

Institute of Extra-Mural Studies

A Maiaene & J Malefane

INTRODUCTION

IEMS is one of the departments of the National University of Lesotho. As a result of IEMS' reorganisation of its academic and administrative structures, the Department of Adult Education was born on 1 July 1993. Hitherto, its activities had been an integral part of the entire responsibilities of the former Part-time Studies Division which offered certificate and diploma courses in business studies and adult education respectively.

Under this new dispensation, the Department of Adult Education runs academic programmes leading to the award of the Certificate, Diploma or Degree in Adult Education, the latter using the distance education learning mode. The reason for adding the degree programme to its academic work was born out of the desire by diploma graduates for further higher education. But considering the socio-economic factors facing the clientele of this BEd degree programme who couldn't have resigned their jobs for the luxury of further education on a full-time basis, IEMS in collaboration with the Faculty of Education of NUL initiated the establishment of the BEd Degree in Adult Education, basically to be offered through the distance learning mode. The programme took off in July 1994 with 60 students enrolling.

TEACHING/LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The programme takes four years on a part-time basis through a combination of distance learning mode and direct contact. These modes are offered to students through:

- A residential programme (four weeks) at the beginning of the academic year followed by one weekend of lectures
- A four-week full residential course at the beginning of the second semester in January

- Written examinations at the end of each semester, that is December and May of every year

Tutoring/materials

Each course book is designed in such a way that it provides three assignments, plus a test given by the lecturer, to make a total of four assignments (40%) and the final examination (60%). This means that the face-to-face mode is supported and supplemented by print materials which students use during their own study time and on Saturdays and Sundays when they are on campus for tutorials. In future the department wishes to add electronic media materials to complement the present print materials used in the programme.

Counselling

In broad terms, general counselling and guidance services are provided by each of the lecturers in the part-time programme. But in specific terms, counselling services are provided for part-time students by the co-ordinator of the programme, who is a full-time academic staff member, in addition to the services of a professional counsellor who also happens to be a part-time lecturer in the programme.

Study centres

The IEMS has established three study centres for its part-time students. These are the Maseru, Mhale's Hoek and Mahabong centres, where students come one weekend a month for professional assistance in management of their studies and counselling. This weekend is perceived to be strengthening individual students' capacities and capabilities in managing their distance education. In future, the study centres would be equipped with a library, co-ordinator and a secretary. Such services would enhance both the academic and administrative services needed by the students.

Resources

The IEMS, through the Adult Education Division, provides administrative and academic support services to students using the existing academic and administrative staff. Training skills are provided within the courses undertaken by students through their distance academic courses. In future, the Adult Education Division will facilitate visits to other distance education institutions in the region for the exchange of ideas, etc.

Financial

Unfortunately, the government of Lesotho does not provide scholarships for part-time programmes, only full-time. Our students therefore meet their own financial obligations of paying tuition — M1 500 from locals, M5 000 non-locals, plus M50 per course book.

However, the AED division is attempting to secure assistance from donors to support the distance education students. Any assistance for such purposes would be highly appreciated.

The Institute of Labour Studies

A Maiaene & J Malefane

LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

The Institute of Labour Studies offers training programmes mainly to workers through their respective organisations. It must be noted that the institute does this training on request, especially on topics which the trade unions cannot handle by themselves. It must be noted again that the institute tries by all means to train trade union officials, who in turn will train their rank-and-file members. In short, what the institute does is what is normally known as training of trainers.

It has been normal practice to conduct our courses in a tutoring manner, that is face-to-face contact wherein the facilitator leads the discussion on a particular subject which is discussed in a classroom situation by all the participants, followed by groupwork where the facilitator goes from group to group to clarify issues.

Lately, another method has been introduced in which the facilitator is given a training manual, prepared earlier by trade union officials with the help of ILO Regional Office. Each manual addresses a single subject such as economics for trade unionists; planning and administration of trade union training; and many others.

The first task of a facilitator is to synthesise the content of the manual in order to reproduce it in a language that any literate individual can understand. This is where the problem starts. How simple is simple language? At this stage, it becomes incumbent on facilitators to test their work in the process of writing their courses. What we usually do is find ways of having an audience (informal) with the ground workers in the campus. During spontaneous discussion the facilitator may raise an issue simply, say on economics, and check if he/she is understood.

If some curiosity is raised, give an explanation using any item as an example. At this stage one can gauge whether one is heading in the right direction.

