

LEARNER'S SUCCESS CENTERED ODL SYSTEM : THE WAY TO ...

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bssudhindra@vsnl.net**Abstract :**

Success is very necessary and essential for “Every Learner” enrolled in an ODL system, if we truly want to generate an educated -“ Learned Man power “ in a developing nation like ours. A paradigm shift in strategy to realize this mission in an ODL system is presented in this work. To begin with an “unconventional approach” to empower every learner with “elements of education “ are presented using the ACCRONYM approach. The following words are used to drive-in the basic information.

1. STUDY for your success : viz. Spare Time for Understanding and Development of Yourself for your success.
2. What is UNDERSTANDING ? viz. Uniquely Note Down Expressions Relating to Subjects's Theory Application, Novelties and Deficiencies.
3. What is EDUCATION ? viz. Enabling one's Development through Understanding of Cases/Concepts through Analysis, Thinking, Investigating, Organising and Nurturing.
4. What is LEARNING ? viz. Listen-ing, Examine-ing, Arithmetic-ing, Read-ing, and Note-ing. As reading and writing are like two faces of a coin, we go further.
5. What is READING ? viz. Recognising Expressions And its Direction.
6. What is WRITING ? viz. What you feel like Reading Ink Them on paper !
7. What is MATHEMATICS ? viz. Mental Ability to Hack Equations in Multiplication, Addition and Their Inverses Correctly ,Sequentially ! We also provide details of “FOLK-CAP” procedure on ‘how to enjoy ‘solving maths problems.
8. How to write a “complete” Answer ? is answered through a procedure termed “NEED-IPS” !.
9. How to face Exams or difficult question.? As success depends ONLY on learner's efforts we outline a powerful try “REVERSE-LOGIC” procedure to write an answer to a difficult-unfamiliar- question.

Finally, a new LSC-SIMs format viz.“ Learner's Success Centered Self-Instructional Materials “ Format is outlined and discussed. The new format consists of 4 columns, with :

- i] A single 9cm wide column *main text*, with prefix-[previous info] and Suffix (inquiry column).This will facilitate FOCUSED reading with understanding without strain of eye, head movements.
- iii] A 3cm wide LEFT column space for “point-ing PREVIOUS background info.”
- iv] A 3cm wide RIGHT column for “pointing related issues, application area” or even raising a MCQ related to main topic being discussed.
- v] At the bottom of *every page* about 5cm height and whole page- width [3+9+3]cm column foot note space to reinforce facts .

The whole work represents accumulation of author's fifteen years "Student Support Services" experience in IGNOU and a passionate urge to make matter simple to follow by Distance Learners with "minimal" background.

1. Introduction

The basic desire of every learner joining an educational program is to learn something new and benefit from the efforts put-in. This means experiencing "success" is very essential in future endeavors of one's life. When the Open University System began with the paradigm shift from "Teacher centric" education to "Learner centric" was effected. Much progress has been seen in enrollment into this system of study. However, even these systems are not able to show significant figures in 'successful rate' in completion a program .

[No Univ. conventional or ODL, would like to expose this data, for various reasons. However, many CEOs and senior faculties during personal chats do admit to this "grey area" in the system.] In other words, what plagues the "conventional system" do continue to exist even in the Open Learning system. Like the "digital divide" scenario in IT and media arena, only the "already well attained requisite" background learners have been successful in the ODL system as well. In order words, the drop out rate is alarmingly high.

The back-bone of any Open and Distance learning system is the Self-Instructional Materials (SIMs). Ways to improve the contents of these SIMs are discussed so that "every learner" must be facilitated to "experience success" in the programme/courses enrolled. Success is very necessary and essential for all enrolled if we want a truly educated / learned manpower to develop the nation as a whole. A paradigm shift from mere numbers enrolled to that higher percentage(> 90 %, ambitious thinking / target some may feel) of successfully completed the programmes is the "need of the hour". Whence, a strategy to achieve this goal is presented in this work. As a first step, we take this journey through an "unconventional" brief on elements of education which every learner must get used. This should help him/her on journey to successful completion of the program. This is followed by a new format of SIMs that facilitates learners to succeed.

