4.2.7 EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES

Activities based on the learner's experience

EXAMPLE 19. Sample activity based on the learner's experience (a)

ACTIVITY I

Try to come up with your own ideas in order to answer the question above. Make notes in your journal about ways to address the following in distance courses:

(1)   oral traditions
(2)   learning as a group affair
(3)   rote learning as a cultural norm

I hope that you have been able to come up with a number of ideas that illustrate that a well-designed course at a distance can address cultural differences. Here are some real-life examples.

*In **Guyana**, learners who live far away from the institution, use audio-conferencing to supplement print materials. This is done because the Guyanese culture has a strong oral component. The course integrates the print and audio conferencing meaningfully.*

*The **University of the South Pacific** also uses audio-conferencing to create communities of learners at a distance, because its learners come from countries where there is a strong tradition of group interaction for learning.*

*And in **India** there is a traditional* tendency *(habit) towards passive learning. Thus the Indira Gandhi National Open University uses carefully designed interactive print materials together with face-to-face support to stimulate new approaches to learning (COL 1995:11).*

Source: *Introduction to Materials Development in ODL.* ODL103-H, p.3 (UNISA)

EXAMPLE 20. Sample activity based on the learner's own experience (b)

Look at the statements in the quiz below. Tick the ones that you feel best describe you. Be honest with yourself!

	Tick for yes
I learn best by doing, seeing or hearing things first-hand	☐
I learn best by finding new ways of doing things	☐
I learn best when I feel I am in a 'safe' environment	☐
I learn best when I am relaxed and calm	☐
I learn best when I can see the 'big picture'	☐
I learn best by working it out as I go along	☐
I learn best when I have a plan with goals and targets	☐

Source: *Introducing Counselling Skills* (National Extension College)

Activities to help learn principles and concepts

EXAMPLE 21. Sample activity to practise using principles

ACTIVITY 1.3

STUDY pars 2.20–2.31 of the textbook and then do the following:

1   List two exceptions to the general rule that a partnership is not regarded as a separate entity. Write these exceptions down.
2   Rhamjee, Pule and Constance formed a partnership. Rhamjee then becomes insolvent and his estate is seque-strated. Pule and Constance want to know the effects of Rhamjee's insolvency on the partnership. They come to you for advice.

Make sure that you understand the legal nature of a partnership before you start answering this question. You should tell Pule and Constance that the partnership estate and their personal estates will be sequestrated, but that Rhamjee's creditors will first be paid from his personal estate before the trustee will look at the partnership estate. A further consequence is that the partnership will dissolve, since the insolvency of one of the partners is a ground for the dissolution of a partnership. I will tell you more about this in study unit 4.

Source: *Entrepreneurial Law*. MRL101F, p. 4 (UNISA)

EXAMPLE 22. Sample activity to help learners apply new concepts

ACTIVITY 2

Tick the appropriate box to say which of the following are assets and which are liabilities.

	Asset	Liability
A car	❏	❏
A bank loan to buy the car	❏	❏
Office furniture	❏	❏
Raw materials	❏	❏
Debt owed for raw materials bought	❏	❏
A building	❏	❏
The mortgage used to buy the building	❏	❏

Compare your answers with ours, at the end of this module.

Source: *Essential Book-Keeping* (National Extension College, Cambridge)

Planning activities

EXAMPLE 23. Sample activity based on action-planning

How adults learn

Introduction

Our knowledge of how adults learn is, to say the least, incomplete. It is not even clear that all adults learn in the same way. At present, the best we can do is to set out what seem to be the most-widely accepted characteristics of adult learners and then to deduce from these what seem to be the guiding principles for the design of post-school learning materials. Whatever the weaknesses of this approach, at least at the pragmatic level, designers who follow these guidelines consistently produce ODL courses that lead to high quality courses.

Issues for instructional designers

1. How are adult learners different from school-age learners?

2. What implications do these differences have for instructional design?

Characteristics of adult learners

Various writers have maintained that adults possess certain characteristics that affect how they approach learning and how they learn. Perhaps the most commonly quoted summary of these ideas is that of Knowles (1990), who identifies six characteristics of adult learners:

1. The need to know why they are learning

School children may accept the school curriculum without question, treating it as part of the 'natural' world of being a child. Adults are less accepting and, when faced with a new course or curriculum are more likely to ask questions like 'How will this help me in my job?' or 'How will this help me bring up my children?'

