

Shifting the paradigm: The use of multiple mode assessment strategies in distance teacher training programme for inclusivity.

Kofi Poku Quan-Baffour
Institute for Adult Basic Education & Training
University of South Africa
quanbkp@unisa.ac.za

Abstract

The question of assessment is central to the understanding of competencies of students studying at a distance to become teachers. The traditional mode of assessment which measures knowledge and skills of distance teacher trainees is very narrow. It tends to concentrate on one aspect of assessment. For example it is limited to finding out the knowledge and skills of distance teacher trainees through one to three hour test or examination. That 'once-off' exercise fails to capture the entirety of what the students know at any given situation of learning. This assessment strategy ignores the possibility of assessing students holistically through multiple methods and strategies. To measure the knowledge and skills of teacher trainees at a distance in a fair and authentic manner there must be a shift of the paradigm from the traditional 'once off' to a multiple mode assessment. This shift must involve teacher trainees in assessment strategies that provide them with the opportunities to demonstrate their competencies in various ways. This paper proposes the use of multiple assessment modes such as tests, examinations, projects, portfolio, demonstrations, assignments, self-assessment, peer assessment in both formative and summative ways to assess distance teacher trainees holistically and inclusively. This shifting of the paradigm could make assessment more authentic, fairer, humane, democratic and all inclusive. The proposed broad based approach to assessment could capture the competencies of teacher trainees at a distance in various ways and under various assessment strategies. This integrated and flexible system of assessment may give a more holistic picture of an individual student's performance and ability than one that is based on a single 'shot'. The movement from a single assessment mode to multi-dimensional assessment strategies may demonstrate a distance education institution's shift towards the ethos of openness in their discourse of and assessment practices that measure student competencies from all angles.

Key words: **paradigm, shift, assessment, distance, trainee, holistic, inclusive**

Introduction

In a distance education situation learning occurs where the lecturer and the student are usually removed from each other in space and time (Yates & Tilson, 2000:7). In other words a significant proportion of education [that is, teaching, learning and assessment] is conducted where the lecturer and the student are separated from each other permanently or most of the time. In Perraton's (2000:13) view open learning is an organisational activity based on the use of teaching materials, in which the constraints on study are minimised either in terms of access, or of time and place, pace, methods of study or any combination of these. The umbrella term 'open and distance learning' is currently used to cover educational approaches where teacher trainees are taught and assessed at their schools, provided with learning resources to enable them to qualify without attending college in person or open up new opportunities for keeping up to date no matter where or when they want to study (Perraton, 2001:3).

Assessment is sine qua non to teaching and learning no matter the circumstances or conditions under which the process occurs. Literally teachers are like the navigators of ships at sea. To know which way to go, they need to know where they are. Therefore like the navigator who must keep a running record of the ship's approximate position and make frequent checks to fix its exact location, teachers must continually appraise and reappraise their position. If this [assessment] is not done how would teachers know what direction to aim their course? (Clark & Starr, 2000:378). Thus the question of assessment is central to the understanding of the competencies of students studying at a distance to become teachers.

However, the traditional mode of assessment which measures knowledge and skills of teacher trainees is very narrow. It tends to concentrate on one aspect of assessment and therefore inadequate for training of teachers at a distance. For example it is limited to finding out the knowledge and skills of teacher trainees through two-three hour test or examination only. That 'once-off' exercise fails to capture the entirety of what the student knows at any given situation of learning. This assessment strategy ignores the possibility of finding out what the students know through multiple mode strategies that could holistically and adequately capture the knowledge and skills they have acquired as a result of instruction.

To measure the knowledge and skills of teacher trainees at a distance in a fair, democratic and authentic manner there must be a shift of the paradigm from the traditional 'once off' to a multiple mode assessment strategies. This shift must involve teacher trainees in assessment strategies that provide them with the opportunities to demonstrate their competencies in a variety of ways. The multiple mode assessment not only gives the student the opportunity to demonstrate competencies in a number of areas but also ensures quality and thus debunks the perception [by some critics of distance education] that teachers trained at a distance might be sub-standard compared to those trained via the conventional face- to- face programmes.

