# Putting the teacher in the text (PTT) May 2020

# Tutor Notes

## Introduction

(See also the PTT activity description for participants and the slide set.)

The activity’s sub-title is *Introduction to preparing resources for distance learning*. It covers some similar ground to instructional design training but tries to do this in a jargon-free more accessible way. The content of the activity is very familiar to us from the OU but we need to keep in mind that the Myanmar system of DL is very different, and is changing.

The activity is adapted from the May 2019 version and is framed by six key questions (slide 6). It’s now in two distinct halves so it fits into the two sessions over two days schedule. There are activities in each half. I haven’t retested the timing so this may need some flexibility/adjustment.

## Participants

This is a ‘joint’ session with both academics and support staff (IT, Library, admin etc). Note that the mixed teams and varying roles means not all will be involved with *writing* learning materials of any sort, hence use of the word ‘preparing’ in the activity sub-title.

Most participants will be from ‘day universities’ that provide some teaching for distance students but do not prepare the course material or assignments. However, this is changing, and they may be doing their own course development in future.

Participants should sit in their university teams to work through the activities together.

## Handouts and other resources

The handouts are copies of Study Sessions from the OpenWASH module, *WASH: Context and environment.* These have been chosen because OpenWASH was designed using DL techniques with a consistent structure for all study sessions and because the environmental topics are relevant for TIDE. It’s important to note that the focus of this activity is on the structure and distance teaching methods, not the subject matter of the OpenWASH modules.

Study sessions (SS) are numbered 1 to 14 and each is 11 or 12 pages long. (Study Sessions titles are listed at the end of these notes.) You will need one complete set of 14 SS for your tutor group.

In the first exercise, you will be giving out two SS for each team – it doesn’t matter which SS they are as long as they are different. For the second exercise, they have one SS per team; again it doesn’t matter which one but more interesting for them if it’s not the same as before.

A few other background points about OpenWASH: it was written by Ethiopians with OU support for use in Ethiopia; designed for school leavers i.e. level 1 equivalent; published in 2016; being used successfully in technical colleges and for in-service training of WASH professionals in Ethiopia; written for print but also freely available for download on OpenLearn Create.

You will also need post-its, pens, flipchart and stand.

## Slides

Check participants have copies of the slides in their handbook. The slides should be in the academics *and* support staff handbooks in both English and Burmese. .

