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Appendices and Definitions

Appendix 1: Definition of Key Terms

In Appendix 1, I have presented the key terms used in this study in alphabetical order and explained their contextual use in order to provide a common understanding.

Academic advisement (support): Encouraging distance learners to participate in communities of learning such as formal and informal discussion groups. This support may be in form of tutorial support during contact sessions, marking and providing feedback and constructive commenting on assignments and promoting participation in peer support sessions (Holmberg, 1995).

Administrative Support: Refers to the clarification of the obligations and responsibilities of learners and the education provider during the admission, registration and orientation stage and throughout the learning process including advice on assessment structures (Holmberg, 1995). It also entails making arrangements and providing learners with information about access to physical facilities and other learning resources such as libraries and necessary equipment for learning such as computers and science laboratories.

Collaboration: Refers to the partnership between the stakeholders in the provision of learner support services on the DPE programme.

Completers: This term refers to distance learners who had completed the four year duration and passed in all the subjects at all levels, the research project and the teaching assignment portfolio (TAP).

Computer literacy: Refers to the knowledge and skills that distance learners are supposed to acquire from the prescribed computer course.

Constructivism: Refers to the theory of learning that stresses the importance of experiences, experimentation, problem solving, and construction of Knowledge by the learner, (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 56).

Correspondence course: Refers to distance education delivery mode where the learning materials and assignments are mailed to the learner. The learner completes the assignment and returns it to the instructor (tutor) for marking. Feedback is provided through mail and the next assignment is mailed to the learner. The cycle is repeated until the course is completed (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 57).

Counselling Support: Learners are given counselling support to enable them to solve personal difficulties and advice related to their study before and during their course or programme, (Simpson, 2002).

Delivery system: Refers principally to the physical delivery in terms of originating, distributing, and receiving and using study materials (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 61).

ODL: An educational process in which the significant proportion of teaching is conducted by someone removed in time and/or space from the learner (UNESCO, 2002). The student and the instructor are physically separated by distance. All communications are mediated by some form of media in real or in delayed time. Technology i.e. voice, video data or print is used to bridge the instructional gap (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 66).

Flexible Learning: Refers to the removal of barriers to accessing higher education and the use of various media for the delivery of the curriculum and teaching and learning (Edwards et al., 2002).

Formative evaluation: Evaluation conducted during the development or improvement of a programme or product (or a person, etc.) (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 78).

Learner support: entails providing learners with opportunities for two-way communication through participatory and interactive learning materials, tutorial contact mentoring, counselling and organisation of peer support structures (Melton, 2002, Robinson, 1995 and Simpson, 2002). Also distance learners have access to physical facilities and other learning resources.

Learner Support Coordinator: Refers to the person responsible for the coordination of learner support services at the providing institution, colleges of education and other study centres.

Learner autonomy and independence: Refers to the level where the learners feel well equipped in terms of study skills and access to learning resources to be able to learn on their own as self-directed learners. In this study, the theory of autonomy and independence of the learner is discussed in Chapter 2 under the section on theories of distance education.

Learning Experience: Refers to how distance learners felt or perceived the learning events. In this case it was important for me to know if learners were satisfied or dissatisfied with the academic, counselling and administrative support during the learning process.

Learning Activity: This refers to ways in which learners are involved in their own learning either alone or with small groups (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 97). In this study it was necessary to find out the type of learning activities the learners engaged in such as group discussions or self-help groups and their experiences with those activities.

Self-help Study Groups: Interactive learning activities either in formal or informal, as in peer groups where participants play both the role of the learner and the teacher for purposes of exchange of information (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 97).

Learning Contract: An agreement between the learner and the instructor (tutor) of what and how to master the learning performance objectives (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 97).

Monitoring: Refers to monitoring learner performance and providing timely remedial assistance to improve throughputs and reduce dropout rates.

Non-Completers: This term refers to the category of distance learners who had completed the four year duration but still had incomplete results having failed one or more subjects in levels 1 to 4 or had not completed the research projects and/or the teaching assignment portfolio.

Open Learning: Refers to organised educational activity, based on the use of teaching materials, in which barriers to studying in terms of either access, or of time and place, pace, methods or study or any combination of these are minimised (UNESCO, 2002).

Open and Distance Learning (ODL): This term is used as an umbrella term to cover open and distance learning activities where learners can learn without attending learning institutions or where new opportunities are opened up to enable learners to learn no matter where or when they want to study. Often, ODL makes use of various media such as print, audio tapes, broadcasts, and the internet and through occasional face-to-face meetings with tutors and with other learners (UNESCO, 2002).

Programme Coordinator: The person responsible for the coordination and the management of the DPE activities in the providing institution and at colleges of education.

Scaffolding: Refers to building on prior knowledge so as to provide the foundation for new knowledge (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006: 128). On the DPE programme, the PTC qualification was assumed to provide adequate scaffolding or requisite knowledge for the diploma curriculum.

Tutor: Refers to a lecturer or a teacher who is engaged on a part time basis to provide tutorial support, mark and provide feedback to distance learners.