After the manual has been synthesised, it is printed and distributed to the identified course participants prior to the start of the course for individual reading. By the time the course starts it is assumed that the participants at least know what they are expected to

discuss. The facilitator who synthesised the course, leads discussions for the duration of the course, which in most cases is residential.

In conducting the courses, we normally use print in the form of flip charts, chalkboards and handouts in different forms.

The organising body, which in this case is mainly the Trade Union Centre, is responsible for all financial implications of the courses. The institute may, if necessary, provide transport for its people to and from the course.

Overview of Distance Education in Namibia

Dr. Jonathan

INTRODUCTION

The last two decades have witnessed a rapid growth in the use of distance education and there is a growing interest in this mode of learning.

NAMIBIA

From the early years, distance education has remained an important part of higher education, especially in a country like Namibia, where access to education is a major concern.

Today, the country's higher education is offered by the Namibian Department of Education.

The Namibian Education from 1975, a white document prepared and approved by the government, was the first step in the development of distance education in the country. This was the first step towards the development of distance education in the country.

After the independence of Namibia, the country started to develop its own distance education system. The country had a Department of Distance Education in the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education. The distance education system was developed and implemented by the country's government.

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Overview of Distance Education in Namibia

H Beukes

INTRODUCTION

The high level of demand for distance education in Namibia has been amply demonstrated over the years. Namibians have a good deal of experience in distance education and there is a general awareness of its potential benefits.

Over the years many Namibian citizens have enrolled at the University of South Africa (Unisa). Vocational and school certificates were offered by commercial South African correspondence colleges.

Within the country, courses have been offered by the Academy's Department of Distance Education.

The Namibian Extension Unit (NEU) in exile (Lusaka) prepared and delivered junior secondary courses to exiled Namibians in Angola and Zambia. This unit has been assisted by the International Extension College of Cambridge and London.

After Independence the Ministry of Education and Culture inherited the Department of National Education. This Ministry had a Division of Distance Education in the Department of Adult and Non-formal Education. The country's profound educational deficits, sparse population and huge land area offer classic conditions for an expanded distance education programme.

In 1990 the International Extension College was asked by NEU to do a feasibility study on distance education in Namibia. The report of this study recommended that the following programmes be offered by distance education mode: teacher education, adult and continuing education, and English language teaching.

These programmes should be supported by a network of community learning centres. All these programmes would follow a multimedia approach, combining printed materials, face-to-face and audio, especially the radio.

In 1992 the Ministry of Education and Culture set up a consultancy team to review the various reports on the expansion of distance education in Namibia. In the report it

was clear that Namibia is faced with a huge demand for expanded educational provision at all levels. Much of this demand is from adults and young adults. These people are scattered throughout the country, and their educational needs cannot be met by conventional face-to-face methods. In 1995 Namcol (Namibian College of Open Learning) was established to cater for the need in school programmes. Namcol enrolled about one thousand learners for its distance education programme. In 1996 the enrolments have gone over four thousand. In 1996 IGCSE courses by distance education were introduced.

The Centre for External Studies (CES) at the University of Namibia

H Beukes

DISTANCE EDUCATION AT UNAM

This article was originally written in 1995 and revised early in 1996. Since then significant changes have taken place in the organisation and services of the Centre for External Studies of the University of Namibia. The article is printed here as revised in 1996, before those changes were implemented. A brief postscript was added in September 1997 by Tony Dodds, Director of CES since January 1996, in discussion with the author, to show what those changes are and how they are beginning to affect the students of CES.

In the mission of the University of Namibia (Unam) it is stated that learning throughout Namibia should be encouraged and promoted. In the light of this the Centre for External Studies (CES) caters for the needs of persons who for a variety of reasons cannot attend residential classes at Unam. CES helps Unam to fulfil its larger mission in terms of taking education to the people wherever they may be located. When the Academy was established in 1980 it was realised that the demand for education in Namibia was increasing very fast, and called for renewed efforts to expand educational efforts. It was also realised that education in Namibia should be delivered in its varied kinds to address the diversified needs of all the people. In 1984 the Distance Teaching section was established. It started with the Education Certificate Primary (51 students). In 1986 the Higher Primary Education Certificate was introduced (191 students). In 1989 the Distance Teaching section was extended and new courses were introduced: (National Diploma in Public Administration — 71 students, National Diploma in Police Science — 58 students, Educational Diploma Primary — 30 students). Courses in Library Science (22 students) and Community Development (52 students) started in 1990.