2. Elements of Education

The need for inclusion of this topic to every Distance Learner's info-base became evident from the commonality in the questions raised by Distance Learners of different programs visiting our Regional Centre over a decade.

2.1. Are You Ready ?

At the beginning of any work/study "refresh" your mind to allow to concentrate on the topic you are to begin. This could be anyway you feel comfortable to adapt. Be it "closed eyes", or meditation or just relax for a minute or two calm, cool away from any kind of distraction. Then see whether you have requisite background info required for the topic. If not, get to know them first !

2.2. STUDY for your Success

With the accessibility of mobile phone, its the era of SMS. – short message service – gone with the wind is the etiquettes of the normal language. Like wise in the IT and Software arena there a lots ACRONYMS used in Computer programming and implementations. Acronyms are also useful teaching aids. For example, BODMAS or is new version BROIDMAS in mathematics Kuldeep Singh (2003), , SWOT in management studies, SQ3R in reading skills etc. In many of

the BEd workshops' inaugural / valedictory session I had presided, seen using a variety of them. This encouraged me to provide better info-tips to our Distance Learners.

STUDY =>>

Spare Time for Understanding & Development of Yourself .

One has to devote time for understanding a topic. At least, an hour a day !

2.3 What is UNDERSTANDING ?

We wish to answer this simply by using this word as an acronym

As follows:

Uniquely Note Down Expressions [sentences] Relating to Subjects [topic/ area's] Theory , Applications, Novelties, and Deficiencies.

Often we hear the remark write in your own words, what and how to do can be thought of ,using the above word sequence. An educated person is one who has a well understood info-base.

2.4. What is EDUCATION ?

Volumes of literature are available for the interested, but for our purpose [beginners with background : 10th std or even lesser , or 10+2 without Maths] again take a simpler view as :

Enabling one's Development through Understanding of Cases [Concepts] through Analysis , Thinking , Investigating , Organizing , and Nurturing.

You will recognize that the above is a process involving many steps and there are no quick-fix approach to master or learn any subject. Thus, LEARNING IS A SLOW PROCESS. Let's begin the journey now. No day is better than to-day and no time is better than now!

2.5. What is LEARNING ?

Learning involves one to acquire and effective use following skills :

Listening , Examine-ing , Arithmetics [problem solving] , Reading , and Note-ing ./

Most of the teachers, authors of text books *presume that all learners are aware of these skills! [Even parents /elders too assume their children/ward knows them]* One of the basic reasons for non completion of the courses has been the difficulty of lack of some of the above skills. There is a need for galvanizing these activities with-in SIMS, by providing tips, raising queries etc at each step. [sec.3 below] Of these reading and writing can be considered as two faces of a coin ! In this way many of the characteristics of a writer and his writings can be better assimilated, especially when one is studying poetry, drama or literature.

2.6 What is READING ?

READ is Recognizing Expressions and Associated Direction

Most widely referred procedure on how to read is the SQ3R approach of Robinson(1962).[See also Schloss et.al (1995)]

2.7 What is WRITing ?

WRITE-ing is *What you feel like Reading Ink Them Explicitly*

On paper! [Input Them onto computer, Inscribe Them on Board / wall]

We feel that for a Distance Learner , writing refer to answering any question/topic in such a way that the reader(in this case, evaluator) feels that you have understood the topic. [Example-2 below.]

2.8 What is MATHEMATICS ?

Often we see many learners find this subject as a “very difficult topic” Much of the failures at the senior secondary/secondary Board exams has been in this subject. How can be facilitate learners to enjoy Problem Solving ? For this purpose we first as a memory aid use expand the word as an acronym as follows:

Mental Ability To Hack Equations in Multiplication, Addition and Their Inverses Clearly and Sequentially

Then, outline the FOLK-CAP procedure to solve maths problem. [Sudhindra, 2003], [Example-1 , below.]

