

A Training Evaluation on the Capacity Building for Open and Distance Learning Materials at Bangladesh Open University

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Received 28 May 2006; received in revised form 21 June 2006; accepted 22 June 2006

ABSTRACT

A 5 day long training programme of the teachers of BOU on the capacity building for open and distance learning materials was held during 12-15 and 19 March 2006 with a view to upgrading skill, knowledge and quality for their better educational exposure in imparting distance education. Fifty terminologies concerning ODL materials were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme through pre and post evaluation. In pre-evaluation at the beginning of the training session out of 50 only 25 terminologies were assessed to be acquainted satisfactory with the participants' knowledge while the rest 25 were assessed at the end of the training programme yielding significantly as much as 39% improvement on the term like ISSN followed by 27% in tele-conferencing. Based on the result, it is revealed that the training has been found effective in imparting appropriate required knowledge of technology including ODL educating materials such as writing of self learning modules, preparing scripts for radio, television, audio-video tapes, e-learning techniques, video conferencing, tele-conferencing, mediated communications etc. with the expectation that the training would have the useful impact on the teachers' educating efficiency of BOU teachers. The probable definitions on the acquaintancy of terminologies used have been incorporated.

Key words: Training, evaluation, capacity building, ODL.

INTRODUCTION

Generally the training is an essential process of act for the development and improvement of quality or the skills and efficiency in a given profession. But in the technological age the training is an indispensable process for proper development of the skills, efficiency and quality at all levels of a given profession. It helps people to acquire skills, habits of thoughts and qualities of character that enable them to understand their jobs and perform them efficiently and lead them to advancement of their chosen professions and generally fit them for their part in the competitive world (Mills, 1967). As regards to the context of distance education Perraton (1995) emphasized the quality of teachers as to the quantity. He opined that to do their job well, the teachers need to possess a mastery of the subject matter they are to teach and to be skilled in the process of teaching.

Bangladesh Open University has been emerged in 1992 to provide the public sector with a wide range and greater access of need based formal and non-formal compatible education through open

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and distance mode. In distance learning, materials are to take over the teachers responsibility and the success and failure of distance education depends on the quality of its course materials and BOU has already introduced the standard process for developing course materials as per requirements of the distance learners (Tofazzal Islam *et al.*, 2006). The gradual efficiency and skills on writing and preparing the self learning distance materials require conscious efforts of the teacher and/or writer to incorporate the desired inputs in a lesson as to the style and content, language and graphics needed. And this can be achieved through effective training and practice.

In the context of mobile situation of new and advanced knowledge and technologies related to distance education a training programme on the capacity building for open and distance learning materials for BOU teachers was designed to upgrade their skills, knowledge and quality for their better educational exposure, especially for the newly recruited teachers who have not prior fundamental knowledge about ODL, while sustainable offering of quality education through distance mode has been emphasized (Bazlur Rashid, 2005).

Learning effectiveness in the training and in the instructional/ delivery system assumed to be an essential pre-requisite for any training programme. Post evaluation of the training programme of newly appointed BOU officers on "Administrative and Financial Management of BOU" has been reported to be helpful to understand the level of achievements the trainees attain and how much they feel the acquired knowledge fruitful (Anonymous, 2005).

Therefore, an evaluation was followed to assess the depth of knowledge treasury of the participants or to learn about the strengths and weakness of the participant's knowledge and skill and also find out the strengths and weakness of the delivery expositions during the training programme.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The training programme was designed actually for the training of trainers (TOT) consisting the teachers of BOU dealing with open and distance education during 12-15 and 19 March 2006 at BOU campus. The evaluation was carried out two times- one called pre-evaluation at the beginning of opening session and post-evaluation at the end of the whole training programme. There were altogether 44 participants and all were pretty junior and/or newly recruited teachers of BOU. Pre-evaluation included 50 terminologies related to the main theme of capacity building in open and distance learning materials. Each participant was asked to put tick (✓) mark on the already known or acquainted terms.

Post evaluation was carried out at the end of the whole training programme followed by the same procedure. But as regards to the terminology out of 50, only 25 terminologies were found to be partially acquainted during pre-evaluation. And only these less acquainted 25 terms were used in post evaluation. Both pre and post evaluation were followed by individual comment of the participants. The participants response was subjected to statistical analysis in completely randomized design. Finally the whole training programme was evaluated in the closing ceremony.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In pre-evaluation out of 50 terminologies used the acquaintancy response by the participants varied depending on the treasury of the participants' knowledge. In pre-evaluation it was revealed that the participants had been preliminarily acquainted with 25 terminologies only to some extent and the individual participants expressed their needs of detail briefings on the terminologies in their comments. The result has been presented in Fig. 1.

