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# **M.E.S.- 113**

## **Learner Support Services**

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**Sample Preview  
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# QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

M.E.S.-113

Time: 3 Hours ]

[ Maximum Weightage : 70%

Note: All the four questions are compulsory. All questions carry equal weightage.

**Q. 1. Answer the following question:**

**Discuss the essential reading comprehension skills.**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 23, Q. No. 3.

Or

**What are the functions of a study centre?**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 42, 'The Functions of a Study Centre'.

**Q. 2. Answer the following questions:**

**Discuss different categories of counselling in distance education.**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 63, 'Categories of Counselling'.

Or

**What are the skills required by a counsellor in distance education?**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 75, 'The Skills of a Counsellor'.

**Q. 3. Answer any four of the following questions:**

**(a) What are the steps involved in distance teaching?**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 125, 'Distance teaching- A four step process'.

**(b) Explain the significance of supplemental communication.**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 111, 'Supplemental Communication'.

**(c) What is the difference between counselling and tutoring?**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 10, '(1) Advice/Counselling; (2) Tutoring individually or in groups'.

**(d) What are the characteristics of a distance learner?**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 2, 'Characteristics of Distance Learners'.

**(e) What are the tasks of a distance teacher?**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 122, 'Tasks for a Distance Teacher'.

**(f) What are the functions of a Regional Centre?**

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 46, 'Functions'.

**Q. 4. Answer the following question:**

**List different types of tutor comments. If you are an academic counsellor, how will you apply these comments in evaluating assignment responses?**

Ans. In other words, we tried to make a case for the need for and purpose of such comments. In this part, we'll try to demonstrate why it's not always possible to create comments that are 'well thought out,' and that it's even harder to make comments that are precise and have a pedagogical purpose. We will establish a few broad categories of comments that should help us better understand the what and how of teacher-comments based on a sample of comments submitted by untrained classroom teachers. Before we list the remarks, however, we would like to ask and provide an explanation for why we have chosen to talk about the what and how of tutor comments.

There is a wealth of literature on how a teacher should approach teaching a specific subject in a classroom setting. Although classroom teaching methods are a field of study in and of itself, little progress has been made in developing online teaching methods.

Now let's take a look at the following excerpts, which were actually written by inexperienced remote teachers as they worked on assignment solutions.

- Horrible vocabulary! Pay closer attention to the wording you use.
- You've covered a lot of ground.
- If the jargon is unclear to you, try to stay away from it.

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- How do you interpret that? Where is the example?
- Is there anything further to say? Do you believe you have included all the necessary details? Return to the instructional unit and reread the assignment's subject.
- Please read over the lesson and the assignment question once more.
- You were given a 'A' because you nearly met the standards for effective language teaching materials.
- You can make your response's structure better.
- Spending more time on your response might help it.
- Go back and read the question. It appears that you did not fully comprehend it.
- A lot of extraneous information has gotten in.
- Read the response again and delete any extraneous information.
- Review the lesson once more.
- You should not be overly concerned about the linguistic issues you have.
- Your response accurately summarizes the lesson.
- You did not even remotely answer the question.
- Is this required in this case?
- Reread the lesson and do the assignment once more.
- Illustrations and examples are acceptable, but just one illustration would have been sufficient.
- Try to maintain the high caliber you started with in the essay.
- Not precise and lacking in focus.
- The topic is not adequately addressed.
- You haven't provided even one example of how to.
- You need to be a little more certain that you comprehend the task at hand.
- Your response was too succinct and insufficient.
- Your claim that vocabulary is influenced by events and themes is plausible, and the cricket example you used is effective.
- You may have used positive examples instead of negative ones (i.e., representations of what is desired).
- You could have gone into more detail about the challenges using your examples. Additionally, you must to have covered the following topics:

- Consider putting the suggested changes to the test in your own classroom teaching environment. Drawing from your experience, create illustrations, and send them to us for review.
- You'll see that you missed the importance of experimenting in the science-teaching process. To strengthen your argument, you ought to have mentioned this aspect in your response.

**Harmful (HL) comments**

Consider remarks 1 through 5. Comments like 'Horrible language' and "You have beat around the bush" are detrimental in that they turn away learners.