2.9. Presentation and Print-out Skills.

As you go through the study life cycle, you will feel the to make a good presentation at some seminar or debate etc. Likewise, you will need to submit project reports, part thesis work, or even brief write ups where a good print-out need to be submitted. Going for 2-color or even multicolor prints becomes costly and beyond pockets of many Learners. Hence we have shown how these can be effectively done even in black and white(paper)! Simplest two-color presentation could be to use a color [light yellow/ blue/ pink /green] paper! [Example-3 & -4]

3. Learner’s Success-Centered SIMs [LSC-SIM].

There is no dearth of materials on how to prepare SIMs.[STRIDE (2000) and references therein] but what is presented here is based on author’s innumerable info dissemination activity being carried out for over a decade and a half and the appreciation received from students and public at large.[Sudhindra (2001), Sudhindra (2005)] Printed materials have the distinction of “carry anywhere, read anywhere and anytime *without any extra [hidden, running] cost*”. Provided below is a solution to the question we posed : “How can we make SIMs Learner’s Success Centered ?”.The new format consists of 3 columns, with :

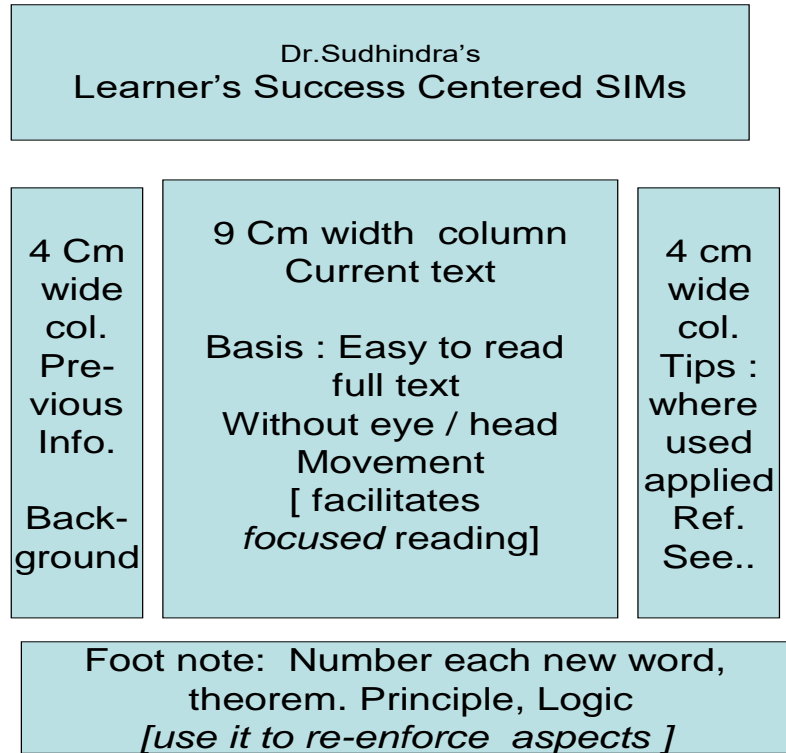
i] A single 9cm wide column *main text*, with prefix-[previous info] and Suffix (inquiry column).This will facilitate FOCUSED reading with understanding without strain of eye, head movements.

iii] A 3cm wide LEFT column space for “point-ing PREVIOUS background info.”

iv] A 3cm wide RIGHT column for “pointing related issues, application area” or even raising a MCQ related to main topic being discussed.

v] At the bottom of *every page* about 5cm height and whole page- width [3+9+3]cm column foot note space to reinforce facts .Thus the new format appears as shown below :

FIGURE HERE –CHART -1



25-Jul-05

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1

We emphasize the need to incorporate at the foot note of every page

- i] Place here all new terms/concepts that has come for **FIRST** time in the writings
- ii] Number them sequentially for easy recall : see footnote p...
- iii] Repeat definition of the term so as to facilitate even the weakest to get alerted .
- iv] Answer the MCQ raised in the right column.

