

Block

1

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

UNIT 1**Amorphous Beginning** **7**

UNIT 2**Curricular Issues** **22**

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MDE-419: Staff Training and Development in Distance Education

(New Course in place of ES-319 : Staff Development in Distance Education)

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MDE-419: Staff Training and Development in Distance Education

Course Outline

Block 1 : Growth and Development

- Unit 1 : Amorphous Beginning**
 - Unit 2 : Curricular Issues**
 - Unit 3 : State of Maturity**
 - Unit 4 : Towards Professionalism: An Exposition**
-

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- Unit 1 : Training to Develop Self-Learning Print Materials**
 - Unit 2 : Training in Student Support Services**
 - Unit 3 : Training of Non-Teaching Support Staff**
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-

Block 3 : Implementational Aspects

- Unit 1 : Training Needs Assessment**
 - Unit 2 : Methodologies for Staff Development**
 - Unit 3 : Trainer Training**
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-

Block 4 : Online Training

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-

Block 5 : Staff Development Experiences

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Staff development has come to be accepted as an essential part of organizational growth in any field. Distance education institutions and/or open universities are no exception as most of the staff who work in the field of distance education have come initially from other fields like conventional system of education, industry, army, administrative and allied services, business houses, private organizations and so on. Some join without any prior training in their functional areas. In near future many more persons with different professional background will join the field of education as the new situation demands it. This very aspect spells out the need for staff training and development in distance education itself. Human resources to effectively handled and thus promote a system need to be generated through training and retraining over a long period of time.

The system of distance education presently puts the conventional academic into a very unfamiliar situation- a situation which his/her existing educational culture most often revolts against. Further, the distance learner too is forced to make cultural shift of immense dimension- he/she is expected to become a self-learner/an independent learner. In such a scenario, the distance mode of education, promising to be the mode of the years to come, demands a very high level of professionalism on the part of those who run the system. And so, providing training in the various aspects of distance education has a case which cannot be questioned. Thus, any comprehensive training programme in distance education like the present one (MA Distance Education) must have a course on 'Staff Training and Development in Distance Education' which could cover all the major aspects of training in distance education. We have tried to cover the critical issues related to staff training and development in distance education keeping in view the special situations obtaining in the developing countries also.

The first four blocks are written in the format of self-learning materials. The fifth block has two parts: in the first part there are three articles related to staff development and in the second part there are two reports on staff training and development workshops conducted by Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education, IGNOU. We hope you would like the choice and presentation of the issues and workshop reports and enjoy studying through the course.

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK 1

In this block, we have traced the genesis of training in distance education. For purposes of presentation, we have conceived of training in three stages: amorphous beginnings (unit 1); identification of curricular issues (unit 2) and state of maturity (unit 3). In the first unit, we have discussed the notion of 'learning on the job', which the OUUK favoured initially. In this context, we have pointed out that the theory of 'on the job training' is inadequate primarily because the system, in the hands of unprepared personnel, will fail and all the efforts and resources put in to build system will dissipate. Unit 2 presents how 'training' for distance education has gathered momentum. In this unit, the discussion is on the 'who', 'what' and 'how' of training. Referring to sample of training programmes available for distance educators the world over, unit 3 describes the present status of training.

In unit 4, we have addressed ourselves to the changing scenario as regards training and have emphasized the need for professionalism in order that training may serve the purpose for which it is intended.

Study Guide

A schematic representation of the design of the units is given below to facilitate your access to the content presented here.

Unit X*

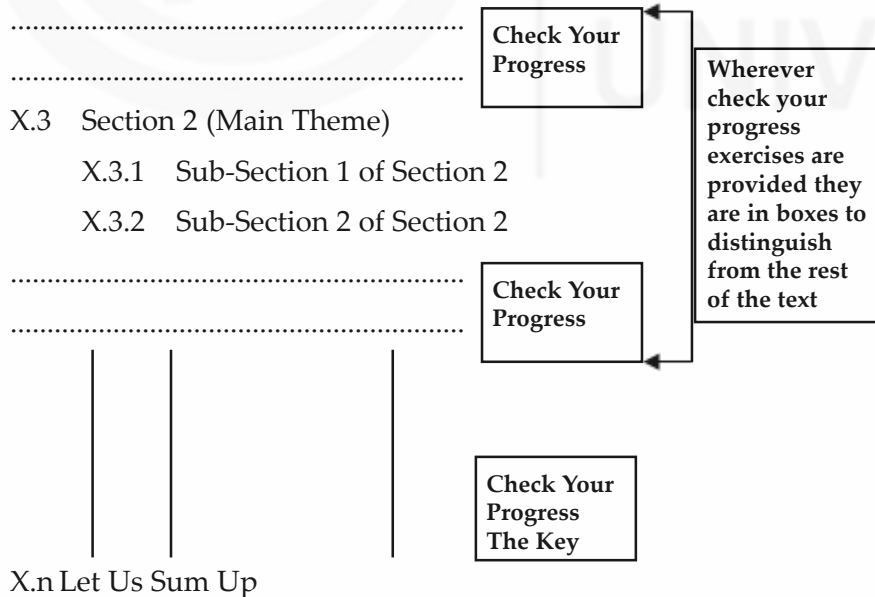
X.0 Introduction

X.1 Objective

X.2 Section 1 (Main Theme)

X.2.1 Sub-section 1 of Section 1

X.2.2 Sub-section 2 of Section 1



***'X' stands for the serial number of the unit concerned**

As the scheme suggests, we have divided the units into sections for easy reading and better comprehension. Each section is indicated distinctly by bold capitals and each sub-section by relatively smaller, but bold typeface. The significant divisions within sub-sections are in still smaller but bold typeface so as to make it easier for you to see their place within sub-sections. For purpose of uniformity we have employed the same scheme of 'partitioning' in every unit throughout the course.

We begin each unit with an Introduction followed by the section 'Objectives'. It articulates briefly

- What we have presented in the unit, and
- What we expect from you once you have finished working on the unit.

In the last section of each unit, under the heading, 'Let Us Sum Up', we summarise the whole unit for purposes of recapitulation and ready reference.

Besides, we have given self-check exercises under the caption 'Check Your Progress' which invariably end with possible answers (the key) to the questions set in these exercises.

What, perhaps, you ought to do is to go through the units and note down important points as you read in the space provided in the margin. (Broad margins in the booklet are there for you to write your notes on. Make your notes as you work through the materials. This will help you prepare for the examination as also in assimilating the content. Besides, you will be able to save time. Do use these margins). This will help you keep track of and assimilate what you have been reading in the unit, answer the self-check exercises and the assignment questions and, easily identify the item(s) to be clarified.

We hope that we have given enough space for you to work on the self-check exercises. The purpose of giving self-check exercises will be served satisfactorily if you compare your answers with the possible ones given at the end of each unit after having written your answer in the blank space. You may be tempted to have a furtive glance at the possible answer(s), as soon as you come across an exercise. But we do hope that you will overcome the temptation and turn to the possible answers (which are not necessarily the best answers) only after you have written yours.

These exercises are not meant to be submitted to us for correction or evaluation. Instead, the exercises are to function as a study tool to help you keep on the right track as you read the units. On an average, each block will have at least one or a part of one assignment. At times an assignment may expect you to work through more than one unit to prepare your responses. You have to work on one assignment per course. Assignments are sent separately and are changed every year.

We suggest the following norms be strictly practiced while you are working through the assignments.

- Write your enrolment number legibly.
- Before you put anything down in words, assimilate what you have read, integrate it with what you have gathered from your experience to build your answer, and preferably prepare a concept map before starting to write it.
- Make the best use of the block and additional reading materials by diligently working through the assignments.

Mail us

At the end of this block, we have provided a questionnaire to be filled by you after you complete reading this block. Your feedback will be very useful for future revision and maintenance of the programme. Please take note of the time you devote in studying this block. Maybe you can complete this block after 4-5 sittings. But for every sitting, kindly note the time separately so that you can categorically say how much time you took to read this block. You can send the feedback questionnaire by post or you can e-mail the same to: (pkbiswas@ignou.ac.in). In the email, please mark in the subject area – FOR COURSE COORDINATOR-MDE-419. You may also contact us for any difficulties related to the programme in general and MDE-419 in particular.

UNIT 1 AMORPHOUS BEGINNING

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 The Course Team Approach
 - 1.2.1 Philosophy of Staff Development for Distance Education at OUUK
 - 1.2.2 Teaching Materials: Credibility and Quality Questions
 - 1.2.3 A Case for Developing a Course Team
 - 1.2.4 Constituents and Responsibilities of the Course Team
 - 1.2.5 Course Team: Operations
 - 1.2.6 Problems of the Course Team Approach
 - 1.2.7 Learning from the Experience of a Course Team
- 1.3 Training Educational Technologists
- 1.4 Training Distance Educators for Developing Countries
- 1.5 Training Educators from Developing Countries
 - 1.5.1 A Common Training Programme
 - 1.5.2 Common Training Programme: Reflections
- 1.6 Purposes of Training Distance Educators: Parameters
 - 1.6.1 Structural Parameters
 - 1.6.2 Instructional Parameters
 - 1.6.3 Effectiveness of the Parameters: When and How
 - 1.6.4 Stages of Staff Development
- 1.7 A Course on Distance Education
- 1.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.9 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

You are aware that Distance Education in its various forms has been in practice for many years now. But the idea of 'staff Development' or 'training' in the area of distance education is of a recent origin. The earliest attempts in this area are associated with the beginning of the Open University, U.K., during the early 1970s, and later at the Indira Gandhi National Open University, India, in 1987. It should be of great interest to all of us to study the various schools of thought, and the corresponding practices and areas of emphasis that have emerged during this short span of about three decades. We should state, at the very outset, that our focus is on the advanced levels of training for distance educators, i.e. any training in this area available for lower levels has not been considered for our discussion here.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall first present a brief outline of the trends in staff development for distance education during the 1970s. In the main, we shall present six cases of differing characters. It is quite instructive and interesting to study these cases for their variety and divergence in approaches. The purpose is to drive home the point that staff development programmes differ according to the needs of the institutions which conduct the training programmes. At the end of this unit, you will be able to list and comment on the main features of

- the course team approach at the Open University, U.K.;
- the training of educational technologists at the Jordanhill College of Education, U.K.;
- special staff-training courses (meant, for developing countries) at the International Extension College and the University of London, U.K.;
- the common training programme for educators at the University of Surrey, U.K.; and
- the course in 'Distance Education' given by the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, India.

1.2 THE COURSE TEAM APPROACH

It is interesting to note that the Open University, U.K., during its formative years did not recognise the need for systematic training for distance educators. They believed that the skills, knowledge and attitudes which go into the making of a distance educator can best be learnt on-the-job, and whatever additional skills need to be learnt, can be picked up from manuals.

1.2.1 Philosophy of Staff Development for Distance Education at OUUK

The philosophy of staff development for distance education at the OUUK was mainly based on two assumptions:

- i) that distance educators must learn their skills on-the-job , and
- ii) that of all the tasks which make the process of distance education, the one that needs training is the task of course development.

This philosophy is understandable as far as this Open University is concerned. Being the pioneers in the field of large-scale open distance education, they had no models to go by, they had to develop their own models and for all practical purposes their own training models have stood them in good stead.

1.2.2 Teaching Materials: Credibility and Quality Questions

The first problem that the Open University faced was with that of credibility: the academia in particular and the public in general were sceptical about the success of the University.

The University authorities took no time to realise that the main tool to fight this scepticism and establish their credibility was the quality of their teaching materials. The quality of education being imparted by the university could be judged both by the academics and the students, in terms of the quality of these materials. To operationalise this realisation, a machinery had to be set up to produce high quality materials, and this machinery came to be known as the 'course team'.

1.2.3 A Case for Developing a Course Team

Besides the assumptions mentioned above (1.2.1) the course team approach originated also from the belief that it was not advisable to leave the content, presentation and teaching of the Open University courses to the idiosyncrasies of individual teachers as is the case with face-to-face teaching.

Nor could it be left to the whims of individual departments or schools within the University.

There were two more reasons for course teams to come into being:

- i) interdisciplinary courses, which the University had decided to produce and give, could not be produced by individual academics or departments; there had to be some kind of cooperation among different departments and individuals from different disciplines.
- ii) if the multi-media approach was to be a success, the media experts had to cooperate and work with the academics

“A course produced by this method”, claims Lord Perry (1976), “will inevitably tend to be superior in quality to any course produced by an individual”. This method has been adopted, with various degrees of modification, by Open Universities in many countries Canada, Australia, Asia and South America. Lord Perry (1976) rightly claims that “the concept of the course team is the single most important contribution of the Open University to teaching practice”.

1.2.4 Constituents and Responsibilities of the Course Team

A course team consists of a number of subject experts, an educational technologist, an editor, a BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) producer, a course administrator and a staff tutors (a person who looks after the tutorial service in a region of the country). One of the academics i.e., the subject specialist, is chosen by the team as chairperson of the course team. He/she conducts all the meetings of the course team. It is the academics in the team who have the joint responsibility for planning and developing the course; the non-academic members of the team work in collaboration with the academics but remain answerable to their parent departments for example, the BBC producer, who functions as a member of the course team is ultimately answerable to the BBC. Besides the members of the course team, there are many more experts and skilled personnel whose contributions are vital to the production of high quality materials. These are graphic experts, project control staff, librarians, etc. It should be clear that the OUUK regards the course team as the training ground for distance educators. Working as a member of the team is considered actual training. We need to know more about this training ground and the training.

1.2.5 Course team: Operations

All the course teams do not work the same way. In certain cases, the draft units are prepared by individuals and later are discussed by the whole team. The modifications and suggestions which come up during these discussions are incorporated in the text. The materials are then passed on to the materials production centres. Thus, though the basic work may have been done by an individual, the entire team is supposed to have produced the course. In other cases, the members of the team produce the draft units and circulate them among other members for comments. On the basis of the comments received the unit writers revise the units. In such revisions, they may or may not take into account all the comments they receive. The ultimate responsibility for the quality of the units, however is that of the writer himself/herself.

1.2.6 Problems of the Course Team Approach

Functioning in a course team may not always be a smooth going affair. Some of the reasons for these are as follows:

- i) **Difficulty in getting the right kind of academics:** To function successfully in a course team, an academic needs to have at least the following five attributes:
 - a) subject expertise
 - b) writing skills
 - c) teaching skills,
 - d) time consciousness, and
 - e) cost consciousness.

It is not always possible to find academics with all these attributes. There are academics who cannot write well for the learner's purposes; others who find it impossible to work to deadlines and a few others who are not cost conscious. There are reported cases which show how, with the approach of deadlines, members find it difficult to read and comment on their teammate's work. Unit drafts receive scant attention and, in many cases, even the meetings are not attended. With the result that in certain cases, only the course team chairperson remains to steer the course to the deadlines. In other cases, a distaste for criticism compels some academics to submit their unit-drafts late in order to save themselves from the criticism of their colleagues, some of whom can be junior colleagues. In still worse situations a course team member who finds himself/herself criticized repeatedly and unnecessarily (from his/her point of view) may withdraw from the team for ever. Besides, there may be situations when, to reach consensus in the team becomes impossible or takes an unusually long time.

- ii) **Clash of egos:** It is not unusual for senior academics of a faculty to work as members of course teams which are chaired by junior members of staff, which is not a pleasant experience in all the cases, and is definitely counter productive in certain cases. Lord Perry (1976), however, was of the considered view that relative seniority of staff members was of no consequence as far as the chairpersonship was concerned. Chairpersons, he felt should be appointed for their skills in management.

