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Open and Distance Learning in Dual Mode Universities: A Treasure Unexploited

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1. Introduction

Open and distance learning (ODL) has garnered increasing interest from not only lifelong learners but also traditional high school leavers. Conventional universities are repositioning themselves to become dual mode universities in order to satisfy the ensuing demand for ODL. Dual mode universities are those which offer both distance and on-campus based programmes of study (Aguti, 2009; Muyinda *et al.*, 2009).

ODL is a relatively a young phenomenon in dual mode universities. Thus many of its would be key stakeholders in these universities are yet to fully appreciate and/or understand the modus operandi and treasures inherent in it. Consequently, in many dual mode institutions, ODL students have often been treated as second class students who are attended to, in all respects, only after attending to conventional students.

It is the intention of this Chapter to show the hurdles that ODL faces in dual mode universities with the hope of getting long lasting solutions to identified huddles. The Chapter also demystifies the benefits and values derived by dual mode universities in efficiently running ODL programmes. The Chapter shows that with deliberate initial investment in the necessary infrastructure, staff and student support services, the treasures of and potential for ODL programmes can be enormous. Limited or lack of investment in the aforementioned resources and activities has led to limited harnessing of the treasures and potentials for ODL programmes in dual mode universities. This Chapter chronicles the challenges and unexploited treasures and benefits of running ODL programmes in dual mode universities, with particular reference to Makerere University.

The rest of this Chapter is organized in 14 sections. In *Section 2*, the concept of distance learning is defined. *Section 3* explores the concept of on-campus based learning. In *Section 4*, we reiterate the concept of dual mode universities. In *Section 5*, we provide an account of Makerere University external programme. The organization of ODL at Makerere University and demand for and attrition on ODL programmes are given in *Sections 6* and *7* respectively. In *Section 8*, we show how tuition is extended to ODL learners at Makerere University. The staffing and infrastructural position for ODL at Makerere University is

given in *Sections 9* and *10* respectively. In *Section 11*, the ODL student support system at Makerere University is elucidated while in *Section 12*, the strengths inherent in the Department of Open and Distance Learning (DODL) are provided. *Section 13* provides the unexploited treasures of running ODL programmes. Recommendations and conclusions and future work are outlined in *Sections 14* and *15* respectively.

2. Distance learning

Distance learning refers to a mode of study where a learner may complete all or part of an educational programme in a geographical location apart from the institution hosting the programme (Keegan, 1990). The final award given is equivalent in standard and content to an award programme completed on campus.

3. On-campus based learning

On-campus based learning refers to the traditional way of learning where learners attend full-time studies at the university. These learners are not separated at all in time and space from their institutions and lecturers offering them the tuition. At Makerere University, such programmes of study are also called 'internal' programmes. Makerere University used to offer only internal programmes until 1991 when distance learning programmes were introduced. About 80% of the student population at Makerere University is made up of internal learners. Thus the majority of processes, operations and policies are tuned towards the internal mode of study. Likewise academic, administrative and support staff's mindsets are skewed towards internal mode of study.

4. Dual mode universities

The introduction of distance learning programmes at Makerere University in 1991 turned Makerere into a dual mode university. Dual mode universities are universities which offer programmes of study either as distance or internal learning programmes or both. Usually, the curriculum for a programme being offered in both modes is the same. However, the duration for completing the programme may be a little bit longer on the external programme than on the internal programme. The same quality assurance measures are meted out on both programmes.

5. Makerere University external programme

ODL programmes at Makerere University have been packaged in a programme known as the Makerere University External Programme. As has already been indicated above, the origin of the External Programme is traced from 1991 when the University launched its two distance learning programmes, namely: Bachelor of Education (External) or B.Ed for short and Bachelor of Commerce (External) or B.Cox for short. According to Aguti (2009, p.219), the objectives for establishing the External Programme were to:

a.   Increase University intake in some courses which meet urgent national needs;
b.   Extend universal education; and
c.   Extend use of University resources to eligible and interested people who could not pursue full-time courses and programmes at the University campus.