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| ***Slide*** | ***What the slide is and what to say and do*** |
| 1 | TIDE cover |
| 2 | PTT title slideHello and welcome. Introduce yourself. Type your name and role on the slide in advance if you want to.Within the TIDE programme, this activity contributes to the pedagogy strand and the development of skills for distance teaching.Check they can see slides. Check they have right page in handbook. *Slide notes:*This session is an introduction to preparing resources for distance learning. Distance learners do not have a tutor or teacher with them when they study so we need to produce learning materials that put ‘the teacher in the text’. This session will provide an overview of some of the ways that can be done.Many of the topics introduced here will be developed in more detail in other activities during your participation in the TIDE programme. |
| 3 | LOs for the activity.Probably best to read them out.Note this LO slide covers both PTT session |
| 4 | Changes to distance education in MyanmarIn August 2018 the Union Minister for Education announced the launch of what has become referred to as the ‘One Campus Two Systems’ model, whereby the 34 Day Campuses take on full responsibility for the award and delivery of undergraduate distance education degrees. The policy announcement represented a radical system change that in the short term is disruptive. It has the potential to pave the way for transformative decentralised solutions, as ‘Day Campuses’ will have more devolved responsibility related to the blended mode of DE they offer. There is also scope for more flexible and relevant curricula that respond to local employment needs. Another policy change has been to move the age of matriculation from 16 to 18 thus changing the age on entry to both full time and DE students. |
| 5 | What is distance learning? Ask them to work in groups to answer these 4 questions – then you can do a round robin in drawing the responses together |
| 6 | Six questions to consider. Key point is that these 6 questions are the framework for the rest of the activity.Note that support staff in the teams are unlikely to be responsible for deciding such things as what subjects are taught, assessment etc but they may have a role in developing the resources for those purposes.*Slide notes:*Imagine you are preparing educational resources to be used for distance or blended learning. What would you need to think about? What would you need to know? These are some of the key questions to consider:[see slide]In this presentation we will briefly go through each of these questions in turn. Later on you will be exploring some of them in more detail. |
| 7 | Question 1 Who are your students? ‘How old are your students’ question: not very relevant in Myanmar because the answer is usually 18-20. You may need to explain and elaborate some questions e.g.: ‘Where do they live’ question: bring out the contrast between urban and rural; location in Myanmar may have regional/cultural/language differences.‘Facilities’ question: do they have access to computer? phone/tablet? to internet? to a library? (Worth noting that Facebook is very dominant in Myanmar. People say ’The internet is Facebook’. YUDE send assignments to students via Facebook.)*Slide notes:*Whenever you write anything, you need to know your audience. When preparing resources for distance learners, unlike face-to-face teaching, you have the challenge of not being able to see and talk to the students and getting to know them that way. So you should consider questions like the ones shown in this slide.Last point on the slide: It may not be possible to describe a ‘typical’ student. Teaching at a distance usually means teaching at scale. Large numbers of students increases their diversity. Care is needed to avoid assuming that all students are the same. |
| 8 | Activity on parts of a student profile Participants will get to look at student profiles more than once with TIDE as they do a student profile for one of the OER development activities and in different online courses. Support staff may also do it their sessions. This activity just focuses on three questions and is a way for you to also better understand the prime characteristics of DE students in Myanmar. After teams have written down their responses you can get them to share their answers and to promote discussion. |
| 9 | 2 How will learning be delivered to students?Unlikely to get definitive answers to most of these questions because the DL system is evolving. But the point is to get them thinking about the differences between, for example, print and online teaching. You could also ask about the future and how it might be different (if they know?)*Slide notes:*The basic principles of good teaching remain the same regardless of delivery method. However, different methods will influence the approach to teaching and the options available to you when designing a new course.You may need to consider questions such as these. [see slide]All these questions will need to considered when you are planning a new course. The different components need to be integrated together to create a coherent whole that makes sense for students and encourages them to learn. |
| 10 | 3 Who are you working with?May need to explain ‘co-design’ and ‘peer review’.Team roles listed here will also need some explaining. These roles and our OU ‘course team’ model are not familiar to most participants. Reviewing and commenting seems to be particularly unknown. Editor role also appears to be limited.*Slide notes:*Producing educational resources requires teamwork. Developing ideas and plans in a team will produce a more coherent and better quality product (course). Giving and receiving comments from other people will improve quality. Many people may be involved, in various roles. [see slide] |
| 11 | 4 What is going to be taught?Lots of notes on the slide for this one – see below.LOs only briefly introduced here because there’s more later.*Slide notes:*This is obviously a very important question! Let’s imagine you are part of a team developing a course on water pollution. You will need to identify the topics you want to include in your teaching such as sources, pathways and effects of pollution, methods of prevention, and treatment processes. In other words, *knowledge* of the subject.You may also want to include teaching of relevant *skills*. This could be sampling methods and techniques for laboratory analysis (this links to question 2 about how teaching will be delivered).You need to consider the *level* of teaching required: Is this a course for new students or will they be further on with their studies? (this links to the question about knowing your students and what prior knowledge and experience you can safely assume they will have).For new students, you may need to help them develop their skills for study and learning. For example, finding and using sources of information, skills in academic writing, correct citation and referencing, and more. The knowledge and skills that are to be included can be defined in terms of learning outcomes that tell the students what they can expect to know and do by the end of the course (or module, session etc.). We’ll be looking at Learning Outcomes in more detail later. |