But, it is not as though academics with qualifications or skills in management are easily available. Thus, the work getting messed up under an unskilled chairperson may not be an unusual occurrence. However, ways and means should be found from time to time to overcome such difficulties.

- iii) **Problems in integrating specialisations:** One of the obvious objectives of the course team is to effect integration across various specialisations which the teams bring together.

However, it is not possible to achieve this objective completely. In the first place some specialisations are so different from the training and experience of the team members that they cannot even think of taking up work roles under those specialisations. For example, a professor in Chemistry may find it difficult to see eye to eye with a video producer. Secondly, it is not unusual for specialists of various types to guard their specialisation to the extent of not allowing others in the team even to think of contributing within those specialisations.

1.2.7 Learning from the Experience of a Course Team

We can gain significant insights from the experience of course team approaches practiced at the OUUK. Some of them are given below:

- i) **Excellent materials:** Despite what we have described and discussed above, the OUUK has produced teaching/learning materials which are acclaimed all over the world. In spite of bitter experiences of some academics, attacks on their intellectual activity and integrity, their disgust and indifference, the material, produced are worthy of the effort. After all, course teams need not be a bad experience only. It should always be possible to find a few people in course teams who bear the brunt of preparing the courses; these are the people whose personal qualities suit this kind of work environment. They may find the course team a suitable situation in which they can exploit their qualities to the maximum.
- ii) **Good, but selective training:** Though one cannot deny the fact that course teams produce high quality materials, the very course teams cannot be considered training grounds for distance educators. At best, they are training grounds only selectively, i.e. only a few people who by virtue of their personal qualities or influences of education, fit into the system of course teams and the course team culture. Only these may actually get trained in such teams. Besides, such training shall take a long time for completion.
- iii) **Expensive and time consuming:** Even those who succeed as the members of course teams, and thus become trained distance educators do so very slowly and at a very high cost. It is a widely accepted fact that materials produced by the course team approach are very expensive. That producing distance educators through this approach must be expensive too is no exaggeration.
- iv) **Writing courses alone will not make us distance educators:** Training on-the-job (as a member of a course team) does not impart all the skills and the knowledge required by a distance educator, or a person engaged in distance education. Distance education is much more than the preparation and development of teaching/learning materials.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

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

List at least two major advantages and two disadvantages of the course team approach.

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1.3 TRAINING EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGISTS

Here, we shall discuss a training course which though relevant to the practice of distance education, did not originate as a course on distance education, or if it did, it could not be comprehensive, as 'distance education' was not thought to be a discipline those days. In fact, as you know the term 'distance education' was recognised officially in 1982, at the 12th World Conference of the International Council for Correspondence Education (since called International Council for Distance Education) at Vancouver, Canada. The Course we are referring to was introduced in 1975, and is called the CNAA Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Technology given by Jordanhill College of Education (JCE), Glasgow, U.K. (CNAA is an abbreviation for Council for National Academic Awards).

The course was started in response to demands from all levels of education in Scotland and the other parts of the UK for trained staff (often referred to as educational technologists) who combine skills of instructional design, skill of resource organisation and experience in the production of learning materials.

Components of the course

The course comprises three broad categories described briefly as follows:

- i) Theoretical studies (i.e. concepts of educational technology, towards science of learning and communication, curriculum study and the systems approach)
- ii) Management studies (i.e. management of staff, production facilities, copyright and contract etc.)
- iii) Production skills (i.e. graphics, printing, tape recording, TV production, computer assisted learning etc.)

Target groups

It is a two-year part-time course, and links home and college-based study with enough scope for students to evolve approaches appropriate to their own personal and institutional needs. It may be taken by teachers working at the nursery or pre-school stages, primary and secondary school teachers, and lecturers in further education colleges, etc. The programme is country-specific i.e., meant for teachers in the United Kingdom.

1.4 TRAINING DISTANCE EDUCATORS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

A four-month course on distance teaching given by the International Extension College (IEC) and the Department of International and Comparative Education of the University of London (Institute of Education), London, was introduced in its earliest form in 1977.

Target groups

The course is meant for the developing countries and caters to the needs of those who are currently working or intend to work in distance education institutions such as open universities, directorates/units of correspondence courses and agricultural or health extension services.

The objectives of the course are to enable the students:

- to determine whether or not distance teaching is appropriate to their countries;
- to make informed choices between different methods of distance teaching;
- to work out administrative arrangements for distance teaching; and
- to write, edit, revise and maintain distance teaching materials.

Course content

The course content includes themes like characteristics of distance education, print, broadcasting, and face-to-face tuition, integrated courses for effective learning, course design and editing, organisation and management of distance teaching materials.

The overall emphasis is on practical work rather than theory. Thus, the academic work is divided into various activities;

- i) Three intensive workshops on:
 - a) planning and administration
 - b) planning, writing and producing printed materials
 - c) writing and producing radio programmes.
- ii) Individual written projects on themes (pertaining to distance education) of the trainee's choice
- iii) Case studies to be presented; seminars to be participated and studies of distance teaching institutes in the UK.

Are the programmes discussed in 1.3 and 1.4 adequate to train distance educators?

Evidently, either of the above courses (the one given by the Jordanhill College and the other by International Extension College) is relevant to the needs of a distance educator. However, they do not point to professionalism in distance education. The CNAA Diploma has been conceived as a course in educational technology and is supposed to be useful for teachers working at all the levels of instruction (pre-school to the higher university levels of education). The second course we talked about is a course in distance teaching both in content and intent; however, its character remains that of an extended workshop. Besides, a four-month course cannot go beyond the purposes of 'orientation', as it does not give any idea of the entirety of distance education as a discipline or profession. We shall discuss this issue more elaborately in the following section.

1.5 TRAINING EDUCATORS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The Institute of Educational Development, University of Surrey, U.K., introduced a diploma programme in the practice of higher education in October 1980, given through the distance mode. It was later developed to an M.Sc. programme. The programme was meant for teachers of higher education from developing countries. It may appear odd to bring in such a

course for discussion here, as our focus is distance education rather than higher education. But this difference in the key expression should not mislead us, as the theoretical basis of the programme of this nature has a significant contribution to make in our discussions.

1.5.1 A Common Training Programme

Elton (1981) believes that education at the distance and education not at a distance (i.e. traditional face-to-face teaching) should not be thought of as wholly separate forms of education. He contends that the teachers in distance education should not be trained separately and differently from those who teach in face-to-face situations. In other words, they should be trained together through the same course, as both teachers and students may be involved. in both forms at the same time or in the same programme.

The following points need to be considered for furthering our discussion:

- i) Elton (1981) does not recommend training distance educators as 'distance educators'; instead, he recommends that teachers in general require "a knowledge of educational principles and their application to practice which goes far beyond matters which differ between on-campus and off-campus teaching. If teachers are to teach effectively in situations which are not wholly traditional . . . they have to be trained in the fundamentals of their profession". In other words Elton's 'distance educator' does not require any training different from that needed by an 'educator'.

By implication, it would appear, a training course for an 'educator' has enough in its contents and intent to cover the elements which are required by 'distance' educators that is, the elements which differentiate distance education from education in general. But, Elton does not seem to contribute to this view either. He thinks that the prospective distance educator needs the much required orientation to the demands of his/he new tasks.

He admits that distance education poses problems which do not arise in face-to-face teaching, and also that those academics who join distance education institutions seem to require some training. He also admits that experienced university teachers have not always shown good results when asked to work in distance teaching institutions. Very often their efforts have not gone beyond their producing materials consisting of "no more than copies of lecture notes, references to textbooks and practice tasks, while those sufficiently adventurous to introduce other media, have been known to send audio cassettes which were records of full lectures as given on campus".

- ii) Elton believes that in 'the training of any kind' trainees have previously passed through a training similar to that which they are now being trained for. That is, officers have at one time been cadets, supervisors have been subordinates, and teachers have been students. Thus, the trainee-teacher knows what being a teacher means (he/she has seen teachers in action when he/she was a student) and also what being a student means (he/she had himself/herself been a student one time).
- iii) For Elton, academics working at higher levels of education need a training course in higher education; and those engaged in distance education too need the same course; however, they should take it using

distance learning methods. By undergoing a training course using distance learning methodology, the trainee will 'experience distance learning methods at every stage'. Elton emphasizes that the fundamentals of distance learning can be treated through a general treatment of individualised learning and that "its special features will emerge for the participants through their own experience".

1.5.2 Common Training Programme: Reflections

To begin with we should admit that most distance teachers today have not been distance learners. And this situation is going to continue for quite some time to come. They may not have any idea about the experiences of distance learners. It is, however, possible that they get informed about such experiences through reading or any other means. Clearly, only a few have direct experience. And it is this **direct experience** of being a distance learner, Elton thinks, which the prospective distance teacher requires most. By getting this direct experience of distance learning, he/she will be like the cadet now under training to be an officer, or like an operator, now training to be a foreman. But the present situation we are talking about does not give the opportunity to all distance teachers to personally go through the experience of distance learners. To sum up, a prospective distance teacher must, in the main, experience distance learning, and while doing so, he/she also needs to learn about 'individualised learning' to complete his/her training to function as a successful distance teacher. The courses on the practice of higher education given by Surrey University courses are open to practicing teachers, and the components which constitute these courses include modules on Teaching and Learning Methods, Course Design, Assessment, Communication and Media, Administration and Management etc. It may be noted that these modules may justifiably be components of staff development programme for distance education. But, the course aims "to increase the members' knowledge, awareness and skills in matters relating to teaching and learning in **higher education**". Thus, though we admit that the modules should be useful for distance educators, the course as a whole, as conceived by those who give it, is a staff development programme for higher education, and so, it does not meet the special requirements of distance teachers. The implication is that we need a different training course for distance teaching.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer

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

Point out at least one **strong** point and one **weak** point in Elton's argument for a common course for all educators.

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1.6 PURPOSES OF TRAINING DISTANCE EDUCATORS: PARAMETERS

In this section, we shall talk about the views of Meacham (1981) who worked in the Division of External Studies, Riverina College at the time he presented these views and not about any particular case available at the college. We are introducing these views mainly to acquaint you with a line of thinking (from Australia) which is different from the one advanced by the Open University, UK. Both the lines of thinking, going on in two different parts of the world some time ago, were influential in designing the staff development programmes for distance education.

Meacham thinks that in the context of distance teaching, staff development is required to improve the quality of instructional materials used in distance teaching. He suggests that a staff development programme can be proposed only after the following are considered carefully:

- i) Structural and instructional parameters of designing distance teaching materials, and
- ii) the stages of concern of the faculty members.

We shall elaborate these factors here.

1.6.1 Structural Parameters

Structural parameters which influence the effectiveness of distance teaching as listed by Meacham, are:

- course function (what are the aims and objectives of the course?);
- available modes of instruction (what are the media available to be put to use to present the course?);
- subject characteristics (what pedagogic structure will suit the subject concerned? for example, it may not be useful to present courses in mathematics the same way as courses in literature);
- subject location (what is the sequential position of the subject/part thereof in the whole course?);
- teacher characteristics (lecturers differ in their attitudes, experience, etc., and this affects the structures of the course materials);
- student characteristics (age, educational level, degree of involvement etc);
- professional assistance (layout, graphics, copyright, test design, etc., make significant contribution to the effectiveness of the course materials);

It may be noted that all these factors, by themselves, are not the components of course design. Lying outside the design itself, however, they exercise great influence in making the materials effective.

1.6.2 Instructional Parameters

The instructional parameters which influence the effectiveness of the materials are:

- motivation (students' interest has to be assured and maintained by means of the subject-matter, design, packaging etc);

- goal definition (indicates what knowledge and competencies the learner is to demonstrate after he has gone through the course);
- cognitive structuring (the presentation of materials should have logical and psychological relations between the subject components);
- signposting, layout, access devices, activities, etc., help the learner to be on the right track;
- activation (asking students to work on questions and various tasks is helpful);
- feedback (from the tutor to the student and vice versa help build didactic conversation successfully);
- transfer and retention (learning may be said to have been achieved if the learner can retain what he/she has learnt and apply his/her learning to new situations - to achieve this objective adequate number of exercises of differing types should form of the materials);
- assessment and evaluation (the effectiveness of the materials should be evaluated by various means).

1.6.3 Effectiveness of the Parameters: When and How

Basic to this view is Meacham's belief that workshops, verbal instructions, administrative admonitions, etc., cannot improve the design of course materials. Improvements of the kind we are talking about are possible only through 'improving' the individuals; their aptitudes and their experiences. If the developmental stages of the individuals do not match with the orientation training, the programme may not succeed in achieving its goals. It is therefore, advisable to identify what the level of concern of a particular

faculty member is, and then arrange a training programme for him/her accordingly.

Identifying the levels of concern of the staff

Broadly, the following three levels of concern are possible. They may be understood in terms of statements given against each

- i) **Impact Concerns:** 'I know certain things which will be more effective, let me try/use them', 'I would like to see how effective my design is', etc.,
- ii) **Task concerns:** 'I have no means to implement my ideas'.
- iii) **Self-concerns:** 'I am not interested in any changes'. 'I do not know that changes are expected'.

It is true that academics will hardly ever have concerns at only one level. It is also likely, however, that one level dominates over others at a given point of time.

Designing the programme according to staff needs

The problem of staff development, as seen by Meacham (1981), is to find a way of matching "the need for transmitting essential elements of instructional design with the concerns of faculty members". The ideal solution is to look into the concerns of the individual academic and train him/her according to his/her needs; but more practical is to identify groups of academics with similar concerns and make them undergo a training programme suitable for their level of concern.

Meacham suggests that 'structural' and 'instructional' parameters are linked with the higher level of concern, i.e. 'impact' concern and 'task' concerns. In other words, talking of the importance of those parameters to the academic whose concerns are at the 'self level' will have no influence on them. What the academics at the 'self' level of concerns need is 'awareness' or which they need to be approached through informal meetings and be 'sensitised' for what they need to do.

1.6.4 Stages of Staff Development

As a general scheme for staff development, the overall operation may have the following stages:

- i) Defining the innovation for which the staff is to be trained.
- ii) Identifying the concerns of the faculty members in relation to innovation. (This may be done with the help of interviews, questionnaires, etc.).
- iii) Organising the faculty members into different groups, according to their levels of concern.
- iv) Relating each group with the objective they should achieve; the strategy that needs to be used to achieve that objective and what the trainers should focus their activities on.
- v) Preparing the blueprint of the training programme.
- vi) Implementing the programme.

Meacham believes that the ultimate aim of staff development in distance education is to implement new 'concepts and procedures' in order to help

- the users of the distance education systems to adjust with innovations,
- the agents of distance education to be more helpful, and
- the system to be more responsive to the changing needs.

Meacham rightly believes that the programme outline given above does not solve all the issues involved in staff development for distance education. However, he thinks, that the outline is "an attempt to bridge the gap between the actions required to bring about an improvement in instructional design and the competencies and concerns of essential participants".

Obviously, like the OUUK approach, Meacham's focus too is on the instructional material. But the strategies adopted by both to train course writers are different. The course team approach of the Open University assumes that any sound academic may join the team and learn the job, whereas Meacham's strategy suggests that the personnel to write self-instructional materials should be identified and the training programmes be designed according to the needs of the individual members.

We also know that distance education is much more than instructional materials. Besides, right now we are not aware of any training programme that follows the above line of thought propounded by Meacham, except the workshop/orientation programmes which are designed and implemented for specific groups of the staff - a workshop for audio and video script writers, and orientation programme for prospective counsellors, a workshop for course editors etc.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

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

What are the two broad categories of Meacham's parameters for distance teachers? State the two important steps necessary to make the parameters effective.

