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# UNIT 2 TRAINING IN STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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In the previous unit you have learned how to organize training sessions for the course writers. In this unit we shall concentrate on academic counsellors. Training of the academic counsellors is one of the crucial factors in providing effective student support services. The academic counsellors have to perform various functions which include tutoring and counseling. Training programme for the academic counsellors proposes to provide necessary knowledge and skills to become effective practitioners. The counsellors are thus expected to take knowledge which is often theoretical in nature, to real life situations and apply it in practice. Training should help reduce gap between the actual practice and the theoretical inputs imparted to promote the relevance of counsellor training programmes and substantially guide their practice.

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## 2.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the importance of student support service;
- plan and design a workshop for the academic counsellors in your own situation.

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## 2.2 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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You will agree to the fact that the multimedia package of instructional material forms the core of instruction. The materials are supposed to be self-instructional. Yet, given the heterogeneity of the learners in terms of age, experience, educational background and socio-economic status, some content areas of self-learning materials might pose conceptual problems to some learners, if not all. Added to this, are the inherent problems associated with the system such as the distance between the teacher and the learner, isolation of the learner from other learners and the institution, and the absence of chances of regular interaction with colleagues, peers, teachers. Student support services, therefore, become essential to provide solutions for certain problems, gaps, difficulties, etc. which the distance teacher, the institution and the teaching-learning materials are unable to meet or provide. In order to provide effective support services to students, suitable personnel are to be identified, selected and trained keeping in view the nature and kind of support services needed by the students.

You have acquired knowledge and skills while studying the course MDE 413. There is no need to discuss the issues related to students support services here. We shall concentrate on the training aspects of the academic counsellors in face-to-face situations only.

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## 2.3 ORGANIZATION OF ACADEMIC COUNSELLOR TRAINING

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### Organization of 3-day workshop

You may organize a 3-day workshop (face-to-face) for the academic counsellors. In the following pages we shall give you an idea. You may develop your own training schedule depending on your own situation. The objectives of the workshop may be the following:

#### Objectives of the session

- To orient the participants with the concept and practice of ODL;
- To provide hands-on experience in face-to-face counselling;
- To provide hands-on experience in evaluation of assignments

#### Participants

- You may select 30 participants (Max.)

#### Methods

You may follow various methods depending upon your own situation. Some methods are:

- Power-point presentation
- Discussion/Interaction
- Individual activity
- Group activity
- Presentation by the participants
- Feedback/Evaluation

#### Resource persons

- Select 4-6 resource persons.
- Distribute the sessions among the resource persons according to their expertise in a particular area.
- Use 2 resource persons in a day.

#### Preparation of a tentative schedule

- Keep four (4) sessions per day.
- Total 12 sessions (including Inaugural and valedictory sessions).
- Each session may be 1 hr. 30 min. duration.
- Session 1 will be inaugural session.
- Use some time from inaugural session for participants' introduction and ice-breaking.
- Apply a short pre-workshop evaluation test.

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## 2.4 SESSION-WISE TOPICS FOR ACADEMIC COUNSELLOR TRAINING

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### Day 1

#### Session 1: Inaugural Session



#### Session 2: Open and Distance Education

This session almost similar to the session we have discussed in unit 1. There should be a brief presentation on ODL concept and practice followed by interaction. The topics may include:

- Meaning/Definition of distance education
- Characteristics of distance education
- Clarification of various concepts
- Learner profile
- Media used in distance education
- ICT

#### Session 3

##### Student Support Services

There may be a power point presentation followed by interaction. The topics may include:

- Meaning of learner support
- Need of learner support
- Types of learner support
- Models of learner support
- Meaning and types of counselling
- Meaning of Tutoring
- Practical Training / Hands on experience
- Feedback on assessment and progress
- Administrative problem solving
- Library facility
- Conduct of examination / practical
- Maintenance of Learner Records
- Online support (where applicable)

## Identifying main features of self-learning materials

### Session 4: Group Activity

- Divide the participants into 5 groups. Try to keep participants from same or related disciplines in one group. Identify group leader in each group.
- Give them self-learning print materials. Ask them to identify the main features of these study materials, difference with the text book, and why these materials are important for the distance learners



- Give them 20 min for group discussion
- Each group leader/any participant should present the outcome of the discussion.
- After each group presentation, the members of the other group will interact with them.
- The resource person will also interact.
- Identify the common features identified by the groups and the specific or unique features identified by each group.
- Grade the group activity.

