E-Teaching in Teacher Education—A Conceptual Framework of Sultan Idris Education University

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Teacher education programs are essentially institution-based. Their students need to be exposed more to the realities of school and community. Internship, practice of teaching, practical activities, and supplementary educational activities are better planned and organized more systematically. Malaysian government announced that in 2020 all the primary and secondary school teachers must be graduated. In accordance to that, Sultan Idris Education University is offering the distance learning education to all school teachers. The frame work of the teaching involves e-learning. E-education involves e-teaching and e-learning along with the various administrative and strategic measures needed to support teaching and learning in an internet environment. It will incorporate a local, regional, and national view of education. This paper will be analyzing the e-teaching which involves distance learning in Sultan Idris Education University.

Keyword: e-teaching, e-learning, online learning, UPSI, e-education

Introduction

It is well recognized that the overall quality in education mainly depends on the quality of teachers. A program aiming for professional preparation of teachers is essential for imparting quality education. Teaching is an art which can be inculcated through a series of well designed activities in respect of education and training of teachers and is equally valid for professional preparation of teacher educators. Malaysian government enhances the school teacher's education in a quality way by several workshops and trainings. To upgrade the teacher's qualification, government has encouraged the school teachers to pursue higher degrees while they are teaching. Following this, Sultan Idris Educational University got an opportunity to offer the distance learning degrees to the school teachers. The teachers are selected for various subjects and the classes are taught by face to face on weekends.

Teacher Education—Present Status

Teacher education in Malaysia has undergone scrutiny from time to time. It is important that such a process is carried out to ensure that teacher education remains relevant and accountable to the demands of the society and nation. It seems to be even more important now when there are new demands on teacher education to produce teachers who would be able to meet the challenges of globalization. In this context, this study has identified major contemporary issues and challenges in teacher education in Malaysia. It is an on-going attempt

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to identify the major issues and also figure out ways to address those issues to further enhance the quality of teacher education in Malaysia. Apart from this, this study also aimed to focus on the teacher's education curriculum, prospective teacher's knowledge, skills and attitude, client's perceptions about the prospective teachers in terms or their knowledge, skills, and attitude, and the appropriate teacher education model for Malaysia.

The prefix "e" is attached to activities like real estate, retailing, banking, entertainment, and currently education. The "e" stands for electronic and it relates to the use of the Internet to undertake the wide range of activities. As we become more familiar with the language of the Internet, we find just how much it pervades our daily lives in the dot.com age. We readily recognize *http://www.* as an Internet web site and see it plastered on vehicles, billboards, hot air balloons, and merchandise and in the screen and print media. Educators are now beginning to hear terms like e-teaching, e-learning, and e-education as it subtly becomes part of our regular vocabulary.

E-education involves e-teaching and e-learning along with the various administrative and strategic measures needed to support teaching and learning in an Internet environment. It will incorporate a local, regional, national, and international view of education. Hence it is necessary to include the appropriate components, contents, and methods for e-teaching in the existing curriculum for teacher education.

Meaning & Scope of E-Teaching

The term "e-teaching" stands for all uses of information and communication technology in the process of education. This includes computer labs, virtual learning environments, PDAs in classrooms, etc. It is noted that e-teaching is increasingly becoming a reality in most universities. The use of IT in teaching holds a huge amount of potential and promise (cf. Alexander, 2001). In general, the e-teaching improves the learning process. According to Goldman, Cole, and Syer (1999, p. 73), "At its best, technology can facilitate deep exploration and integration of information, high-level thinking, and profound engagement by allowing students to design, explore, experiment, access information, and model complex phenomena". This means that traditional learning is supported, but also that the borders of traditional learning are transcended. Lee (1999) has pointed out that learning will become possible outside of traditional institutions and outside of traditional frameworks.

The empirical research has shown that the uses of technology in the right circumstances improve learning and overcome some of the barriers of learning found in traditional institutions (Piccoli, Ahmad, & Ives, 2001). While technology may not be a panacea, it can enable the effective application of constructive, cognitive, collaborative, and socio-cultural models of learning" (Leidner & Jarvenpaa, 1995, p. 288). One of the reasons of success of e-teaching is that it is closely associated with one of the central features of all educational processes namely communication. Communication is the basis of any successful education, no matter what learning model or underlying theory one chooses. Since IT is a tool for the improvement of communication, it stands to reason that its use will result in an improvement of education (Hesketh et al., 1996). Communication can be improved between learners and teachers as well as between learners (Tress, 2000).

