Learning through Mass media is a flawless process in Distance Education system

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Abstract: Distance education is generally providing education in which students are remote from the institution and rarely attend formal teaching sessions, compulsory teaching classes etc. Telephone plays important role to contact students. Distance educators use a variety of means of communication with the learners to present information and ideas to students for their motivation and to stimulate their thinking. Components of media are the resources and means of communication. The term media is derived from the Latin word and describes that it stands between receiver and the source of the message. Multimedia describes refined technology, Internet, web sites, etc. technology has radio, TV, video record player, telephone, fax machines and computers. Media in education refers to any kind of communication method that conveys information and made interaction between teachers and students. The message of distance educators is significantly more important than the means used to convey the message for distance learners. The inventiveness and imagination of teachers will be the key factors in the selection of media to communicate to the mass of pupils.

Keywords: Multimedia; Mass media; Communication; Interaction; Distance education; Distance Educators; Distance learners.

I. Introduction

Mass media influence our daily life more than any other cultural institution. They are our main sources of news and entertainment. According to Wilbur Schramm, a mass medium is essentially a working group organized around some device for circulating the same message, at about same time, to a large number of people, the messages are disseminated to a large number of people ie, to Mass. They are called the audience in general. In Distance education system we say mass as all kinds of learners. No media can sustain without a sufficient audience. The above definition again meetings about devices of circulating messages. These devices are technological means through which messages are communicated to the audience. Devices include printed documents, television, radio, DVD, cassettes, the internet etc. These are important in the Distance education institution to make clarity in the communication and interaction with learners.

II. Objectives

Objectives of this article are to explain about the use of print media, non-print media in the achievement of learning; it is to establish relationship among Audio, Visual and Computer based media; it is also to explain the need of multimedia in distance education system; to describe the features of computer based media in learning process; to identify the strength of various media in learning process. These are few objectives to be achieved from this article.

III. Categories of various media for learning

A distance education institution uses various media to deliver learning information and to associate with students and teachers. Some media can be used for both purposes; generally they are grouped into a) media which can be used to convey subject content, such as print materials, video tapes, audio tapes, television, computer-based courseware, and CD-ROM. b) media which permit communication between teachers and students, such as fax, radio, teleconferencing, videoconferencing and the Internet as in [13].
IV. Print media

Johannes Gutenberg’s invented the moveable metallic type in the fifteenth century flagged the way for proliferation of the print media. The printing press introduced the method for mass production of texts. Before this invention of printing press, books were expensive materials affordable only for the aristocrats and royal families. Printing reduced the cost of books and made them available to the common men also. Rapid duplication of multiple copies of handy texts led to the innovation of modern newspapers and other printed materials. Print Media include Newspapers, Magazines, periodicals, books, all kinds of textual documents, newsletters, directories, advertising memos, business forms, pamphlets, posters and other printed publications for selling advertisement, programs at theatre presentations and sporting events etc. These are conveying the information in a print form and distinguished from broadcast or electronically transmitted communications. In short print media can be said as any kind of material in written form which gives us knowledge is called print media.

V. Uses of print media

Print based media is the most commonly useful medium in distance education system, because it is very easy to transmit the information towards the learners. The value and effectiveness of print resources are so high within the learners. In spite of the explosion of high tech computer-based communication and of the information super-highway, print based texts will remain the most accessible medium of communication for many years. Printed information can be used anywhere and is always at hand for reference. Print media are useful to easy transformation of information. It is one of the reason distance education system using this media predominantly for its proper functioning. It is more economical and also traditionally used for pedagogical purpose.

VI. Restrictions in Print media

Print media requires skills of literacy for the preparation of the text to convey information; It requires high level of study skills for reader/learner; Interaction between teacher-learner and among the learners is not possible according to their needs of emergency; The opportunity of active participation of the learner is very less with print media; Learner should waste lot of time just for waiting to get some feedback; There are difficulties in providing individualised instruction in print media; Provision of psychomotor skill training is least in its use as in [10].

VII. Non-print media

There are numerous non-print media which are facilitating the distance learners for better interactivity as worthy as face to face interaction. Non-print media are available for teaching learning process to remove the boundaries of print based media. Some of the non-print media are play a vital role in the teaching and learning process. Non print media is what we are using in online articles on Wikipedia, Yahoo and things of that nature as in [8]. Non print media consists of other than printed matter, such as slide shows, slide-tape presentations and video show, etc. Electronic media is a kind of non-print media in which, information are reached the audience by means of micro-electronic waves. The history of electronic mass media starts with the invention of radio by Marconi. The first radio station was set up in Pittsburgh, New York and Chicago in the 1920s. Following this USA, European countries also started radio stations for broadcasting in [8].

