to-face counselling sessions form an important component of the Counselling services of IGNOU. The face-to-face sessions, mostly in the form of tutorials are organized at study centres on weekends and holidays and sometimes even on weekdays but after office hours. Teachers from the host institution where the Study Centre is located or from neighboring educational institutions and professionals working in various sectors form the core group of Academic Counsellors for the tutorial sessions.

The Regional Centres provide necessary guidance to Study Centres in preparation of the counselling schedule and periodically monitor the conduct of counselling sessions. The Coordinator/Assistant Coordinator of the Study Centre organizes the face-to-face counselling and tutoring sessions as per guidelines provided by the various Schools of the University. The Study Centres need to submit monthly reports to the Regional Centre.

Tele Counselling

IGNOU provides telecounselling to students through teleconferencing at receiving stations at Regional Centres and Study Centres through Edusat. The exclusive Education TV Channel Gyan Darshan also provides counselling to students.

Phone-in Radio Counselling

FM radio station *Gyan Vani* is now widely spread all over the country to provide phone-in radio counselling to IGNOU students.

Science Practical Sessions

The Study Centres organize the practical component of the science and computer programmes. The Coordinator/Programme in-Charge arranges practical sessions in the premises of the host institution or any other designated practical laboratory. It is the duty of Coordinator/Programme-in-Charge to arrange for practical counselling and hands on work practice in the course during the academic session. The Coordinator/Programme-in-Charge prepares a schedule in the prescribed format and learners are informed well in advance. Laboratory courses are also organized during vacations for employed/in-service learners.

IGNOU Flexi Learn

The IGNOUFLEXILEARN facilitates informed learning by providing free access to anyone who wants to learn. The platform provides a self learning environment with option interact with Academic counsellors/advisors through Discussion Board, Blogs, wikis, podcasting, RSS feeds etc.

The FlexiLearn website (www.ignoutflexilearn.ac.in) gives free access to the university courses. This is a personal learning space where free learning resources are integrated with learning management system for anyone who wants to learn, whatever their educational needs and experience.

FlexiLearn facilitates informed learning wherein, anyone can register and explore courses free of cost to gain knowledge and skill in a particular area of interest. Certification for courses will be based on payment of the requisite fees. This provides an alternative way of awarding degrees and diplomas. The FlexiLearn platform offers courses in a complete open and flexible environment with following features:

Banner of IGNOU Flexi learn

- ❖ Any visitor to the FlexiLearn site has the option to register for any particular course or a full length academic programme. A modular approach is followed wherein a registered learner can combine course credits to obtain a diploma or degree of their own choice.
- ❖ The platform provides self learning environment with a list of Academic Advisors/ Course Guides to act as mentors. The Personal Learning Environment (PLE) will have interactive tools like Discussion Board, Blogs, wikis, podcasting, RSS feeds etc.
- ❖ Each course will have the option for both online assessment as well as offline one as per the choice of the learner wherein a learner can take their exams 'on demand'.
- ❖ A complete tracking mechanism is integrated in the platform through the e-portfolios of individual learners. E-portfolio will keep a formal record of all formal and informal studies carried out by the registered learner. Certification of the course will be based on stipulated time spent on a course and completion of all learning activities identified by the faculty.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Describe the counselling and tutoring services of IGNOU and BRAOU.

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4.2.4 Tutoring and Counselling in Distance Learning of the Dual Mode Universities

We have already discussed that most of the **Distance Education Institutes/universities** organize counselling and tutoring in the form of Personal Contact Programmes (PCPs) at their headquarters. Some dual mode universities also follow a two/three tier Learner Support Systems for providing counselling and tutoring services to their learners.

To give you some insights regarding organization of Counselling and Tutoring services, let us look at the systems practiced at different open universities and DEIs.