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1.7 A COURSE ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

The course introduced in India in 1980 is just one among many which constitute the components of a teacher training programme at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, India. The following themes constitute the course 'Distance Education':

- Distance education: concept and philosophy
- Socio-economic relevance of distance education
- Characteristics of self-instructional materials, assignments, etc.
- Student support-services, etc.
- Practicals - analysis of self-instructional materials, assessment of assignments, etc.

The focus of this course is essentially on 'two-way didactic communication'. Though certain themes are considered to be relevant, it cannot be considered a full-fledged professional course in distance education.

That is why it has been treated as part of a general training programme for the teachers of English language in India.

1.8 LET US SUM UP

Let us briefly state what we have presented in the previous sections and see why we made the selection of cases the way we did.

In the first place, of the six cases we have discussed four belong to the UK. That is understandable as the pioneering work on open distance education began most visibly with the Open University, UK. Consequently, before anywhere else, it was in Britain that the need for staff development for distance education was felt and attended to. The OUUK developed its philosophy and methodology of training the staff, obviously, somewhere around 1969 when the University started functioning. Jordanhill College introduced its training course in 1975, and the International Extension College in 1977, followed by the course introduced by Surrey University in 1980. The complexion, intent and philosophy of no two of these are in agreement. This too is understandable, as the resource institutes had differing perceptions of what they wanted to do and for what purpose. The

OOUK had its own staff in mind, Jordanhill College had the whole country in its mind, whereas the International Extension College and the Surrey University had the developing countries in their minds when the courses were developed.

Secondly, we notice that the views and/or courses mentioned under sections 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 of this unit appeared almost simultaneously in or around 1980/1981. All three views, i.e., those from Surrey University (through Elton), from Riverina College (through Meacham) and from the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, India (through Koul) were presented at the same symposium on distance education Penang, Malaysia, in 1981.

What is significant in this coincidence is that (to our best knowledge) it was for the first time that distance education practitioners from three different parts of the world emphatically articulated their concerns regarding the issue of staff development for distance education at an international symposium.

When Elton had raised the question of staff development for distance education in a similar symposium in 1979, it was treated as 'incomprehension' (Elton1981) However, by 1985, the people concerned with distance education had realised that the issue was relevant for the development of distance education. At the 13' World Conference of the International Council for Distance Education held at Melbourne in 1985, this theme was given the status of a special interest group within the programme of the conference. But the coincidence ends there, since the three views presented focused on three different issues.

Like the other three courses introduced in Britain, (touched upon above) these three too did not suggest any explicit steps towards the convergence of views in the field of staff development for distance education. Looked at in this light, though the 70s owed appreciable effort to bring in programmes for staff development, the approaches and implementation strategies were amorphous in character, as no two institutions, courses or thinkers seem to show agreement on the essentials. However, it should be admitted that promising beginnings were made, notwithstanding the fact that they were amorphous in character. It was during the early 80s that a convergence of views in this regard started emerging and it took recognisable shape by 1985. It is during this period that the workers in this field started articulating their concerns in favour of some kind of professional approach to staff development for distance education. At present, as usual, initial articulations, besides being feeble, could not be comprehensive, nor could they be free from controversies. But, that is a different theme, and we shall take it up in the next unit.

1.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

Advantages of the course team approach:

- i) The quality of materials produced by a team of experts will be superior to the quality of materials produced by an individual
- ii) Production of materials in multi-disciplinary areas becomes easy.

Disadvantages of the course team approach:

- i) To cultivate the team spirit among different individuals is not easy.
- ii) Materials produced by a course team are costly.

Check Your Progress 2

The strong point about Elton's common course for all educators is that it will give the teachers adequate knowledge about the fundamentals of education and teaching. Its weak point is that it does not meet the special requirements of distance teachers.

Check Your Progress 3

The two major categories of Meacham's parameters are structural parameters, and instructional parameters.

The two important steps necessary to make the parameters effective are:

- i) identification of the stages of concern of the staff, and
- ii) designing the training programmes according to the needs of the staff.



UNIT 2 CURRICULAR ISSUES

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Why Train Distance Teachers?
 - 2.2.1 Professional Training Needs
 - 2.2.2 Distance Education as a Career
- 2.3 Who will Train and Whom?
 - 2.3.1 The Professional Trainees
 - 2.3.2 The Non-professional Trainees
 - 2.3.3 Staff Development: Sources
 - 2.3.4 Distance Teacher Trainer Attributes
- 2.4 What is the 'Content' of this Training?
- 2.5 How to Impart the Training?
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 1, we have presented the scene during the 1970s as far as the question of staff development for distance education is concerned, the overall picture that emerged was that of amorphous beginnings - different people and institutions took differing stands. Consequent upon the differing practices with differing approaches and foci were established. Some approaches considered only a part of the totality called distance education and others viewed it in altogether a different light. This divergence in approach and treatment of the issue is natural in the beginning which, however, got gradually changed in the 1980s.

As we come closer to the end of the 1970s and step into the 1980s, we observe efforts being made to bring an acceptable convergence in the approaches and thinking pertaining to staff development for distance education. International bodies like the UNESCO got interested in this educational concern, and appreciable degree of deliberate effort for consensus and the consequent convergence in thoughts and deeds is indicative of the fact that the period of amorphous beginning was over and that we had already entered the stage of consolidation and systematic organisation. The first five years of the 1980s may, therefore, be called the period of analysis and synthesis, i.e. what was on the scene was analysed objectively and then the findings synthesised to present a well organised view of the entire issue - staff development for distance education. We shall now describe and discuss this process of analysis and synthesis in order to show what the points of convergence are and what directions this process has given for further development.

We must begin with the fundamental curricular questions related to the need for the training, its aims, the personnel to be trained and the people who will train them, the resources, the content of the programme and the tasks of the personnel working at the distance education institutions, the mode of training, etc. In short, we shall discuss all the important aspects of the methodology of the training programme. Let us take these questions in that very order for discussion.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we intend to acquaint you with the needs for professional training of distance teachers, and suggest answers to the basic curricular questions pertaining to teacher training in the area of distance education. In other words, we shall try to answer the questions: Why training is necessary in distance education? Who are to be trained? Who will train them? What should be the content of such training? What are the various criteria for using any training programme to train them?

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- identify the various reasons for professional training for distance teachers;
- classify the various categories of trainees, and the trainers (distance educator/ resource persons) along with their functions; and
- identify the attributes of a distance teacher/ trainer/ educator, the contents of such a training, and the various activities meant to justify a training type/programme to impact such training.

2.2 WHY TRAIN DISTANCE TEACHERS?

We know that in the context of distance education the learner is separated from the teacher, multi-media strategies are followed, preparation and presentation of materials is systematic, student-support services are provided to make the system more effective, the design of the educational structure as a whole is much more advanced than the earlier correspondence or broadcasting education, and that the system is a deliberate effort to democratize education. In spite of these common characteristics, distance education systems differ widely in their organisation, practices and objectives, as their target clientele, their scales of operation and their structural complexities differ in essentials. However, these systems are now a major factor in educational development in many countries all over the world.

As has already been shown, though there is enthusiasm about these systems, there are reservations too, and to make the systems successful we need to be cautious. In this context the corner stone for the edifice of caution is 'trained personnel'. The implications of what we have said above are that distance education:

- i) has recognisable features,
- ii) has diverse structures and practices,
- iii) is a major factor in educational development, and
- iv) needs to be safeguarded as a system

2.2.1 Professional Training Needs

The above implications point to the need for 'training' which informs those concerned about what the recognisable features are, builds up the base for innovation and creativity among the practitioners, promotes the required degree of professionalism to answer the genuine reservations of some critics on the one hand and to create a long-term impact on the systems of education on the other. A body of distance educators is badly required to

start new distance education institutions, to expand the range and number of student populations, to see what the community needs for its social and economic purposes, to revitalise the older institutions, to identify, describe, and undertake new professional role within the system, to give new directions to the existing practices and establish the system permanently. Most people who take up key as well as subordinate positions in the distance education institutions come from other areas of education. They face two problems in new positions:

- i) they must adapt themselves to the new situation immediately; and
- ii) they must contribute to the culture and vitality of distance education in positive terms for a long-term impact on the society in general and on education in particular.

The first of these problems may be overcome with the help of 'workshops' etc., but the second problem calls for a more potent solution - nothing less than professional training of a very high standard.

2.2.2 Distance Education as a Career

At this stage we need to comment on a statement made in 1987 in a UNESCO publication. The statement considers pre-service training in distance education 'only as a future prospect and scarcely yet a present reality' and suggests that perhaps some time in the future when distance learning systems and structures are an inevitable part of every general education system, distance teacher education may become an option in ordinary teacher education but that is not yet the case in the Asia-Pacific region. We would like to ignore this view, and emphasise that the statement is no more valid today. However, we shall do so by reviewing the arguments which are basic to the statement.

In the first place, it is suggested that for some people involvement with distance education is a temporary phase in their career. Most people enter the system mid-career and those who continue move from one work role to other within the system, but there are hardly any who spend their entire working/ professional lives in the same system.

The suggestion is valid, though only superficially. Distance education institution cannot claim to be older than 40 years to date. Therefore, it is premature to suggest that the personnel who enter the system have not spent or are not going to spend their professional lives in the system. If what is indicated by the success of the courses given at Jordanhill College, the University of Surrey, etc., (see Unit 1) is taken into consideration, a more powerful and valid suggestion will be that people are looking for pre-service training in distance education, which of course is available presently in a few rare cases. Secondly, a serious question can be raised: "Has a career of distance educator yet emerged?" And the earlier answer was that it has not. It is feared that distance education is an 'emergency system' which may attract talented and imaginative academics and non-academics as it provides outlets for their talents but may fail to retain them for long. Success in such distance education experiences may invite them back to the professions they originally came from and look for, explore and implement innovations in those professions. Such possibilities are open in fields like education, broadcasting, educational television, publishing and printing, educational communication, etc. So the fear is not entirely unfounded.

Secondly, it should be noted that most social reforms, educational and others, do appear on the scene as 'emergency systems', but, if found useful, get established as parts of the overall social system. It should not be difficult to see that distance education systems, though introduced as 'emergency systems', have come to stay. Of course, the period of transition, in which the concerned population of academics and non-academics shuttle between their original professional interests and those offered by the systems of distance education, is still on or more correctly, has just begun. The transition will go on for a long time, but the fact that it has begun is evidence enough to emphasize that distance education is emerging as a career, it is time we saw that is made one.

Thirdly, if distance education is to be accepted as a 'career', it needs to display a 'career profile' i.e. the various possible, or existing stages of professional growth which follow one another successively, providing the careerist ample opportunities for developing the career-system (distance education) on the one hand, and on the other his/her own personal career within the domain of distance education. What we can say here is that any professional training in distance education worth its name should highlight those progressive stages towards greater professionalism which should enable it to be seen both as a career and a discipline. Needless to say that providing full-fledged professional training in distance education is a positive and necessary step in this direction.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

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

Identify at least three important needs for which a special training Programme for distance teachers is necessary.

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2.3 WHO WILL TRAIN AND WHOM?

Many people are involved in the whole process of distance education. So far as the activities in a professional training programme for distance teachers are concerned, two major types of people viz., those who are to be trained and those who will train them, are engaged in the programme. The first two subsections of this section are devoted on the two categories of trainees – the professionals and the non-professionals and the next two sub-sections will talk about those who will train the distance teachers.

2.3.1 The Professional Trainees

Among the professionals, we may identify a few clearly definable categories of personnel, each category requiring a specific kind of training relevant to its needs and job requirements. These categories are:

- i) planners and administrators working at various levels of the system;
- ii) surveyors, course planners, curriculum developers, course writers, editors, reviewers, course coordinators, tutor counselors, evaluators, and graphic artists;
- iii) audio producers, script writers, evaluators, special effects personnel;
- iv) video producers, script writers, designers, special effects personnel, evaluators;
- v) educational technologists, technical staff of various types, specialists in integrating the media-inputs; and
- vi) facilitators of various services - libraries, laboratory staff, etc.

2.3.2 The Non-professional Trainees

Among the non-professionals, we list a host of people who may seemingly have nothing to do with distance education, but in reality may play a vital role in the success or failure of the system. We may categorise such people as follows:

- i) Politicians, policy/decision-makers who motivate the creation of distance education institutions, popularise the political statements in favour of such establishments and mobilise resources for them.
- ii) The target learner populations of several types - school children, university students, professionals, housewives, drop-outs from the formal system of education, etc. These are the people whom the institutions serve directly, and these people need to know how they may be served maximally.
- iii) Liaison agents of several types - social reformers, local community leaders helpers and at places, religious agents, parents, other professionals who can be used in local community situations etc. The suggestion here is that for example, uninformed parents can do a lot of harm to their distance learning children, as it is the parents, the seniors who are expected to create a learning environment (proper place, appropriate time, etc.) for their children for which they need to be educated, if they are not.

Table 2.1: Task and Training Needs for the Trainees for Distance Education

Role	Tasks	Training Needs
Policy maker	Makes decision about establishing the distance education system; persuades policy making colleagues aware about its advantage; monitors the progress of the system; controls the financial allocation, etc.	'Sensitisation' to advantages of distance education. Knowledge of outline of systems and structures; knowledge of cost benefit account of distance education.
Learners	Obtain study resources, place, equipment, time, fees. Manage learning tasks. Choose courses. Contribute to peer activities, whenever possible.	Study skills, knowledge of local resources (persons material information sources). Knowledge of curriculum information about other distance learners.

Role	Tasks	Training Needs
Parents and family	Provide physically requirements (place of study and for keeping study material safe) writing material, light, heat, radio, TV, Computer. Supervise learners schedule of study, assignment etc. Adopt encouraging attitude. Provide information/ideas from own education, if possible and from other sources. Monitor cultural/ethical /social appropriateness of material. Provide co-curricular needs. Contact organization, resource persons on learners behalf.	Awareness of distance education. Knowledge of relevant local resources and support system. Knowledge of outline curriculum requirement.
Other Community resource persons (teacher at other level's health worker) etc.	Provide alternative study location. Provide study resources information and material. Provide experience of practical situations. Adopt encouraging attitude. Contact logistic communication support systems.	Sensitivity/awareness of distance education. Awareness of relevant local resources. Knowledge of curriculum material, knowledge of delivery systems.
Local community leaders	Encouraging distance education as a part of education system. Marshal local resources/ personnel to assist learners. Check and improve logistic/community systems. Provide study resources information and material and experiments/ practical situations.	

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

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

List at least three categories of professional trainees and two categories of non-professional trainees for whom we need to have distance teacher training/ education programmes.

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2.3.3 Staff Development: Sources

Having identified the groups that need training of one or the other kind, we now turn to the question “who will train them?”