This paper proposes the use of multiple assessment modes such as tests, examinations, projects, portfolios, demonstrations, written assignments, self- assessment, peer assessment and observation. All these assessment modes can be done in both formative and summative ways to assess distance teacher trainees in a more holistic manner. This shifting of the paradigm from the 'once- off' to multiple mode could make assessment more authentic, fairer, humane, democratic and inclusive. This proposed broad based approach to assessment could capture the competencies of teacher trainees at a distance in various ways and contexts. It is an integrated and flexible system of assessment that could give a more holistic picture of an individual student's performance [knowledge and skills] and abilities [competencies] than the traditional method based on a single 'shot' activity. The movement from a single assessment mode to multi-dimensional assessment strategies may demonstrate a distance education institution's shift towards the ethos of open-ness in their discourse of and assessment practices that are not only practical but also measure student competencies from all angles.

Training teachers at a distance in Africa: the motivation

Distance education or Open distance learning has become the practice rather the norm in the contemporary world. In many parts of the modern world almost all conventional tertiary institutions are, to some extent, involved in distance education to provide many people with learning opportunities (Evans and Nation 1996). The need to change with the times in order to meet the learning needs of the contemporary society has ushered in the rapid demand for distance teaching and learning opportunities. All over Africa conventional face- to- face universities are faced with ever increasing number of applications for enrollment. To cope with the growing number of students it is imperative for African countries to provide higher education institutions with the necessary support to enable them devise alternative delivery system to the existing conventional face-to- face teaching and learning. The conventional face-to-face mode of delivery can only reach a few people in Africa and to make education available to all potential students it is crucial to find alternative ways. Distance education as a partner in the education process can contribute a great deal to both formal and informal education either to fill some gaps or offer initial and basic education and training on the continent. Distance education is a very important instrument for development.

As Harris and Williams (1977) observe;
there might have been no Western Commercial
and Industrial revolution in the late 19th and early
20th century in all its momentum and power without
distance education. Distance education
was indeed half-hidden reinforcement and background to
the more visible improvement of the formal education
system at the time of the Industrial Revolution
(Harris & Williams p4).

As a matter of fact development- human, economic or infrastructural- cannot take place without education. The quest for development has become a reality in Africa since the beginning of this millenium. Most African countries have become aware of the fact that they can only achieve the millenium development goals when, if not all, at least over 90% of their nationals receive basic education. Against this background most governments on the continent are trying to make education accessible to all citizens by opening more schools even at the remotest corners of the countries. The irony is that while the demand for education is increasing and for that matter more schools are being built the most important vehicle for education - teachers- is dwindling by the day. Citing UNESCO, Kgosana (2005) reports that there is a shortage of 30 million teachers world wide and Sub-Sahara Africa needs 4 million more if the goal of education for all[EFA] by 2015 has to be achieved. The need for more teachers has escalated due to a number of factors which include teacher attrition emanating from poor conditions of service, HIV/AIDS scorge, movement of teachers to other professions with good salaries and even leaving their home countries for overseas. While the old go on pension or die the poor conditions of teachers do not attract many young people to the profession. In view of this situation the demand for qualified teachers in most African countries outstrips the supply.

To meet the ever increasing demand for qualified teachers, who form the cornerstone of education, many higher education institutions on the continent have started to supplement conventional residential training of teachers with the distance delivery mode. The efforts by traditional face - to- face higher education institutions such as the University of Pretoria, University of North West (in South Africa), University of education Wenniba, University of Cape Coast (in Ghana), NIEPA (Nigeria), University of Ethopia and others in training teachers at a distance are cases in point. Since the 1940s the University of South Africa, one of the mega world class open distance learning institutions has been the only known institution on the continent which ran all its programmes, including teacher training, at a distance. As the de facto leader in distance education in Africa UNISA still trains thousands of teachers all over the continent. Its teacher education programmes cover pre-service and in-service teacher training for primary and high schools and colleges.