The DEI of the **University of Mumbai**, which offers both undergraduate and post graduate programmes organizes counselling and tutoring in selected Study Centres and also at the HQ. As declared in the prospectus, the Institute follows a different methodology of instructions from that of the conventional University/College. It is claimed to be more learner-oriented and the learner is an active participant in the teaching learning process. It follows the multimedia approach in instruction. Face-to-face interaction with teachers at PCP centres and Counselling at the institute are conducted by the Co-ordinator, between the times 03:00 p.m. to 05:00 p.m. from Monday to Saturday. Personal Contact Programme (Guidance Lectures and practicals) are also organized for the benefit of students, in the evening from 6.00 to 8.00 p.m. from Monday to Friday and practicals are held on Saturday, Sundays/Holidays in Mumbai only. **Attendance of about 75% lectures and Practical are compulsory.** It is an attempt to provide guidance to students in solving their academic difficulties. Personal Contact Programmes are organised for a period of 03 months in a year towards the end of the course and just before the commencement of the examination. PCPs are organised in the constituent colleges and the faculty of the colleges are the resource persons. The main aim of PCPs is to formally teach the content to the students through face-to-face classroom teaching. PCPs are aimed at helping the learners to supplement the study materials and preparing them for the examination. Normally six to seven lectures are arranged in each course (Harichandan, 2005).

The Institute of Distance and Open Learning (IDOL), Gauhati University which offers mainly post graduate programmes conducts counselling and tutoring at both HQ and Study Centres. The counselling and tutoring sessions are organized at the selected Personal Contact Programme centres and at the University campus. The PCP centres are located in the affiliated colleges of the University. Senior faculty members of the colleges act as counsellor-tutors. Normally, two PCP sessions are organised for each academic year. These sessions are of two-three weeks duration. The IDOL management prepares the counselling schedules and plan counselling services in consultation with the Study Centres. Availability of class rooms, relatively flexible period in the regular class-schedule of the college teachers etc. are taken into account while finalising the counselling schedule. The counselling sessions at the headquarters are conducted throughout the year. There are

provisions of regular tutorial classes on the weekdays and also during weekends. The Institute has also introduced walk-in and telephone counselling and tutoring. Learners can walk-in during the scheduled day and timings either to the HQ or to the designated Study Centres for counselling. The learners can also seek counselling through telephone by sending SMS through short code messaging services. The time limit for such telephone counselling is ten minutes. Upon receiving the SMS from learners, the telephone numbers of the learners seeking counselling are forwarded to the concerned tutor-counsellor. Tutor-counsellors call up the learner and provide necessary counselling, if the allotted time limit of ten minutes is not sufficient, the learner is advised to meet the tutor-counsellor personally either at the HQ or at the Study Centre. Attendance at these counselling-tutoring sessions is not compulsory.

Madurai Kamraj University, Tamil Nadu organises Contact Seminar programmes for its learners in several rounds. These face-to-face sessions are organized at the designated centres. The contact seminar classes for the undergraduate and post graduate students are arranged for the benefit of the participants and participants are advised to utilize this opportunity of interacting with the faculty members from various reputed Academic Institutions. Students are expected to improve their performance in the University examinations by attending the contact seminar programme regularly. The seminar contact programmes are organized in various rounds and are designed to cover different portions of the syllabus. Notifications are issued declaring the schedule and venues for these sessions well in advance and students have an option to attend classes at any one of the centres of their choice. If the students have no classes at a particular centre, they can attend the classes in any other centre. Students have to look at the Notice Board put up in the seminar venue for room arrangements of the programme. If the strength of the students in a class is less than FIVE in a particular centre the particular class is suspended for the subsequent rounds. Students can make a written representation to the Director/Deputy Director (Seminar), Head of the Department about the problems relating to class teaching, non-coverage of the prescribed syllabus and such other hardships they face in the classes.

International Centre for Distance Education and Open Learning (ICDEOL), Himachal Pradesh University conducts counselling services in the form of Personal Contact programmes. During these Personal Contact Programmes, the services of internal faculty and eminent teachers from outside are especially requisitioned for enriching the quality of academic programmes. Attendance in the personal contact programme and Practical Training is compulsory for M.Ed., B.Ed., BA/MA (Music), PGDCA/APGDIT courses. The University prepares the schedule well in advance and students are communicated by post. The Personal Contact Programmes for other courses are organized for a period of 7 to 25 days. The Personal Contact Programme Centres for the UG/PG are either at the HQ i.e. at Shimla or outside the state, also as per the concentration of the students strength. The University takes decision regarding conduct of the Personal Contact Programme at various centres on the basis of density of student-enrolment and availability of the qualified staff. The students have been given option to choose the centres for their Personal Contact Programme.

