



## TEACHER EDUCATION VIA DISTANCE EDUCATION- AN EXTENSIVELY OVERLOOK

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### Abstract

*Globalization has provided many challenging opportunities for improving ourselves. Teachers have an important role to play in making education relevant to the needs of the emerging modern society. Teachers have an important role to play in making education relevant to the needs of the emerging modern society. Technological advances in education have been many over the last 50 years. Only enlightened, competent and emancipated teachers can meet the aspirations of society by providing quality education to learners. This is being possible, only if teachers are well trained through effective teacher education programmes. The standard of teacher education programmes determines the quality of training provided to teachers. Distance Education aims to equip prospective teachers with the skills and knowledge to effectively integrate their development in future practice. The author would like to throw light on the Teacher Education through Distance education as a complementary mode of delivery was initiated as an effort to overcome the challenges of access equity, cost-effectiveness, and quality for higher education.*

**Key words:** *Technological advances, Distance Education, cost-effectiveness, quality of education*



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### Introduction:

The global need for teacher education is greater now in the early 21st century than ever before. According to UNESCO, half of the world's 195 countries will have to expand their stock of teachers significantly. Distance education, or distance learning, has long been a major form of professional development for teachers in developing and developed countries. Distance Education has affected strongly in the area of teacher Education throughout the world. World wise involvement of distance education in Teacher Education is highlighting part of success. Problems in teacher education, training, are needed to cope with Distance Education.

### Meaning of distance Education:

In 1994, Sir Geoffrey Holland, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter, stated that

"By the year 2020 every education and training programme leading to a qualification or a credit towards one will be available in three modes: full time, part time, and through distance learning."

- (Wild 1994)

Such a sweeping and generally accepted statement requires a careful look at distance education in general, and of the factors driving the almost geometric explosion in its implementation and acceptance.

Distance education, also called distance learning, has existed for centuries. It involves obtaining knowledge outside of the traditional avenues of attendance at learned institutions. Some recent definitions have focused on it as a new development, involving advanced technology. A few have even sought to define it in terms of a single technology usually the one they are reviewing or marketing. - (North 1993)

*A better definition is provided by Ian Mugridge, who states that it is*

"A form of education in which there is normally a separation between teacher and learner and thus one in which other means the printed and written word, the telephone, computer conferencing or teleconferencing, to bridge the physical gap." - (Mugridge 1991)

A subset of distance learning that includes evaluation by distance educators and two-way communication, which usually includes the structuring of media content and use by the educator.

#### **To sum up the above definition in my words-**

- ✚ Separation of teachers and learner which distinguish from face to face.
- ✚ It influences individual from personal study.
- ✚ Use of technical and printing areas in use from distance.
- ✚ The use of telephone, computer conferencing or teleconferencing, to bridge the physical gap.
- ✚ To help the teachers to cope with the main stream of learner.

#### **Distance Education for Teacher Education-**

Many countries have adopted this scheme of distance education for the development of the teachers. These distance education has made them to reveal the qualities for self development. If they are working in field teachers can follow the correspondence lessons and their details. They can gain their qualification at their ease. There is increasing and strong among government institutions, international agencies and teachers themselves in the use of distance education continuing professional development of teachers. There are many universities like Britain, Sri-lanka, Toronto offered programmes of Teacher Education beside their degree, diploma and continuing education work. Sri lanka has considerable experiences of distance education and has developed open university which include among their responsibilities. Australia has a fully qualified teaching force. But, over the years the entry level to teaching has risen so that there are large numbers of teachers in the service who feel that their promotion may be blocked unless they raise the level of their qualification.

#### **Obstacles in the way of processing Teacher Education through Distance Education**

Distance education is the general term that includes the range of teaching and learning strategies used by Correspondence colleges, Open universities, Distance education departments of conventional universities and Distance education training units of private sector organizations. Today, however, both research and practice are showing the tremendous opportunities in large-scale education provision offered by distance Education. Capitalizing on the strengths afforded by innovative information and communication technologies and media, distance education broadens and streamlines access to teacher education in a way that traditional delivery modes cannot. More so than traditional students, distance learners are more likely to have insecurities about teach (Knapper, 1988). These insecurities are found in personal and school related issues such as financial costs of study, disruption of family life, perceived irrelevance of their studies and lack of support from employers. These pressures

often result in higher dropout rates than among traditional students (Sweet, 1986). The distance education through teacher education has developed the professional skills among teachers. The way of doing work pattern of the plan is based on formation of degrees. Another problem facing distance Education is the level and type of interactivity. Similar to the issue surrounding support, the lack of face-to-face interactions between student, teacher and other classmates can be problematic for those new to the distance-learning environment. The technology required to participate in a distance education class must be readily available and fully functional. Furthermore, it acquires a certain level of competency with the technology, including hardware, software and all related accessories, in order to be successful in the course. Technology that is unavailable or unstable quickly becomes a barrier for distance-learning in teacher Education.

### **Potency of Distance Education in Teacher Education**

All the institutes and colleges know the better importance of the Distance Education. Distance Education has served as an alternative method for delivering academic course work to Teacher Education unable to attend traditional campus-based classes. The format of distance education varies from correspondence-style courses to technologically based courses using the Internet. Distance education offers considerable benefits, including increased access to learning, lifelong learning opportunities, and convenience of time and place (St. Pierre, 1998). Distance education dictates changes in behavior for both the teacher and the learner. The successful learner develops persistence and skills in self-directing work. The successful distance education teacher becomes conversant with new technology and develops new instructional styles, moving from creating instruction to managing resources and students and disseminating views (Strain, 1987).

### **Garrels (1997) describes five critical elements for successful teaching at a distance:**

1. Instructor enthusiasm. This requires animation and comfort in front of the camera, or with the technology utilized. Faculty support and interest are critical to the success of distance learning endeavors.
2. Organization. Teaching materials must be prepared in advance; timing, variation, and smooth transitions must be planned. Instructors should allocate from 3 to 5 hours of preparation for each hour of distance instruction. Great attention to detail is required long before the actual classroom activity occurs  
(Summers, 1997).
3. Strong commitment to student interaction. Whatever the modality used to teach at a distance, the instructor must encourage and facilitate ongoing communication between the students and the instructor.
4. Familiarity with the technology used in the class format. Faculty development is important before beginning any distance activities, and instructors should be trained in video use, computer use, or other forms of instructional technology used.
5. Critical support personnel. Production staff, graphic designers, and technical staff members will help the instructional setting produce successful teaching at a distance.

### **Conclusion**

The potential use of distance education within all disciplines is tremendous as this application to higher education evolves within our culture. Distance education is not a panacea for the difficulties and barriers encountered in traditional educational settings, but it does provide the

potential for greater service to more individuals seeking learning opportunities. Educational systems facing a shortage of professionally trained teachers should strongly consider. It has been proven to be very effective if it is well planned and implemented. The literature shows that it has worked effectively in training teachers all over the world.

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