After 6 days of training i.e. in post evaluation the improvement response of the participants as regards to the acquaintancy on the less pre-acquainted terminologies, the result has been presented in Table 1.

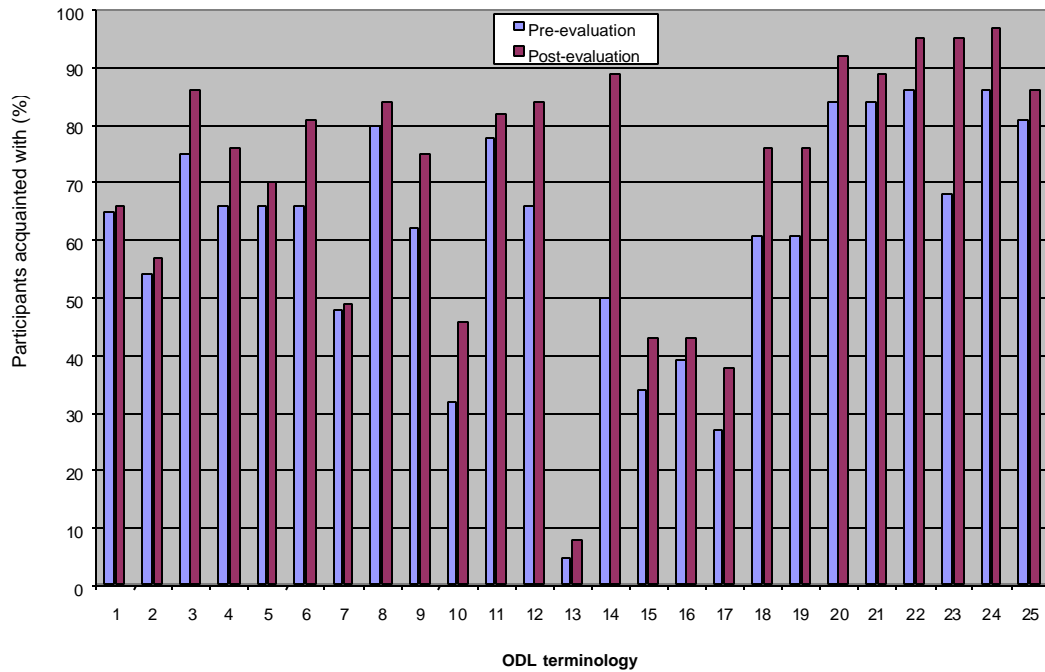


Fig. 1. Improvement of capacity building as regards to the acquaintance of trainees with some ODL terms (Lsd: 0.6)

It is revealed that significantly the highest improvements were achieved in some terminologies most commonly used in open and distance learning materials. The acquainted knowledge on the term ISSN was rated as 39% improvement followed by tele-conferencing (27%). In this way the whole training programme assumed to be performed effectively on the following topics.

1. Conceptual framework of ODL : BOU perspective
2. e-Learning and its prospects for the promotion of ODL
3. Management of ODL
4. TV script writing and presentation
5. Art and techniques for oral presentation in distance education
6. Research methodology in open and distance education
7. Thesis writing
8. Academic and research writing for journals and conferences
9. Developing text materials for distance education
10. Writing study materials for distance education
11. Reviewing and editing for publishing of academic and research writing
12. Linear and non-linear editing of videos.

It is expected that the training yielded the desired harvest to the participants in capacity building on the knowledge of technology including open and distance educating materials such as radio, television, audio-video tapes, e-learning, video conferencing, tele conferencing, printing modules computer mediated communications and learning processes etc. which are inevitably useful in open and distance learning.