4.3 HOW TO PLAN A COUNSELLING/ TUTORING SESSION?

Experiences of both dual mode and open universities prompt that we must plan the counselling and tutoring services well in advance preferably at the beginning of each academic session. The planning part remains important for Study Centres as well as for Headquarters. Most open universities in India have their fixed schedule for counselling. For example counselling and tutoring in IGNOU take place on Sundays. The dual mode universities organize face-to-face counselling sessions mainly in the form personal contact programmes where attendance is not compulsory. Though many dual mode universities conduct these sessions at the HQ as well as at Study Centres, these are planned and scheduled centrally by the University, whereas the counselling and tutoring services in most of the open universities are decentralized.

4.4 IDENTIFICATION AND APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC COUNSELLORS

How to identify counsellors?

As we have already discussed that open universities conduct counselling and tutoring in the Study Centres, so identification of counsellors in a particular Study Centre mostly depends on the availability of qualified persons in and around the location of the Study Centre. Since the universities depend mostly on the bio-data submitted by the Study Centres, it is in fact the Study Centres that play the most crucial role in identification of the counsellors.

In most ideal situation, the Study Centre officials try to engage the best available resources in their own institution and in the town. While doing so Study Centres are expected to invite applications from interested and qualified persons who are prepared to undergo necessary training and orientation. But the actual picture in a typical Indian Study Centre may tell you a different story. Identification of counsellors or resource persons for conducting Personal Contact Programmes in the dual mode universities largely depends upon the HQs. Since, majority of these sessions are actually held at the HQs, the DEIs select those personnel based on their availability in a particular location.

While identifying a counsellor for a particular course apart from general aptitude of the person in the concerned subject, the other humanly qualities such as tolerance, democratic temperament, patience, pleasant personality etc. should be taken into consideration. These qualities are essential for a good counsellor-tutor, who not only provide necessary academic back up to the learner, but also inculcate the culture of self learning in the learners.

Factors which may influence the process of identification of counsellors

Imagine a typical Study Centre of an open university. The Study Centre officials find it difficult to identify many resource persons, so they opt for the usual short cut. Instead of taking a long process of inviting applications from interested persons, only friends and acquaintances are identified as counsellors and tutors.

There are also other human factors which eventually may influence while identifying counsellors. Even if there are interested and qualified persons in an institution where Study Centre is located they may not be engaged as counsellors if they do not have good relations with the Study Centre coordinator/assistant coordinator. Therefore, proper monitoring of the selection of counsellors by the Study Centre should be a regular concern of the Regional Centre.

4.5 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF ACADEMIC COUNSELLORS

As counsellors are identified and engaged by the Study Centres in case of most of the open universities in India, the Study Centre organizes regular orientation and training of the people engaged. The counsellors are expected to receive orientation and training in the field of Distance Education, various learning theories and also the concerned subject wherever possible. Since, majority of them belong to the conventional educational institution, a long term strategy must be drawn to train them to cope with heterogeneous learners. Experience shows that most of the academic counsellors chose to lecture rather counselling and try to cover the syllabus. While conducting Personal Contact Programme in dual mode universities many academic counsellors often complain that the learners turn up without prior reading of the study materials. However, the academic counsellors must be oriented to face a situation where a learner may turn up for a contact programme without even opening the packet of study materials he or she received from the university.

Proper orientation should be given to the academic counsellors to behave similar to that of a personal tutor assigned to a group of learners at the UK Open University, where a group with no more than 25 or so other students are attached to tutor in order to allow personal knowledge, support and understanding to grow up through the lifetime of a course.

Sensitizing the Counsellors to the Need and Philosophy of ODL System

Counselling and tutoring services in different ODL institutions are effectively managed by the people largely belonging to the conventional system. Hence they carry the baggage of teacher oriented approach to ODL counselling too. Often they tend to “teach” and cover the syllabus within the limited stipulated time rather than counselling. Various researchers have demonstrated that these people even consider the counselling inferior to lecturing. Therefore academic counsellors must be sensitized to the needs of distance learners.