When pre-service teachers are trained and the knowledge and skills of existing ones are upgraded through distance education delivery they may be well equipped to to teach and turn out skilled and knowledgeable civil servants such as nurses, medical practitioners, accountants, technicians etc who can improve productivity for the development of the economies of their respective countries. Open distance education institutions employ technology in delivering knowledge and skills at a distance. Commenting on how modern technology assists in open distance education delivery, Parmaji (1984:22) writes:

The greatest contribution of media in distance education
is that media have widened the frontiers of education

available to the public. Supplemented by an effective, auxiliary face-to-face interpersonal network, media effect is tremendous and entire societies can be changed and modernised in a short span of time.

A majority of teachers in Africa are parents, bread winners or people with lots of responsibilities. Among them may be untrained or less-qualified teachers but who on account of socio-economic responsibilities can not leave work to go back to school full-time. An important reality is that these teachers are scattered in all regions and communities in the various countries which makes it impossible to be reached and taught through the conventional face-to-face mode of delivery. The training of teachers at a distance is more flexible because unlike the conventional face-to-face education the trainees have the option to take the number of courses that may suit their circumstances (e.g. as a parent, worker or a community leader). Illiteracy is one of the biggest stumbling blocks to development, therefore when teachers are trained at a distance more teachers for literacy programmes can be trained at a faster rate to provide basic education in their communities. Basic education includes those programmes with alternative curricula such as basic health, nutrition, family planning, literacy, agriculture and other life related and vocational skills (Yates and Tilson 2000:7). In most parts of Africa because of remoteness of some places which is due in part to geographical circumstances, political problems, scattered communities, poor communication and transport networks many potential and ambitious adults are denied access to education. Learning opportunities must be opened to people living under different and difficult circumstances to enable them contribute to the overall development of the continent. The traditional approach to education which is characterised by 'chalk and talk' cannot rapidly help solve the colonial legacy of illiteracy and lack of skills among Africans hence the need to educate, train and retrain more teachers at a distance. The more Africans become literate the more social problems, particularly HIV/AIDS and ignorance can be reduced. The escalating growth of population and spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa, particularly among women, can be explained in terms of the high illiteracy levels among millions of them.

Thomas, Crow et al (1994:60) affirm that;

female education and health are correlated, and female literacy rates have direct impact on demographic variables such as fertility and infant mortality for developing countries. An educated and informed female population will bring about a lowering of population growth rates, lowering infant mortality rate. This will assist countries to reach other developmental goals.

Herein lies the reason for the training of teachers at a distance for Africa's development. As the cornerstone for education, teachers must be trained both within and outside the conventional modes to meet the increasing demand for education.

Traditional Assessment: A critique

The word assessment brings to mind rows of students in an examination room, busily writing away, with one eye on the clock, and a stern-faced invigilator pacing up and down. It also brings to mind marks, marking and certification (McKay,1998:126). This is the traditional form of assessment most educated people are familiar with. In most developing countries

especially in Africa this parochial form of assessment applies to all categories of students - whether education is provided through the conventional face-to-face or distance the assessment is one way- written test or examination. The same also applies to the training of teachers. As the need for more teachers becomes a reality in Africa some countries are now training teachers at a distance but have not altered the traditional mode of assessment.

Some of the major characteristics of the traditional mode of assessment are briefly outlined here. It is norm referenced i.e. it creates a standard or norm which requires that a certain percentage of learners should pass and the rest fail. The assessment practice usually pushes out failures from the education system whether at school, college or university level. It does not tell what an individual student knows holistically but seeks to compare students who are at the same level.

The traditional assessment mode which is examination-based and summative in nature emphasises 'pencil and paper' tests and tends to rely on recall of content. A high proportion of questions under the traditional assessment procedure requires the candidate simply to reproduce learned material directly from memory, without reconstructing it or using it in any way. Very often the tested material consists largely of 'factoids'- isolated fragments such as figures, names, dates, places, technical terms - the building blocks of knowledge rather than its structures (Somerset, 1996: 276). This system of education and its narrow assessment procedures train teachers to literally 'deposit' information into the minds of students and 'withdraw it' at the end of the term or year. The practice has been described by Paulo Freire (1978) as the banking system of education.

