MODERN TRENDS IN TEACHER EDUCATION THROUGH DISTANCE MODE

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ABSTRACT

A remarkable area of higher education system of the present day is teacher education. It is a hard fact that the progress of a country depends on the quality of the education, which in turn depends on the quality of its teachers at all levels of education. Teacher education being an integral part of the total school system cannot remain conventional and static while education itself is dynamic in character. So, it has to transform itself into a progressive, dynamic and responsive system. In this paper, it is clear that making effective teacher education programme through distance mode, we cannot walk single step without having the help of multidimensional practices.

Field of Research: Instructional Methodology, ICT, PCP, Cost-Effectiveness

Introduction

Distance education system has come to stay as an accepted mode of education and has been gaining widespread popularity in recent year. The information age has created increasing needs for teachers and other school personnel at all levels of education to develop, use and disseminate skills for including technology as the driving force behind integrated, interdisciplinary learning experiences that prepare the learners for life in the ‘real’ world. Teacher education being an integral part of the total school system cannot remain conventional and static while education itself is dynamic character. The multidimensional practices have to transform it into a progressive, dynamic and responsive system. In our country learners participating in teacher education programmes through distance mode are more in number. The structure of the global society would naturally by multi-dimensions having wider scope for innovations to be experimented and executed. The rigidities in the formal system of education and constraints imposed on educational opportunities have resulted in inequalities in the society. The education that has a key role in social change and social itself needs to undergo changes in this particular content. Distance education is the best replacement of the same. Teacher education is a professional course, where a student – teacher wants to develop one’s teaching competencies (Saravanakumar, AR & S. Subbiah, (2011)). In distance education the student – teachers are in service so they have certain skills developed to them and also they have a platform to practice whatever inputs are given to them in the teacher education programme. Therefore there is need to adopt multidimensional practices in distance education.

Needs for Teachers

The education service is one of the most strategic factors for the success of this dream, as it is responsible for nurturing the youngsters who will contribute to all aspects of nation building in the future.
The role of teachers in the present day is more of a helper or facilitator rather than a teacher in the strict sense of term. As a facilitator the teacher has to provide a conducive and congenial environment. Of all the professions, teaching alone is considered to be the noblest because it is a service rendered by the professionals’. A teacher fully qualified and equipped for the profession will make every learner achieve the objectives of instruction in each class. The marginalized children sitting in the last row with hesitation and inhibition has to receive special attention from such teachers. To achieve quality assurance, every teacher should continuously update his or her knowledge with the help of World-Wide Web and other Internet-based Collaborative tools.

The information age has created increasing needs for teachers and other school personnel at all levels of education to develop, use and disseminate skills for including technology as the driving force behind integrated, inter-disciplinary learning experiences that prepare students for life in the ‘real’ world.

There is a growing and continuing need for systematic efforts to infuse instructional technology in relevant ways in all professional education programmes preparing administrators, teachers and counsellors.

- Assisting instructors in becoming more creative and better problem solver
- Stimulating curiosity and increasing enthusiasm
- Addresses teacher’s needs, includes instructor input, offers opportunities to develop a range of teaching and utilizes a variety of instructional methods.

**Teacher Education through Distance Mode**

Teacher education through distance mode series to achieve the objectives of teacher education by adopting multidimensional practices. The instructional methodology for teacher education through distance mode comprise print material in the form of SIM, audio-video programmes, assignments, face-to-face academic counselling services, project work, personal contact programmes, teleconferencing, school based activities including community work and practice teaching. (Lever – Duffy, (2007)).

The in-service student teachers seeking admission for the TEP come from different backgrounds and different schools. They belong to different levels and possess different characteristics. Developing the TDP as per the needs of each and every student teachers developing the SIM accordingly. Thus there is difficulty in developing a programme that would cater to the needs of one and all. The TE through DE and the issues there in are the outcome of the continuous struggle to impart quality teacher education programme with a visionary outlook, making the TE more flexible and suitable for those in-service. It is confident that the strong philosophical base of DE and a theoretical foundation for the curriculum it will be able to explore new possibilities and avenues.

New and innovative technologies have created many opportunities in the area of distance education; Technologies used for distance learning span a wide range of cost and complexity are important to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each type of technology, cost availability for both the instructor and. learner, target audience, available equipments, goals and objectives of the presentation and it’s effectiveness. (Saravanakumar, AR & S.Subbiah, (2011))

The original communicative stance of teachers and students are substituted by technologically mediated interaction between two of them.
Benefits of distance learning technologies

- Greater access to learning resources for students, teachers and adults;
- More opportunities for collaborative learning among mentors, colleagues, and instructors around the world; and
- Alternative higher education opportunities.

Application of use of ICT in distance education

Application of information and communication technology especially in support of distance education activities, adds enormous value to the training. It enables and empower trainee and participating teachers to share experience, curriculum, learning materials, lesson notes, feedback and collaborative programmes. It encourages paced learning through tools such as assignment, tutorials, broadcast programmes, computers, conferences, etc.

The advantages of ICT lie in its potential for increased interaction with and between learners, speedier delivery and response times to queries and feedback on assignments, greater access to communities of teachers and quicker lead in terms for updating course materials while at the same time needing the establishment of effective quality assurance procedures (Punie, Y (2007)). The use of ICT and CD-ROMs is becoming more common for materials developers of distance education programmes of all kinds and for supporting administrative processes and staff involved in learner – support.

Strategies for Teacher Education Programmes

- Closing the gap between educational objectives and teacher competencies
- Teachers as learners
- Teacher education is a continuous process
- Reviewing cost-effectiveness criteria applied to teacher education
- ICT has rendered education portable, flexible, electronic, convenient and enjoyable
- School autonomy implies teacher autonomy
- An integral approach to teacher professional development.

Teaching Competencies: Teacher Education is a professional course, where a Student – Teacher wants to develop one's teaching competencies. In distance education the STs are in service, so they have certain skills developed them and also they have a platform to practice whatever inputs are given to them in the training programme. Considering this background we have developed a ‘training continuum’ to develop their teaching Competencies. (Prema, P (2011))

Functional purpose of innovation in education is the implement of multidimensional practices in teacher education. Structural purpose is the change of basic fabric in teacher education. The visionary purpose is the continued articulation of teacher's role and the fundamental purpose is in our image of teacher as - the key reformer in education. Any functional or structural improvement in the multidimensional practices in teacher education should be guided or judged by the image of teachers as reformer.

In institutionalized system of education direct and face-to-face teaching and instruction is great significance. The teacher and the taught share their knowledge, experiences and attitude and try to update their skills. The teacher is giver and student is taker. Since the success of educative process depends upon the efficiency of the teacher education system in the country.

The micro-teaching training program for trainees pursuing B.Ed through distance education. The trainers used the techniques of Visualization, Diagnosis, Remediation, Scaffolding and
knowledge Integration. The Trainees were given exposure to online workshop, Seminars, Tele-Conferences and expert advices were sought with the help of Internet. Then their teaching competency was assessed through CCTV's. The Pros and Cons of their Teaching Method were analyzed by the Peers and by the experts. Thus the results showed that ICT helps in shaping the Teaching Competency of the teacher trainees.

Conclusion

In our country students participating in teacher education programmes through distance mode are more in number. The multidimensional practices along with effective management and monitoring system certainly make teacher education through distance mode appropriate and adequate. Therefore, there is need to evolve effective management and monitoring systems which would take care of students admitted to these programmes. From the discussions made in this paper, it is clear that making effective teacher training programme, we cannot walk single step without having the help of multidimensional practices.

References


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