IMPROVING EXAM PERFORMANCE AMONG LOW ACHIEVERS OF THIRD YEAR B.A.(HUMANITIES) PROGRAMME OFFERED BY INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

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Exam performance has been an important criterion to judge the Quality of students coming out of the Institutions. It was felt as essential to suggest some remedies after a diagnosis of individual difficulties among low achievers of Third year students for B.A. (Humanities) offered through distance mode by the University of Swaziland, in order to control dropout rate among them. This project (entitled as above) was undertaken to diagnose difficult course content by students in different low performance courses and to wash out these difficulties with the help of a tutor support as well as help these learners for enhancing their exam performance and thus passing out in low achieving courses. This research had an objective of making tutors aware of learner difficulties for meeting the same in coming batches. e) Suggest some suitable remedial strategy for enhancing learner performance in various courses under consideration for BA (Humanities) Programme ;f) Recommend the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) some essential and needy steps for controlling dropout cases by enhancing performance level during examination among IDE students for B.A.(Humanities) programme; g) Initiate similar projects for other IDE programmes, if the present project gets a success. Out of Sixty four (64) low achievers (E or F grade) only Thirty Two (32 being 50%) had replied regarding difficult content, expectations from their concerned tutors and some other comments in four subjects as cited here with. The Analysis revealed that in History, the students had some academic difficulties in H202,H213&H305, with some expectations in H202& H305 and some additional comments in H202,H213&H305. Similarly, in Theology & Religious Studies, they had academic difficulties, expectations from the tutor and some other comments in only T3P2 (TRS 303) course. The scenario in African Language & Literature revealed that they had academic difficulties in AL210,AL300, AL301,AL304, and some expectations from tutors in AL300, AL301, AL304, as well as some other comments about AL210, AL300, AL301, AL304. But, in English subject, the situation was worse as they expressed academic difficulties in all courses except in Eng 205. The expectations from the Tutors and some special comments had been in all courses except in Eng 206.The concerned tutors have been advised for making easy to grasp the difficult content and prepare their deliberations among future batches of students for same course in such a way that new students find the same content as easy one and not as a difficult one. An urgent orientation of all tutors/ teachers about their role and responsibilities must be organised by IDE.Every Programme Coordinator must organise a one day meeting with all new students and their tutors enabling them to understand their role in Distance Education system, and, various activities to be done as well as course content to be covered by them. Necessary Audio/ Video support be developed to explain the difficult course content. This Audio/ Video support may bemade available to students on line by IDE as well as off line through UNISWA Library. The IDE students may be motivated to form a 'Learner Association' in their locality by grouping students for the same programme. They may meet in person and talk or chat on line among themselves and discuss their difficulties among themselves. Use of Email and Internet for an effective communication is a cheaper media for them. A strong habit must be developed for using Internet by IDE students and their tutors. It would help them to be in contact with each other and from one to another for an academic interaction. In this setting, a question raised by one student and its answer by another will reach to all, making all benefitted. It is good that UNISWA has been allotting Email ID to all students who must develop a habit of using the same for interaction among themselves. It may be helpful for the academic Counsellors/Tutors to become familiar with the course content where the students had some difficulties during study and provide a remedy for the same.

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INTRODUCTION

Every student has a desire to meet expectations from the University examinations. They compare their performance (perception) with their expectations. When the gap between the two is high, it generates a frustration in their mind and finally, sometimes, some of them become a case of Dropout from the system. Also, production of students in bulk gives an opportunity to society for selection of cream from among them. Thus, low achievement in examination becomes a curse for students regarding their future career too. Tens of Thousands of students in England leave school every year aged 16 with no or very limited qualifications (Robert Cassen 2007).Distance education system also faces same problem of low achievement among many students. It is observed that those, who are rejected by the conventional system for admissions, are admitted to Distance Education system. But, there are many cases witnessed of getting very high marks/grades after studying through Distance Education system. This means that there are some barriers which cause low achievement among students. Diagnosis of these barriers/variables may help the teacher to frame some suitable remedy for controlling the effect of these variables and finally a better performance by students during examinations. Of the many challenges facing teachers at School/College/University level today, probably no issue is more frustrating and complex than low student achievement. All students should learn and achieve at their highest possible level because every dedicated teacher, counsellor and administrator strives for the same. Yet some students just don't reach their potential. It is essential for every teacher to understand about the barriers to academic achievement for some students. Essential efforts must be made to remove those barriers.