The [traditional] assessment which teachers in almost all African countries are trained to implement does not only fail to assess students, democratically, fairly and holistically but it is also too teacher- centred and puts undue stress on students. Teacher trainees are assessed in the same way and are taught to implement it when they enter the profession. The system of assessment has therefore become a vicious circle with serious shortcomings. Over emphasising on the process, at the expense of outcomes, is a frequent weakness of teaching practice assessment during teacher training. Because classroom observation is much more labour intensive than most other modes of assessment, teacher educators tend to rate trainees on aspects of practice which are readily apparent during their short visits: the preparation of lessons, classroom management, use of teaching aids etc. But evidence as to whether or not the trainees' approaches are leading to effective learning takes longer to gather, and so tends to be overlooked (Somerset, 1996). This traditional way of assessing student teachers tend to reduce rich and complex lives to a collection of scores, percentiles or grades. It puts too much pressure on teacher educators to narrow curriculum to only what is tested in 2-3 hours examination.

The system also emphasises 'one shot' examination that assesses knowledge residing in a single mind at a single moment in time. Apart from focussing too much importance on single sets of data (eg, test scores) in making educational decisions it treats trainee teachers in a uniform way. Individuals have different aptitudes and learning styles hence teacher trainees must be subjected to and trained to implement the type of assessment procedures that take into consideration not only what individuals know but also capable of doing. Assessment should support learning by helping individual students to develop and further learning. It should be enabling rather than limiting. Gipps (1996:252) aptly points out that the notion of limitation is a major disadvantage of the psychometric approach [to assessment] i.e. measuring attributes which are a property of the individual and which are fixed. Armstrong (1994:117) adds that standardised testing is thoroughly impoverished because amongst other things the approach tends to emphasis " one- shot examination that assesses knowledge residing in a single mind at a single moment in time."

Assessment which is based on only test or examination encourages cramming. That is, students literally 'chew,' 'pour,' 'pass' and 'forget' a particular content or information. To borrow the words of Armstrong (1994:115);

It would certainly be the height of hypocrisy to ask students to participate in a wide range of multi-spectrum experiences in all seven intelligences, and then require them to show what they have learned through standardised test that focuses narrowly on verbal or logical domains.

Paradigm's shift: the application of multiple mode assessment strategies

The inadequacies in the traditional mode of assessment calls for a shift in the paradigm to make assessment of teacher trainees at a distance not only more inclusive but also more authentic, democratic and learner-centred. The necessity to shift from the traditional assessment towards a multiple mode of assessment which is more inclusive, holistic and student centred is totally dictated by the desire to go beyond the limitations of the traditional assessment and the need to address real life experiences and explore how these can help teacher students to be involved in their own assessment. In other words, it is a drive towards student- centred and democratization of assessment. The multiple mode of assessment which is the focus of this discussion may not be the panacea for all the woes of assessment. It may nevertheless shift the emphasis of assessment from a narrow point of view to broader strategies that assess the teacher trainees more holistically, i.e. in all the seven intelligences.

Under the new proposal assessment [i.e. tests, examinations, practical work, observations and records of achievement] come not only in a range of forms but with different purposes and underlying philosophies which relate to the issue of fitness-for-purpose (Gipps, 1996:251). The assessment to gauge out the extent to which teacher trainees have acquired content of their chosen subjects and skills for teaching may fit its purpose- enhancing the teacher's content knowledge and teaching competencies. The new form of teaching and assessment of teacher trainees at a distance should enable students to understand what they learn so that they can apply it in different contexts. A better approach is to develop alternative forms of instruction in which distance teacher trainees and their lecturers could jointly engage in knowledge construction and in which lecturers progressively turn over meta-cognitive functions to teacher trainees, so that learning is an intentional process where teacher students are taught how to learn. Real learning involves construction of one's own interpretations and relating this to existing knowledge and understandings, not mere recall of facts or information. Learning is seen as a process of personal knowledge construction and meaning making, describing a more complex and diverse process (Gipps 1996:258).