At the outset, we should admit that not many pre-service training programmes in distance education are available today, as such we should not look for many qualified resource persons, i.e., distance teacher trainers in the traditional sense and they are not easily available, In other words, like other teacher trainers, we do not have many full time trainers in the field of distance education. This fact needs to be noted carefully. Obviously, today it is the ‘distance educators’ themselves who train others for distance

education, and not the 'trainers' in the conventional sense of the expression. These 'distance educators' have learnt their new skills and acquired the relevant knowledge about distance education mostly on the 'job'. It is also possible that many of them are fresh from their job experiences and in that sense they are themselves in the process of learning. However, this fact need not prejudice us against them, for in most cases training in the various areas of distance education pertains to the early stages of its development, and the experts fresh from their job experiences have proved successful in such situations. There is another factor too which helps this situation - mostly those who join distance education institutions are trained and/or experienced teachers, administrators, technicians, and broadcasters. In many cases, they have some relevant information or even operational skills. However vague or disorganised these skills, etc., might be, they should help in the process of interaction between the trainer/distance educator and the trainee. Thus, the present responsibilities in the field of staff development for distance education are three fold:-

- i) to maintain the existing arrangements to meet the 'emergency type' needs,
- ii) to build a system that will produce full time trainers, and
- iii) to achieve national or local self-sufficiency or training resources at the fastest possible rate.

As far as the resource personnel are concerned, we may depend on two sources: national or local and foreign, either from resource countries or from international agencies such as UNESCO. Depending on whether local or national resources are advisable because the environmental factors pertaining to economic, social, industrial and educational development are shared and easily understood, common difficulties become tractable, and there is no scope for underhand exploitation. If such local or national resources are not available, one has to depend on what may come from abroad. There too, it is better to depend on neighbor countries, or the courtiers that belong to proximate region for similar reasons of shared environmental problems and understanding. Personnel from abroad can be of great help, but only in a limited way. Their roles at best can be advisory in nature. They help in setting up systems or subsystems but the task of building the actual infrastructure will always be that of the local personnel. Besides, the personnel from abroad cannot be of any real help at the school and community level education or training needs. The suggestion that is being made is that such personnel can be used as consultants who can present details about their systems, structures and the contexts wherein they were built and suggest ways and means by which the hosts can adopt and adapt to those systems and structures within the latter's contexts.

2.3.4 Distance Teacher Trainer Attributes

Another point to be considered is what the attributes of the trainers should be. By implication, those very skills should be expected from a finished product - the trained distance educator. A distance teacher-trainer should be

- i) **Skilled:** The teaching materials (print, audio, video etc.) in distance education are more visible to greater numbers of people of various walks and levels of life. They have to be of a very high standard for the credibility of the system and they have to be socially and pedagogically relevant for their social and pedagogic utility. Such materials can be produced if the personnel employed to produce them are **skilled people**. A very high standard of **academic and technical skill** is, therefore, expected of the trainers.

- ii) **Cooperative:** There are hardly any tasks and roles in the systems of distance education which can be carried out in isolation from other tasks and roles. Most of these tasks and roles, however dissimilar they may be and seem to be, are inter-linked and inter-related for purposes of making the finished product a success. Cooperation, obviously, is the corner stone of this success, and cooperation is not possible unless those involved in the tasks are cooperative, or have learnt to be so. Trainers, therefore, have themselves to be cooperative, for, then alone can they promote this attribute among the prospective trainers (i.e. trainee trainers).
- iii) **Flexible:** Rigidity of views and attitudes is a major hurdle in the way of making distance education acceptable and successful. Flexibility, on the other hand, not only helps the trainees to adapt themselves to the new situations and roles, but also in collaborating with others in effecting frequent readjustments of various kinds. It is only a flexible distance educator, who can take on such diverse roles as those of academics, Technicians, producers and administrators. The trainers should be able to display this attribute in good measure to show what its utility is.
- iv) **Patience:** Some people believe that it is only at the early stages of the development of distance education institutions that the workers have to face anxieties, frustrations, delays and failures. The fact, however, is that so long as the institution keeps on being innovative in terms of offering new courses, extending its reach to diverse sections of the society, reducing the costs of its products, and becoming increasingly responsive to social needs, the distance educators will continue to face frustrations, anxieties, etc. Thus, instead of marking time for such difficulties to come to an end, they should develop a work- culture which accepts these difficulties as routine episodes, and thus build confidence and optimism in and around their work. Basic to this attitude is the attribute of patience which the trainers will do good to display in their own approach to work.
- v) **Innovative:** Distance education is an innovation by itself and it survives on its ability to build one innovation on the other. These innovations range from course design to course offering, from cost efficiency to extended student services, etc. The personnel who can maintain this innovative character of distance education need to be innovative necessarily and so the trainers. Innovation has to be the dominant factor in the 'personal profile' of a distance educator, and through this attribute alone can they build a distinctive 'career profile' which will help ascertain the claim that distance education is an autonomous discipline by itself.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Space is given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- i) Write down the reasons for which we have to depend on the national or local resource personnel to develop staff for distance teaching.

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- ii) List all the five skills/attributes to be developed in a distance teacher through professional training.

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- iii) Justify the development of such a skill (any one of the five skills) in the distance teacher.

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2.4 WHAT IS THE 'CONTENT' OF THIS TRAINING?

Like most complex systems, the system of distance education consists of networks and chains of diverse tasks. Obviously, first and foremost, training in this field should provide expertise and practice to the personnel to carry out their own specific tasks and duties. Secondly, the personnel should learn to function effectively along and within their role-chains and task-networks. So, the training should provide them with the understanding of and an appreciation for how their own work and tasks are related with those of others, and what the means and ways of making the cooperative effort successful are. Thirdly, this training should provide for the building blocks of 'commitment' on the part of trainees - they should get committed to distance education in their thoughts, words and deeds. These are the underlying principles the content of training should be based on. Put differently, what we have suggested is that training should provide adequate and appropriate content in all the three domains (namely, cognitive, psychomotor and affective) to build effective human resources for establishing, developing, maintaining and expanding the systems of distance education. Let us look into the sources to identify these training needs.

Identifying training needs: sources

The various means and ways of identifying training needs are:

- generalisation from the available literature on distance education in general, and on the roles of differing personnel categories in particular;
- analysis of the tasks, the problems therein, anticipated tasks and the problems expected therein;
- critical incident analysis i.e., an analysis of individual's behaviour in various situations, its consequences in terms of the productivity of the tasks concerned; such exercises identify problems which suggest training needs;

- case studies of successful distance educators help in identifying those characteristics which contribute to their success; these characteristics may then be pointed to, and the trainees encouraged to develop them through training;
- pooling the views and opinions of experienced people (as to what they think and/or believe the training needs are) helps in preparing an inventory or possible needs, where from, after further analysis; dependable training needs can be identified.

Using these means, exercises have already been done and various training needs identified and listed. We shall present specimens of such lists in Unit 3 of this block.

2.5 HOW TO IMPART THE TRAINING?

In this fast changing world 'training once-in-a-life-time' is an obsolete concept. Now training is a life-time affair for serious professionalism. Besides, the variety of personnel to be trained is vast and they are at different stages of their careers, some in permanent positions in well established institutions, some in temporary positions, some working on projects, some on long-term assignments - and all of them at differing levels of concern.

The anticipated progressive career-profile suggests that those in permanent positions need revitalisation of their skills and practices so that they do not perpetuate such practices as have outlived their utility; those in temporary positions will move to permanent positions; those working on projects will go to long-term assignments; and those working on long-term assignments will step into permanent positions. Corresponding to this progressive upward mobility in the career prospects of a trainee, it is likely that the systems and sub-systems within a known system of distance education undergo changes: communication technology is changing rapidly, educational concepts and learning theories are breaking new grounds, etc. An effective training programme will have to take care of all the changes and the corresponding activities which have been exemplified above.

Selection of the training programme/type

Having, thus, very, briefly touched upon the scope of training, we need to list a few basic principles and specific activities that may be used to differentiate the various training types (see Unit 3 section 3.3.) and the corresponding activities according to the needs of the specific grounds of the personnel.

- Scaling the scope of project:*** First and foremost, the trainers or the training institution must judge the scope of the project for which training is to be arranged. The training programme should suit that scope adequately and appropriately. For a distance education project with a single specific objective, a training programme of two days may be enough to enable the personnel involved perform their tasks satisfactorily. An international agency may conduct a workshop of eight to ten days with the object of achieving multiplier effect (personnel trained at a workshop would train others and this process continues).
- Short and long term advantages of the programme :*** The second consideration is the short-term and long-term advantages of a training

programme. It may be that the scale and scope of a training programme impose limited objectives and activities on it. Care should, however, be taken that a programme of limited scope builds reasonable motivation for further work beyond what the programme provides, and conversely a programme of vast scope should lay reasonable emphasis on immediate needs and applications.

- iii) ***Catering both institutional and individual needs*** : Both the needs of the individual participants and those of the institute should be catered to. Though a training programme always aims at achieving an objective for an institution to reinforce an existing distance education system or modify and improve such system, the building blocks of that reinforcement and/or change are the individuals who come forward for the training. For the programme to be successful, it should be satisfying for the individuals too, though the overall objective continues to be the needs of the institute and/or the country.
- iv) ***Linking past activities events with future*** : As stated above, training should not be 'once-in-a-life-time affair'. It should build links with the, training events that have gone before it, and create scope for other training events that may be linked to it in the future. To make this linking a possibility, each training programme must have built evaluation mechanisms which provide for follow-up changes, modifications and extensions. The ultimate result of such an approach is that the rewards of training turn to be cumulative.
- v) ***Providing models of acceptable and desirable behaviour*** : To cover the affective domain, training should modify the behaviour of the trainees by providing models of distance educators. This objective can be achieved by practising what is preached about its characteristic features: it should be systematic, well planned, efficiently managed, well proportioned with regard to its components and the trainer should conduct himself/herself admirably to set living examples for the trainees.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: i) Space is given below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- i) How can training for distance educators be made continuous and lifelong?

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- ii) How does the system of distance education adjust with the corresponding upward mobility of the trainee (of DE) within the framework of a life-long training programme?

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

We have discussed in some detail the thinking that took shape during the first half of the 1980s. It is obvious that this thinking is far ahead of what it was in the 1970s. This advance in thinking is indicated in the following facts:

- i) Unlike the earliest thinking of the OUUK, the main function of the personnel engaged in distance education is not just the production of instructional materials. It is realised and accepted that distance education systems consist of network of various sub-systems, each of which needs specially trained personnel.
- ii) Distance education is seen as an autonomous activity distinct from education (see Elton's views discussed in section 1.5 in Unit 1) and educational technology (see Jordanhill College Courses, section 1.3 in Unit 1)
- iii) Depending on the developmental stages of a particular distance education institution and the personnel, different types of training should be arranged to meet their needs, and the content, methodology, etc., of such training can be (in fact has been) specified in explicit terms (see Unit 3)

Besides, there is yet another point which this thinking has emphasised, namely, that pre-service training for distance education is only 'a future prospect and scarcely yet a present reality'. We have already expressed our reservation regarding this view though briefly. Unit 3 will take up this issue more elaborately to show that pre-service training for distance education is already a reality and that all the prerequisites that necessitate such training have already come into being.

2.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS : POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

A special training programme for distance teachers is necessary because they have to :

- i) plan and start new institutions of distance education and revitalise the older institutions
- ii) provide education and training to a large number of student populations and
- iii) develop courses suitable to the needs of the community and in relation to the socio-economic needs of the country.

Check Your Progress 2

The three categories of professional trainees are

- i) planners and administrators of distance education,
- ii) those engaged in curriculum development and teaching, and
- iii) educational technologists

The two categories of non-professional trainees.

- a) politicians and policy makers, and
- b) liaison agents.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) We have to collaborate with the national/local resource persons to share common difficulties in the system, to understand the various environmental factors involved in socio-economic and educational developments of the country, and to be conscious of any underhand exploitation in order to avoid them.
- ii) Attributes of a distance teacher: a) skills, b) cooperations c) flexibility, d) patience, and e) innovation
- iii) For example, a distance teacher must be innovative because he/she not only has to deal with various innovations within the systems, but also himself/herself develop new courses, new ways of offering the courses, new ways of tutoring and counselling, and to minimize cost on one hand, and increase System-efficiency on the other. Being innovative he/she can build up his/her personal profile and 'Career-profile' to add to the emergence of distance education as an independent discipline.

Check Your Progress 4

- i) In distance education training programmes, the past training events have close relationships with the present ones. The present training events scope for future training programmes. To maintain this continuity, evaluation mechanisms to be built in each programme and the distance educator has to know all the new developments in this area. Thus training in distance education becomes a life-long affair.
- ii) A distance educator may start with a temporary position, move on to a long-term one and then get absorbed in a permanent position.

UNIT 3 STATE OF MATURITY

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Tasks and Training Needs
- 3.3 Types of Training
 - 3.3.1 Workshops
 - 3.3.2 Field Staff Programmes
 - 3.3.3 Manuals
 - 3.3.4 Professional Associations
 - 3.3.5 In-house Programmes
 - 3.3.6 Assistance from Resource Institutes/Countries
- 3.4 The State of Maturity
 - 3.4.1 Distance Education as a 'Discipline'
 - 3.4.2 Staff Development in Distance Education: Few Examples
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 2, we left a few loose ends with the intention of bringing them together in this unit. The main theme of this unit is pre-service training in distance education. As we know, pre-service training in a discipline/vocation is an indication of the maturity of the discipline/vocation under consideration.

Whether the process of staff development for distance education has reached a state of maturity is an interesting issue today.

However, we have definite views on this issue and intend presenting them with the greatest possible caution.

To exercise this caution we postponed our explicit answers to the third and the fourth curricular questions raised and discussed in unit 2. The questions, to recall them, are:

- What is the content of training in distance education?
- What procedures, processes, follow-up programmes, etc. may constitute the training methodology?

As discussed above, we have already discussed these questions in unit 2. In the present unit, we shall present explicit answers to these questions, and then use a citation from a UNESCO publication to build a link between these answers and the main theme of this unit, i.e., pre-service training in distance education.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

You have read a detailed account of the various curricular issues concerning staff development in distance education in Unit 2. In the present unit, we aim at providing you with the implications of pre-service training in distance education, and the various strategies used for development of staff

along with a few such illustrations including that of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

By the end of this unit, you would be able to:

- identify the various strategies used to develop staff for distance education;
- classify distance education as a discipline in itself;
- trace the implications of pre-service training for distance education; and
- trace, the growth of such institutional facilities over the years.

3.2 TASKS AND TRAINING NEEDS

The purpose of presenting here the answers to the questions mentioned above is to highlight the convergence of views, with regard to training tasks, training-needs and training types that was achieved during the first five years of the 1980s. The citation, referred to above (that has been presented in 3.4 of this unit) gives us a collective world opinion about this convergence. This world opinion affirms the convergence in the strongest possible words, but suggests, without any ambiguity, that this convergence cannot be operationalised yet. However, convergence has been operationalised, and is being operationalised at the IGNOU, India, London University and the International Extension College (UK), the Open University (UK) and a few institutions in Canada and Australia.

We shall present specimens of the tasks and training-needs in the following tables 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3. Also see Table 2.1 of unit 2 for a holistic approach.