DETERMINING POINT FOR LOW ACHIEVEMENT IN PRESENT STUDY

Backwardness or low achievement in subject of studies has no absolute magnitude. It is only a relative term which indicates deviation from the normal in the negative direction, i.e. below average. There is no clear cut line of demarcation showing exactly the point of determination of backwardness and vice versa. Backwardness/low achievement is thus a matter of degree and extent of deviation from the normal. A person would be more backward or less depends upon his position on the continuum of normal probability curve. It had been decided that a student getting less than 50% marks will be labeled as a low achiever for the sake of present study. As per University grading system, a student getting 40% to 49% marks gets E grade and below 40% gets F grade. A student achieving these E and F Grades in any course of each subject will be considered as low achiever for that course. These students reappear in examination to improve their grades in that course (having got E or F grade).However after a third chance, if they fail to improve, they are kicked out of the system by the University. They become a case of forced Dropout and discontinue their study, having no other alternative.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It was observed from Institute of Distance Education records that 57 students of B.A.(Hum)programme had failed and thus discontinued from their respective programmes. The same situation may come in future with existing IDE students for various programmes. It was felt as essential to avoid such ugly situation in future for every programme. The academic career of present low achievers might also be ruined, if no steps were taken to enhance exam performance among them. Low achievement is a product of so many external and internal variables in and around the student. Most of them are Psychological in nature like Low Intelligence, Lack of Motivation to study, Lessinterested in study, Shortage of study time, Fear of a low performance in next examination etc.   Such students had been in an urgent need of some remedial help by their Tutors through study. But, the learner performance in different courses of every subject indicated that they are not low achievers in every course of study. They have low performance in some courses which might be due to academic difficulties/ confusions/ questions/ in understanding some course content at different pages of the learning material. A pin pointing solution by the tutor may help the students in washing out the same and finally a better result may make them to pass the examination. As an experiment, the B.A. (Humanities) third year result was considered for this Research Project. The result analysis revealed that 102 students had low performance in BA Humanities III-2011(Final Results), but ,it came down to only for 64 students after Supplementary Results. These 64 students were finally considered members of the target group for this Research Project.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY:

Following objectives had been framed, after a careful consideration of whole situation of low achievers, and, a discussion with academic staff members during an internal Seminar, at Institute of Distance Education, University of Swaziland.

To diagnose the specific course content found difficult by the target group students in different low performing courses.

To wash out these difficulties in various courses with the help of a tutor support.

To help the low achieving learners for enhancing their exam performance and to achieve D or a better Grade.

To make concerned tutors aware of learner difficulties enabling them to meet the same among future batches of distance learners.

To suggest some suitable remedial strategy for enhancing learner performance in various courses under consideration for BA (Humanities) Programme.

To recommend the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) some essential and needy steps for controlling dropout cases by enhancing performance level during examination among IDE students for B.A.(Humanities) programme.

To initiate similar projects for other IDE programmes, if present project gets a success.

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METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

This was a survey type study covering diagnosis of learner difficulties for a Tutor supported remedy to target group students by the concerned tutors/counsellors. The Final result and the Supplementary result of low achievers had been analysed and it was found that after supplementary examination only 64 students were still trailing behind the passing marks of 50% in some courses. The course wise number of such students was as shown in Table 1, 2, 3, &4.These students were considered as population for this study. There was no imagination about the number of students submitting back the duly filled in Questionnaire, and so, it was decided that those who submit back the same would be treated in the sample. The target group students were given a letter supported with blank pages for each low achieving course (below 50% marks) for their free responses related to following important points.

Course wise Learner difficulties.
Expectations from the Tutor.
Other Comments (if any).

Only Thirty two (32) students out of Sixty Four (64) had replied this Questionnaire though there were frequent reminders to these students for submission of a duly filled in Questionnaire using personal reminder letter and Email as well as communication through their Class representatives. After a gap of three months, thirty two (32) students had submitted back their duly filled in Questionnaire to the Project Coordinator. These responses had been summarised course wise for compilation and were submitted to the concerned Tutors/Academic Counsellors who were asked to prepare their deliberations (as remedy) by covering all of these difficulties/ problems/ queries/ confusions/ questions, mentioned by the target group learners in their responses. Question- answer, learner-learner interaction, Answer of the question by Email or providing some notes etc. etc. were suggested as the options to be adopted by the tutors/counsellors as part of proposed remedial strategy. The concerned students (under consideration) had been asked to contact the Project Coordinator, as and when they feel so, for every academic problem. The Project Coordinator had assured them for a solution from the concerned Tutors in future too, if some new problem is reported by the students during this course of action. The Project coordinator had communicated the concerned Tutors/Academic Counsellors about learners' difficulties in various courses (as communicated by the students).The names of students were kept as confidential along with their Questionnaires and were not communicated to the Tutors in order to keep a cordial relationship between both.

