

LANGUAGE IN INDIA
Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow
Volume 9 : 8 August 2009
ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.
Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.
Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.
B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.
A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.
Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.
K. Karunakaran, Ph.D.
Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.

Procedure to Develop Competency Based Self-Learning Materials

J. R. Nirmala, M.A. (Eng)., M.A. (Ling)., Ph.D.

Procedure to Develop Competency Based Self-Learning Materials

J. R. Nirmala, M.A. (Eng)., M.A. (Ling)., Ph.D.

Quality Issues in Elementary Education

The main indicator of the quality of elementary education can be visualized in terms of its product – the learners’ achievement both in scholastic and co-scholastic areas. The factors associated with success in these areas, which relate to conditions of learning and learning environment, are also sometimes considered as indicators of quality of elementary education. Thus ensuring quality in the inputs and processes becomes necessary if quality achievement is aimed at.

Quality issues in elementary education will revolve around the quality of infrastructure and support services, opportunity time, teacher characteristics and teacher motivation, pre-service and in-service education of teachers, curriculum and teaching-learning materials, classroom processes, pupil evaluation, monitoring and supervision etc. Indeed improvement of quality in these parameters and its sustenance is a matter of grave concern for the whole system of education. There are many issues in this concern, out of those the crucial problem is the *development of competency based and contextual teaching-learning material*

Teaching through Self-learning Materials

Teaching through self-learning materials is catching on throughout the world in the developed as well as the developing countries. Elementary education will continue to flourish only by using excellent self-learning competency packages. Considering this fact, this paper discusses the development of self learning material preparation.

Designing and producing an effective learning material is very important to create a great quality learning environment. Competency based self learning material provides an opportunity to learn the subject effectively. A flexible and good quality competency based self learning material provides better understanding of the subject.

There is a positive impact of using self learning materials in all subjects, particularly in language teaching; we could see the positive manifestation of self learning materials. Considering the importance of self learning material, the material production should be considered before Planning, Designing and Producing Materials. Competency based self-learning packages should solve the learners’ need as well as it should bridges the gap between the conventional method of learning and self learning. The self learning materials may be in the form of CD ROMS and in the form of books but it should have the quality, user friendliness and flexibility.

Principles for the Preparation of Self-learning Materials

The following good quality principles are expected to follow while preparing the self-learning packages.

- ❖ Ground Work
- ❖ Range
- ❖ Structure and design
- ❖ Flexible delivery
- ❖ Ingress and Equity
- ❖ Content
- ❖ Evaluation & Feed Back.

Ground Work

Self Learning materials must

- ❖ Be relevant to child's needs so that they are capable of preparing the learner for the current and future trends in the education system.
- ❖ Be challenging but still appropriate for the level of the target group.
- ❖ Adapt rather than duplicate the existing materials ; Be nationally / internationally comparable

Range

The range refers to the breadth and depth of the learning material. In order to ensure that the scope is fit for purpose- developers need to

- ❖ Identify the relevant outcomes of learning and support their acquisition
- ❖ Relate to the appropriate target group- flexible enough to accommodate the varying abilities and backgrounds. ;Provide clear examples, explanation and illustration
- ❖ Provide an accurate education context to suit current and future learning environment.

Structure and Design

Self Learning materials must not only promote effective learning and assessment strategies but also have a clear structure and be sequenced such that the target group can easily explore them.

They must

- ❖ Be easy for the learner to navigate through ;Present a visually attractive design
- ❖ Provide activities and learning strategies designed to motivate learners; and
- ❖ Use words / language appropriate for the level of the target group

Flexible Delivery

Self Learning materials must consider the learners varying needs, preferences and entry levels therefore must

- ❖ Provide a variety of learning methods; Provide for use in a variety of training/learning context
- ❖ Provide guidance on entry requirements ; Be adaptable for use under different but similar conditions ;Be challenging to cater for target population

Ingress and Equity

In order for self learning materials to be inclusive; they must

- ❖ Accommodate cultural diversity
- ❖ Challenge stereotypes of gender, ethnicity, creed and ability status, which can be corrected/ reversed by use of non discriminatory words, pictures, illustrations and examples
- ❖ Be affordable in terms of purchase price ;Be moderately colorful but attractive
- ❖ Be produced in a way that is cost effective ; Take information technology needs on board ;Provide guidance on learning

Content

Content refers to what goes into the self learning material. A well-balanced content must