Table 3.1: Tasks and Training Needs of Various Types of Personnel

Personnel	Tasks	Training Needs
Policy maker and planner	1. Within the framework of national priorities, needs and constraints, etc. conceives, plans and guides in the execution of distance education programmes	1. Overview of distance education system, its strengths and weaknesses, its social need and economic validity 2. Knowledge of developmental plans in other sectors so as to relate education to the overall development of the country.
	1. Overall manpower planning 2. Institutional management 3. Co-ordinates and supervises institutional programmes 4. Popularises the distance education system 5. Some other specific tasks related to services in the field as under a) appoints tutor, allocates student to tutors b) deals with student and tutor problems.	1. Knowledge of distance education and its operation at grassroots level 2. Knowledge of institutions, programmes and procedures 3. Knowledge of distance education institutions working within the country as well as abroad and communication with them. 4. Students and tutor problems

Personnel	Tasks	Training Needs
	c) responsible for efficient tutor functioning d) arranges staff and equips study centres 6. Schedules face-to face sessions 7. Arranges other uses of study centres 8. Disseminates information to students 9. Supplies feedback to institutions 10. Collects marked assignments from tutors 11. Sends samples for monitoring conducts examinations, sends results to institutions. 12. Regional Publicity	5. Training in Management and supervision of support staff 6. Understanding of local conditions and problems 7. Skills in establishing rapport with community at grassroots level 8. Skills in human relations
Administrator	1. Designs and carries out research in identified problems of distance education 2. Analyses and interprets data 3. Makes recommendations based on research findings. 4. Compiles final report 5. Disseminates research	1. Understanding of distance education and its strengths and weakness and problem areas 2. Orientation towards various education research designs. 3. Sampling techniques with references to distance education. 4. Techniques of constructing instruments for data collection and analysis of data. 5. Report writing. 6. Dissemination skills.

The following table contains the tasks and training needs of those categories of personnel's that involve in the production of course material:-

Table 3.2: Tasks and Training Needs of Personnel Related to Production of Course Materials

Personnel	Tasks	Training Needs
Curriculum designer	1. Assesses distance learners' needs. 2. Analyses situation 3. Conceptualises and designs appropriate need-based curriculum. 4. Coordinates with others 5. Appreciates the role of media, face-to-face discussion and practical complements of the curriculum 6. Prepares course outlines 7. Suggests suitable learning experience and activities.	1. Overview of distance education systems, its strengths and weaknesses, etc. 2. Understanding of needs, resources, constraints etc., of distance education in general and those of the institution in particular 3. Knowledge of target groups and their problems 4. Knowledge of learning experiences and activities, etc.

Personnel	Tasks	Training Needs
	- Helps in the preparation of 'learning outcomes' - Helps in evaluation of Curriculum	- Knowledge of teaching strategies - Curriculum designing skills - Understanding the role of media in distance education - Evaluation of Curriculum designs
Writer/ Reviewer	- Decides/adopts formats - Organises material - Develops detailed educational strategies - Writes course materials, usually in close collaboration with other members of course team - Supplies ideas/drafts for illustrations - Reviews/drafts - Works with reviewers, editors and illustrators until material is ready - Test, and evaluates material is ready - Revises/reviews galley proofs from printers - Prepares feedback, questionnaires, pre-tests and post-tests	- Overview of distance education system, its strengths and weaknesses, etc. - Knowledge of writing/reviewing skills - Knowledge of target groups and their problems - Knowledge of learning process and teaching strategy - Knowledge of content - Locating resources/materials, etc. - Knowledge of production of materials through course team - Testing and evaluation skills - Some knowledge of design editing and printing processes
Editor	- Face-edits: format, student-aids, layout, print getup - Texts edits - Collaborates with authors to remove content ambiguities and confusions - Edits language - Checks readability, logical flow, sequencing and presentation of material - Checks suitability of illustrations, graphs, etc - Proof-reads - Relates printed texts with other media of the system - Contacts printers to get the materials printed	- Overview of distance education system, its strengths and weaknesses - Knowledge of distance teaching techniques - Editing skills - Making-up manuscript of printing - Prof-reading skills - Knowledge of different media and their role in teaching - Knowledge of different media and their role in teaching - Knowledge of printing stages
Course Coordinator	- Schedules and arranges course development, maintenance and renewal activities - Briefs external writers - Co-ordinates activities of course team - Facilitates services to ensure smooth course production	- Orientation to the philosophy of distance education - Writing skills - Coordination skills - Sound knowledge of subject content and methodology - Course production procedures

Personnel	Tasks	Training Needs
	5. Collaborates with course team members 6. Prepares student and tutor guides and other supplementary materials such as assignments, tests, marking guides etc., for mailing 7. Arranges review and testing of materials 8. Communicates with students and tutors from time to time 9. Monitors marking of assignments 10. Arranges workshop/practical components, if necessary	6. Scheduling, communication skills 7. Management skills 8. Testing and evaluation
Tutor/ Evaluator	1. Corresponds with students 2. Holds face-to-face sessions 3. Gives prompt, accurate and constructive feedback to students on their progress 4. Marks assignments 5. Sends in results 6. Provides guidance and counseling to students 7. Provides feedback on students problems and procedural difficulties	1. Knows about distance education and its various aspects and tutor role in it. 2. Role of evaluator in distance education 3. Knowledge of the subject content 4. Knowledge of programmes, schedules, regional services, facilities 5. Skills in communicating with students 6. Counseling skills 7. Human relations

The following table contains an example of details regarding tasks and training-needs in terms of 3 domains of learning:

Table 3.3: Training Needs: An Example

Personnel	Tasks	Training Needs		
		Knowledge	Attitudes	Skills
Trainer/ Administrator	Planning	1. Principles of need/ problem identification 2. Principles of measurable objective formulation 3. Principles of generating alternative solutions 4. Theories of research and evaluation	1. Awareness of problems and difficulties faced by the country 2. Appreciation of need for prioritization of needs and problems 3. Appreciation of need for systematic planning and evaluation of such plans.	1. Skills in writing measurable objectives 2. Skills in designing projects/ programmes 3. Skills in control, monitoring and follow up of projects/ programmes. 4. Skills in project/ programme evaluation

3.3 TYPES OF TRAINING

Most strategies used for staff development in the conventional systems of education are available to distance education system also. And all of them have been used for meeting various demands in the area of distance education. A brief description of each of them is presented below:

3.3.1 Workshops

A workshop may be of 5-10 days' duration depending upon the objectives and target group. The special features of a workshop are as follows:

- It has clear objectives to which all the activities are directed;
- The participants constitute a homogeneous group and are usually at the same level of concerns;
- It emphasises activity and participation aimed at achieving the objectives of the programme;
- It can have institutional, regional, national or international character;
- It can use the services of experts (institutional, regional, national or international);
- It allows scope for innovation.

Workshops are one of the major means of imparting training in the various areas of distance education at the present stage, and they will remain significant for quite some time to come. You may go through the objectives, contents, strategies used for conducting workshops in different areas of distance education in Block 5 of this course.



3.3.2 Field Staff Programmes

Whereas workshops are usually of 5-10 days' duration, field staff programmes are of a shorter duration but not different from workshops in character. Their major features are as follows:

- They involve local (district based) and regional (state based) staff/officials, political and religious leaders wherever necessary, parents and social workers.
- They are conducted in local areas, partly for the convenience of participants and partly because the 'local situation' is the locale of the programme.
- They serve a dual purpose: the local people realize and recognise what their roles are and the professional staff from the distance education systems learn about the problems of learners through first-hand, on-the-spot experience of dealing with them.

- They set the tone and build the procedures for community-based distance education programmes.

3.3.3 Manuals

Manuals serve both the new entrants to the profession; and the experienced staff in various ways. To the former, they present information regarding established practices and procedures, skills and techniques. To the latter, they introduce new and unfamiliar parts of the system, besides throwing new challenges and raising new questions for them. Secondly, manuals function as follow-up boosters to workshops and field staff programmes.

3.3.4 Professional Associations

Professional associations looking after the interests of distance education use various means and ways — conferences (regional and international) workshops, journals, research groups and individuals — to promote and advance the techniques of, awareness about and experience in the various aspects of distance education. Actively involved in such development programmes are the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) and various regional organizations like European Distance Education Network (EDEN), Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU), etc. Besides, distance educators find places in several other associations, such as the associations of educational technologists, mass communication, continuing and extension education, etc.

3.3.5 In-house Programmes

These programmes for the promotion of expertise among the staff of a distance education institution are among the accepted routine institutional activities. Staff meetings are held to share experiences, propose and discuss new techniques, listen to experts, etc. Besides, longer meetings for specific training purposes are also held for the benefit of such staff.

Another significant in-house activity is to organise regular scrutiny, inspection and supervision to identify training requirements and also the personnel who need it. Having completed this task, training sessions are organised to plug the weak spots. Thirdly, as professionals of diverse fields come together to work in a distance education institution, they get into situations in which they find themselves jointly applying several types of professional insights to the special requirements of those situations. This results in training for and by colleagues. And whatever ideas, techniques and approaches are developed are passed on to new recruits through meetings, etc.

3.3.6 Assistance from Resource Institutes/Countries

Assistance may be sought in-the following four ways:

- I) **Consultancy:** In order to set up a new institution, or a new activity within an existing institution, specialists from outside (or inside) the country are invited to formulate and conduct training programmes relevant to those activities.
- II) **Attachments:** The personnel who are expected to be assigned specific tasks in a distance education institution may be attached to such counterpart departments and programmes (inside or outside the country) in which relevant expertise is available. The attached personnel

are expected to observe and obtain work experience in actual work situations.

- III) **Visits:** Visits are limited 'attachments' for the new recruits, and the benefits too are limited such as initiation, or the first exposure to a new system of education. However, in cases where the visitors' own programmes are not very different from those of their counterparts the benefits are of a much larger scope such as possible long-term collaborative projects, etc.
- IV) **Adoptions:** The resource institutes (well established distance education institutes) adopt a new institute or a new programme within an established institution, and support it through their experienced personnel. This approach allows exchange visits, loaning of equipment. etc., till required.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Space is given below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- i) List the six strategies used for staff development in distance Education.

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- ii) Identify and list the major functions of any professional association looking after the interests of distance education.

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3.4 THE STATE OF MATURITY

Let us examine a citation (UNESCO, 1987) that confirms the above discussion in essence, but brings in a controversy. It is a lengthy one. However, it helps serve our purpose.

"Although distance learning in the forms both of correspondence schools and school radio has been present in the Asia-Pacific region for decades past, the last few years have seen emergence of more precisely structured, more deliberately conceived distance education systems. There have been developments in print-based materials resulting from clearer ideas about instructional methodology, and in educational telecommunications resulting from the applications of television, satellite and computer technologies to learning and teaching..."

Substantial institutional developments have occurred. Many of these have been in higher education 'open universities', so called because they relax student entry requirements, adapt the structure of curriculum to the needs of adult students, add to their degrees and diplomas, offer non-formal socially worthwhile programmes and teach through media that are public to everyone, especially television and radio. Teacher education based in Ministry special units or teachers' colleges, has adopted distance education as an important means of development. In the school area, development has been less spectacular but is increasing. Correspondence schools have been revitalized and modernised, extending their clientele, accumulating wider social purposes, broadening their range and improving the quality of their teaching. Broadcasting authorities have become more conscious of their educational role and more professional in the educative programmes they produce, whether they are providing services to schools and universities or are fulfilling a responsibility to educate the public about broad social issues. All these ventures depend for their effectiveness on well trained, enthusiastic personnel. The success of the major distance education operations, based in schools and other institutions, and with long-term intentions, has attracted interest in the scope the distance education has for short-term purposes. The capability of distance education to devise and disseminate efficiently, quickly and economically, programmes that deal with specific educational problems— an urgent curriculum change, teacher retraining, and sensitising of nonprofessionals (and some traditional senior professionals) towards new concepts of education — have been recognised. Some distance education operations are urgent projects, designed to make an impact throughout an area where inaccessibility delays and deters change or where a largely intractable problem might respond to a dynamic change of tactics. Without creating an elaborate institutional structure, a Ministry may wish to mount a short-term operation, using the skills which they recognise distance education methodologies have to offer. But they require a well trained, enthusiastic task force to carry them out...

The skills of those who create learning at a distance are specialised skills. To some extent they are extensions of existing professional skills which good teachers, writers, editors, broadcasters, administrators and managers have. But whereas those skills are normally employed in a limited and specific professional context, in distance education they are used in collaboration with other professionals. Training in distance education for the most part, therefore, is to enable men and women to enhance skills they already have and apply them collaboratively with others ...

But professional training (or retraining) is not just for one permanent role, it is part of continuing professional education and career development. At the initial stage, as a beginner in distance education or as a member of a short-term project, the person to be trained needs to identify which of his existing professional ideas have most relevance, what particular emphasis and skills development they may need and where they fit into the new scenario. But if individuals continue further in distance teaching programmes (or if the programmes grow and make greater demands of specialism, sophistication and leadership) they may soon need more advanced training. Beyond that, there is the prospect of full professionalism as a distance educator to enable the person who began as a teacher, broadcaster or manager to engage permanently in distance education as a life-long career. .. Pre-service training for distance education, however, is only a future prospect and scarcely yet a present reality. “

Let us now examine a few implications of pre-service training in distance education.

Pre-Service training: some implications

It is true that today the distance learning/teaching systems are at a mixed stage—some of the programmes are permanent and some temporary; some are well established, some at an advanced stage of development; some are just taking off and others at the stage of planning. Training needs for such systems and programmes may be met by the strategies discussed so far, but if we aim at “full professionalism” in distance education (as pointed out towards the end of the above citation) we need to be more deliberate and systematic in our efforts.

To accept the idea of pre-service training in distance education, and then to offer such training has some significant implications. Some of the more important of these implications are:

- i) There is a ready market for trained distance educators, and this market has the potential of absorbing a regular supply of the trained personnel from training institutes.
- ii) The existence of such a market and a large regular supply of trained distance educators implies that the ‘personal profiles’ and ‘career profiles’ in distance education have not been recognised in theory only, but in socio-academic practices also.
- iii) A straightforward inference from item (ii) above is, that distance education has been (is being) accepted as an autonomous discipline.

In fact, if we start with the proposition listed under item (iii) above as the basic premise, then what has been suggested under items (i) and (ii) above, follows as logical consequences. When a discipline comes to be recognised as an autonomous one socio-academically, the necessary infrastructure for preservice training on the one hand, and that for using the services of the trained personnel on the other get established.

3.4.1 Distance Education as a ‘Discipline’

Though we have already discussed the issue of distance education as an autonomous discipline, it will not be out of place to revisit the issue at this juncture.

We have seen that distance teaching is a growing activity that has a range of problems and its own solutions. “So there seems to be *prima facie* case for thinking of it as an academic discipline in its own right” (Sparkes, 1983). One way of identifying a discipline is to see whether it is of academic interest and raises sufficient problems to stimulate research which leads to the publication of journals in the subject concerned. But this obviously is not enough. Even appointing a professor in the subject area is a step towards recognizing the subject as a discipline, but then there are professors who cover a specialist area within a broader discipline. Certain other requirements, clearly, have to be looked for.

Pre-requisites of a discipline

Sparkes suggests that in addition to the above-mentioned characteristics, an area of interest should grow in the following ways in order to become acceptable as a discipline to the academics:

- i) it must grow in **degree of relevance** to real and important problems ...
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- a) importance of these problems must, in the end, be accepted by the academic
- b) community even if interest in them originated elsewhere in the community;
- ii) it must grow in theoretical and **conceptual depth**;
- iii) it must develop its own **conceptual structure**, that is, there must be a complex set of inter-relationships between its fundamental ideas.

He admits that the ideas put forth above are abstract and if they have to have any meaning they must have some relationship with reality. For example, the idea of **degree of relevance** may best be judged in terms of

- i) the number of students interested in studying the subject,
- ii) the number of other disciplines that apply and/or use its theories and data,
- iii) the number and range of basic concepts and theories that characterise the subject, and
- iv) the number of specialisations it covers.

The larger these numbers, the wider is the 'degree of relevance' of the subject concerned.

Then we come to **conceptual depth** in the theoretical development of the subject. Sparkes suggests that one can visualise at least three levels:

- i) empirical generalizations/laws that are true in limited specifications,
- ii) explanations for such laws on the basis of theoretical artifacts, and
- iii) theories which express relationships between these theoretical artifacts.