Table 1. Improvement on the acquaintancy of the participants on the terms related to capacity building on ODL materials

No. of participants increased (%)

Sl. No.	Treatment according to arranging order	Mean	$\Delta \cong$.600 (Prob ^y . of acceptable level)
1	Appendices	1.66	1.44	effective
2	Audio graphics	3	1	effective
3	CD ROM	11	*2.00	more effective
4	CEMBA	10	1	effective
5	Costing and estimating	4	1	effective
6	DTP	15	1	effective
7	DYDW	1.66	1.44	effective
8	Flow chart	4	1	effective
9	Foreword	13	1	effective
10	Galley proof	14	1	effective
11	Home page	4	1	effective
12	ICT	18	*3.00	most effective
13	IMAC	3	1	effective
14	ISSN	39	*12.00	most effective
15	Liner editing	9	1	effective
16	Mentor	4	1	effective
17	Non liner editing	11	*2.00	more effective
18	Off Print	15	1	effective
19	OLDE	15	1	effective
20	PPD	8	1	effective
21	Reprint	4	1	effective
22	Study Centre	10	1	effective
23	Teleconferencing	27	*9.00	most effective
24	Tutoring	11	*2.00	more effective
25	Valid	5	*3.00	more effective

It may be mentioned that the training was important particularly for the newly recruited teacher who did not have their prior knowledge ever before in this context.

Almost all the participating teachers were homogeneously young, energetic, lively and very receptive with quicity who appreciably put forward their comments as their recommendations for designing long term training of this kind. It is optimistic that the training will have the most useful impact on teachers efficiency and learners of BOU (Table 2). The probable definitions of the terminologies used in the evaluation have been incorporated.

Table 2. Comments of the participants at the beginning and at the end of the training programme

Comments	
Pre-evaluation	Post-evaluation
1. I would like to know all these and to know how to develop audio and video material and their recording system.	1. "Research and evaluation" all should be regenerated again by relating BOU teachers who are interested in ODL research & the feedback should be or the research activities should be under the consideration of BOU policy makers.
2. I want to learn latest technology-based methods of ODL, such as, Tele-Conferencing, e-learning etc.	2. It might be benefited specially for the newly appointed faculty members. The alike topics by different trainer might be avoided and proper attention should be given while selecting resource person as trainer.
3. I want to learn more about module and course material development.	3. The training sessions were enjoyable. It would be better if the committee arrange these kinds of program after 6 months.
4. I want to develop knowledge, skill and attitude, specially in distance learning.	4. I think the training program was too crowded to capture all informations. I think everyday 4 sessions is not appropriate for a good training. Personally I become information overloaded.
5. A lot of experiences about ODL and printed system materials is required for me.	5. Time budget was not maintained strictly so as to the trainees were not sincere in the concerned classes.
6. I need to be an efficient faculty.	6. Question-answering time allocation was too little to discuss for clear learning.
7. Practice oriented teaching is needed..	7. Half of the power-point display (font especially) was not seen from behind.
8. From this program my expectation is to be familiar with the unknown words and their applications in practice.	8. The presenters should be more regular along with their contemporary device, information & presentation.
9. I think I learn/realize the concept of distance education program.	9. Any irritating mismanagement should always be avoided.
10. I hope quality will be improved for me to attend the training program.	10. It is better to give some questionnaire about the ODL system as dichotomous way (Yes, No) then again send the same questionnaire to evaluation.
11. I want to increase the skill in relevant field.	11. Good. It is necessary for every year for new comers. Notable that Japanese people like Japanese Language but Bangladeshi people try to deliver their lectures in English, why?

The comments put by the participants were almost alike and a few only are cited here. The participants' remarks on inconvenience during the training programme may be of significance for the concerned authority for future endeavour of this kind.

Probable solution of the terminologies

- Appendices** : Plural of appendix- anatomy publishing.
- Audio graphics** : Data conferencing, operating and checking to hearing not video focusing.
- CD-ROM** : Compact Disc Read-Only Memory, which contains large amount of unalterable or unerasable fixed data to be viewed only by using computer.
- CEMBA** : Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration
- Costing and estimating** : Costing- (noun) fixing the price; estimating- (noun) rough calculation; approximate judgement as to amount.
- DTP** : Desk Top Publishing