### Day 2

#### Session 5: Academic Counselling

Review the first day activities. Identify participants for this task. After that there may be a brief power point presentation. The topics may include:

- Role of academic counsellor
- Difference between counselling and tutoring
- Qualities and skills of academic counsellors
- Methods of counselling
- Media used in academic counselling
- Practical and project
- Study skills

#### Session 6 and 7

- Live counselling (demonstration and practice)
- Bring few students and ask the participants to interact with the students.

#### Session 8

- Discussion on the activities performed by the participants during session 6 and 7.

- The resource person will clarify the problems presented by the students, modify the responses and style of presentations by the participant counsellors.

### Day 3

#### Session 9

- Review of the second day activities by the participants

#### Tutor comments

The participants should learn how to evaluate assignments and write tutor comments on each answer written by the students. There may be a presentation on tutor comments.

#### Academic Communication

- To address every learner individually and write meaningful or teaching type comments on assignment responses
- Correct the learner if s/he responds incorrectly
- Point out and confirm acceptable points, examples, figure etc.
- Suggest to add a point or elaborate on the issue
- Assess the level of achievement and explain the basis of that

#### Personal communication

- Try to break the feeling of 'isolation' of the learner
- Help to go ahead smoothly to achieve the stipulated learning objectives
- Motivate the learner

#### Supplemental Communication

- May be initiated by the learner or the distance teacher
- When learner reacts strongly to the comments or challenges the grade
- Teacher may send the probable answer to the learner

#### Types of Comments

**Positive comments:** "Your explanation with regard to information processing theory is very good. I appreciate your diagram number one".

**Constructive comments:** "You could have discussed the temperate climate and the modern methods of farming as important factors of high production of wheat in the prairies".

#### Personal comments

"I appreciate your style of presentation. It is new to me. No other student has presented the diagram on information processing theory. Carry on please. You will definitely be able to achieve learning objectives."

#### Overall (Global) comments

"This is good you have submitted your assignment in time and attempted both the questions. This is also good that you have not crossed the word limit. Your overall response is good. However, you have missed some important points (see margin comments inside). With regard to the first question you could have mentioned three reasons: temperate climate, fertile

land and plenty of water provided by the two major rivers Mississippi and Missouri along with modern methods of farming which have helped in the high production of wheat in the prairies. In your response to the second question also you have missed some points e.g., how the farmers of the prairies use machines for agriculture, how they rear animals in Ranches and so on (see margin comments). As you have missed these important points I have given you 'C' grade. Your handwriting is neat. But you should give more attention to spelling.

This is your first assignment response. Hope, in your next assignment you will do better. If you face any difficulty with your studies do not hesitate to write to me”.

### Session 10: Individual activity

Each participant will be given an answer written by the student to an assignment. The participants will evaluate the answer, grade them and teach the students through written comments.

### Session 11: Counselling using ICT

This session may be devoted to discuss how ICT can be used for academic counseling.

### Session 12

- Feedback/post workshop evaluation
- Valediction



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## 2.5 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we gave you an idea about a 3-day training workshop (face-to-face) for the academic counsellors. We have suggested the way you may organize a training workshop for the counsellors. In our last Block (5), we have presented training design and report of a 15-day training programme for the academic counsellors conducted by us in IGNOU.

### Activity

Modify the contents and strategies suggested in various sessions of the 3-day workshop. Prepare session plans for 2-day orientation programme for the academic counsellors.