Such remarks are 'rude' in and of themselves because they don't help the distant learner and the distance teacher establish a meaningful rapport. In contrast, they construct barriers between them, which obstructs all communication opportunities. Sensitive distance learners frequently feel offended by such comments. They not only begin to despise the tutor in question, but also lose interest in the subject being studied. They consequently withdraw from the course. Others may reply, criticizing the tutor's 'rude' words. Most of the time, the tutor explains their comments, but that defeats the objective.

**Hollow (HW) comments**

Look closely at comments 6 to 15. They are only words, nothing more. Although they appear to be complete phrases, their meanings are 'empty,' as one cannot infer anything from them. For instance, the order "please go through the lesson once again and also the question in the assignment" appears to be a directive, but it is unclear 'what', 'how', and 'with what effect' will occur if the directive is carried out. Or, think about comment 12. The learner would not have provided those data if she had known which ones were 'unnecessary.' Additionally, treating those 'unnecessary details' won't be aided by "reading the answer again." The comment is essentially meaningless—it is just a collection of words, even a sentence, with no apparent meaning.

**Misleading (MG) comments**

Tutors occasionally say things that steer students in the wrong direction; they may ask them to perform things that are pointless or force them to have unfavourable opinions of themselves, their learning style, or the environment in which they get instruction.

# **Sample Preview of The Chapter**

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# LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

## Learner Support – What, Why and How

1

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a process that goes in both directions, with the goals of absorbing and evaluating new information. The goal of the communication in both directions with a learner is to analyse and increase their knowledge skills. The many forms of communication technology each play an important part in this process. The style of education known as distance learning because it allows for interaction to begin between the student and the teacher. Not only does it help in the delivery of knowledge, but it also removes the learner's feelings of isolation by providing them with opportunities for human-to-human interaction. The learner assistance systems are really important to the overall procedure. In addition to giving the learners with course content and enhancing their abilities, they also offer help in the areas of academics (cognitive or academic support), organization (organizational support), and emotions (emotional support).

### CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

#### **LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES**

Learner support systems are important for having a two-way communication in distance learning method of teaching. This is done through four methods, firstly by making material available for students to study, secondly by arranging a two-way contact programme between the learners and academic instructors and finally providing final results of examination to learners.

The key methods used for providing material for distance education are: Providing study material, TV, Radio and Computer programmes and through Tutoring and Counselling (face-to-face sessions, telephone and electronically).

#### **What are support services?**

The main objective of support services in Distance learning education are: to facilitate learning, to encourage them to use support services and successful delivery of learning experiences at a distance.

Learner Support services include: advice/counselling, learning study skills, Tutoring, Peer group support, examination skills, feedback to understand progress of students, language support, career guidance and administrative problem solving.

Elements of support services include:

Personal contact between students and support agents, peer contact, providing feedback as mode of assessment of student learning, study groups (actual and virtual) access to libraries and laboratories. Institutes use these elements in combination depending on the geographical distribution of learners, availability of resources and infrastructure of the country.

New Information technology now makes face to face interactions between learners and support agents easy. Different types of electronic learning support include Email, Web page, Bulletin boards, CD-ROM, Conferencing.

#### **Types of Support Services**

Different types of Learner Support Services are required at different stages of learning process in Distance Education. The Different stages are:

**(a) Pre-Entry Stage:** Learners at Pre-Entry Stage are confused about their life goals. They need information, advice and counselling. They are keen to know about the institution, fees, teaching methodologies, awards and employment prospects in future. After that they seek information regarding entry requirements in the institution and application procedures.



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Types of support systems required at this stage are:

- Imparting information about the types of programmes by the organisation and courses available for the learners.
- Counselling before selection of a course.
- Providing information regarding instructional methodologies, entry requirements, fee structure, duration of the course etc.
- Guidance regarding fee reimbursement and fee concessions.

**(b) During Course Stage:** After the Pre-Entry Stage when the learners finally take up a course, he/she is faced with many apprehensions like if there is a possibility for him/her to complete the course successfully, how to tackle lack of motivation, how to face non-academic problems and how to minimise examination anxiety.