4.6 SCHEDULING OF COUNSELLING AND TUTORING SESSIONS

Availability of physical space, human resources, learner convenience and local climatic conditions—these are the few important factors that must be considered while scheduling the counselling and tutoring sessions.

It is advisable that learners are informed about the schedule well in advance, if possible at the time of enrollment. A comprehensive

academic calendar which includes the detailed schedules of counselling sessions and examinations should be worked out at the beginning of each academic session by all ODL institutions. Many open universities and DEIs have their strict academic calendar, which contain schedule for counselling sessions.

Study Centres are the ideal places to conduct face-to-face sessions. The distance learners are informed well in advance about the specific period and place where the face-to-face sessions are to be held. The distance education institutes/open universities differ widely with respect to the number of face-to-face sessions organised by them for each course during the academic session. They also differ on the frequency of face-to-face sessions in the time and interval with which they are organised. The DEIs and open universities adopt different policies in regard to organizing counselling sessions. Open universities mostly organise limited face-to-face sessions throughout the academic session on weekends or holidays in the evening hours. The dual mode universities schedule the Personal Contact Programmes mostly during the end of the academic sessions, in order to prepare the learners for examinations.

4.7 BUDGETING AND INFRASTRUCTURE ARRANGEMENT

Timely budgeting and arrangement of physical infrastructure are most crucial for successful implementation of counselling. Obtaining financial sanction from higher authorities for timely payment to counsellors is extremely important. It is often complained in India that academic counsellors do not receive their remuneration in time. The delay in payment of remuneration to various personnel engaged in counselling also happens largely because of the lack of proper budgeting. The Study Centre coordinators should take adequate measures in arranging physical infrastructure for the counselling sessions.

4.8 IMPLEMENTATION

The following points such as Need Based Counselling, One to One Counselling, Face to Face Counselling, Group Counselling and Online Counselling should be emphasized in accordance to the needs.

4.8.1 Need Based Counselling

The ODL institutions must take special measures for organizing need based counselling for its learners. One of such important measures is to organize counselling for differently able learners. Many open universities like IGNOU and OUHK takes special measures to cater to the needs of its learners with disabilities. A range of services including counselling advice, special course materials, suitable tutorial venues, special examination arrangements and the loan of learning equipment is provided to facilitate their learning. Visually and hearing impaired learners are provided with special equipment and special disabled learners centres are set up for this purpose.

Many open universities also have provisions for organizing special need based counselling sessions for slow learners. IGNOU organizes special remedial tutorial sessions for many of its learners.

4.8.2 One-to-one Counselling

Many open universities and few DEIs follow the system of one-to-one counselling by various means. Telephone counselling is one of such system where one-to-one counselling may be provided to learners. In this case a learner calls the designated number and receives required counselling. Many universities outsource services of the Call Centres to provide such counselling. Gauhati University introduced a system of one-to-one walk-in or telephone counselling for its learners. A definite day of the week is normally assigned for a particular course, when learners can either walk in to meet the individual counsellor or call up a particular number to receive required counselling. Experience shows that learners feel much comfortable during such counselling and after overcoming the initial hesitation they actively participate in discussing various problems.

4.8.3 Face-to-face Counselling

By now you are already acquainted with various aspects of organizing counselling and tutoring sessions for distance learners. We have found that both in open universities and DEIs of dual mode universities face-to-face contact session play a crucial role. However, there are two opposite views on face-to-face session for open and distance learners. One considers face-to-face sessions as a mere hangover of the conventional system and seeks to reject it straight. The other view accepts the crucial role played by the face-to-face sessions for distance learners. It opposes the view that it represents interference, disturbing the individual self study, rather it believes that face-to-face sessions are essential in converting a common learner into a self learner. Another section opines that face-to-face contact dilutes the very concept of an independent learner in distance education.