Tutorial Support: Refers to a learning environment in which tutors carry out tutorial responsibilities of conducting scheduled tutorials, marking and providing timely feedback and constructive comments on assessment work.

Turnaround time: Refers to the speed the tutor marked assignments are returned to distance learners from the time they were submitted for marking.

Workload: Refers to distance learners, tutors and programme coordinator's ability to combine their normal teaching loads with learning, tutoring and assessment and coordinating the DPE programme on a part time basis.

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule I: Distance learners

1. How did you know about the DPE programme by distance mode before enrolment?
2. What motivated you to enrol in the DPE programme?
3. What assistance are you given to prepare you for distance learning at the following stages of your studies?
 - a) admission
 - b) registration and orientation
 - c) during the course of your studies.
4. How effective are the study skills provided in meeting your learning needs? If not, why?
5. What challenges do you face when learning on your own? Briefly describe some of the advantages and disadvantages.
6. How has studying part-time and your teaching responsibilities affected your personal life? What changes has studying part-time brought to your personal life?
7. What assistance do you get from your family, employer and friends in the course of your studies?
8. What subjects, if any, do you find most challenging on the DPE programme? Why? What remedies would you suggest?
9. How do the following factors affect your learning progress?
 - a) time allocation to your studies and pacing your work
 - b) availability and accessibility to tutors outside residential sessions
 - c) finding a quiet place to study.
10. How accessible are the following resources and facilities to you to enhance your studies?
 - a) computers

- b) laboratories
- c) libraries

11. How helpful are your tutors in the following aspects of your studies?

- a) clarifying difficult content by providing additional explanation over and above what is in the study materials
- b) facilitating discussions during tutorials
- c) correcting errors on assignments and giving clear explanations on how a higher grade could have been obtained
- d) giving timely and constructive feedback on (i) research projects and (ii) the teaching assignment portfolio.

12. In what ways have you benefited from being a member of a self help study group?
(Briefly explain)

13. What in your view are the major barriers that you experience in accessing learner support services?

14. What changes would you suggest to improve the provision of more effective learner support services on the DPE programme?

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule II: Tutors/Part time Coordinators

1. What is your understanding of learner support services? (Briefly)
2. What do you think learner support services are addressing on the DPE programme?
3. How effective is the orientation you get in distance education skills in preparing you for tutoring and marking assessment work for distance learners?
4. What are the most common learning challenges that distance learners present during the learning process? How do you assist them to find solutions to these challenges?
5. What preparations do you make for tutorials before meeting distance learners?
6. What subject areas do learners have most difficulties in? Why? How do you assist them?
7. How do you ensure that distance learners get timely feedback in the following aspects of their assessment work?
 - a. marked assignments
 - b. research projects
 - c. teaching assignment.
8. What arrangements are in place to ensure that distance learners have access to the following resources?
 - a. computers,
 - b. laboratories and
 - c. libraries
9. What form of support do you get from college management in the following aspects of your work?

- a. integration of tutorials, setting and marking distance learners' assessment work with other college activities
 - b. timely processing of results through college assessment structures
 - c. accessing human, physical, and material resources for distance learning activities.
10. What in your view are the major barriers in the implementation of learner support services on this programme?
11. What changes would you suggest to improve the provision of a more effective learner support system on the DPE programme?

Appendix 4: Interview Schedule III: Decision makers

1. How do distance learners know about the DPE programme? Briefly explain how this programme is advertised before enrolment?
2. How is distance learners' readiness determined to ensure that they meet the admission requirements for enrolment on the programme?
3. What information do distance learners get at the following stages of their studies?
 - a) admission
 - b) registration and orientation
 - c) in the course of their studies
4. What processes and procedures are in place to ensure that distance learners get their study materials on time?
5. What is the purpose of (i) academic support such as tutorials and assessment (ii) administrative and (iii) counselling support on this programme? How do you ensure that learner support services achieve the purpose for which they were set up?
6. What monitoring mechanisms are in place to ensure that distance learners attend scheduled tutorials? What steps are taken to assist those who fail to attend tutorials?
7. What orientation/training is given to part-time tutors and programme coordinators to enable them to carry out their duties effectively?
8. What processes and procedures are in place to ensure that the following roles and responsibilities are carried out effectively on the DPE programme?
 - a. tutor attendance to tutorials
 - b. timely marking of assessment work
 - c. timely provision of feedback in form of constructive comments on assessment work?
 - d. correct conversion and entry of marks into the mark sheets
 - e. processing of results through various regulatory academic boards.

9. How does the learning support contribute to distance learners' retention and timely completion of the DPE programme?
10. What arrangements/policies are in place to ensure that the following resources are accessed by distance learners?
 - a) computers,
 - b) laboratories and consumables for practical subjects
 - c) libraries
 - d) photocopying facilities and stationery
 - e) office space and equipment
 - f) meals and hostel facilities.
11. What do you see as the major barriers in the provision of learner support on the DPE programme?
12. What changes would you suggest to improve the provision of a more effective learner support system on the DPE programme?



