STRENGTHENING ICT IN TEACHING

Sakshi Khattar/TNN

KEEPING in line with the government's scheme ICT@schools, NCERT plans to start an online course in action research in educational technology from August. The programme is meant for teachers and teacher educators.

On what encompasses educational technologies (ET), Vasudha Kamat, joint director, Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), NCERT, explains: "Educational technology is a very broad term which implies those processes which facilitate learning. This includes planning, developing, using, evaluating, and managing technologies for enhancing quality of learning (and/or teaching). Also, it encompasses face-to-face, distance as well as e-learning."

ET includes all the modern media, methods and materials which are used at all stages of education whether used for kindergarten group or for students sitting in remote places and learning through distance education. The fact that this field offers a variety of career options makes it a prospective subject that can bring qualitative changes in the field of education.

The field of educational technology opens a plethora of jobs ranging from educational technologists, instructional designers, script writers for educational TV and radio programmes, producers, directors, editors, among various others, she informs. Some of them require a formal degree or diploma level training/education, while others can be mastered through short-duration workshops or learnt while being on-the-job.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Instructional design, a relatively new career within educational technologies, focuses on the systematic process of planning any teaching-learning process and developing an effective educational system. It also involves micro-planning and material development for actual teaching-learning activity. CIET also plans to start online courses in instructional design later this year.

Explains Kamat, "It is the science of designing instructions for learners, so that it facilitates the whole process of learning. Any instruction needs design but it is more effective when the instruction takes place in an e-learning environment. The instructional designer prepares ID for online courses, interactive multimedia packages, learning objects as well as for any other e-content."

In India, the department of educational technology, SNDT Women's University (SNDTU), Mumbai, offers a Master's degree programme in instructional design, which is only for women. SNDTU also offers a four-credit course in ID through the online mode. Symbiosis Centre for Distance Learning, Pune also offers a diploma in ID.

"With the change in the way education is delivered and with the emergence of the concept of e-learning there is a greater need for instructional designers both in the corporate sector and educational institutions. It is one of the fastest growing fields. There are many countries which are outsourcing the instructional design work to India hence there is a great demand for instructional designers in the near future. Every e-learning company in India needs instructional designers to develop content for various target groups. Almost all the educational institutes need instructional designers," informs Kamat. As such, an ID at the entry level can earn anything between Rs 10,000-Rs 25,000, based on the skill and prior exposure.

There is a great demand for instructional designers in the corporate sector as well as in the government sector especially in organisations dealing in education. She adds: "Instructional designers can work as instructional co-ordinators, curriculum specialists or personnel development specialists. A course in ID introduces prospective designers to the basics of human learning, principles of instructional design, creation of instructional material, how ID needs to be integrated into content creation, story board writing, authoring tools and other tools."

ROLE OF NCERT

CIET is taking the lead in developing e-content in the form of Learning Object (LOs). It is developing interactive multimedia LOs for classes IX to XII in science, maths and geography. CIET is also guiding State Institutes of Educational Technology (SIETs) to develop LOs. For this, CIET is training teachers as instructional designers face-to-face.

SCRIPT WRITING

Scripting is a major aspect of any audio or video production process. Though there are thousands of institutes offering courses in mass communication and media, there are very few which offer any specialised course in educational media.

This year (2010-11), CIET has planned to train 1,200 script-writers (600 each for audio and video) through EduSat video conferencing mode. Teachers interested in participating in this six-day training programme may visit website for more information *www.ciet.nic.in/workshops.php*. The script-writers are in great demand not only for educational programming but also in entertainment.