COURSE WISE STUDENT NUMBER FOR THIS SURVEY

The result analysis for Final examination 2011 and also   for a Supplementary examination 2011 helped to diagnose the low achievers who had failed to get D or more grades in both examinations in some courses. The number of such students was as below.

Table 1

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Low Achievers in History

S.N.	Course Name	Course Code	Students Identified	Students Responded	Percentage
1.	Historiography/Research Methods in History	H300	04	02	50%
2.	Economic History of West Africa to 1900/Economic History of West Africa since 1900	H302	02	01	50%
3.	Introduction to the History of Colonial Latin America	H305	18	09	50%
4.	Imperialism and colonialism in Africa in 1920	H202	01	01	100%
5.	Europe from 1789 to 1870	H213	03	02	67%
6.	Europe since 1870	H214	02	01	50%

Table 2
Low Achievers in African Language & Literature

S.N.	Course Name	Course Code	Students Identified	Students Responded	Percentage
1.	Introduction to Linguistics	AL 210	02	01	50%
2.	Linguistic Analysis of the Main Language	AL300	10	06	60%
3.	History of Linguistics(Western) /History of Linguistics(Bantu)	AL301	17	09	53%
4.	Modern Literature-II	AL302	03	02	67%
5.	Oral/ Traditional Literature-II	AL303	02	01	50%
6.	Introduction to Grammar	AL304	04	04	100%
7.	Contemporary African Poetry and Drama	AL213	01	00	00%

Table 3
Low Achievers n English

S.N.	Course Name	Course Code	Students Identified	Students Responded	Percentage
1.	Survey of English Literature: The Romantics to theModerns	Eng205	03	01	33%
2.	A Study of Poetry	Eng206	04	01	25%
3.	Introduction toCritical	Eng204	01	01	100%

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	Theory			
4.	Grammar III: Clause Combining and Text Creation	Eng301	22	08	36%
5.	Conversational Analysis	Eng303	09	01	11%
6.	Modern critical Theory	Eng304	20	07	35%
7.	A Study of Drama	Eng305	29	13	45%
8.	A Study of Novel	Eng306	32	13	41%
9.	Research Method	Eng307	14	06	43%

Table 4
Low Achievers in Theology & Religious Studies

S.N.	Course Name	Course Code	Students Identified	Students Responded	Percentage
1.	A Study of the old Testament	T2P1	01	01	100%
2.	Studies in the newTestament1	T3P1	02	01	50%
3.	African Traditional Religion	T3P2	02	01	50%
4.	Early and medieval Church/The reformation	T3P6	01	00	00%

Table5below indicates courses where students had content difficulties, expectations from tutors and some other comments in all four subjects.

Table 5
Subject Wise Course Codes having Student Opinion

S.N.	Subjects	Difficult Content	Expectations from Tutors/Lecturers	Other Comments
1.	History(H)	H202,H213,H305	H202,H305	H202,H213, H305
2.	Theology &ReligiousStudies(TRS)	T3P2	T3P2	T3P2
3.	African Languages &Literature(AL)	AL210,AL300 AL301, AL304	AL300, AL301, AL304	Al210, AL300, AL301,AL304, AL302
4.	English(Eng)	Eng204, Eng206, Eng301, Eng303, Eng304, Eng305, Eng306, Eng307,	Eng204,Eng205, Eng301,Eng206, Eng303, Eng304, Eng305, Eng306, Eng307,	Eng204,Eng205, Eng301,Eng303, Eng304,Eng305, Eng306,Eng307,

Table6 indicates courses where students had not expressed content difficulties, expectations from tutors and some other comments in all four subjects.

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Table 6
Subjectwise Course Codes Having No Student Opinion

S.N.	Subjects	Difficult Content	Expectations from Tutors/Lecturers	Other Comments
1.	History(H)	H214,H300,H302	H213,H300,H214 H302	H214,H300,H302
2.	Theology & Religious Studies(TRS)	T2P1,T3P1,T3P6	T2P1,T3P1,P3P6	T2P1,T3P1,T3P6
3.	African Languages &Literature(AL)	AL302,AL213, AL303	AL210,AL302, AL303,AL213	AL303,AL213
4.	English(Eng)	Eng205	-	Eng206

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

After a careful analysis, course wise results were summarised for academic difficulties, expectations from the Tutors,and,other comments.