Of course, at times there may not be anything to “fill-in” in left or right columns, it can still be left vacant. NO CRAMPING of information please!

This is highly recommended because *LEARNING IS A SLOW PROCESS* requiring time for understanding. A less dense page intrinsically gives Distance Learner a kind of confidence that “I can complete it”.

More efforts will be required to be put-in by course writers. In fact, the size of the booklets-SIMs- needs change and one has to overcome the printing hurdles. We feel its worth the exercise.

Four examples of using this LSC- SIM format are given below :

Example - 1

Are You Ready ?

1. Cultivate the joy of Problem Solving follow "FOLK-CAP" procedure

**Figure Out the Logic with Knowledge
of
Current And Previous chapters**

Basis for FOLK-CAP

Folk Cap involves 5 steps ...

1. Every human being has an inbuilt logic software !
Be proud to use it
2. Use of Maths SIGHT WORDS
3. Classifying SIGHT WORDS from class 5 to 10 separately.
4. Emphasising use of Current And Previous classes Knowledge (Concepts)
5. Logical reasoning as the main basis for solving problems
First Reason, then Result
...sequence
Did you know ?

STEP 1 :

Be aware of previous chapters / years maths data w.r.t. Definitions, Theorems and properties of figures, relations etc.

[See Maths Sight Words and Phrases Tables 1 to 8 relevant to your class level]

STEP 2 :

Read the text / unit and spend some time in "Figuring Out the Logic" used in "solved example" in the Unit / text.

Note them down in your workbook
In this revision process you will have become familiar with the vocabulary and script that are unique to maths.

Add to your collection the newly read topics, important results & new vocabulary learnt

At 10+2 level every student needs

4th std.	112 words / phrases
5th	112 + 62
6th	174 + 94
7th	260 + 76
8th	344 + 64
9th	408 + 117
10th	525 + 119

Just about 650 maths words / phrases that every learner need to understand use them effectively in problem solving !

At 10th / 10+2 without maths level

STEP 3 :

For any given problem, note down.

i) **data** already **given** and

ii) **what** is **to** be found / **determined** clearly

iii) Wherever possible draw a **sketch** / diagram indicating the above for better clarity of the problem.

□ Half the problem is solved if this is done !

to be aware of

~ 180 - theorems / corollaries in geometry.

~ 60 - properties/concepts in number theory and algebra.

~ 72 - integral / differential / trigonometric formulas

Like in the initial stages of learning "bicycling" the above procedures may appear difficult, but as you go by the whole Reading / Writing / Maths process becomes easy.

STEP 4:

Try to **Figure Out** the **Logic / Steps** with **Knowledge of Current (data given) And Previous chapters** to solve the problem.

- Stretch / strain your mind and imagination to arrive at the solution in stages.

Logical deductions

Logic : Reason - 1

We know that ...

Intermediate Result-1 [m_1]

Logic : Reason - 2

We know that ...

As, because, for

Intermediate Result -2 [m_2]

.....

.....

...

...

Therefore ...

Final result = Answer! [m_f]

[i.e.

First reason .. then step leading to result]

$m = m_1 + m_2 + \dots m_f$ [m_i Marks for each step]

= total marks for the problem

This brings transparency in the evaluation

procedure as well. Both student and the evaluator

knows how marks are awarded.

- If you can not "figure-out" at the first go, put it aside.
- Keep thinking about it and come back to it.
- Review again the steps / logic used in the solved problems in the text.
- Try again !

STEP 5 :

If you can finally solve it on your own, isn't the feeling great ?

Experience the Joy of Success in Maths !