Types of support systems during this stage:

- Induction Programme.
- Distribution of study material and assignments
- TV programmes, teleconferencing etc.
- Library facilities.
- Organisation of practical at science labs, computer labs etc.
- Feedback regarding assignment evaluation.
- Development of study skills of students.
- Tutoring and Counselling services.
- Examinations.
- Communication of results of assessments.
- Providing unbiased information.

**(c) Post Course Stage:** At this stage the learners have already given their examination and may require information or guidance regarding when he/she would get his/her results? What career he/she should choose and many such questions.

Types of Support Systems during this stage:

- Information is given regarding final results by providing grade card, conducting convocation ceremony etc.
- Guidance is given regarding job opportunities and future prospects of completing the course by the learner.
- The institute obtains feedback on programmes and services conducted by it for the learner.

#### NEED FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

Learner support services are important for Distance Education System of teaching. Since learners do self-study these Learner support services help in facilitating the student learning process.

#### Characteristics of Distance Learners

Distance learner adopts the mode of Distance education as a part-time activity. According to Koul (1989) Learners can be divided into three categories. First the confident types who do not require a counsellors help. Second types need a counsellor to sort out their queries through face-to-face sessions and third category of learners are those who contact the counsellor only if they face an obstacle during the learning process.

Difference between a Conventional System and Open System as a mode of Learning:

- Conventional system is a full-time activity for the learner while Distance learning system is a part time activity for the learner.
- In a conventional system the learner belongs to one institution while in Distance System learner is a member of many organisations.
- In a conventional system the learner is of a young age while in a Distance system learner is a mature adult usually.
- In a conventional system the learner can connect with other co learners while it is difficult in a distance system for learners.
- In a conventional system the learner can access institutional resources while in a Distance system the learner cannot access the institutional resources due to distance.
- In a conventional system the learner has to attend lectures on a full time basis while in a Distance system the learner devotes part of his time on learning.
- In conventional system the learner is not burdened with other commitments besides teaching while in a Distance System the learner is burdened with other commitments like job, family and other things

#### Characteristics of Learning material

Self-learning materials are provided to the learners. Some amount of human support to facilitate to understand the study material is provided to the learner. Additional support systems like counselling etc are given with the study material.

#### Academic Socialisation

Distance learning Mode is a kind of Self-study programme, hence new entrants need to be facilitated with as to how to orient themselves with the system. Hence, Induction programmes are conducted by all institutions which help the learner:

LEARNER SUPPORT – WHAT, WHY AND HOW / 3

- To help them in the transition from conventional learner to a distance learner.
- Familiarize the learner with the functioning and working of the institution.
- Introduce them with the delivery system of instructional package.
- Introduce the learner with other facilities provided by the institution to facilitate learning besides instructional material.
- Helping the learner become more accountable by structuring their goal independence.
- Motivating the learner.
- Reducing Post Entry course problems.

**HOW TO PROVIDE SUPPORT**

The nature of Learner Support services varies from institution to institution. There are two approaches to Learner Support System:

**(1) Non-Contagious communication:**

- Providing communication via media, by providing written and recorded material.

**(2) Large scale approach:**

- Developing large number of courses for learners.
- Providing thousands of copies of course material.
- Offering face to face tutorials.
- Benefits from the economies of scale.

**Factors affecting the provision of Support Services**

The factors affecting the provision of Support services are aims of the organisation, the resources available in the organisation, Instructional course content, Delivery of course material, Audience to be targeted, socio-economic educational structure and availability of various forms of media at home/ workplaces.

**Different models of Learner Support**

There are three different systems of education according to Sewart (1989):

The Traditional correspondence and sending course content via post where learners study in isolation and send assignments back for feedback. The communication is only between the learner and the institution. This is also called the industrial model where design and instructional package is important.

The second method is usually followed in Eastern Europe where learners receive material at intervals and have to attend compulsory classes and seminars.

Third method is followed in UK Open University model. In this method variety of communication and support systems are offered to students. The usage of face-to-face sessions at study centres and regional

centres are conducted. This is the distributed model where study centres and communication networks are important.

Constructivist approach to curriculum development involves relevant instructional designs linked to personal situations of learners. Secondly interactive methods for learning through mediated setting by either through face-to-face interactions at study centers or through computer conferencing is done.