Academic Difficulties in History

The students had expressed followingdifficulties onlyin threecourses.

1) Introduction to the History of Colonial Latin America (H305)

The Colonial Economy (Unit 05,p46-52);Approaches to Economic Development in the Nationalist period (Unit 08,p81-83);Revolutionary change in Latin America(Unit10,p101-108);Land & Labour Mobilization in Latin America(p33);The new State of Latin America – Laudillismo & its Impact; Caudillo Rule(p73);Permian Guano Cycle (Not in the Module).

2) Imperialism and Colonialism in Africa in 1920- H202 (H215)

Primary Reaction to Colonial Rule – The case of Africa (North of the Equator);African Primary Reaction to Colonisation (South of the Equator);Colonial Administrative Policies during inter- war period; The Second World War and Politics of Decolonization in British Colonial Africa; Belgian and Portuguese Decolonisation in Africa.

3) Europe from 1789 to 1870 (H213)

French Revolution (Unit 03)

Expectations from Tutors in History

The students had desired following expectations from concerned Tutors onlyin two courses.

1)Imperialism and Colonialism in Africa in 1920 (H202)

More clarification was desired from the Tutor.

2)Introduction to the History of Colonial Latin America(H305)

The students need more explanation from tutor for every Lesson/Unit. They need Tutor comments on their assignments. It will generate a two way communication between the student and the tutor, they want to see back the corrected assignments and their exam papers. It will help them to understand their mistakes and they will try to avoid the same in future.They want a revision exercise before exam. Thetutor must concentrate on the Module content and not on the content taken from

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Internet.The teacher should supply a simplified version of the Internet material as the downloaded material is very difficult to understand. More explanations of the Case Studies are needed.The tutor should avoid shallow (not clear) illustrations, and, should explain by giving examples, explanations etc.Notes should not be dictated in class after making explanations and discussions etc.

Some Other Comments in History
The students had expressed some other comments only in following courses.
1)Imperialism and Colonialism in Africa in 1920 (H202)
The students need Scope of the examination to be given by the Tutor.
2)Introduction to the History of Colonial Latin America (H305)
The module is out-dated and it does not have the required information. It should be revised. The students want a gap between two exam dates for their preparations. Everyday examination from Monday to Friday should be avoided. Different assignments should be given on different dates with different submission dates. It will give enough time with less mental tension for a submission back to the teacher. Some teachers prefer Full time (regular) students than Distance learners.
3) Europe from 1789 to 1870 (H213)
The Modules should be made easier to understand by inserting some examples and explanations too. The teacher should explain the content in detail.

Academic Difficulties in Theology & Religious Studies
African Traditional Religions Page 03was a difficulty in African TraditionalReligion (T3P2/TRS303) course only.
Expectations from Tutors in Theology & Religious Studies
More content clarity /clarifications are needed during counselling sessions.Some hand-outs related to Unit should be given by the teacher were expectations from the tutor in African Traditional Religion (T3P2/TRS303) course only.
Other Comments in Theology & Religious Studies
The students wanted the Hand-outs for the course units already covered in class, in African Traditional Religion (T3P2/TRS303)course only.

Academic Difficulties in African   Language & Literature
The students had expressed some difficulties in following courses only.
Introduction to Linguistics (AL 210)
Tone (Unit 03 Phonology & Phonological Rules).
Linguistic Analysis of the Main Language (AL300)
Articles and their use (Unit 03)
Introduction to Grammar (AL 304)
There were some difficulties in Language of Copulatives (pp116-117); The Imperative mood(p109);Locatives (Formation) p32; the reciprocal (p96); and, Adverbs(p114)
4) History of Linguistics (Western)/History of Linguistics (Bantu) (AL301)
Language in the Nineteenth Century (Unit 05p88);Language in the Nineteenth Century (Unit06p109);Contributions by August Schleicher (1821-1868 p117);

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Schleicher's Typological Classification of Languages(p124);Language in the Twentieth Century (Unit 07 p130);Language in the Twentieth Century (Unit 08 p155); A short history of Linguistics by Robins R.H.(6.1.2 p112);Synchronic & Diachronic Universal Grammar (7.4 p 137); Language in Ancient Times -2 (Unit 03 p49);Western Linguistics (Unit 2 p30-31);The Alexandrian Period- Pre Socratic Philosophers 5th Century Rhetoricians, Protagoras/ Pythagoras, Socrates.