VIII. Uses of Non-print media

Non-print media helps the students to bring the learning atmosphere for active participation in their learning process. Motivation of learner’s psychology in drawing their attention towards learning process as in [12] is an important part that carried out by non-print media. Motivation to bring the curiosity of the learner towards learning is taking place by non-print media. Non-print media involves the learners to feel and sense by providing training in their psychomotor skills during their learning process.

Technologies of non-print media such as computers, facilitates the learner to cater their individual requirements. Non-print media is facilitating as a supplementary medium for the print based media. Iconic symbol system as in [3], ie. Pictures, colours and signs for coding knowledge are clearly expressed through non-print media. Analogic symbol system such as more expressive and performance of dynamic activities are possible only through non-print media. The access of non-print media inside the education system facilitates the learners to overcome all the limitations of print media.

IX. Limitations of Non-print media

High tech technology-based media suffer from the various limitations of the specific technology to be used; its accessibility depends on availability, where and when it can be used and also contingent upon its reliable operation as in [7].

X. Audio, Visual and Computer based media

Audio and video equipment are universal in these days. Computer hardware and software required for online access, it is comparatively less common in use and slightly expensive too. But it is true that computer is
much more effective than the other media, in terms of value for money and educational effectiveness. Cost-effectiveness is important in educational effectiveness of distance education system as in [1].

XI. Audio Based Media

In distance education system radio broadcast and audio cassettes are mostly used as an audio media for effective teaching learning purposes. Radio is the biggest mass media of all and covers the largest population in the world. Both radio and audio cassettes are one-way technologies. Radio is used for live radio broadcasting and also broadcasts can be stored and used later through the way of audio cassettes.

XII. Radio programmes in learning process

Radio programmes can be produced for the learners in the form of direct lecture by expert teachers. Discussion based interviews with various subject experts on important issues can also influences the learning process through radio broad caste. Recorded cassettes or audio cassettes can be used by radio broadcast experts keeping that cassette as a resource material for learning process. Learners are provided with guided study material before radio broad casts and those materials should be discussed in the radio talk in radio-vision procedure otherwise known as audio-vision activity.

XIII. Successful audio programme

The programme can provide simple and concrete idea about concepts of lesson with appropriate example. Radio programme can be produced with the involvement of students in various aspects like discussion, follow-up activities etc. Audio/Radio programme can achieve the success by means of stating the link or integrating the programme with course materials, project works, assignments and also term end examinations.

Telephone teaching also one of the audio programmes, it is used as a supplementary teaching device, in which learners can get some information regarding their course and also they can clarify their doubts. Educators must be available on telephone at the appropriate time for giving proper response to the queries of learners or some other common arrangement should be set up for this purpose.

Audio-conferencing is a kind of extension of telephone teaching technology. In this teaching is carried out through the central telephone which is connected with a bridge of few numbers of telephones. Learners are at the receiving end, they can discuss with their teacher simultaneously for their clarifications. It can be said as a collaborative teaching learning as in [10].

XIII. Visual based media

Television and video are powerful media used in distance education as a visual based media. American scholar Richard Clark said that media do not influence learning. Media is just a vehicle that carries and delivers instruction and information to the students. Television is an open medium and involves one-way communication. Television programmes can be recorded for future use and it can be viewing repeatedly whenever needed. There are different forms of television like instructional television, interactive television, video conferencing, tutored video instruction, etc. These can be used by the institutions on the basis of learning objectives and the available facilities. Television acts as direct teaching resource. Abstract concepts were concretized with the help of television. Learning by live demonstration as well as it is possible to be repeated also. The programmes of television are properly designed and can able to reach large number of audience.

XIV. Computer based media

Computer is an important media in communication process. Computers in the field of education are a significant one; it helps the learner in learning practices. It is also possible to connect the computers with remote areas through network. In the area of education, computers are acting as a media. There are number of developments available in this, such as all sort of calculations, graphic representation for a given data, picture making, writing the required matters, getting information from internet services, communicate through video and audio via computers, etc.as in [2].