If we are to develop assessment to support learning which sits within the educational paradigm rather than the psychometric model we need to develop assessment programmes and procedures which use performance assessment and teacher assessment. For assessment of distance teacher trainees to be of good standard the students need learning support. At UNISA in particular, student support is provided through discussion classes, tutorials sessions [face-to-face and tele-conferencing], copious constructive comments provided by lecturers and tutors on students' assignments. For quality assurance in the training of teachers the university appoints qualified tutors throughout the country and trains them through

workshops of 3 or more times a year. The study guides provided by the University to its students are user friendly in that they are easy to read by any average teacher student, more interactive and learner –centred. UNESCO (2001) affirms that UNISA has a superb quality assurance measures which includes external assessment of teacher education courses, external moderation of assessment of teachers and review of study materials by external assessors. The various assessment tasks in which distance teacher trainees engage in must be of high quality and pedagogically sound so that the time is not seen as wasted. This therefore requires assessment to be more diverse and to assess in more depth the structure and quality of students' learning and understanding.

The paradigm shift from the traditional mould to the multiple mode assessment aims at making assessment of distance teacher trainees more authentic. This idea requires that assessment tasks should not only cover various methods but must also be real examples of skills and learning goals rather than proxies. Authentic assessment implies that the assessment is authentic to the learning activity we wish to promote and/or that the context of the assessment is authentic rather than artificial (Gipps 1996). Authentic assessment is always performance – based so it is in effect a special case performance assessment. Examples of performance-based and therefore authentic assessment are practical tasks such as written essays, demonstrations [as obtains in work integrated learning sessions of teacher trainees], portfolios and projects.

The limitations of the traditional mode of assessment coupled with the democratic drive to involve learners in designing relevant assessment instruments and modes has given rise to authentic and multiple mode of assessment which is regarded by many as more holistic and inclusive. Authentic assessment is student- centred where teacher trainees would be involved in their own assessment. For example, peer, group and joint assessment could be used during work integrated learning sessions of the teacher trainees. The lecturers or experts within the vicinity of the students could moderate the assessment done by peers. In this case all observers - peers, lecturers or experts from the the field of education- may award marks for various aspects of teaching e.g. lesson preparation, classroom management, lesson introduction, development [learner participation and activities, activities of teacher trainee] and closure of the lesson. The assessment of content knowledge and teaching skills done in this way could be moderated by the lecturers as quality measures. Gipps (1996:261) points out that if we are really concerned about learning for all, and with the [student] at the centre then we must look at what we know about learning and use that to frame assessment practice. We must train teachers in observation, diagnostic questioning and formative assessment, give them curricular definitions and exemplars of performance and offer group moderation processes as well as external audit or moderation. Training teachers in assessment and supporting school-based assessment needs to be seen as a crucial part of teaching, not as an add on. If we wish assessment to support learning we can do so, even when that assessment is to be used for monitoring and selection purposes (Gipps, 1996).

Assessment of distance teacher trainees should be holistic. It must take into consideration authentic measures that probe students' understanding of content more thoroughly than 'once-off' test or examination. By multiple mode and therefore authentic assessment measures it means that assessment strategies allow teacher trainees to show what they have learnt in context – in other words, in a setting that closely matches the environment in which they would be expected to teach in real life. It also means that assessment is broader and inclusive. That is, it must be continuous and involve a variety of learning and assessment opportunities.

Authentic and or multiple mode assessment is over praised because amongst other things it assesses on an ongoing phases in a way that provides a more accurate picture of a student's achievement (Armstrong 1994). Lending further weight in support of the mixed mode assessment McKay (1998) states: 'we want to remind you that we do not think that all 'traditional' methods are wrong; rather we want to caution you against problems that we may encounter with assessment in general. This is not only an acknowledgement of the goodness of some aspects of the traditional mode of assessment but it is also an implicit argument in favour of the mixed mode approach to assessment. The mixed mode assessment strategies recognise the significance of taking those elements of assessment within the traditional method and fusing them with new and a variety of methods. The new paradigm requires student teachers to be assessed and graded on all aspects of learning e.g. theory and practice. This means tests and written examinations may take certain percentage of the over all marks and the success of the student may not be determined by only tests or written examination of few hours. The multiple mode and authentic assessment strategies which may be more inclusive in the training of teachers at a distance and can be combined with tests or examinations are briefly described here.