Expectations from Tutors in African   Language & Literature
The students had some expectations in following courses only.
1) Linguistic Analysis of the Main Language (AL300/AL310)
The Tutor/Counsellor is very fast in delivering the content while the studentsare unable to cope with this speed. They are unable to take notes in the class during tutor deliberation.
2) History of Linguistics (Western)/History of Linguistics (Bantu) (AL301)
The teaching of History of Western linguistics is not clear in the class. British pronunciation is not clear to students. Another tutor for history of the Bantu linguistics is too fast and very brief in the class. More examples should be given for content clarity in the class. The students should be encouraged for class participation for finding a best fit solution of a problem. The tutor for History of Linguistics (Western) needs to concentrate on examination related course content.The student need a separate Question paper covering less content than that prescribed for regular students.
Introduction to Grammar
The students should be given more Homework as this is a second language.The tutor is giving enough time to students to discuss various issues in class.

Other Comments in African   Language & Literature
There were some other comments, only in following courses.
1) Introduction to Linguistics (AL 210)
The students do not wish to be combined with the Education students. The Education students seem to be already familiar with some of the content and they are in majority. The teacher thinks that every student knows this content like these 'Education' students. The IDE students for this course have desired for a separate class for them.
2) Linguistic Analysis of the Main Language (AL300)
One student needed more time to finish his writing work during exam hours. There should be enough gaps between two examinations. It will help in getting enough time for preparations. One student had failed to submit the assignment in time resulting in getting no grade for assignment in this course.
3) History of Linguistics (Western) History of Linguistics (Bantu) (AL301)
This is a wrong imagination in the mind of one student that some other students were asked to write a special paper while he was not invited for the same. This act made others to pass the examination while he could not. The issue of Morning classes on Friday is painful as some students are in job and cannot attend the classes on Friday. The students do not want to be mixed with Education students as these Education students have already read this content and the teacher thinks that everyone knows

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most of the content. As a result the B.A.(Humanities) students suffer and fail to get the benefit of contact sessions. The Education students are very old and have different behaviour patterns than the B.A.(Humanities) students.There should be a separate class for B.A.(Hum) students. The students need more time to IDE students as they are unable to cover all the topics in the prescribed time limit. Also, they need more options in Question paper during Examination. It will help them to select a Question of their own choice.

4) Modern Literature – II(AL 302)

One student agreed to have committed some mistakes and so has failed   though he/she had a good performance in continuous assessment.

5) Introduction to Grammar (AL304)

The language is new and it needs much time to understand.Examination answer scripts must be shown to the low achievers so that they may identify their mistakes done during examination and may try to not repeat such mistakes in future.

Academic Difficulties   In English

The students had expressed some difficulties in following courses only.

1) A Study of Poetry (ENG 206)

Strategies for analysing Poetry (p21);Imagery(p73)

2) Introduction to Critical Theory (ENG 204)

Anglo-American   new   Criticism(Unit07,p65);Modern   Psycho-analytic Criticism(Unit08,p77) ;Marxist Literary Criticism(Unit09,p89);Approaches to the study of African Literature(Unit10,p100).

3) Grammar III: Clause Combining & Text Creation (ENG 301)

Elaboration(Unit 04p141); Extension(Unit 05,p166);Enhancement(Unit 06,p184 ;Paractic Ideas 'Projection'(Unit 07,p207);Elements of Clause Structure 'Clause'(Unit 01p10); Clause Combining & Text Creation(Unit 02,p51);Clause Patterns(Unit 01,p23);Apposition 'Clause Combining(Unit 02,p94);

4) Conversational Analysis (ENG 303)

Problems in Transcription.

5) Modern Critical Theory (ENG 304)

Colonialism/Post Colonialism.(Unit 01,p11);Modernism/Post Modernism (Unit 02,p56) ;Existentialism(Unit   04,p158);Deconstruction(Unit05,p189); Feminist/Literary Criticism (Unit 03,p97).

6) Study of Drama   (ENG 305)

a)   Module 305 A -Other Theatres (Unit 05,p46);Arena theatre(Unit 04,p36);From Classical Drama to African Theatre(Unit 06,p58);Othello Drama (Literature & Drama)(Unit 01,p03);Drama and Theatre (Unit 02,p12);Content and Form of 'The Gods are not to Blame' (Unit 06,p62).b) Module305 B-Elizabethan Theatre (Unit 03,p31);Proscenium Theatre(Unit 04,p48);Reaction to Proscenium Theatre(Unit 05,p64).