| 12  | Exercise: Identifying key features of DL materialsUsing OpenWASH (OW) study sessions (SS).There’s a brief description of OW in the PTT description and in slide notes below. Organise everyone into their university teams (so in 3s or 4s). Hand out 2 different SS to each team.Hand out post-it notes.Explain the task. You’ll need to emphasise that you don’t want them to look at content – it’s only about structure. The interpreter will be useful.Give *very clear* instructions about what you want them to do i.e. write each common feature they identify on a separate post-it note, emphasise one point per note. Again, use the interpreter.Allow about 20 minutes, depending on time and engagement among the group.Invite teams to put post-its on flipchart page.Organise post-its so repeating ones are collected together. Then group discussion of how these features can help students to learn. This may be best done with the ‘answer’ slide that follows.Make clear that OW is only one example. It’s not essential to have all these features for good DL. *Slide notes:*The example we are using for this activity is from OpenWASH. OpenWASH is a programme of study that provides a broad curriculum for the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in Ethiopia. The OpenWASH modules were written using DL techniques but are used to support face-to-face teaching in technical colleges and also for professional training in the WASH sector. The modules are freely available as Open Educational Resources. Each OpenWASH module consists of 15 separate study sessions of approximately 4000 words. You will be given printed copies of individual study sessions from one of the OpenWASH modules to analyse. For this part of the activity, you will be working in your university teams.[see slide]Followed by group discussion of your findings. |
| 13 | ‘Answer’ slide of key repeating features. Not sent to participants in advance.  |
| 14 | END OF FIRST SESSIONAny questions? |
| 15 | START OF SECOND SESSION I’ve added a new title slide to denote start of the second session |
| 16 | Recap slide of 6 questions and progress so far.Not sent to participants in advance.  |
| 17 | 5 How will students’ learning be assessed?*Slide notes:*Assessment could be a whole topic on its own.Developing appropriate assessments is mainly an academic responsibility but is an important part of preparing learning resources. Key principles for assessment include:* Plan the strategy and methods of assessment at the same time as developing the content.
* Only assess what has been taught. Questions that require knowledge not included in the course are not fair.
* Methods of assessment vary e.g. self-assessment questions (SAQs) with answers provided, assignments of various types that are marked by a tutor or computer, written exams, practical exams, spoken exams, etc.
* It may also be necessary to consider standards and requirements specified by other organisations and authorities e.g. professional bodies.
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| 18 | 6 What style of writing will be most effective?*Slide notes:*The sixth question:What style of writing is going to be most effective for putting the teacher in the text? Remember students may be studying on their own. You need to motivate and encourage them to be confident and successful learners. How do you do that? (You should be able to recognise some of these from the OpenWASH example.)* Address the student as ‘you’ so they feel you are ‘talking’ directly to them
* Use conversational language that is easy to understand. Avoid long and complicated sentences.
* Ensure there is a logical sequence to the narrative. The narrative is the story you are telling in your teaching. Ask yourself: does one section follow on from the one before? Have you organised the sections in a sensible order? Generally, you should introduce an idea or term first, then describe and explain it before you apply or make use of it.
* Define and explain important terms when you first use them. Don’t assume students will already know technical terms.
* Be consistent in your use of terminology so students are not puzzled or confused by a different word.
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| 19 | 6 What style of writing will be most effective? continued*Slide notes:*Q6 continued…* Make your writing lively and engaging, for example: vary sentence length; avoid long paragraphs; use questions in your writing.
* Break up the text with headings and sub-headings. But take care that your headings accurately describe what follows below them.
* Use examples and case studies. These help to bring the material to life but they must be relevant and support the teaching.
* Use various text design features so that the pages look different and are not just plain text.
* Don’t rely too much on numbered or bulleted lists. They can be difficult to take in.
* Include images – photos, diagrams, etc. that have a purpose for your teaching. Figures should be referred to in the text so students know why they are included.
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| 20 | Learning outcomesThis is first of 3 slides about LOs leading to the second exercise.*Slide notes:*Now, more on learning outcomes and how they are used.From earlier slide: A learning outcome is a statement of what a student is expected to know and be able to do at the end of a course of study.Usually have a standard from of words. |
| 21 | Words for learning outcomes. *Slide notes:*LOs need to specify both knowledge and skills. They may be grouped into categories. All LOs should include a verb. |
| 22 | Learning outcomes *Slide notes:*Writing learning outcomes needs care. The words have to be meaningful to students and be easily understood.They should be appropriate for the level of study, for example LOs for new students might include verbs like ‘describe’ or ‘define’ but higher level courses could include more challenging skills such as ‘evaluate’ and ‘analyse’. They must be ‘testable’, meaning it must be possible to write an assignment that will enable students to demonstrate they have achieved the LO. LOs must be stated at the beginning of the course, the necessary teaching must be included and students should be tested to check they have achieved the LO.They provide a framework that tells students what is coming next and what is expected of them. They also provide a framework for you and your team if you are developing new teaching materials. It is better to write and agree LOs before you start writing so you can keep them in mind and know where you are heading with your writing. For a specific module or course, you will need a set of LOs for the whole module and you may also want more specific LOs for each part. But beware of having too many because this can create problems for assessment and becomes confusing for students. |
| 23 | Exercise: Tracking learning outcomesAgain in their teams, get them to look at a different SS to the ones they had before. They only need one SS this time.Pick one of the LOs listed on page 1. **N.B.** Not the first one which is a standard one about definitions of key terms.Fairly simple activity so won’t take long, maybe 10 minutes. You can ask them to do another LO or choose another SS if time allows. Invite groups to present what they found - don’t need all of them to do this because it gets boring. *Slide notes:*You will have seen from the OpenWASH study sessions that each of them has a set of learning outcomes. Using a different study session, pick one LO and then see if you can identify where it appears in the text.Points to make at the end (no slide for this): Reiterate LOs must be stated, taught, assessed.Responsibility of author/designer to check that what is stated as a LO is actually followed through.Assessment could be in summative assignments, not SAQs like in OW.OW is just one example; other ways are possible.Key point is to ensure students understand what to expect from their study. Again the point is about distance students being isolated and so when preparing DL materials you always need to keep in mind that they are on their own, therefore the teacher needs to be in the text.  |
| 24 | EndAny questions?If you need to use up some minutes, you could go back the LO slide for this activity at the start and ‘test’ if LOs have been achieved. |

### OpenWASH handouts

Study Session titles are:

1. Human Interactions with the Environment
2. Population Growth
3. Development and Sustainability
4. The Water Cycle and Sources of Water
5. Urbanisation: Trends, Causes and Effects
6. Land Use and Urban Planning
7. Pollution: Types, Sources and Characteristics
8. Pollution: Effects, Prevention and Control
9. Introduction to Climate Change
10. Extreme Weather Events
11. Impacts of Climate Change in Ethiopia
12. Resilience and Coping Strategies
13. Human Values and Behaviour
14. Global Environment Policies and International Agreements

### Handout for the PTT session:

* Process words and definitions