Another expected advantage of e-teaching is that it can change the roles in the educational process. Traditionally, teaching in universities is teacher-centered and teachers used to be elevated far above learners. Both of these aspects can be detrimental to learning. Through the use of computers, students' attitudes improve and learning becomes more student-centered (Piccoli et al., 2001). Thus the e-teaching increases

the students' freedom and choice. Traditional instructional modes are often not suited to the use of technologies and will therefore have to be changed (Alavi, 1994). The change of roles implies that the paradigm will change from push to pull, meaning that while the students will be allowed and required to take greater control of their own education, the instructor's role will change to that of a facilitator or coach (Ives & Jarvenpaa, 1996).

In order to enhance the success of e-teaching, teachers must fulfill several non-trivial conditions. They must have a certain level of proficiency in using computers and other information and communication technology tools. It has been shown that familiarity with computers is necessary for successful e-teaching (Piccoli et al., 2001; Leidner & Jarvenpaa, 1995). Further when one is capable to use a computer and web technologies, then they realize the needs of psychological requirements, the ability to work unsupervised, a general attitude toward technology, etc. These requirements, if not met, could jeopardize even the best-prepared attempt of e-teaching.

Components of Online Teaching

The main component for online teaching and learning application is university integrated management system. All the comprehensive modules, accessible through the web, have single sign-on feature. The main modules are MyUPSI Portal, MyFIS, MySIS, MyGuru2, and MyHRA. Integration of the system fulfils three main objectives which are to ensure efficient data management and retrieval, to ensure data reliability and integrity, and to enable data mining for knowledge discovery (Wan Maseri, 2004). All the teaching and learning processes are carried out via MyGuru2. It is a platform with various functions and features designed to support an outstanding teaching and learning process. It allows the lecturers to create the content of teaching resources and upload them. Meanwhile they can also monitor their students' activities.

The Role of the Instructor in the Online Learning Environment

The e-learning portal enables all teaching and learning processes to be carried out via MyGuru2. It allows the lecturers to create the content of teaching resources and upload them. Here the lecturers can monitor their student's activities, and lectures can create activities for students to enhance the learning progress. Here the lecturer is well aware about the grading system, forum, file sharing, and collaborative tools. Instructions and academic news can be delivered to all students on time.

The Role of the Learner in the Online Learning Environment

The teaching and learning can be done continuously 24x7 with the access to Internet. Students can download the materials anytime and anywhere. Learner can participate in the forum and involved in collaborative learning by joining forums. The questions posted by the lecturer will intrigue the discussion among the learners themselves. This will create an active discussing port. In addition to this, learner can submit their assignment through online and participate in the quiz.

Assessing Online Teaching and Learning Readiness

MY Guru acts as the medium of e-learning and e-teaching tool for the distance learners, UPSI lectures, and the students. It is the main communication channel between lectures and students for forums, personal messages, quizzes, tests, and web conferencing etc. The assessment of mark is done in another platform called

MySIS. Here there is an option called mark distribution. The mark distributed according to the lecturer and according to the subject. The 100 marks for the subject can categorized according to lecturer's preference for example 40 marks for assignment, 20 marks for quiz, and 40 marks for final examination. According to the distribution the MySIS platform will calculate the grade of marks automatically. The tick column helps to view the marks of the students.

Problems & Remedies

Large number of students for common subjects were split into many groups and placed under the subject experts. Here the students are supervised by the respective lecturers. Although being watched, there are possibilities for the students to copy the assignments and submit it to multiple lecturers. To avoid this problem there must be a common forum for lectures to verify and check the assignment topics of the students. Another big challenge which arises in the e-learning is the submission of assignments. This is because quizzes and forum assigned to particular person might be completed by another person for example friends as they can access the portal anywhere and anytime if the username and password are known. Here the lecturer will face problem in identifying the originality and trustworthiness of the assignment. So, to avoid these, we need one automatic screen shot or face capture when they login to their portal to answer or participate in the learning session and it must be recorded. It helps us to avoid from such malpractices.

Conclusion

E-education in future has to encompass the broader canvas which is consistently emerging before the teachers and shall continue to change at a much faster pace in times ahead. Generally, it has to ensure the realization of the learner centred education, women centred family, human centred development, knowledge centred society, and ultimately innovation centred nation. Teachers must have a global view of the new trends, strategies, and practices, and focus on indigenous heritage and thoughts which could fit in the local, national, and international situations. The e-education should focus on competencies and commitment in the field of e-teaching in future. It also needs to have a detailed look into solving problems such plagiarism to upgrade the quality of teacher's education. This is to ensure the formation of prospective teachers.

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