A Study of Novel (ENG 306)

a) Module 306 A -Realism(Unit 01-1.9,p11)

b) Module 306 B-The Great Gatsby(Unit02,p23);Sir Gawain and the Green Night(A Novel);Great Expectations(A Novel). The prescribed Novels are not found in the

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Module. The modules having a discussion about prescribed Novels must be reprinted. Module one is relevant to the course and gives a background to the study of the Novel. Rest of the content in Module 01 and 02 are not related to the texts that are discussed. The prescribed texts are not described in the Modules. Other texts are described and it has no relationship with the prescribed texts.
Research Method (ENG 307)

Experimental Research -Types of Educational Research(Unit 02p21-23);Graphical Representation of Frequency Distributions-Statistical Analysis(Unit 09p108);Writing a Research proposal (Unit 08,p83).

Expectations from Tutors In English
The students had some expectations in only following courses.
1) Survey of English Literature: The Romantics to the Moderns (ENG 205)
The tutor should clearly convey about the Question paper pattern before Exam. The exam pattern of Eng 205 for Supplementary exam was totally different than that in Main exam. This changed pattern was not informed to students by tutor.
2) A Study of Poetry (ENG 206)
The tutor should tell students how to answer Questions during exam as well as the points to be covered and weightage to be given to different points while writing answers. The student wishes that tutor should cover all units in a face to face situation as is done with regular students.
3) Introduction to Critical Theory (ENG 204)
One tutor does not explain clearly some chapters. His weakness is telling stories which are irrelevant to the course in class. This tutor is also very stingy (not liberal) for marks. He gives only 50% marks   even if everything would have been O.K., as per his assessment.
Grammar III : Clause Combining & Text Creation (ENG 301)
The tutor must make clarity of concepts and answer all the Questions asked by the students. He must motivate the students to ask Questions during contact sessions and develop &distribute hand-outs to students having a detailed explanation. He must answer with patience all queries by students and should not tell students to read themselves as well as he explain how to attempt certain type of Questions during examination.
5) Conversational Analysis (ENG 303)
Give students more practice exercises on transcription.
6) Modern Critical Theory (ENG 304)
The tutor should meet learner queries instead of reading the module during contact session. He should explain slowly in a clear and audible language. The structure of the examination paper should be briefed during contact session before the examination. Some Questions were asked from a course content not covered during contact sessions. What is taught in contact session should be asked in Examinations. A set of some Model Questions be given before examination from which the Question paper should be declared. Confusion is created when a teacher teaches different things than what a module contains. There should be a similarity between the two.Tutor must be friendly and punctual with the students during contact

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sessions. Tutor must motivate the students to put their queries and should try to cover all Questions/ Queries etc. raised by students. Tutor should give a detailed explanation of every concept.

7) Study of Drama   (ENG 305)

The tutor had taught something which is not in the module. In the examination there were Questions she had never taught. For example, a question about'Revenge Tragedy' (Sec. A) was not in the Module given to students. The tutor also, had never taught the same and the paper setter was perhaps not the tutor but someone else. The tutor must teach whatever is going to be asked in examination.The tutor should consult full time lecturer about what is important for examination and teach accordingly. The tutor is not lenient but is very strict in giving marks.The tutor should give some tips to students about what is expected from them while writing the answers during examination. A Model Question and its model answer must be supplied to students.Regardless of the insufficient time the tutor should try to cover up every topic on the course outline. There should be some choice of Questions during exam.The tutor should discuss his/her notes with the students. Tutor should concentrate more on Academic Queries rather than delivering Lecturers. There should be perfect co-ordination between the IDE tutor and the Regular student teacher for the same course. It will not develop any communication gap with the students. The tutor should give more details about Novels which are not in the Module. The Question paper should bear questions covering the course content given in the modules only and not from outside the Module. One student was expecting Questions from 'The Lion and the Jewel (play)' but there was no question from this play. The Continuous Assessment (C.A.) marks/grades were also very low as a result he/she could not pass the examination. IDE tutor should have a better course clarity than a regular teacher. Students should not be referred to the Regular Programme Teacher for course clarity.