Obviously, a subject in which the intellectual interest reaches the deeper levels of conceptualization tends to be accepted as a discipline.

The third criterion is conceptual structure, a collection of theories and concepts so integrated with one another that they support and sustain a particular line of thought within the subject/discipline.

It should be clear from the material you have gone through so far, that distance education does fulfil these three criteria for being acceptable as a discipline. Its 'degree of relevance' is immense indeed, the 'conceptual depth' is at a reasonably deep level with the 'conceptual structure' taking a visible form.

Further analyses and theorisation (research)

Sparkes would, however, like further analyses and theorisation in various aspects of distance education to enrich it and make it unquestionably acceptable as a discipline. Operationally, these analyses and theorisations will amount to research activities

- i) that have to develop not only new insights into, but also new ways of explaining and achieving the educational aims of different courses required by distance learners; these aims, as usual may pertain to cognitive, psychomotor and/or affective domains, but the variety of courses offered by an open university — academic courses, refresher updating courses, training courses, general awareness courses and others will demand unusual mixes of these aims, and therefore, each course will have to be designed and presented differently;

- ii) that must be based on investigations and insights into the study habits of individual learners, the process of learning, teaching and effective academic communication;
- iii) that, assess and then exploit the differing strengths and weaknesses of different educational media—the print, the radio and the TV, audio and video cassettes, oral communication, communication by correspondence, telephone and so on for purposes of both the cost effectiveness and the pedagogic effectiveness of the types of courses being offered;
- iv) that plan two-way feedback extensively for purposes of clarifying student-doubts, failure of courses, the difficulty caused by the variations in student abilities, and other difficulties, for example those caused by the failure of postal services at times, the private problems of a distance learner, the unsympathetic attitude of a tutor, etc., and
- v) that make use of investigations into and insights in the systems and strategies of information processing for purposes of promoting the more effective teaching materials and discarding the less effective ones.

Sparkes concludes by saying “that the subject of education and learning is more difficult to study than medicine and the human body, and that medicine is more difficult than engineering, but it does not mean that a deep theoretical study should not be attempted ... Furthermore, there is a vast audience for whom education should be made available, accessible and understandable. Thus, not only is there scope for the establishment of a discipline of distance education but there is also a need for it”

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Space is given below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- i) List the three major prerequisites that justify distance education as a discipline in itself.

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- ii) State in a few sentences what is meant by the ‘conceptual structure of a discipline.

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The kind of research that Sparkes has suggested had already started years ago and has since extended geographically and in the range of topics now being covered. The OUUK started contributing to this research right from the beginning under the label of “educational technology”. Equally relevant

to our theme are the efforts made by ZIFF (Zentrales Institute fur Fernstudienforschung) at Hagen in Germany. Exactly in the same year when Sparkes published his article, i.e., 1983, (which we have summed up above), Holmberg also published an article in **Higher Education in Europe** (Vol. VIII, No. 3) under the title "Establishing Distance Education as a University Discipline-Seven years of ZIFF research in Hagen". Fern Universitat was founded in 1974. It created two institutes concerned with distance education methods:

- i) Zentrum fur Fernstudienentwicklung (ZFF), and
- ii) Zentrales institutes fur Fernstudienforschung (ZIFF).

The former supports and cooperates with faculties in course development and evaluation, and the latter is a research institute engaged in fundamental and applied research in distance education. In 1977, this institute defined its overriding goal as describing, explaining and contributing to optimizing distance education. It proved realistic to divide the work conducive to realizing this goal into three areas:

- Target-group analysis.
- Possibilities to direct learning by methods and media.
- Systems research.

The institute has done a reasonable amount of good quality research in these areas over the years. Besides these areas, the institute has undertaken work in other areas as well, for example, in epistemological problems, theoretical approaches to distance education, etc. The institute has, further, made positive efforts in establishing a curriculum for distance education as a university discipline (1978). A significant contribution made by the institute is the action it has taken to diminish "the risk of parochial approaches which might have been adverse to comparative distance education" (Holmberg, 1983) by means of positive interaction in a variety of ways with workers from all parts of the world.

The above research activities have reached a stage of cohesion which is a result "of the evolution of common cores of attention from what were originally somewhat desperate approaches" (Holmberg, 1983).

We have brought in these details about the ZIFF and its activities to show that:

- i) what Sparkes calls 'conceptual structure' has more or less taken shape in what Holmberg calls the 'common cores of attention';
- ii) the kind of research which Sparkes outlines as a precondition for distance education to be accepted as a discipline is already being conducted (in the name of distance education) at university level institutions; and
- iii) university level courses in distance education have already been proposed and launched.

It should, however, be admitted that such research centres and courses are few in number, and that is understandable, for it needs academic courage to make departures from the tradition. But we hope we have made our point. The point we are referring to is what we wanted to refute at the end of section 4, namely, that pre-service training in distance education is a 'future prospect', and hardly a 'present reality'. What we have tried to show through the articles of Sparkes and Holmberg (discussed above) is that such

training is a present reality, of course the 'future prospect' is that of further development rather than the 'beginning' of such training. In so doing, we have also argued for distance education being an autonomous discipline in its own right.

Now you might be interested to know about the various institutes providing pre-service training in distance education.

3.4.2 Staff Development in Distance Education: Few Examples

Master of Distance Education and E-learning

The Master of Distance Education and E-learning (MDE) programme is offered by the Graduate School of Management and Technology at the University of Maryland University College (UMUC) in partnership with the Centre for Life-long Learning at Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg, Germany. The MDE programme has formal approval by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (Bernath, 2002).

The MDE programme began in January 2000. The objectives of the programme are very clearly identified (see university website at www.umuc.edu/programs/grad/mde/).

It states that the graduates of the programme will be able to:

- Develop and communicate a mission and vision for the implementation of distance education within an organization;
- Function effectively as leader, manager and team member within distance education or training organization;
- Develop strategic goals and business plans for distance education within an organization;
- Analyze and recommend an organizational distance education technology plan, and manage the implementation of that technology in distance delivery;
- Design, implement, and assess the necessary support services for a distance education programme

(Retrieved on Jun 10, 2010 from <http://www.umuc.edu/programs/grad/mde/>)

The target groups are working adults from distinct professional backgrounds including academia, corporate training and the armed forces. They must have basic computer knowledge and be fluent in English.

The MDE programme offers the following specializations:

- Distance Education Policy and Management
- Distance Education Teaching and Training
- Distance Education Technology

The programme requires 36 credits of course work. The credits are divided into core course work (15 credits), specialized coursework (18 credits), and Capstone coursework (3 credits).

The core coursework and capstone coursework are common. The core courses include:

- Foundations of Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)

- Technology in Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Teaching and Learning in Online Distance Education (3 credits)
- Costs and Economics of Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Learner Support in Distance Education and Training (3 credits)

The Capstone course is:

- Portfolio and Project in Distance Education and E-learning (credits)

The required coursework for Distance Education Policy and management (DEPM) are:

- Leadership in Distance Education and E-learning(3 credits)
- Distance Education Systems and E-learning (3 credits)
- Library and Intellectual Property Issues in Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Practitioner Research in Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- The Business of Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Distance Education, Globalization, and Development (3 credits)

The required coursework for Distance Education Teaching and Training (DETT) are:

- Instructional Design and Course Development in Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Training and Learning with Multimedia (3 credits)
- Library and Intellectual Property Issues in Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Special Topics in Instructional Technology (3 credits) (Prerequisite: Training and Learning with Multimedia)
- Training at a Distance (3credits)
- Leadership in Distance education and E-learning (3 credits)

The required coursework for Distance Education Technology (DETC) are:

- Instructional Design and Course Development in Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning Systems in Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Training and Learning with Multimedia (3 credits)
- Leadership in Distance Education and E-learning (3 credits)
- Distance Education, Globalization, and Development (3 credits)
- Internet Multimedia Applications (3 credits)

The programme is offered in a fully online asynchronous mode using the WebTycho Web-based virtual classroom interface developed and maintained by UMUC.

Master of Distance Education of Athabasca University

The Master of Distance Education (MDE) programme of Athabasca University is one of the oldest graduate programmes in distance education. The MDE programme was launched in 1994. The programme is designed

to provide all learners with a common base of knowledge, skills, and values regarding distance education and training. The learners will gain experience in designing educational and training programmes, as well as implementing, evaluating and managing them; problem solving, analysis, synthesis, and interpretation in distance education and training; selecting, implementing, and evaluating technologies for use in distance education and training, and so on. All courses for this programme are delivered via a variety of distance education media, including the internet (Retrieved on August 4, 2010 from http://www.athabasca.ca/calendar/grad/distance_03.html).

Graduate Diploma in Distance Education Technology

The Graduate Diploma in Distance Education Technology (GDDET) of Athabasca University is a 18 credit programme (six courses) designed to provide a solid grounding in the current principles and practices of technology use (for the preparation, delivery, and management of instruction) in distance education and training.

The programme has been renamed as “Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Distance Education Technology (PBDDET)” in September 1, 2010.

Graduate Diploma in Instructional Design

The Graduate Diploma in Instructional Design (GDID) of Athabasca University is a 18 credit programme (six courses) designed to enhance expertise in instructional design.

The programme has been renamed as “Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Instructional Design (PBDIP)” in September 1, 2010.

Graduate Certificate in Instructional Design (GCID) of Athabasca University is a 9-credit programme (three courses).

The programme has been renamed as “Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Instructional Design (PBCID)” in September 1, 2010.

Master of Distance Education (MDE) of the University of Philippines

The Master of Distance Education (MDE) programme of the University of Philippines consists of six core courses, four elective courses, and one capstone course.

The core courses include the followings:

- Foundations of Distance Education (3 units)
- Learning Theories and Instructional Design in Distance Education (3 units)
- Technology in Distance Education (3 units)
- Assessment of Student Learning in Distance Education (3 units)
- Management of Distance Education (3 units)
- Research in Distance Education (3 units)

Total: 18 units.

The elective courses include three clusters: Pedagogy, Technology Applications, and Educational Management.

Pedagogy cluster

Online Teaching and Learning (3 units)

Lifelong Learning (3 units)

Design and Evaluation of Multimedia Educational Materials (3 units)

M-learning (3 units)

Design and Production of Audiovisual Communication (3 units)

Technology in Language Education (3 units)

Educational Management Cluster

Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues in the Information (3 units)

Planning and Managing Networked Learning (prerequisite: Technology in Distance Education (3 units)

The student has to select at least one elective course from each cluster.

Capstone course

The capstone course is a 4 unit project (Special Problem in Distance Education).

(Retrieved on June 10, 2010 from <http://www.upou.edu.ph/academic/programs/mde.html>)

Master of Arts in Distance Education (IGNOU)

The Master of Arts in Distance Education of the Indira Gandhi National Open University is comprised of 10 courses, 9 theory courses and 1 project work. The courses are the followings:

MDE-411 : Growth and Philosophy of Distance Education

MDE-412 : Instructional Design

MDE-413 : Learner Support Systems and Services

MDE-414 : Management of Distance Education

MDE-415 : Research for Distance Education

MDE 416 : Curriculum Development for Distance Education

MDE-417 : Distance Education: Economic Perspective

MDE-418 : Educational Communication Technologies

MDE-419 : Staff Training and Development in Distance Education

MDEP-420 : Project Work

Each course is of 6 credits, the total credit of the programme is 60.

The student should complete the first five courses in the First year of the programme, and the other five courses in the Second year of the programme.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we completed fairly comprehensively, our answers to the curricular issues that we had raised in unit 2. Here we discussed the various strategies that are generally used in the formal teacher training programmes which can also be utilised (in fact, they are being utilised by a few established distance education institutes) for developing staff for distance

education. A case was also made to accept/appreciate distance education as a 'discipline' in itself as it fulfills the various prerequisites necessary for a discipline, the research activities carried out to justify a theoretical grounding for it and the efforts made by various distance education institutes in this regard. In the end we reached the conclusion that pre-service training in distance education is a reality and that it is being carried out in a few distance education institutes including IGNOU, India.

3.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Workshops, field staff programmes, manuals, professional associations, in-house programmes, and assistance from resource institutes countries.
- ii) The function of any professional association engaged in the training of distance teachers includes promoting and advancing the techniques of, awareness about and expertise in the various aspects of distance education through individual and group research activities, journals, workshops and conferences.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) The three major pre-requisites that justify distance education as a discipline are its degree of relevance, conceptual depth, and conceptual structure.
- ii) It is the juxtaposition of various theories and concepts pertaining to any subject or discipline and their functioning as a whole to support a particular line of thought in that subject or discipline.

UNIT 4 TOWARDS PROFESSIONALISM: AN EXPOSITION

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 The Need for Professionalism
- 4.3 The Concept of 'Training'
 - 4.3.1 A Workable Definition
 - 4.3.2 Efficient Vs. Effective Training
- 4.4 Models of Training
 - 4.4.1 Individual's Training Model
 - 4.4.2 Training as Organisational Change
- 4.5 Identifying Training Needs
 - 4.5.1 Institutional Analysis
 - 4.5.2 'Shop-floor' Level Analysis
 - 4.5.3 Analysis at the Person Level
- 4.6 Analysis: A Review
- 4.7 Application of Learning
- 4.8 The Question of Trainers
 - 4.8.1 Proactive Trainers
 - 4.8.2 Reactive Trainers
- 4.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.10 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers
- 4.11 References

4.0 INTRODUCTION

We have implied in the first three units that establishing distance teaching universities and propagating their objectives by themselves cannot vouch for the required growth of distance education. Developing relevant curricula and making education accessible to larger sections of the society through the distance mode are the two indispensable practical steps towards democratising education.

Apart from the need to democratise the existing educational programmes in terms of their structure, accessibility, etc., the system should be able to meet the urgent need to change the content of the entire curriculum in order to keep pace with the unprecedented proliferation of information at the fast growing technology. The theoretical possibilities offered by the distance mode of education in this context need to be translated into practical reality by effectively implementing innovative educational programmes. To effect changes, among other things, the personnel involved in this relatively new educational enterprise should essentially have appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes. What is being emphasised here is that the expected size of distance education operations is so colossal that to leave it to the processes of trial and error is risky and may very well be disastrous. A high degree of professionalism has to be, therefore, infused in the training of distance educators. Invariably, the goal of training has so far been to develop/improve the skills of an individual to perform a function or task for which he/she has

been inducted. Arguing for a shift in emphasis, this unit suggests that institutional development should be kept at the centre of training for fostering professionalism.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

In the previous three units of this block, we have seen the different stages of staff development in distance education, a knowledge of which is, imperative for any distance trainer. However, a professional trainer needs, besides knowledge and skills, certain human attributes absolutely essential to impart effective training in different situations. Underlining the shift in emphasis of training from skill orientation to development of human attributes, this unit also argues that the focus of training should be organisational growth. After completing this unit, you should be able to

- identify training needs at different levels and for different trainee types;
- differentiate various models of training; and
- differentiate the notions of 'efficient' and 'effective' training.

4.2 THE NEED FOR PROFESSIONALISM

Can we conceive of an army or an airline without trained soldiers or pilots, respectively? In either of these cases we do not question the need for, or the event of training. But, when we think of training in the field of distance education, usually we find ourselves at pains to present a rationale for it. This should not surprise us because down the ages, *training* is taken for granted in the field of education. Even higher educational institutions in many parts of the world pay little attention to the training of teachers. In most of the cases, a researcher is *ipso facto* considered an effective teacher as well. In all probability, it is this 'cultural legacy' that is being handed down to the institution of distance education, which any way is born of education.