- **Portfolio**

This is a collection of a student's work which provides a representation of his/her achievement. Portfolio includes evidence of the student's work which he/she has compiled for evaluation or assessment. The portfolio collection will tell a story about the student's progress over time, or about his/her achievements in one or more learning areas (McKay, 1998). A portfolio may include samples of a student's best work such as notes prepared or research done by the student or essays written. It gives the teacher trainee an opportunity to present the best work done for assessment. Because the portfolio is the product of a student's efforts compiled through out a period of time, it demonstrates their capacity to intervene and make inputs in designing assessment instruments that correspond to what they want to learn and how. For an example the entry into Honours' B.Ed programme with a specialisation in Adult Basic Education and Training at UNISA, in some special cases, require prospective distance teacher trainees to submit portfolios on their work to be evaluated for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). What this means is that students are accepted into the programme on the basis of information on knowledge and skills that they already acquired either from work or experiences in life.

A portfolio as an authentic assessment tool for distance teacher trainees has merits. For example it preserves a detailed picture of students' achievement and tracks their progress over time. Apart from enabling teacher trainees to track their own achievement a portfolio also has the advantage of helping the student teacher to reflect on his/her own achievement. In this way distance teacher trainees could obtain important insights into academic interests and aptitude through the opportunity of analysing and comparing their later work with earlier work (and so map their progress over time). The preparation and experiences of work integrated learning which students provide as evidence of academic and professional development [i.e knowledge of content and teaching skills] do not only provide assessors with the broader picture of what students are capable of doing but also assist them to understand the work productions requirements of teachers in real life situations.

- **Projects.**

A project in distance teacher training programme is a student teacher's own initiative and activity designed to give him/her a practical training in specific skills in any project that

relates to teaching and learning. The teacher trainee can be guided to undertake a learning project of their own interest such as how to deal with a disruptive learner in class, HIV/AIDS, gardening and poultry keeping or painting. The project can be assessed as it progresses, and thus equips the distance teacher trainees with the hands-on learning experience. A major advantage of a project as an authentic assessment mode is that it is student-centred. That is, distance teacher trainees are given the opportunity and guided to learn relevant skills that can enhance their professional practices as teachers. Teacher trainees become more motivated to learn new knowledge and skills through individual, joint or group projects because it affords them with the opportunity to initiate their own projects. In this way, students teachers are equipped with life skills which may assist them teach their learners the skills to create their own jobs. A project in distance teacher training is more student-centred learning and its assessment can also be student-centred where peers could be involved in assisting lecturers or their representatives to assess them.

- **Anecdotal records.**

This relates to interesting unpublished short accounts about a scholar's academic activities. Through anecdotal records distance students can present their own or even colleagues' life experiences to comment on the tasks that they are faced with in their own day to day learning activities as teacher trainees at a distance. Anecdotes allow students teachers either to bring to the learning situation their life, academic and non-academic achievements such as classroom experiences from work integrated work, sports, music, athletics, indigenous songs and dance and even sad moments. Through reflection teacher trainees can learn from such experiences and use them to enhance teaching for the benefit of their learners. The use of anecdotal records as an alternative mode of assessment envisages a shift from assessment which is based only on academic achievements to a consideration of the student teacher's competencies in other fields such as sports, dance, entrepreneurship and music which are important learning areas to be taught by the contemporary teacher. Because it is the teacher trainee who is narrating the experience, anecdotes enable students to authorize new perspectives in ways not directed by an omniscient teacher.