It may look one has to repeatedly write reasons at every step for every problem. This is necessary to prove to the reader (evaluator of your work) that you know how exactly to solve the problem! It will also help the learner to master the important results and speeds up his/her ability to tackle newer problems confidently.

NOTE :

1. No problem outside your syllabus.
2. No short cuts or hop, skip and jump approach to study maths.
3. Study in the sequence presented.
4. Solve all problems given in the text.

Only then will you have gained confidence in Maths.

Example - 2

Are You Ready ?

2. Cultivate a writing Habit

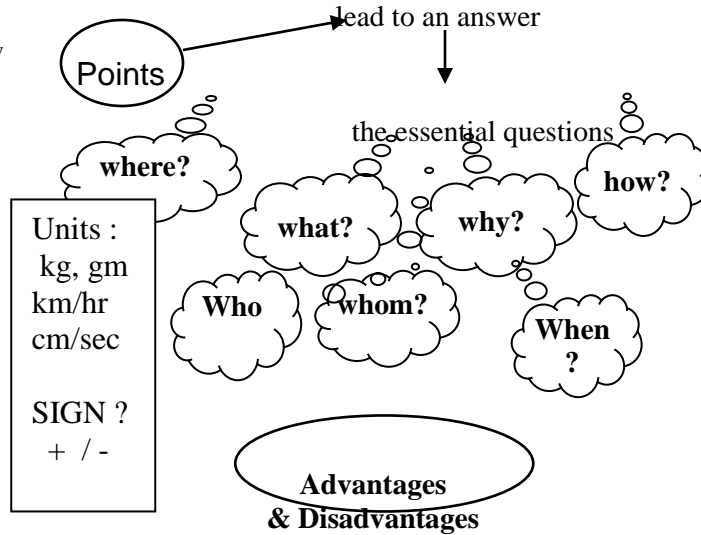
You may follow the 'NEED IPS' procedure to write a complete answer

In the broadest sense,

1. Writing an answer is like filling up a blank page! In such a way that the reader....
2. Evaluator (of your manuscript) is able to understand your writing and feel that you know the subject.

STEP - 1

Noting down essential points.



STEP - 2

Elaborating each points into a paragraph
(1 to 10 sentences)

STEP - 3

EDit the paragraphs into a sequential order
a) by giving an **I**ntroduction to the theme
b) then placing the **P**aragraphs in order
c) giving a brief **S**ummary

After some practice you could feel easy as a writer.

STEP - 4 (Optional)

In practicing stages, you may use a dictionary and Roget's Thesaurus to improve your write-up

(B.S. Sudhindra 1995)

Example - 3

Are You Ready ? 3 Cultivate giving an appealing Printouts 6 Ways to put in B / W

Black & White Beautiful Sight

The authors must try to exercise his / her rights to present the topic to appear in certain unique styles.

Publishers, editors, may try to save space or money by trying to **cramp** more information per page.

This is **against** the spirit of facilitating learner to feel comfortable to read, understand density of matter per page.

1. Use 80 GSM paper
2. Normal Print
3. *Italic Print*
4. **Bold Normal Print**
5. ***Bold Italic Print***
6.

Box it

7.

Reverse Print

8. Use **different font** letters to highlight **keywords**
9. It's cheaper than 2-color & multi-color printing!
10. Use foot-notes to re-enforce major ideas.

Often factors other than learners interest overtake on how to print study materials.

The tendency to put one or two lines in second color will just shoot up cost of printing without any significant advantage to the learners.

Hence the "mantras" given here should help all i.e. authors, publishers, editors, Finance officers on how to save money from avoidable expenditures.

Example – 4

Are You Ready ?

Now a days it is very easy to prepare slides using MS Power Point software

Take care to see to give a visibly clear letters/words from a good background colour in slides.

eg.

1. Red/black letters on white/yellow background.
2. White letters on deep blue / red background
3. Very light colour letters on a deep colour background.
4. Use few words - letters to make your point
i.e. Grammatically correct sentences are *not* required.
5. Point size of letters should be 24 or above
6. Do not cramp information per slide. [3 to 5 lines per slide]
7. No. the slide in a unique way with date, your name and place.