DYDW	: Diploma in Youth in Development Work
Flow chart	: Diagram showing sequence of actions
Foreword	: Introductory note or chapter in a book often written by someone other than the author.
Galley proof	: The first trial printed copy usually not divided into pages, on which corrections one marked.
Home page	: The Website opening page of an Internet. It may be personal Website incorporated with personal data, photographs or contact information.
ICT	: Information and Communications Technology
iMac	: Jobs reversed the company's decision to license the Mac OS to other computer manufacturers, which had taken away market share from Apple.
ISSN	: International Standard Serial Number for publication
Linear Editing	: The original video tape editing method of selecting, arranging and modifying the images and sound recorded on video tape whether captured by a video or recorded in a studio.
Mentor	: Experienced senior advisor who advises and guides younger or less experienced junior colleagues.
Non-linear Editing	: The preferred method for most of video tape editing procedures.
Offprint	: Printed version of single article: a separate printing of a single article from a periodical, often given in small quantities to the contributor.
ODL	: Open and Distance Learning
OLDE	: Open Learning in Distance Education
Open Schooling	: Comprehensively open & informal education being open to pre-school children and to adults, characterized as a process rather than a structure. Flexible & democratic in schooling.
PPD	: Publishing, Printing and Distribution
Reprint	: Printing something again which has already been in print or publish.
Study Centre	: Tutorial centre provided with necessary facilities and study materials required for the learners.
Teleconferencing	: Videoconferencing using telephone lines with a restricted band of frequencies and allows participants to be connected by telephone lines. It is an appropriate, effective and flexible means for distance education facilitating two-way communication among the users at different locations with resource person/expert. The users also get immediate feedback from the resource person and fellow users at other locations. There are 3 types of teleconferencing (a) Audio teleconferencing (b) Video teleconferencing and (c) Computer teleconferencing.
Tutoring	: Assisting or guiding with caring attitude the individual student or a group of students or learners or self-learning students.
Valid	: Unexpired, usable or acceptable until a specific date of expiration.
Anonym	: 1. Unnamed author : an author whose name is not known or not given. 2. Pseudonym : a name used by somebody to hide his or her identity.
Bibliography	: A list of books and articles consulted, appearing at the end of a book or other text. It may be the history of books and other publications, and the work of classifying and describing them
Course	: A program of study or training, especially one that leads to a degree or certificate from an educational institution.
Edit	: Preparing a text for publication by correcting errors and ensuring clarity and accuracy. It may be the overall charge of the publication of a newspaper, magazine, or broadcast program or removing material from something such

- as a publication, broadcast item, recording, or movie, e.g. because it is lengthy or offensive or bad language.
- E-learning** : The acquisition of knowledge and skill using electronic technologies such as computer- and Internet-based courseware and local and wide area networks.
- Evaluation** : The act of assessment considering or examining something in order to judge its value, quality, importance, extent, or condition.
- Internet** : **Global computer network:** a network that links computer networks all over the world by satellite and telephone, connecting users with service networks such as e-mail and the World Wide Web.
- Learner** : Somebody who studies or learns to do something.
- Manuscript** : An author's text for a book, article, or other piece of written work as it is submitted for publication.
- Module** : A short course of study that forms part of a larger academic course or training program, e.g. any of the elements that form part of a degree program.
- Preface** : An introductory section at the beginning of a book or speech that comments on aspects of the text such as the writer's intentions.
- Program** : 1. A television or radio broadcast. 2. A plan of action for achieving something 3. A list of instructions in a programming language that tells a computer to perform a task.
- Reliable** : Able to be trusted to be accurate or to provide a correct result.
- Student** : Somebody who studies at a school, college, or university.
- Synonym** : A word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word in the same language, either in all of its uses or in a specific context. such as "environment" and "surroundings".
- System** : 1. A combination of related parts organized into a complex whole
– a social system
2. An assembly of computer hardware, software, and peripherals functioning together.
- Teacher** : Somebody who teaches, especially as a profession.
- Teamwork** : A co-operative effort by a group or team.
- Tutor** : A teacher who instructs an individual student or a small group of students, especially one teaching students in need of remedial work or an academic who is responsible for teaching and advising an allocated group of students.
- Tutorial Centre** : The study centre where the tutors assist and/or guide the learners with caring attitude.
- Unit** : A part of an academic course that focuses on a specific theme or a measure of academic instruction, usually based on the number of hours of classroom and laboratory work.
- Video** : The visual part of a television broadcast or something that has been recorded on videotape.
- Web site** : Group of related Web pages i.e. a computer program that runs a Web server that provides access to a group of related Web pages

CONCLUSION

BOU being based on distance education the necessary skill and quality of the concerned educators yet to be developed as to the need of globalized expositions. There is no alternative of such a training programme to enhance their competitive and updated knowledge on the modern concepts for imparting effective education in distance mode.

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