A Beginning

The institution of education, through a process of indolent growth over the centuries, has developed certain norms which guide its processes as regards training. This state of affairs, though unsatisfactory from a professional point of view, remains the norm even today. But these norms are inappropriate to the system of open and distance education. As this system of education marks a significant departure from the conventional one, new norms need to be established. Only through training and research, can they be disseminated fast. The implication is that for distance education to become a more dynamic system, i.e. responsive to research findings, changing technology and social situations, a professional approach to training is essential.

We have seen that the earliest attempt in the area of staff development or training is associated with the establishment of the Open University, U.K. (OUUK). We have discussed that during the early 1970s, it entertained the hypothesis that systematic training for distance educators was unwarranted, implying that the skills, knowledge and attitudes which go into the making of a distance educator can best be learnt on the job. Not surprisingly, therefore, the philosophy of staff development for distance education at the OUUK was mainly based on the following two assumptions:

- distance educators must learn their skills on-the-job,

- of all the tasks which go into the process of distance education, the one for which training may be necessary is *course development*.

We found its echoes in the early 1980s as well. Elton (1981) felt that the teacher in distance education should not be trained separately and differently from those who teach in face-to-face situations; instead they should be trained together through the same course.

Further, Meacham (1981) was of the view that staff development is necessary only for course production. Though the situation has changed quite significantly since then, institutions still broach the topic of training in its restrictive sense of skills development. Our discussion in units 1, 2, and 3 would clearly corroborate this thesis. The implication is that we need to reorient the training programmes for distance educators.

The discussion on training gains particular importance here because the focus of the world community concerned with distance education currently is on the quality of training. This clearly indicates the shift in focus from the need for training in distance education to making training effective for the purpose intended.

4.3 THE CONCEPT OF 'TRAINING'

Based on his hierarchy of human needs, Maslow (1970) proposes that satisfaction of the needs on each level, starting with the lowest, frees a person for higher levels of satisfaction. In other words, when someone has satisfied levels 1, 2 and 3, (denoting respectively, physiological or survival needs, safety needs, and need for love, affection and a sense of belonging) then he/she can go on to learn for esteem, individual achievement and self-development purposes. Training courses and trainers should, therefore, attempt to satisfy those upper level needs. On the basis of Maslow's need-analysis theory, we make a claim that the ultimate in client satisfaction in educational context is self-direction. Figure 1 presents the hierarchy of training needs in a diagrammatic form:

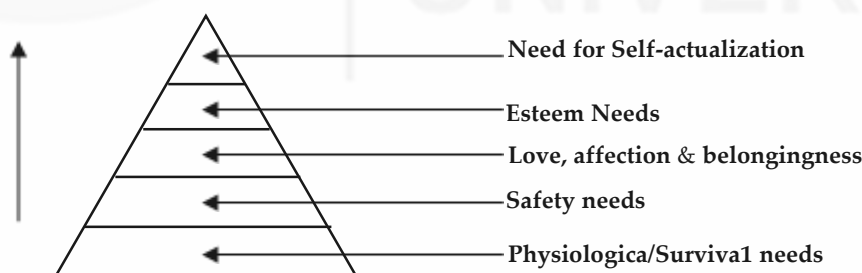


Fig. 4.1: Hierarchy of needs

Put differently, 'quality' training is one which purports to develop self directed trainees, who will in turn help enhance institutional effectiveness. To get a better perspective of what is being said here we shall further discuss the concept 'training'.

4.3.1 A Workable Definition

Different thinkers define the process of training differently. It is generally, however, considered "a systematic development of the attitude/knowledge/skill or behaviour patterns required by an individual to perform adequately a given task"

(*Glossary of Training Terms*, HMSO, 1971). This definition underlines the following:

- ‘systematic development’, which implies planning and control
- ‘individual’, which excludes group and team development
- ‘job or task performance’ which is the criterion of success

The definition has strengths in that it emphasises a systematic process for improving work-based performance. Its weakness, however, lies in the exclusion of groups and teams, thereby it ignores important aspects of the organisational context.

Hinrichs (1976), for instance, views training as “*any organisationally initiated procedures which are intended to foster learning among organizational members in a direction contributing to organisational effectiveness*”. What is important in this observation are:

- ‘organisational procedures’, which put the process into an Organisational/institutional context
- ‘foster learning’, which implies that the responsibility is shared between the organisation/ institution offering it and the members receiving it
- ‘organisational effectiveness’ should be the criterion of success. Being much broader in sense than the previous one, Hinrichs’s definition allows the inclusion of many institutional development activities as well as technical training and firmly plants training in its institutional context. We should not, however, construe it as a reflection of top-down view of training. On the contrary, this view suggests that training, besides helping individuals grow, helps them contribute to the growth of their institutions. A synthesis of these two definitions, therefore, would give us a workable definition of training as
 - a systematic process with some planning and control rather than random learning from experience
 - a process concerned with changing concepts, skills and attitudes of people treated both as individuals and as groups
 - a process intended to improve performance in both the present and the prospective job and through this should enhance the effectiveness of the institution in which the individual or group works.

And, it is to this view that the present unit subscribes. You may notice that the focus of the training of the kind discussed in units 1, 2 and 3 is on efficiency, i.e., conforming to a design paying little attention to the effectiveness or impact of the training. We shall elaborate on this notion in the following sub-section.

4.3.2 Efficient vs. Effective Training

When training activities are put under scrutiny, the question invariably asked is whether the training is efficient, i.e., ‘has the programme achieved most of its objectives in a reasonably economic way?’ This question can quite simply be answered by assessing the changes achieved during training and perhaps by examining the process. If the question were whether the training is effective, what is involved is a more complex analysis of finding out not only whether the training is well done but also whether it is worthwhile for the institution to sponsor it. The fact that institutions mostly ask the first type

of question (about efficiency) rather than the second (about effectiveness) is a consequence of their perception of training which assumes that it is a process of adding to the skills of an individual. Such a definition is inadequate because when we think about the evaluation of training, it is difficult for us to formulate questions about changes in institutional effectiveness or contributions to institutional goals.

Thus, though an examination of the processes and the changes attributable to training is necessary, as it will answer questions about efficiency, training should, however, also include an assessment of improvements in individual and institutional performance. This means asking questions about effectiveness. This movement from 'efficiency' to 'effectiveness' has accompanied two words which have assumed importance in recent years: 'learning' and 'development'. The shift in focus from 'training' to 'learning' has, in turn, accompanied the many changes in training methods. One of the principal changes concerns the change of emphasis in the control of the learning event. With the trainer in the driving seat, the trainees have no option other than to accept the directives of the trainer. The movement to a more *participative mode* of training means the transfer to the learners some, if not all, control of the learning process, and in certain cases some of the content. A change is required not only in the methods of the trainer, or more correctly the facilitator but also in his/her attitude, for in giving up the reins he/she may also have to accept that he/she is not the universal expert— and does not need to be so.

'Development' is a word used widely and often loosely, sometimes as a synonym for 'training'. It has a wider meaning than training, which tends to be usually a singular learning activity, whether a training course, workshop, or a learning package. Development can be considered an overall approach to an individual's or a group of individuals' improvement and enhancement. It can involve a series of training events of various types, preferably linked to lead to a total learning experience which leaves the learner stronger. For the present purpose, however, the term 'training' is used to encompass both the concepts of learning and development.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit

Keeping in view what you have just read, define the term 'training'.

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4.4 MODELS OF TRAINING

Different models of training have different assumptions and are suitable for different purposes. Some models encourage discourse and assume that useful learning takes place as a result of interaction with others who have greater or, perhaps, different experience. Some are based on the principle

that successful job performance is judged by the assessment of levels of skill and thus the function of training is to *improve individuals skills*. Other models focus on *improved effectiveness in the institutional context*.

If training is to be embedded in an institutional context, it would seem relevant for the identification process to take account of both levels and to try to balance the need for the development of individuals with the requirement of the institution. We shall discuss at length these two models of training here.

4.4.1 Individual's Training Model

Training of individuals has its origin in craft apprenticeship where, over a certain period of time, a relatively young person learns to imitate the skills of his/her master. This learning model, in contrast to the ancient one based upon Socratic discourse, depends on some hand-eye skills learned by the method of demonstration followed by practice, which is followed by still more demonstration and practice.

This tradition of teaching skills to individuals has greatly influenced training for trades and technical training in the belief that they will later find a use for these skills. We shall see here a diagrammatic representation of this model.

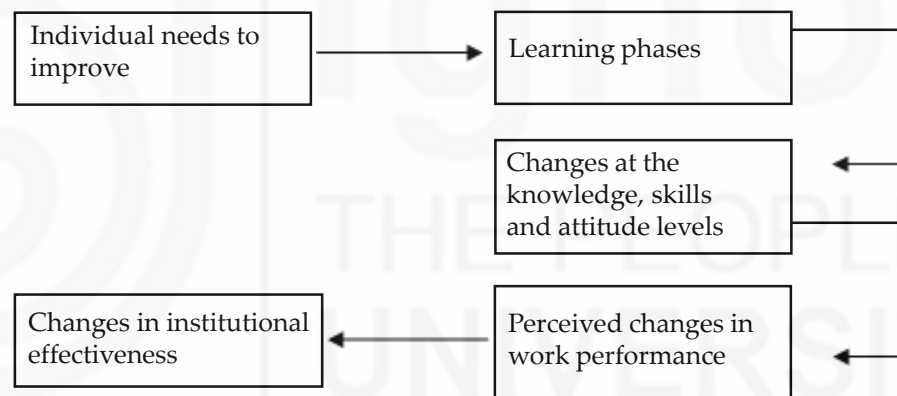


Fig. 4.2: Individual's training model

Figure 2 clearly shows that the focus is on individuals and the process is one of, encouraging them to learn something said to be useful and then expecting them to find uses for the learning. However, identifying changes in work performance is very difficult in this case. With most forms of technical training, where the equipment used in training is very similar to that in the workplace, the changes in skill levels achieved during training will usually transfer quite easily into the job (provided there is an opportunity to practice them there). Nevertheless, in the educational contexts, we should admit that the actual work situation does not closely resemble the simulated training. The changes achieved in the training programmes need not necessarily get reflected in work performance. This would often mean changing the ways in which things are done within the institution and the prevailing model is inappropriate for the purpose.

The logic of this approach is that, as institutions are made up of individuals, it should be possible to change the institution by changing the attitudes of the members. This is, however, a great simplification of organisational reality. An institution will have objectives, priorities and policies. It will also have a structure and accepted ways of doing things. All of these situational

factors will have some effect on shaping the behaviour of the members of the institution within their work. Often the 'changed' individuals will not be able to change these situational factors. Attempts to change parts of institutions by using models like this have "a long history of theoretical inadequacy and practical failure." (Katz and Kahn, 1978).

Put differently, such a training model as presented here is often said to be a 'systems approach' to training, implying that the subsystems within the cycle interact. But, in reality, the process being described goes from step to step in a linear fashion and the subsystems rarely interact nor do they interact with the institutional subsystems such as job design, promotional policies or institutional restructuring and so on. The result of this is often efficient rather than effective training because the training objective, once defined, becomes synonymous with the training need and the training subsystem becomes the closed cycle which is illustrated in the following figure:

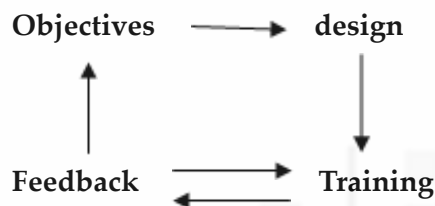


Fig. 4.3: Training as a closed loop

This model of training, which is most prevalent, has developed from educational practice. It intends to teach an individual how to carry out some part of a well-defined job. Where the information and/or skills practice given are closely matched to a task which is not changing, this may prove to be an adequate model. Where it is intended that the training given should help the individual to change the work situations, this model is often not appropriate as it assumes that the individual has sufficient autonomy to change the way in which things are done at various levels of the organization or institution.

In order to be open to the institutional context, training should be evaluated against the need originally identified in the part of the institution where it existed. Generally, it is ignored and so the training cycle stands incomplete. Having talked about training in terms of individual change, we shall now take up for discussion the other model of training.

4.4.2 Training as Organisational Change

Here, a quite different cycle is suggested by considering training a way of enhancing institutional effectiveness. The process starts with an analysis of the existing situation. The needs identified are phrased in terms of new work practices which will enhance the effectiveness of one particular part of the organisation. It is entrusted with the responsibility of encouraging the new behaviours in the workplace by appraising performance and coaching or supervising as necessary to ensure what is learnt gets incorporated in standard work practices. Keeping this in view, let us consider the following model:

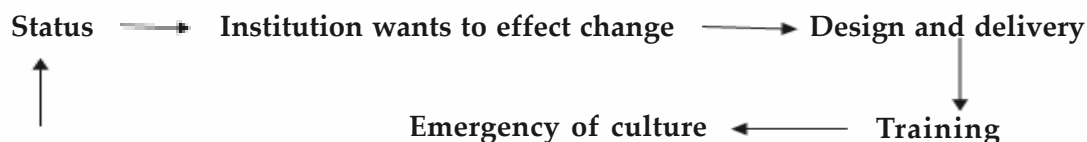


Fig. 4.4: Training as organisational change

Let us note that this model is profoundly different from that shown in Figure 4.3. The intention, however, is the same, i.e., to change the way in which individuals work, but now the new behaviours are embedded in the institutional context. In the earlier model they are encouraged in a training context and it is hoped, based on the philosophy of 'technical rationality', that individuals would apply them effectively in their work. Would training individuals and sending them to an unsuspecting workplace be likely to succeed? If our experience is any indication, the reply will be in the negative.

4.5 IDENTIFYING TRAINING NEEDS

The accurate identification of the training-needs of an institution is crucial to its success and development. We have seen in Units, 1, 2 and 3 earlier, no two distance education institutions necessarily follow the same system; nor are they supported by the same level of technology. Obviously, their concerns for training are quite likely to differ. Looking for a generalised set of needs, therefore, may not be a search in the right direction. In this context, Koul (1990) cautions that *"instead of talking about needs per se it may be advisable to talk of a continuum of 'needs' terminating in general ones at one end and the specialised ones at the other"*. However, theory does little to assist those who face this difficult task. It is not simply a matter of deciding on the location, scope and magnitude of the needs. In other words, priorities need to be set and linked to those of other functions within the institution, as well as to the institution as a whole. The most influential text on training-needs analysis is that of McGehee and Thayer (1961). They argue that training-needs analysis requires much more than 'armchair cerebration' and suggest analysis at three levels: *the organisation/institution, job and person*. Although needs analyses usually consist of these three distinct investigations, McGehee and Thayer (Ibid) argue that these should be interrelated so that they build on each other to produce a "Complete training needs statement".

We shall now elaborate on each of these analysis levels. Before we do so, let us clarify what 'need' means in our context.

We are using the word 'need' to mean an observable discrepancy in performance produced by the lack of skill, relevant knowledge attitude and not to mean someone's expression of preference for, or interest in a particular programme. It is also worth noting that performance deficiency does not necessarily imply a training need. For instance, Mager and Pipe (1987) remind us that job situation factors such as institutional culture, structure and reward system may be, at times, more, powerful controllers of job behaviour than the abilities of individuals on the job.