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q. 1. What are Learner Support Services?**

**Ans.** Learner Support Systems are vital organ of Distance Learning Programme courses run by many different organisations. They facilitate the learners learning process through print, audio, TV, teleconferencing, course material, face-to-face counselling etc. They provide the learner with information support about how to get into organisations their admission and fee criteria to providing course material and finally evaluating the students through online examination system and getting feedback of the Distance learning module conducted by the organisation. They also provide the learner with counselling facilities and provide practical and theory programmes by the usage of audio-visual aids. The organisation gets feedback on the course material and assignments by the students. The success of Distance learning programme is heavily dependent on learner support services provided by the organisation. They help in the dissemination of information. They are also useful for geographically scattered learners and of varied diverse groups. With the growth of Distance Education programmes learner support services have gained momentum in facilitating learning process. Support systems include providing course material etc. establishment of centers in locations identified geographically which requires minimum educational infrastructure facilities.

Important aspects need to keep in mind while delivering student support services:

- Reliability- The organisation should consistently provide education and services as promised by them initially.
- The organisation should be responsive to the needs of distance learners.
- They should provide guidance and counselling.
- There should be sufficient staff to carry out the smooth functioning of Distance learning.

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- Effective knowledge and skill should be provided.
- Staff at study centres should be available to provide information and content.
- Encourage two-way communication between learners and academic instructors.
- Provide good infrastructure at study centres.
- The academic instructors should have expertise over the subject to make it easy for distance learners to gain knowledge.
- The main objective of student support services is to help the learners retain achieve success and be satisfied with the course.
- Institutes develop strategies to provide efficient support services to students.
- The services improve the quality of learning experiences of the learner and foster positive relations between academic instructors and learners.
- They motivate students to gain knowledge and facilitate, engage and motivate students.

**Q. 2. List all the types of support required by a distance learner.**

**Ans.** Distance education is highly dependent on the various support services. Effective support systems help in knowledge retention by students thereby enhancing satisfaction level of learners.

There are three types of student support services. These are Cognitive, Emotional and Organisational. The different support services are required at the different stages of learning process.

**The various stages include:**

**Pre-Entry Stage:** this is basically the information gathering stage wherein the student is confused about his life goal. Advice and counselling is important at this stage. Information about the institution, teaching methods, fees, admission process and placements, etc. are sought for.

Types of support systems required at this stage are:

- Dissemination of information regarding available programmes and courses.
- Professional counselling prior to course selection.
- Providing information about fee structure, course duration, instructional methodologies, etc.
- Formalities regarding fee reimbursement and concession.

**During Course Stage:** during the course the learner faces certain academic and non-academic

problems like lack of motivation, thoughts about dropout, examination anxiety and tips for successful completion of course.

Types of support systems during this stage:

- Orientation Program.
- Dissemination and distribution of study materials and assignments.
- Digital support like teleconferencing and television programs, etc.
- Library and Research facilities.
- Conducting practical classes at science laboratories, computer laboratories, etc.
- Evaluation and final feedback on assignment.
- Developing reading skills of students.
- Coaching and counselling.
- Assessments & Examinations.
- Declaration of results.
- Circulate unbiased information.

**Post Course Stage:** This is a stage after course completion. The learner is again confused about results and future career growth.

Types of Support Systems during this stage:

- Declaration of results, giving information regarding report card, convocation ceremony, etc.
- Career counselling is provided for future job prospects and professional growth.
- Learner feedback is gathered.

**Q. 3. What are the differences between distance learners and conventional learners?**

**Ans.** A conventional learner is that student who regularly attends lectures in school and colleges. They learn through face-to-face interactions for the instructor. They study in a teacher directed environment in a classroom setting. While a distance learner is a student who attends course online. The assessments are structured and delivered virtually. Learner support services are given to distance learners to facilitate learning.

The differences between a conventional learner and distance learner are:

- Conventional learners have access to free flow of information and open interaction between learners and academic instructors which is not there for a distance learner.
- Distance learners get exposed to great deal of technology during the learning process while this is not so for a conventional learner.
- Distance learners gain education through electronic and print mediums while conventional