8) A Study of Novel(ENG 306)

The teacher must make effort for a timely supply of the Course material. The teacher must make an "Analysis of the Novel". The teacher should explain how to answer the Theory and Practical examination questions. Number of Contact sessions should be increased. The teacher should discuss the Questions (given in the Module) during contact session.The tutor should explain all five Novels. It will help the students to have a choice during examination. The Tutor should explain the tips for 'Reading a Novel'. If possible, the Modules must be developed for this course. Tutor should give time for consultation even during mid-week. The tutor should answer student queries in place of a lecture during contact session. Tutor should friendly and freely motivate students for raising questions during contact session. Some Homework should be given to students by the tutor for a Drill and Practice.

9) Research Method (ENG 307)

The tutor appointed should have concept clarity. The tutor should, ask questions, make sure that the students have understood, and, try to simplify every difficulty in the course during contact sessions. In absence of a suitable tutor, the contact programme did not last for a long time. The tutor should explain his expectations

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from the students during writing of exam papers. Some tips must be given in the class for writing a reliable and valid answer.

Other Comments in English
There were some comments in   followingcourses only.
1) Survey of English Literature: The Romantics to the Moderns (ENG 205)
One student had failed in 2009/10 because of not following the instruction to choose Question 01being compulsory for everyone. The same student could not pass second time as he/she had made (by mistake) a gap of two pages between two Questions. This student failed again in Supplementary examination because exam pattern of ENG 205 for Supplementary exam was totally different than that in Main exam. The paper seemed to be for some other course as there were Questions which were never discussed by IDE tutor for Eng 205.
2) Conversational Analysis (ENG 303)
The student feels that he had missed one test and so he had failed.
3) Introduction to Critical Theory (ENG 204)
One student had to devote much time to ailing mother being HIV(+). This student had to face some financial problem also, and so, could not pay much attention to her studies.
4) Grammar III: Clause Combining & Text Creation (ENG 301)
This has been found a difficult subject by one student since first year. One student needs a three hour time to write a full answer as he/she could not write all answers completely in the prescribed time limit.
Modern Critical Theory (ENG 304)
One word answer type questions should not be given in examination as these create some confusion in mind. There should be a gap between two exam papers. In no case, there should be two exam papers on the same day. It will help the students to prepare nicely for exam. The pattern of the paper must be informed to students before the examination, if it has been changed by the paper setter.
6) A Study of Novel (ENG 306)
The Question paper must have Essay Questions as the students are used to write answer of such questions. An adjustment of time table is needed for students of English and African Language. It will help them to participate in both subjects. The course content was not available in Book Shop. The text given to students is difficult to understand. The Book shop had delayed in supply of this text. The textbooks were not available in Book shop and as a result one student wrote all the three tests without a book. He got these books late. Very lengthy and difficult to understand Novels are prescribed. Some simple and readable Novels need to be prescribed. The exam time table must have gap between two exam papers. It will give a chance to prepare for the same.There was not sufficient time during exam for analysing the lengthy Novels. In no case two exam papers should be on the same day.Novels must be converted into Modules of shorter lengths using very simple language. Availability of Novels in sufficient number at Book shop is essential.
7) Study of Drama   (ENG 305)

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A provision in the examination Time table should be made for more time to prepare for every exam paper. A clear demonstration of different Theatres will help to understand them easily. Examples given by the tutor should be in the modules. The text discussed in class during a contact session should be as given in the Modules. It will help the students to read and interact with the same as and when needed. The concepts of this course were not explained in details by the tutor who has never discussed the Examination paper pattern and expectations from students.

8) Research Method (ENG 307)

One student had observed a low continuous assessment and so failed in this course. The exam time table should have a gap between two exam papers for preparation. Friday classes should be resumed enabling students for more contact sessions.

OBJECTIVE   WISE   DISCUSSION

This Research project was undertaken to diagnose difficulties with low achievers of B.A.(Hum)programme with an intention to upgrade their exam performance. This project had revolved around seven objectives. An objective wise discussion of the findings is stated on the coming pages.

To diagnose the specific course content found difficult by the target group students in different low performance courses.

The target group low achievers were served Questionnaire/Opinionnaire for different low performing courses in all four Subjects. They had expressed the specific course content where they need some additional help/support for a content clarity. Various findings have been listed in this research paper.

To wash out these difficulties in various courses with the help of a tutor support.

The concerned tutors had been informed about the course content which was found difficult by the low achievers who had desired some help/supportfor the same. Also, these tutors were advised to prepare the same content with more explanation for coming batches also. Apart from the academic difficulties, the expectations from the tutor, and some other comments by the students, had also been informed to the Tutors with a purpose for an improvement. The tutors were advised to take necessary steps for meeting these difficulties.

