

# Introduction to distance learning assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Distance Education is defined as an educational process in which for the majority of the time, the learning occurs when the teacher and learners are receiving and giving instructions at the same remote side from each other. Open University refer to ' an organizational activity based on the use of teaching materials, in which the constraints on study are minimized either in terms of access, or of time and place, pace, methods of study or any combination of these' (Periaton 2000 : 13)

One of the oldest Distance Education Universities is the University of South Africa, which has been offering correspondence Education courses since 1946. There are now many similar institutions around the world, often with the name Open University. Nowadays there are many private and public, non-profit and for profit institutions offering degree programs and courses through Distance Education. Levels of accreditation vary from one to another.

Some institutions offering distance education have received little outside oversight while some may be fraudulent diploma mills. An institution may not use the term " University" in many other jurisdictions without accreditation and authorizations by national government. The delivery systems most commonly used today are based on video, audio, and computer technologies. These technologies have been adapted to transmit information in unexpected form; for example, visual images via telephone lines.

A variety of such adaptations not only help to make the transmission between lectures and students lively, but it also help to transmit large chunk

of information in the shortest possible time to each and every part of the world. The purpose of carrying out this research is to find out how the distance learning student coping. There are pros and cons of distance learning, but contrary to popular belief, the advantages actually far outweigh the disadvantages.

The single biggest advantage of distance learning via internet is that the lecturers can pre-post the syllabus and assignment questions on the World Wide Web, while the distance learners can download or view the study materials from their computer anytime, anywhere at their own pace. With the help of Internet, working adults who wish to obtain higher paper qualifications will be able to do so at their own pace either during their off-day or free time. For those who consider themselves fast-learner, they can opt to complete the course in less than the stipulated time frame.

However, for those who prefer a stress-free learning pace, they can take their own time to attempt chapters by chapters, subjects by subjects instead of doing few subjects simultaneously like the fast-learners. Most classes are asynchronous, which means lecture sessions and tutorial classes are not compulsory and are only acted as an avenue for lecturer and students to meet up face-to-face and have some discussions. Since distance learning also meant self-pace learning, the learners must possess some degree of self-motivation, self-discipline and self-initiative to make the course a success.

If the learners do not have proper time management skills, they will very likely fail to graduate because most of the examinations are assignment

based, while each assignment will come with a deadline of submission. One has to also bear in mind that the success of a course depends on the equipment used for learning. Since the learning process depends mostly on computers and Internet connections, if the students lack of the essential computer skills as well as a basic computer system; he or she will not be able to continue with the studies. Distance learning provides a new challenge for teachers as well.

The lecturers are faced with a greater challenge to come out with better teaching method to suit the needs and expectations of all their students who are consists of those from all walks of life including international students. If the lectures fail to update the syllabus to be on par with the international standards, the lecturers might risk losing his rice-bowl, while the University will earn itself a bad reputation. Some responsible lecturers are seen to work even on weekdays to reply to their students' inquiries posted to their mailbox.