4.5.1 Institutional Analysis

Training, being a subsystem of an institution, has its own inputs to contribute to the institution. If this interaction is to result in increased institutional effectiveness, then it is clear that priorities for training needs should be related to institutional goals. This implies that the training plan should be constructed in the same context as the business plan and be closely related to it. However, most often this area is relegated to the background. Many still feel that training objectives should be both for the individual and the institution with the hope that it will benefit the institution, as this will benefit the individuals.

Latham (1988), corroborating this view, states that *"organisational support for training should be operationally defined as the extent to which training objectives are*

linked to organisational objectives; the extent to which the training objectives change as soon as there is a change in the organisation's strategic emphasis, and the extent to which training progress is viewed together with the progress made in achieving the business plan."

Essentially, this level of analysis is thus carried out to determine where training can and should be used. The focus is the total enterprise and the analysis will look at things like the institutional objectives, the pool of skills presently available, indices of effectiveness and the institutional climate.

4.5.2 'Shop-floor' Level Analysis

This involves collecting data about a particular job. The analysis will determine what standards are required and what knowledge, skills and attitudes are necessary in order to achieve the set standards. At this level of analysis, it is essential to discover what tasks need to be performed in order to do the job, how they should be performed and thus what needs to be learned in order to perform well. McGehee and Thayer (1961) offer the following for carrying out such an analysis:

- work description will give an outline of the job and typical duties and responsibilities involved. (for some jobs these will change each year in response to new priorities);
- work descriptions are more detailed than job specifications and should give a complete list of tasks (they may also include standards for judging satisfactory performance in the important tasks);
- performance standards are usually phrased as objectives for the job and the targets or standards by which these will be judged;

4.5.3 Analysis at the Person Level

This level involves examining how well one carries out the various tasks which are necessary for successful performance. At the individual level of analysis, the intention is to assess performance levels against those required for the job. Theoretically, a training programme can then be designed for each individual to plug the gap between present and desired levels of performance. McGehee and Thayer (Ibid) offer a few techniques by which individual training needs can be identified. These include the following:

- performance appraisal which identifies weaknesses and areas for improvement as well as strengths;
- observation and work sampling, or testing of knowledge, attitudes and skills required in the job;
- interviews and questionnaires;
- devising situations such as role plays, case studies, etc.

These have often been combined with the main purpose of appreciating an individual's development.

What does our discussion on the three levels of analysis indicate?

4.6 ANALYSES: A REVIEW

Training-needs analyses often concentrate on the *person analysis* level and neglect the links with institutional goals, which are necessary to ensure that the training imparted is effective in serving the purpose intended. The

process starts by examining the performance of the institution as a whole or part of it. If this suggests a possible training need, then, the group of jobs in the area under examination is reviewed. This may lead to an analysis of the individuals in service to discover whether training is likely to change the current level of performance into one which is nearer the optimal level for the job.

A few questions arise in this context.

- What methods are being used to identify needs at the (a) institutional (b) job and (c) person levels?
- How well are the three levels integrated? Which one predominates, and why?
- How well is training linked to the tasks intended? What could be done to strengthen this link? Who could do it? What can we do? etc.

Before training takes place, the developmental objectives should be established between the person who is to learn something and the institution which selects him/her for training. Most adult learning is motivated by attempts to reach goals which the individual has set. In order to tap this source of motivation, it is clear that the participants should be aware of the institutional objectives and to some extent identify with them as if they were personal objectives. Further, the learning situations themselves should be sequenced so that people can use various styles of learning and integrate them into a meaningful whole. A useful model to consider is that of Kolb (1984) which is based on adults learning from their experience. An adapted version of the Kolb-cycle of learning is given below:

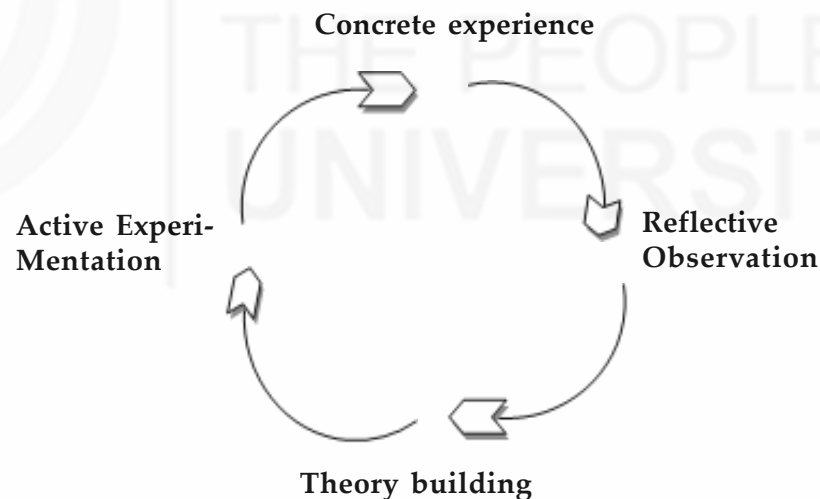


Fig. 4.5: An adapted Kolb-cycle of learning

The theory requires activity in all four stages for effective learning. This implies that there should be some concrete experience, with the participants involving themselves fully and openly, and some reflective observation, which helps the participants step back and reflect upon the experience. These two stages should be followed by a phase when they are helped to integrate their observations to a logically sound framework, i.e., they alter their general theory of 'how things like this work'. The final stage is to put them into active experimentation so that they can test their theories and use them as bases for decision-making and problem-solving. This shows that learning is a cyclical process and therefore feedback is necessary at each stage in order to evaluate how the present performance

differs from that desired. This feedback should be given before new learning takes place. A post-course discussion is usually too late to allow this.

We should, however, admit that few people have the resourcefulness to function in all these phases with equal effectiveness. The implication is that the learning situation should offer more support at those stages in which they are weakest. This of course is a tall order for a designer of training programmes. Testing the learning of trainees takes time in situations other than laboratory conditions. This phase therefore, is conveniently left to chance, i.e., the hope that they will try it at work. A better process would be to ensure that they would be able to try the ideas in the work situation and have the opportunity to discuss the results with someone, i.e., action learning. During the learning process, some emphasis should be placed on examining what is being learned for use back on the job, and plans should be made for transferring the learning. Usually this will involve an action plan which anticipates some of the organisational constraints on introducing change.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

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

List the three levels of needs analysis and the contribution of each for training.

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4.7 APPLICATION OF LEARNING

The incorporation of new ideas of carrying out tasks into normal work is the ultimate outcome of training. In the present context, often this is left to the individuals, the implication being that he/she has the required motivation and the ability to introduce changes to suit the situations. The assumption seems to be that the people who have been trained can take the 'effective' route. How realistic and tenable is this assumption?

We need to make attempts during training to focus on the utility of the learning and to produce action plans for the returns to work. Clearly these must include analysis of situations which are likely to test the new learning and the consideration of strategies to enlist support and to deflect opposition. However, we cannot be complacent. We should be able to anticipate temporary difficulties. The intention must be to prevent these from relapsing into old behaviours.

It all depends on how we define 'learning'. As we have mentioned earlier, over recent years, there has been a significant shift in the focus of training. The emphasis has moved from the trainer; the transmission of information and how best it can be improved, to the learner and how best to promote

learning. But what is learning and how does it occur? There are a variety of definitions of learning, each one of them highlighting one or more aspects of the learning activity.

Learning is an active process. Few people, for example, now think of learning as 'receiving instruction'. Instead learning is increasingly defined as an activity in which learners participate and are actively involved in order that a relatively permanent change in behaviour can be effected. The change may be an increased capability for some kind of performance. It may also be an altered disposition that can be called attitude or interest or value. In other words, learning is the acquisition of additional information, skills and attitudes: an addition to what one knows or can do already; one's present knowledge and skills '+ X'. The additional element, the 'X factor', generates change. Learning, however, may also be a subtraction such as unlearning a bad or ineffective habit. Or learning may be a modification where old knowledge, skills, or attitudes are adjusted to cope with new circumstances.

Peters (1989) in this context remarks, "Learning may be conscious or unconscious but everything we want to learn, i.e., everything we want to embed in our long-term memory must always take the same route; from ultra short term memory, to short-term memory, and then to long-term memory". This transference of information from the short-term to the long-term is accelerated when:

- information or practice is repeated several times. (This emphasizes the importance of recycling and practice on training).
- the new information is associated with some information or a 'picture' already in the long-term memory. (The emphasis here is on the need for the trainer to link new information or ideas with what learners already know).
- the movement of 'electrical impulses' is speeded up by what might be called joyful stress. (People, therefore, learn more quickly when they enjoy a training session).
- the brain is allowed to pause to assimilate while no new information is transmitted to it. This lays stress on the need for trainers to provide time for learners to assimilate new information or practice the skills already taught.

In other words, the transfer of information to long-term memory, and therefore learning, can, however, be slowed or blocked when:

- too much, or confusing, information has to be assimilated in too short a time. Training sessions which focus on providing as much information as possible in the shortest amount of time are rarely effective.
- the learner experiences distress or shock. Such distress or shock blocks the 'electrical impulses' to the long-term memory. This emphasizes the fact that in situations which are potentially threatening, e.g., role-play, a videotaped presentation or a performance test of any kind, the trainer should do everything possible to make participants feel relaxed.

We are in the area of self-efficacy here. People who suffer from a low self-esteem have difficulty in coping with environmental demands. They imagine that potential difficulties are more formidable than is actually the case and they dwell on their personal deficiencies. People who are strong in

self-efficacy focus on the demands of the situation and treat obstacles as a challenge. Self efficacy has been found to increase when experience succeeds in eliminating fears and when the skills learned help to master the situation, which was once felt to be threatening. Most of this is to do with the ability to predict and manage perceived threats. To increase self-efficacy, a training programme should:

- maximise the similarity between the training situation and the job, if necessary by carrying out the training in phases with job experience interspersed.
- provide a wide range of experience of what is being learned so that the principles can be applied to situations which do not exactly fit the procedure.
- help set goals because it will provide a basis for judging their progress.

Clear measures of progress are essential for increasing self-efficacy: trainees should be deterred from setting very difficult goals. (Experience shows that those who give up are often those who self-impose very high standards and then feel no sense of accomplishment because they fail to reach them).

- avoid time delay between learning and its application.

4.8 THE QUESTION OF TRAINERS

A survey of trainers, jointly conducted by the British Manpower Services Commission (now renamed the Training Agency) and the Institute of Training and Development, found that most trainers spend the bulk of their time on tasks which are related first and foremost to the objective of helping people learn and develop. One of the most important distinctions in training is that between **proactive** and **reactive** trainers. While the former actively anticipate and look for business, the latter passively wait for business to come to them. Among the main factors that distinguish **proactive** from **reactive** trainers are their attitudes to needs surveys and the way they carry them out. Let us elaborate on this.

4.8.1 Proactive Trainers

Proactive trainers realise that training is a service and, like any effective service group, are involved in conducting an ongoing needs survey of their institution. They maintain close contact with people in different departments units. Besides, they keep themselves informed of events to happen; the new staff; new projects being set up; new equipment being installed or new policies introduced and forecast future needs as the institution develops and changes. The general tendency for needs survey is to focus on current problems and look back at the past problem that employees describe. Proactive trainers, however, look forward and attempt to forecast needs. They try to identify trends within their institution, e.g., increased use of computers, introduction of quality assurance, more interest in teleconferencing, etc. In essence, they stay ahead of the game and are, therefore, prepared when a training request comes.

4.8.2 Reactive Trainers

Reactive trainers, on the other hand, respond to events and training requests, rather than actively shape them. They tend to wait for requests to come or for instructions from 'above'. One result is that they sometimes wait themselves out of a job. In other words, they generally do not carry out

ongoing needs surveys (nobody told them to), and their contact with other departments is often formal and bureaucratic. Invariably, they tend to consider informal communication and networking. i.e., forming and maintaining friendly contacts with people in other departments, a threat. As a result, when reactive trainers receive a training request, it comes unexpectedly, 'out of the blue', and they are unprepared.

Bennett and Leduchowicz (1983) identify four main types of roles for trainers based on two dimensions. The *horizontal* dimension is one of orientation towards training as an educational process or as a process of intervention into institution/organisation processes. The *vertical* dimension represents an orientation towards 'maintaining' the institution/ organization or changing it.

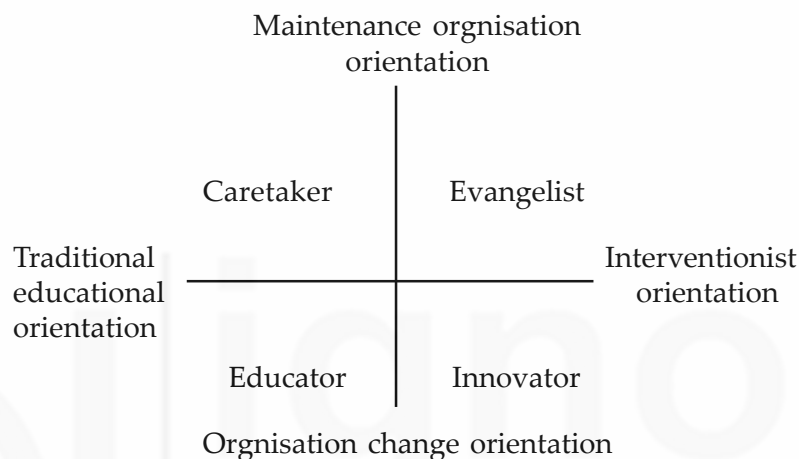


Fig. 4.6: Trainer-roles

Caretakers, as the figure suggests, see the need for training to maintain the smooth running of the present system and procedures within the organisation, and adopt an educational approach. Clearly, this will result in courses which are trainer-centered and highly structured. **Educators** see the need for training to change the systems, procedures or technologies in the institution but also prefer to use traditional, highly structured, educational, course-based approaches in order to achieve this. **Evangelists**, often, see training primarily as a means of maintaining the present systems and procedures but prefer to use a range of interventionist strategies. Most of these will be learner-centered and many will be based upon on-job assignments. **Innovators**, on the other hand, adopt a range of interventionist strategies in order to change the significant aspects of the institution. Quite often these strategies will include programmes for individual development and they will usually be interventionist in the workplace.

Despite a strong tendency for trainers to want to move from the 'caretaker' to the 'innovator' role as the latter is frequently seen as an ideal type, most trainers remain at the former level. The role, however, is a comfortable one and there is considerable risk for them if they embark into uncharted territory. It is also the case that many institutions expect their trainers to design and deliver training programmes rather than bring about change.

4.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have taken up for discussion, the concept of 'training'. We have said that the focus of training is no longer skill orientation of individual participants. The individual's contribution to organizational/

institutional growth has, of late, been the emphasis. In this context, we have discussed the models of training and the notions of 'efficient' and 'effective' training. Further, we have reiterated the need for identifying training needs at various levels to serve the set purpose of training. Consequent on the recent shift in emphasis of training, in this unit, we have introduced the concept of 'proactive' trainers as well.

4.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

Training can be defined as a systematic process concerned with effecting changes in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude at the individual level, while taking into consideration the needs of the organisation/institution.

Check Your Progress 2

'The three levels at which needs analysis should be done are

- i) Institutional level: Being a subsystem of an institution, training has its own contribution to make for institutional development. This being what it is, priorities for training needs have to have a one-to-one correspondence with the institutional goals.
- ii) 'Shop-floor' level: Needs analysis at this level will help identify the exact/actual requirement of a job task. In essence, it means identification of needs from the field/ context itself.
- iii) Person level: While helping us identify the performance level of an individual, analysis of needs at this level gives us an idea about the 'gap' between the actual needs and the training provided. This gap can be plugged appropriately during follow-up training programmes.

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