Holmberg (1986) and Keegan (1989) suggest some important views on aims and purposes that face-to-face sessions serve in distance education. According to Keegan, "Occasional face-to-face sessions are organised for both didactic and socialisation purposes unlike the conventional system, where it is a major teaching medium" (Keegan, 1989). Holmberg (1986) also holds similar view that they are useful as opportunities to consult subject specialists and to exchange views with tutors and fellow learners as well as to benefit from tutors' expositions and criticism of work done.

4.8.4 Group Counselling

As most of you are the product of the conventional university system, you must be aware of situations where teaching-learning takes place in groups. Group counselling is common in distance learning both in Open University and dual mode university systems. The most important factor to be taken into consideration while organizing group counselling is the composition of the group formed. For maximum learning to occur in group counselling, the group must share a common goal for learning, a reasonable degree of cohesiveness. Unlike permanent groups, where these ingredients may already be present, the distance learning counselling groups are not cohesive since they meet for short periods spread over weeks or months. It is the duty of the organizers to create and develop the required cohesiveness and structure of the group. The good structured group helps learners to get motivated for better learning.

4.8.5 Online Counselling

Many open universities and DEIs offer online counselling to their learners through internet. Learners actively use e-mails, blogs, chats etc. to interact with the teachers as well as with the fellow learners. The learners are allowed to submit their assignment and receive tutor-comments online. The entire communication between tutors and fellow learners is done through internet.

E-learning portals are used to create an environment where academic advisers/course guides act as mentors and provide online counselling. Interactive online tools like Discussion forum, Blogs, Chat rooms are used to create a virtual class room where learners freely participate in actual learning process..

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: a) Space is given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

Explain 'Need based Counselling' in your own words.

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4.9 LET US SUM UP

Distance education system is an "industrialized form of education", hence the planning for counselling and tutoring in a distance education institution bear characteristic of industrial planning. Success of counselling and tutoring sessions depends upon proper planning and implementation.

Organization of counselling for distance education institution depend on the nature of the institution. The open university methodology in organizing counselling differs from the DEIs in the dual mode universities. The methodology followed by UK Open university, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University and IGNOU radically differs from that of University of Mumbai, Gauhati University, Madurai Kamraj University and Himachal Pradesh University.

Open Universities organize face-to-face counselling and tutoring sessions throughout the academic sessions whereas distance education institutes of the dual mode universities organize face-to-face personal contact programme/seminar contact programme during the end of the academic sessions, in order to prepare the learners for examination.

The planning of counselling and tutoring services in open universities are largely affairs of the Regional Centre and Study Centres, whereas in dual mode universities counselling and tutoring are planned and implemented by the HQ. Study Centres/PCP centres mainly play the role of providing venue and resource persons.

4.10 FEEDBACK TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

Check Your Progress 1

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University uses multimedia for its instructional purposes. Self-learning printed materials are supplemented by other media, which include, TV, Mana-TV, Audio, Video, Radio, Radio-phone-in programme, TV teleconference (Saptagiri Channel, DD-8) and Mana-TV teleconferences. Apart from these media, the University also organises, contact-cum-counselling classes, winter/summer classes, assignments, practical training programmes and project work.

The counselling and tutoring services of IGNOU are organized through its network of Regional Centres, Study Centres and Partner institutions. Various media are used for counselling distance learners, viz. face-to-face sessions at Study Centres, tele-counselling through teleconferencing, phone-in-radio counselling, TV counselling through Gyan Darshan, FM Radio counselling through Gyan Vani, e-mail, chat mode on internet. The latest addition to these services is the IGNOU flexi-learning.

Check Your Progress 2

The ODL institutions must take special measures for organizing need based counselling for its learners. One of such important measures is to organize counselling for differently-abled learners. Many open universities like IGNOU and OUHK take special measures to cater to the needs of its learners with disabilities. A range of services including counselling advice, special course materials, suitable tutorial venues, special examination arrangements and the loan of learning equipment is provided to facilitate their learning. Visually and hearing impaired learners are provided with special equipment and special disabled learners centres are set up for this purpose.

Many open universities also have provisions for organizing special need based counselling sessions for slow learners. IGNOU organizes special remedial tutorial sessions for many of its learners.

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