- **Observation.**

An important strategy to assess distance teacher trainees is by observing what they practically do. For example during work integrated learning or work experience sessions distance teacher trainees' content knowledge, teaching skills, classroom activities, management, interaction with learners, how they introduce lessons, navigate through lesson phases, motivate learners to participate in lessons and assess learners could be observed and assessed by their peers or lecturers (or their representatives). We learn by doing hence distance teacher trainees should undertake 4-6 weeks real classroom teaching to be observed by experienced professionals, or lecturers and even their own peers. Through the practice of teaching first with a small number (peer teaching) and later with real learners in a school situation distance teacher trainees receive constructive criticism through the observer-assessors. Observation provides the best picture of students' competencies in content knowledge and the skills for imparting it to learners. The feedback from the observer-assessors may assist distance teacher trainees to learn more to improve their skills in teaching. The specific department offering the training of teachers at a distance may appoint specialists in particular fields to observe, record and send assessment reports on student teachers' teaching skills to the lecturers at the university for

moderation and capturing. The performance or marks obtained by the teacher trainees would form a percentage of the overall assessment at the end of the year or study programme. In few cases where there are no experts to observe the teaching of distance teacher trainees the students could record their individual practice teaching activities on video cassettes or DVDs and send them to the lecturers for observation and assessment.

Conclusion

This discussion has made it clear that the traditional mode of assessment is inadequate for teacher training programmes at a distance. It points out that for assessment to be more inclusive and holistic institutions offering teacher education programmes at a distance may need to apply multiple assessment strategies. When used together with the best practices the multiple mode assessment involving a variety of strategies such as portfolio, observation, anecdotal records, projects, tests and examination distance teacher trainees could be given the opportunity to be assessed in more holistic and inclusive manner than the traditional 'one - shot' summative method which involves 2-3 hour test or examination. And once this has happened distance education institutions entrusted with and involved in teacher training would have moved from a narrow assessment to a more student-centred kind of assessment that does not only involve students in their own assessment but more importantly provide them with the opportunities to be assessed on their competencies or what they are capable of doing. The mixed mode or multiple assessment could ensure or guarantee more quality which is not likely to be obtained in the traditional single mode assessment.

References

- Armstrong, T. 1994. Multiple intelligences in the classroom. American Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).
- Clark, L H.& Starr, I S. 2000. Secondary and Middle school Teaching Methods. New Jersey, Prentice Hall Ltd.
- Evans, T. & Nation, D. 1996. Opening Education Policies and Practices from Open and Distance Education. London. Routledge.
- Freire, P. 1978. Popular Education; An Encounter with Freire Quito CECCA/CEDECO
- Harris, WJA & Williams, JDS. 1977. A Handbook on Distance Education. Manchester; Monographs.
- Gipps, C. 1996. Assessment for Learning. In Assessment in Transition; Learning, Monitoring and Selection in International Perspective. Little A. & Wolf A. (eds). Oxford, Biddles Publishers Ltd.
- Kgosana, C 2005. Africa in dire need of teachers. City Press News Paper 11 December issue.
- McKay, V I. 1998. Assessment. In Adult Teaching and Learning. Study Guide for ABT201-E. McKay V I. (ed.) Pretoria, UNISA.

Parmaji, S 1984. Distance Education. New Delhi. Sterling publishers Ltd.

Perraton, H. 2000. Open and Distance Learning in Developing World. London. Routledge.

Perraton, H. 2001. Distance education for Teacher Training. Perraton.H. (ed.) London, Routledge.

Somerset, A. 1996. Examinations and educational quality in In Assessment in Transition; Learning, Monitoring and Selection in International Perspective. Little A & Wolf A(eds). Oxford, Biddles Publishers Ltd.

Thomas, A. Crow, B., Frenz, H T et al 1994.Third world atlas. Milton Keynes, UK Open University.

Yates, C and Tilson, T. 2000. Basic Education at a distance; An introduction. In Basic Education at a Distance. World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning vol. 2.Yates C & Bradley Jo (eds.). London; The Commonwealth of Learning.

UNSECO 2001. Teacher Education through distance learning; summary of case studies, Paris, UNESCO.