XV. Computer and Elements of good teaching and learning

Elements of good teaching and learning are teaching with explanations, examples, illustrations, and learning support in the form of professional advice, comments, encouragement etc. The learning of students includes reading, doing research work, attending discussion groups and involving all courses-required practical activities. One of the most important parts in the teaching learning process is evaluation. Assessment procedures, which will need revision and may be required to be changed to meet the necessities of a distance education programme. Computers assist all these activities effectively.
XVI. Specific pedagogical purposes of computers in education

Computers helpful for the learners in recalling the learning matters; Influence the learners’ motivation; Responses of the learner are gets activated; Computers provides new instructions and stimulate the learners in their studies; Learners can able to get systematic and steady feedback; Provision of getting facilities for appropriate practice; Learning happens in a sequence manner and also in an appropriate aspect; Viable source of information for supporting the processes of learning; etc.

XVII. Computer based media in Distance Education

Computer based media in distance education is available in the following three forms as Independent mode; Interactive mode and Communication mode. According to Taylor in 1995, the term flexible learning model is identified as a fourth generation media in Distance Education. The development of World Wide Web and its multimedia interactive capability are more important in distance education to bring it towards virtual reality. Presently there are virtual universities that deliver courses through World Wide Web. Online teaching and learning are very fast development in the world of computer based media as in [2].

Computer presents verbal, digital and also graphic information to the users as in [3], [10] & [13]. Interact with others by asking questions and answers; Faculty to keep the record of answers for further use; Individualized Instructions for the learners can also possible as in [11]. Variety of software can possible to utilise in computers by the learner, etc.

XVII. Learning through various advance media and Technology

The telephone offers the opportunity for group links via teleconferencing, and television has led to the development of videoconferencing. Online and digital means of producing, transmitting and receiving messages are called new media. It encompasses computer mediated communication technology. It implies the use of desktop and portable computers as well as wireless and handheld devices. The forms of communicating in the digital world include CD-RoMs, DVDs, Internet facilities like World Wide Web, bulleting boarding, email etc. The most complex and expensive advances in educational media are being made in computer-based technology, particularly interactive CD-RoM and online course delivery as in [4].

More vocational training courses are now delivered through online for learning; students can communicate with teachers via e-mail. Their assignment submissions and contribution for bulletin board and discussions are possible. These are carried out through online presently as [5].

XIX. Blended approach in Distance Education System

Distance education programmes are increasingly using combinations of media to deliver training in teaching and learning. For example, print materials often cite references to audio and video resources, which can be sent out to students from the library or resource centre on temporary loan. In the above examples print materials form a significant part of the delivery method. Other media components can offer supplementary information in a different format or provide different learning experiences for students which help them to learn skills more effectively as in [9].

The medium will determines its integration with the distance education process, it integrates with the students in various ways, students may read, listen, watch or interact with computers, etc. Media is also depends on the type of the students, where they are belongs to, what are their levels of existing skill and their learning styles.

The purpose of using various media in learning is to improve the quality of the learning process of students, each medium has its own characteristics and it is matched with the skills needed to be developed in their learning process.

Any medium can be used effectively for any subject on the basis of student influences, motivation and favourable circumstances. Educational medium should be selected on the basis of its capability of presenting the intended information to students. It should enable the student to actively participate in the learning process.

XX. Summary

Distance Education programme is very challenging for students. Those who have only experienced in the classroom-based instruction will often struggle with the absence of other students and teachers. These students will need to be taught how to work more independently, how to organise their study time and how to discipline themselves to study through domestic pressures and other influences. The process of Distance education learning is carried out through the use of various learning resources by the Distance Educators. They use a variety of means of communication with the learners. The resources and means of communication are known as the components of media as in [6].

The word media is a Latin word and it stands between receiver and the source of the message. The term multimedia describes about highly refined technology, as Internet and web sites consists of text, sound, vision
and animation. Media in education refers to any kind of communication method that conveys information and made interaction between teachers and students.

The purpose of using media in learning is to improve the quality of the learning process of students, each medium has its own characteristics and it is matched with the skills need to be developed in their learning. The medium will determines its integration with the distance education process, it integrates with the students in various ways and students may read, listen, watch or interact with computers, etc as in [12]. It is obvious that media depends on the type of the students, where they are belongs to, what are their levels of existing skill and their learning styles.

Distance education programmes are increasingly using combinations of media to deliver training. For example, print materials often cite references to audio and video resources, which can be sent out to students from the library and resource centre. The application of audio, video and computer based media in teaching learning process are well recycled with Distance Education system. Learning through media is the latest trend in the educational institutions and more convenient process for distance learners in Distance Education Institutions.

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