Student enrolment from 1989

Area of study	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Teacher education	1290	1200	1284	1823	1411	1222	1309
Public admin	71	73	97	206	270	300	358
Police science	58	66	91	106	106	118	165
Community Development		52	29	5	6	2	
Library science		22	10	22	7	2	2
TOTAL	1419	1413	1511	2162	1800	1644	1834

With the establishment of the University of Namibia (1993), the Academy as an institution ceased to operate. After the University of Namibia (Unam) came into operation distance education was reformed and restructured to offer education at tertiary level. In the restructuring process the Department of Distance Education, together with the newly established Department of Continuing Education, became the Centre for External Studies (CES) .

At present the CES is in the process of phasing out its previous education courses in order to make way for new programmes. The staff of CES consists of the following:

- *Academic staff*

Director

2 course organisers (one as head of the Department of Distance Education)

8 full-time lecturers

50 part-time lecturers

- *Administrative staff*

1 assistant registrar (CES)

1 administrative coordinator

4 distance education officers

1 secretary

1 typist

1 general assistant

GENERAL PROBLEMS AND WEAKNESSES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION AT UNAM

Unam is phasing out 'old' courses and is in the process of developing new programmes. The university has developed new programmes suitable for face-to-face lecturing which

need to be adapted to the distance education mode. While the various faculties are dealing with their own problems regarding the new programmes, the CES is running out of courses. As in other countries, scepticism about the quality and status of distance education is a problem.

The lack of trained administrative staff causes problems in the daily activities of the CES.

Recruitment of qualified people to assist in the preparation of study material and the tutoring of distance students is one of the main problems facing CES.

PROFILE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS IN CES

A research by Keyter and Beukes in 1993 indicated that the average age of distance education students in CES is 29 years; this means that these students can be categorised as adults. Research by Mowes (CES) indicated that most of these students did not have, or did not take, opportunities earlier in their lives to improve their education. Female students (62%) form the greater part of the distance education student population.

Most of the distance education students (66%) live in the northern parts of Namibia. Nineteen per cent of all these students live in Windhoek, the capital city.

The majority (80%) of these students are in possession of a Grade 12 Certificate, because it is a requirement for entry into most of the courses offered by CES.

While the courses offered by CES are in-service training courses the majority (98%) of these students are employed as teachers, police officers and public servants.

THE NEEDS OF DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS IN CES

The two main reasons for distance students to study education are promotion and a decision by the government that unqualified teachers should qualify themselves or face retrenchment. It is not only students in the teaching profession who need further studies, but also students in other professions, for example police officers.

Students study for a variety of reasons, but the main motive in most of the cases is promotion.

To succeed in their studies distance students need an effective student support system. These students expect such a support system to include the following services:

- the provision of counselling, which is widely and increasingly recognised
- the opportunity for face-to-face tutoring
- quality feedback on the assignments that they send in for marking
- quality tutors to mark students' assignments
- high quality printed study material (the only medium of teaching)

- the opportunity to contact their tutors when students experience difficulties in their courses
- not studying in isolation

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE CES

To meet the needs of distance education students in the CES the following support is provided:

- Face-to-face contact: two times a year (for one week) students attend classes in Windhoek and in the north where face-to-face instruction is offered.
- The university has established nine centres in the country. These centres are being run by centre heads. These centre heads are responsible for the following activities:
 - enrolment of students at the beginning of the year
 - distribution of study materials to students
 - organisation of weekend sessions when students have face-to-face tutoring by tutors recruited by the centre heads
 - organisation of group discussions for distance students
 - maintaining the small library in the centre which is available to distance students of CES
 - telephone contacts between students and their lecturers in Windhoek (arranged by the centre head)
 - dealing with student matters
 - assisting with the organisation of vacation schools, especially the ones in the north
 - sending out newsletters to students in their region
- Audio tapes are provided in language courses.
- Lecturers who are marking students' assignments receive training in this and in writing tutorial letters.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF STUDENT SUPPORT IN CES

Currently there are more weaknesses than strengths in the student support system of CES. One strong point is that almost all the lecturers are devoted to helping the distance student in the best way they can. It needs to be mentioned that the majority of lecturers

are employed on a contract (part-time) basis for only one year. These lecturers are from all walks of life, for example teachers, lawyers and police officers.