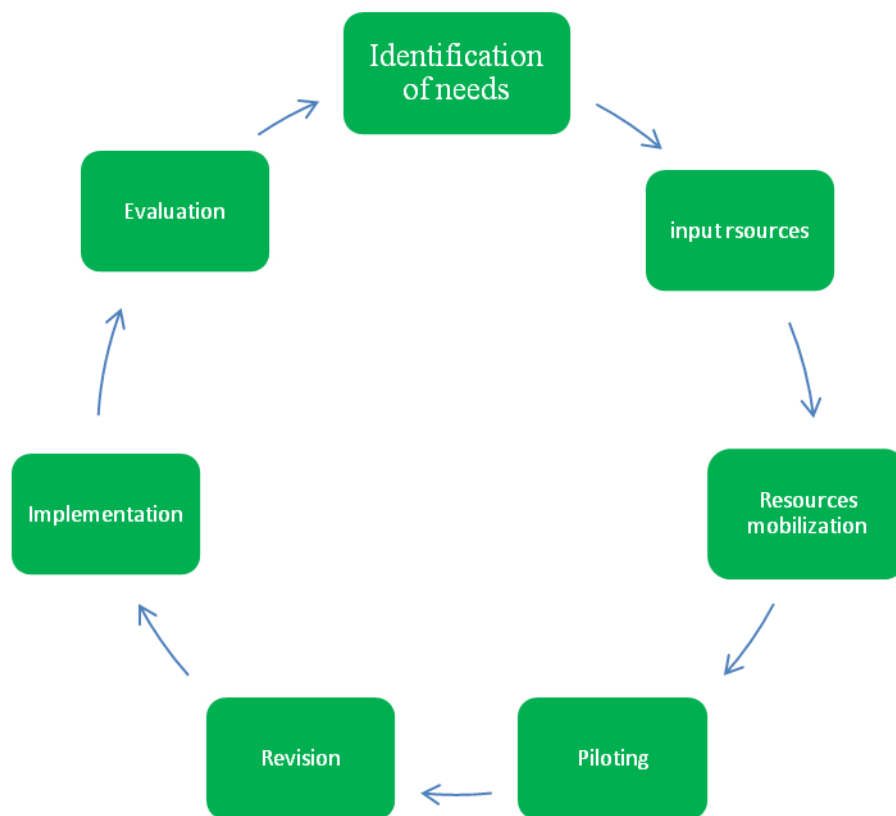
- ❖ Be interactive by keeping the target group engaged
- ❖ Be presented in a language appropriate for the level of the user
- ❖ Be simple ;Simulate reality in terms of work requirements and problem solving
- ❖ Assist the trainer's effort in delivering / implementing the curriculum
- ❖ Nationally / internationally and locally comparable and up to date

Feedback and Evaluation

Self learning materials must promote self assessment for the learner and provide feedback to both the learner and the developer.

Material Development Process

The following model can be adopted for the purpose of self learning material development.



Before preparing the package the developer can prioritize and strategize on special issues.

- ❖ Input is those aspects that the developer needs to bring together when developing learning materials.
- ❖ The overall objective of resource mobilization is to make material reach people it is intended for.
- ❖ Piloting is done to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the developed material in order to take necessary remedial actions prior to its full implementation.
- ❖ Once the material has been piloted, the developer needs to amend, as necessary, in accordance with feedback from those involved in the trial run to meet the needs of learners.
- ❖ Implementation stage is considered that the material can be used to deliver the programme. Revision and review of the material should be done regularly
- ❖ In order to determine the value factor of the material, evaluation instruments must be developed and implemented to determine the correlation between the identified needs and the impact of the material on learner's performance.

The above discussed techniques can help the material maker to develop the Competency based Self learning material. This kind of materials must be

- ❖ self explanatory
- ❖ Self contained
- ❖ Self directed

- ❖ Self motivating
- ❖ Self evaluating
- ❖ Self learning

We the teachers are responsible for the quality education. To enhance the quality of the elementary education, preparing self learning material is important. So the teachers should take the initiative to prepare the quality materials. If we prepare the material that may be cost effective, also instantly we can prepare the materials based on the requirement.

The self learning materials not necessary to be the written materials it can be a cartoons, pictures, motion pictures etc., particularly in the language learning part this kind of visual self learning materials manifest the great impact on language skills development.

J. R. Nirmala, M.A.(Eng)., M.A.(Ling)., Ph.D.
R. M. K. College of Engineering and Technology
R. S. M. Nagar
Puduvoyal - 601 206
Tamilnadu, India
[vijainir2000@yahoo.co.in](mailto:vi Jainir2000@yahoo.co.in)