To help the low achieving learners for enhancing their examination performance and to achieve a 'D' or a better Grade.

The diagnosis of the difficult course content had been done on the basis of an opinion survey from target group low achieving learners through a Questionnaire/ Opinionnaire. This might had been done by the concerned tutors to help these low achievinglearners through an academic support. A further analysis of exam performance may be done about these low achieving students, to see the improvements made by these low achievers.

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To make concerned tutors aware of learner difficulties enabling them to meet the same among future batches of distance learners.

The concerned tutors have been advised to present the difficult Course Content easier to grasp and prepare their deliberations among future batches of students forsame course in such a way that new students find the same content as easy one and not as a difficult one.

To suggest some suitable remedial strategy for enhancing learner performance in various courses under consideration for BA (Hum) Programme.
An analysis of low achieving learners' opinion revealed that the tutors and the learners did not know their role in Open & Distance education system. They need an orientation of the same. The students had expressed a desire for more contact sessions and the tutor should deliver lectures based on every Unit of the course content during these contact programmes. This is wrong and should not be expected in a distance education scenario. In fact, the students are supposed to learn self as an isolated identity. He may present his difficulties/confusions etc. to the tutor concerned in advance using Email/Phone/in person/fax etc. The tutor would like to provide his feedback usingEmail/ Phone/ in person/fax etc. or he may also take up the same during the contact programmes and discuss with the students. It would help other students also in the class. The tutors (deployed to provide human support to learners) have been in a habit of delivering a lecture on a topic of their own choice in the name of Tutoring/Counselling. They are supposed to motivate the learners for a self-study. These tutors should diagnose learner difficulties/queries/questions using various available media and must prepare their contact session deliberation in such a way that all these difficulties/ queries/questions are covered. They may like to motivate students for a group discussion and interaction among themselves. The Institute of Distance Education (IDE) may orient these Tutors as well as the students about their role and responsibilities with each other.

6) To recommend the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) some essential and needy steps for controlling dropout cases by enhancing performance level during examination among IDE students for B.A. (Humanities) programme.

It was recommended that an urgent orientation of all tutors about their role and responsibilities must be organised by the Institute of Distance education (IDE).Every Programme Coordinator must organise a one day meeting with all new students and their tutors enabling them to understand their role in Distance Education system, and, with various activities to be done as well as course content to be covered by them. Necessary Audio/ Video support be developed to explain the difficult course content. This Audio/Video support may be made available to students on line by Institute of Distance Education (IDE) as well as off line through UNISWA Library.The IDE students may be motivated to form a 'Learner Association' in their locality by grouping students for the same programme. They may meet or talk or chat on line among themselves and discuss their difficulties among themselves. Use of Email and

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Internet for an effective two way communication would be a cheaper media for them.A strong habit must be developed for using Internet by the IDE students and their tutors. It would help them to be in contact, always with each other and from one to another among students for an academic interaction. In this setting, a question raised by one student and its answer by another will reach to all, and thus ,making all students benefitted. It is good that UNISWA has been allotting Email ID to all students. They must develop a habit of using the same for interaction and communication among themselves as well as with their tutors also.

7) To initiate similar projects for other IDE programmes, if present project gets a success.

Looking to activeness and a good response by the target group learners, it is recommended that IDE should take similar projects for other programmeslike - Certificate in Portuguese, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Arts (Hum.), Certificate in French, Bachelor of Education (Adult Education),Bachelor of Education (Primary Education),Bachelor of Education (Secondary Education), Diploma in Commerce, Diploma in Law, PGCE

OUTCOME OF THIS PROJECT

The purpose of Distance Education system is to educate the mass as per their mental abilities. Discontinue an educational programme after being failed three times in some courses may compel the persons to remain uneducated throughout their life. Society may feel this group as a burden on them. Thiscase study has become a help to low achievers for washing out their Difficulties, Confusions, Questions and Queries in course content of low achievement, and, finally a ray of hope to get necessary remedy from their tutors for coming up as a successful graduate studied through distance mode of education. It may be helpful for the academic Counsellors/Tutors to become familiar of the course content where the students had some difficulties/problems during study. These tutors may prepare some remedy in the form of more explanation by using various techniques for the difficult course content. This will open all doors for further educationas well asfor a suitable job to Distance Learners to meet the Bread & Butter needs of their families. This type of remedial work may be initiated in future too for other programmes offered by the Institute of Distance Education, if present project has been found successful in raising learner performance among third year low achievers of B.A.(Humanities) Programme.

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