This leads to an important observation about adult learning: adults are likely to put more effort into a task if they think that they will benefit from it. This implies that ODL curricular should concentrate on what is beneficial to adult learners, i.e. what can be practicably applied at home and at work.

2. Adults see themselves as responsible, self-directed persons

Adults tend to see themselves as being responsible for directing their own lives: deciding what job they want; deciding how to bring up their children; deciding what leisure pursuits they wish to follow. In education, this manifests itself as a desire to make their own choice of courses and to exercise some autonomy within a course. In educational terms, we can say that adults like to set their own goals and choose their own learning tasks. This criterion is hard to meet when designing ODL courses: materials-based courses are necessarily more pre-prepared and more rigid than courses delivered in a classroom.

Practical activities

EXAMPLE 24. Sample practical activity

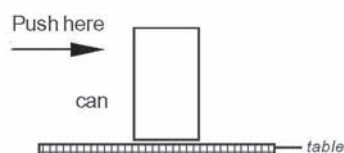### Practical Activity taken from Physical Science IGCSE

When does an object topple over?

What you would need:
1 empty can
sand

What you would do
Place the empty can on a table and try to push it over, by applying the force at the top as shown.
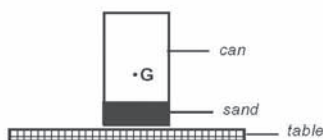

Let us look at some positions of the can.

The can topples over when the vertical line through the centre of mass falls outside its base!!

Place some sand inside the can. Try to push it over. Did you feel that it is much more difficult to make it topple over? Why?
The centre of mass was lowered by adding sand to the can.

Now try the next self mark activity to see if you understand the Centre of Mass.

Source: Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL)

Reading activities

In study guide ODL courses, activities are often built around readings of the accompanying texts.

EXAMPLE 25. Sample reading-based activity

3.4 Liability of Partners

Activity 3.6

STUDY pars 5.32–5.34 of the textbook and write down the difference in liability before and after dissolution of the partnership.

In principle partners are jointly and severally liable for partnership debts. The meaning of joint and several liability can best be explained by way of an example: Say a partnership has three partners, namely, Martin, Kutlwano and Lesedi. If Kutlwano, acting on behalf of the partnership, undertakes to pay Pick and Choose CC the sum of R600 monthly for the electric stove, Kutlwano binds herself (as principal) to pay Pick and Choose CC the said sum, whilst she also binds Martin and Lesedi (acting as their agent) to pay Pick and Choose CC R600 per month. Consequently, Pick and Choose CC may claim the R600 from Kutlwano, or it may claim the R600 from Lesedi, or it may claim the R600 from Martin. Alternatively, it may sue Kutlwano, Martin and Lesedi together for the R600. In other words, the most that it can claim is R600 and it may sue any of the partners or all of them together for this amount. If Pick and Choose CC decides to claim the whole amount of R600 from Kutlwano only, she may recover R200 from Martin and R200 from Lesedi.

Source: *Entrepreneurial Law*. MRL101F, p. 22 (UNISA)

Scenario activities

A very common type of activity involves tasks based on a given scenario.

EXAMPLE 26. Sample scenario-based activity

Read the scenario below and then answer the following questions:

1.   In planning his changes, what things did Robert Ruthless omit to do?

2.   What factors might explain the problems with the computer system, staff absences and resignations?

> If Robert Ruthless had called you in at the start to help him plan a change programme, what advice would you have given him?
>
> Robert Ruthless had decided to re-organise the sales and marketing office. Ever since he could remember, it had been organised around sales areas. As the product range had grown and the products had become more complex, he saw staff having more and more difficulty coping with the technical aspects of what they were selling. The solution came to him in a flash: re-organise the staff around product groups. Since the sales software was area-based, he thought this was a good time to have a new computer system; staff were always telling him how antiquated the current system was.
>
> So, Robert closed his office door, wrote a specification for the new system and sent it off to his pet ITC company. Whilst the programmers got to work on the new system, Robert planned a high-powered presentation on his new working arrangements and wrote a detailed staff manual.
>
> A few weeks later, he was ready to announce the changes. In great excitement, he went through his presentation. At the end there was silence – not a question or comment.
>
> Not long after, Robert was off sick for a long time. From the first day of the new system, everything seemed to have gone wrong: the staff had endless problems with the computer system; staff absence seemed unusually high; there had been several unexpected resignations; and customer complaints were at record levels.

Source: *Entrepreneurial Law*. MRL101F, p. 35 (UNISA)