The weaknesses of the student support system in CES can be summarised as follows:

- too little face-to-face contact for students (centre heads try to organise more face-to-face sessions over weekends)
- too few permanent staff to offer qualitative support (CES recruits part-time lecturers to assist full-time staff)
- only a few centres to be utilised, which means that students have to travel long distances to visit the centres
- no student counsellors (lecturers are requested to assist in this regard)
- written study material as the only means of instruction (except in languages where students receive audio tapes)
- very little assistance provided by CES in design and editing of distance learning materials
- no utilisation of electronic media (television and radio)
- losses and delays in regard to students' assignments (CES sends assignments to the centres by courier; the centre heads distribute them to the students to avoid assignments getting lost in the post)

MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE SOME PROBLEM AREAS

CES introduced a monitoring system to have quality control over the marking of student assignments. From time to time full-time lecturers receive assignments marked by part-time lecturers; they scan them and give advice to these lecturers in order to improve on the tutoring of the distance students.

An assistant registrar was appointed to administer the smooth running of the administrative section in CES.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Staff members attend workshops and seminars on distance education from time to time. Staff members also present seminars and workshops to members of CES, as well as to people from outside the university. Some staff members are currently enrolled for distance education courses at the Open University (UK). It is the policy of CES to expose members to training as much as possible.

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Until recently the one-writer approach was followed in the writing of study material for the distance students. In 1994 the CES tried to introduce the team approach in the preparation of study materials. The team consists of a writer, moderator, editor and a person to do the layout and design of the material. Study material is printed by the printing section of the university.

The CES has its own facility to copy audio tapes for language courses.

FUTURE PROJECTIONS

As mentioned above, the CES is in the process of phasing out existing education programmes. The Higher Primary Education Certificate and Education Diploma Primary will be offered for the last time in 1998. New courses to be offered by CES in the near future are Bachelor of Education (with initial specialisation in English and Mathematics), and the Degree in Nursing Science

From 1996 radio will play a more important role in student support.

From 1996 the university centres will be under the supervision of CES in order to have better control over the activities of these centres. In the past these centres were under the supervision of the examination office.

POSTSCRIPT (ADDED IN SEPTEMBER 1997)

In 1997 the Polytechnic of Namibia broke its links with CES and set up its own Distance Education Centre, though an agreement has been reached to continue to use the student support services offered by Unam's regional CES centres. Unam's external students have therefore decreased to approximately 800 in 1997. It is predicted that these numbers will increase to over 1 000 in 1998 and to 2 000 by the year 2000. The support services described below are being designed to cater for these increasing student numbers.

Several new programmes have been, or are being, introduced by Unam, through CES, which accounts for the expected increasing student numbers. These include an expansion of the Diploma in Education, African Languages (with a current enrolment of over 80), the Bachelor of Nursing Science (Advanced Practice), which enrolled nearly 200 when introduced in 1997, and the Bachelor of Education, which will be introduced in November 1997 with more than 200 students, with initial subject specialisation in mathematics and English. As new teaching subjects are introduced from 1999 onwards it is expected that these enrolment numbers will increase rapidly. It is also planned that one further bachelor's degree programme will be introduced in 1998/99, probably in management.

One of the major changes being introduced by CES which will, it is hoped, contribute significantly to improved student services and success rates is the creation of a professional instructional design unit which will assist part-time course writers to produce more effective, more student-friendly learning materials which will meet internationally recognised standards for distance and open learning materials. This unit has already taken responsibility for the creation of quality promotion and control structures.

The second major change is the creation of a student support services unit within CES whose professional responsibility is the diversification and intensification of tutorial, counselling and other support services for CES students scattered around Namibia. These include improved design and use of vacation schools, turning them from impersonal and overcrowded lectures into opportunities for students to interact intensively with their tutors to help them to study their materials more effectively. They also include improved postal tutoring through increased personalisation and a decrease in the number of students allocated to each marker tutor. Finally they include increased local tutorial services, including regular weekend tutorials where students can attend these; less regular but more intensive tutorials in more isolated study centres for those who can't; experiments with tele-tutoring via organised telephone conferences; and the use, as they become available, of e-mail, fax-tutoring and other forms of computer-based support services. The purpose of these diversified services is to experiment to find the most appropriate tutorial support forms for Namibia's differing population patterns, and to reduce the challenge of isolation in Namibia's population of external students.

The third form of improved services is the gradual expansion and upgrading of Unam's regional centres, by upgrading existing staff, improving library and information services, and by introducing a cadre of professional academic tutorial and outreach coordinators to stimulate, support and supervise such services.

Finally, CES is working to revise and improve its administrative structures, regulations and services to recognise and cater for the special needs of external students as compared to full-time on-campus students for whom its administrative systems have previously been designed. These will include more flexible enrolment and registration patterns, more open study schedules, and more responsive information and counselling services.

It is CES's hope and intention that the above changes will help more of its students to study effectively, and successfully and will serve to expand Unam's offerings to an ever-increasing body of students.