Appendix 5: Letter of Permission from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development in Botswana

TELEPHONE: 3655408
TELEX: 2944 THUTO BD
FAX: 3655408
REFERENCE E 1/20/ 2 II (7)



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG 005
GABORONE
BOTSWANA

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

24th Feb. 2009

To Ms. Judith Kamau
University of Botswana
Private Bag 00707
Gaborone

**RE: REQUEST FOR A PERMIT TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY ON:
DISTANCE LEARNERS PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES ON THE DIPLOMA IN PRIMARY EDUCATION
BY DISTANCE MODE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA: A CASE STUDY**

We acknowledge receipt of your application to conduct a research on the topic mentioned above.

This serves to grant you permission to conduct your study at Tlokwen College of Education, Molepolole College of Education and Kanye Education Centre to address the following research objectives/questions:

1. *What are the strengths and weakness of learner support services at the University of Botswana?*
2. *How do distance learners perceive the effects of learner support services on their studies?*
3. *What barriers and opportunities exist for effective implementation of learner support services?*
4. *How do stakeholders perceive their roles and responsibilities in the provision of learner support services?*

It is of paramount importance to seek Consent from the Principals, Lectures and Students that you are going to interview before conducting the study. We hope and trust that you will conduct the study as stated in your Proposal and to strictly adhere to the Research Ethics.

Please note that this permit is valid for a period of one year effective from 24th February 2009 to 24th February 2010.

You are furthermore requested to submit a copy of your final report of the study to the Division of Planning, Statistics and Research, Ministry of Education, Botswana.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Fernando T. Siamisang
For / Permanent Secretary

Appendix 6: Letter of Informed consent for Distance Learners



University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South
Africa

Tel (012) 420-5721 Fax (012) 420-
4215

<http://www.up.ac.za>

Faculty of Education

Date:

30 June 2009

Letter of Informed Consent (Students)

Topic: Distance Learners' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Learner Support Services on a Diploma in Primary Education Programme.

Dear -----

I wish to request you to participate in a research project aimed at investigating the effectiveness of learner support services to distance learning and teaching on the Diploma in Primary Education (DPE) by distance mode. While the success of this research will contribute to the completion of my doctoral qualification at the University of Pretoria, it is also meant to explore your perceptions about the effectiveness and timeliness of the academic, administrative and counselling support in enhancing distance learners' progress to complete their studies.

Your participation in this study (focus group discussion) is voluntary and your identity will remain anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality throughout the interview session which will last about 45-60 minutes. The interviews will be audio-taped with your consent to facilitate accurate transcription of data. The transcripts and tapes will be destroyed once the study has been completed. For this purpose, interview responses will be treated as confidential, and anonymity will be guaranteed throughout.

Hopefully, the results of this study will provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of learner support services in distance teaching and learning and contribute towards the development of policies and strategies to improve students' progress and completion rates on the DPE programme.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent, i. e. you participate in this research project willingly and that you understand that you may withdraw any time.

Kind regards,

Judith W Kamau

(Applicants signature)

CC: Prof Nkomo (Supervisor)

Signature _____

Student _____

Signature _____

Appendix 7: Letter of Informed Consent for Learner Support providers (Tutors, programme Coordinators and Decision makers



University of Pretoria

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel (012) 420-5721 Fax (012) 420-4215

<http://www.up.ac.za>

Faculty of Education

Date: 30 June 2009

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT (Tutors/ Programme coordinators and managers)

Topic: Distance Learners' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Learner Support Services on a Diploma in Primary Education Programme

Dear -----

I wish to request you to participate in a research project aimed at investigating the effectiveness of learner support services to distance learning and teaching on the Diploma in Primary Education (DPE) by distance mode programme. While the success of this research will contribute to the completion of my doctoral qualification at the University of Pretoria, it is also meant to explore your perceptions about the effectiveness, fitness of purpose and timeliness of the academic, administrative and counselling support in enhancing distance learners' progress to complete their studies.

Your participation in this study (one-to-one interviews and group discussions) is voluntary and your identity will remain anonymous. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality throughout the interview session which will last about 45-60 minutes. The interviews will be audio-taped with your consent to facilitate accurate transcription of data. The transcripts and tapes will be destroyed once the study has been completed. For this purpose, interview responses will be treated as confidential, and anonymity will be guaranteed throughout.

Hopefully, the results of this study will provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of learner support services in distance teaching and learning and contribute towards the development of policies and strategies to improve the implementation of learning support on the DPE programme.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent, i. e. you participate in this research project willingly and that you understand that you may withdraw any time.

Kind regards

Judith W Kamau

(Applicants signature)

CC: Prof Nkomo (Supervisor)

Signature_____

Participant _____

Signature _____

Appendix 8: Clearance Certificate from the University of Pretoria



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

DEGREE AND PROJECT

INVESTIGATOR(S)

DEPARTMENT

DATE CONSIDERED

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE NUMBER :

EM09/03/03

PhD: Educational Policy Studies

Distance Learners Perceptions about the effectiveness of learners support Services at the University of Botswana: A Case Study

J Kamau

Education Management

4 May 2010

APPROVED

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE Prof L Ebersohn

DATE

4 May 2010

CC

Prof. M. Nkomo
Ms Jeannie Beukes

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.