4. Cultivate Presentation Skills

1. Speak clearly and facing the audience eye-to-eye directly and boldly.
 2. Practising to speak at home or with a core group of friends before going to the maiden appearance.
 3. A brief handout of the talk can be distributed to the interested.
 4. If a member of the audience points out a mistake accept it and rectify it later.
 5. While thanking them for pointing out the mistake.
 6. Before closing your presentation remember to recapitulate the salient points of your talk.
 7. Thank people who encouraged/helped you in your work.
- * *Get set and experience the joy of success.*

YOU WILL HAVE CULTIVATED GOOD HA

4. RULE OF THREE for doing well in Exams.

Often we blame the evaluators for *not* giving higher marks , but rarely we reflect whether have we missed out some points in our answer ? we feel that Learners should answer any question in such a way that the reader(in this case, evaluator) feels that you have understood the topic.

There is one and only way to get good score in exams is to follow RULE OF THREE to understand any topic/question viz..

- i) Get familiar with the words and phrases commonly used in a given topic.
- ii) Get familiar with unique scripts / symbols commonly used.
- iii) Get familiar with the Rules of the game/area – conventions, hierarchies etc.

Once you become familiar, you gain confidence in the topic you will be to answer any question in any variety of exams, be it Annual, All-India/ State Common Entrance Test [CETs, MAT, SNAP, RAT etc]. In academics, *familiarity breeds confidence !*

Remember : Exam is between you and your Univ./Board and getting a good grade depends on you [your writings] ONLY!

. i.e. *independent* of what others do [friends/classmates etc]. Try REVERSE LOGIC procedure [Sudhindra, 2005] if you want to answer a difficult question.

5. Build Your Personal Library

Books never die, is a famous proverb. Likewise, lifelong learning is an opportunity provided by an ODL. As one grows in life, you would need to recollect some past information or to be abreast with progress in science/technology you need buy books and thus make up your own library. Cultivate the habit of visiting your local book store once in a month or during your tour/visit to a Metro !. Now a day's many bookshops and publishers have web sites where you can search a book and buy on line.

Some we have used are : www.amazon.com , One will get just immersed with the wide spectrum of books and get a feeling of what is an “*infinity*”, - an almost infinitely long list books ! In the Indian scenario we have seen www.strandbookstall.com , www.sapnaonline.com .My father used to remind me [in 60's] that “*once your fundamentals are strong, nothing can stop you*”. Success assured!

6. Conclusions:

We have discussed all aspects of elements of education that EVERY Learner need to be familiar. We have outlined a simple FOLK-CAP procedure to Problem solving , uniformly through- out the academic years of study. Also outlined is the NEED-IPS scheme to write a complete answer. A new more-focused single 9cm-column main text format for SIMs. Few examples of this new format were also included . This work empowers with methods that should help Learners to succeed in his/her studies. Finally we quote Joseph Henry's word “ *The seeds of great discoveries are constantly floating around us, but they only take roots in minds well prepared to receive them* “ -19th Century American Physicist. The basic mandate of any ODL is to provide education i.e. prepare such minds hitherto un-reached!

7. Acknowledgements :

I am grateful to former CEOs (late) Prof. G. Ram Reddy, Prof. V. C. Kulandai Swamy, Prof. R.G. Takwale and present CEO Prof. H. P. Dikshit, for their encouragement to develop the above school of thought.

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Dr.Sudhindra's
Learner's Success Centered SIMs

4 Cm wide col. Pre-vious Info. Back-ground	9 Cm width column Current text Basis : Easy to read full text Without eye / head Movement [facilitates <i>focused</i> reading]	4 cm wide col. Tips : where used applied Ref. See..
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Foot note: Number each new word, theorem. Principle, Logic
[use it to re-enforce aspects]