By 1992, 246 students had been registered on the two pioneering distance learning programmes. By 2001, Makerere University realized the objectives of the External Programme as two more programmes were bankrolled on the External Programme. These were the Commonwealth Diploma in Youth in Development Work programme or CYP for short, and Bachelor of Science (External) or BSc. for short. In that year, the overall student enrollment on all the four distance learning programmes grew to about 8,000 students. The Department received substantial funding from the central administration and student support was at its best. The Department also received a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the World Bank through the I@Mak.Com Project to facilitate materials production and setup regional learning centers fully equipped with ICTs. ICT enabled learning centers were setup in Fort Portal, Jinja, Mbale, Lira and Kampala. Support and administrative staff were also recruited at these learning centers. At that time the Department blossomed with decentralized student support services such as tutorials at learning centers, submission of assignments at learning centers, constant physical and non-physical outreach to students, materials production, materials distribution at learning centers and other designated places and effective student counseling and feedback. These support services offered flexible study opportunities to persons who would otherwise not be able to attend a fulltime education at the Makerere University main campus.

The flamboyant student support situation outlined above was however short lived. Over the years, the University started releasing less funds to the Department. As if that was not enough, in 2007 the University introduced a policy of reducing student numbers each year by 10%. Though ODL programmes thrive well under circumstances of great student numbers as is espoused by Keegan (1990), ODL programmes were not spared from this killer policy. By August 2010, the number of places on all external programmes in all the years of study had reduced from over 8,000 to 6,350. Of these, B.Cox was allocated 3,000 places, B.Ed – 2,000 places, BSc. – 750 places and CYP – 600 places.

The reduction in student numbers caused a reduction in funding and therefore a fall in student support services. By December 31, 2010, only 2,988 students (47%) had registered for examinations out of the allotted 6,350 places which imply that the Department was operating below allotted capacity. In the last quarter of the 2010/11 academic year, the funding situation slightly improved because the new leadership in the University had stayed the policy of reducing student numbers. This led to a slight improvement in student support services, mainly in the area of proactive communication to students. As a result, there was a slight increase in the number of students who registered for the May/June 2011 examinations to 3,373 students. This increase shows that increased funding leads to increased proactive student support services which in turn leads to increased student retention levels. Proactive student support services characterise true ODL.

According to Otto and Writson (2005), the characteristics of a true external programme include:

a.   The physical separation of the teacher and learner
b.   Efficient student support systems
c.   The use of specially designed self-study materials to act as tutors
d.   Two-way communication between student and tutor to provide support services to a learner

e. Use of ICTs for student support
f. Little or no use of learning groups, depending on one's location
g. Large student numbers

Whereas the above characteristics should rein in any true ODL dispensation, Otto and Writson (2005) found that Makerere University's external programme was characterized by:

a. Inadequate funding
b. Limited supply or lack of self-study materials
c. Inadequate student support services
d. Infrequent two way communication with students
e. Limited use of ICTs in their offering
f. Large dependency on-campus based residential (face-to-face) sessions
g. Poor and inappropriate infrastructure

The aspects characterizing the external programme at Makerere University have not in any way helped in fostering the development and growth of ODL at Makerere. An evaluation of the Makerere University External Programme conducted in 2005, with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, attributed the challenges facing ODL at Makerere University to the limited awareness by would be key stakeholders in the University, on the modus operandi of ODL (Otto & Wrightson, 2005). Five years down the road, the limited understanding of the modus operandi of ODL activities at Makerere University has not shown any signs of improvement! In a letter responding to an application by the Coordinator of the BSc. programme for a scholarship for his MSc. in Zoology studies, the Human Resources Development Committee of Makerere University stated:

> "The HRD Committee wonders how Zoology will be applied in the Department of Distance Education and unanimously decided that the scholarship not be granted. So we advise you to try other sources of funding"

> (Makerere University, 2010a)[1]

The Human Resources Development Committee is composed of a number of top level managers in the University. For this Committee to have made the resolution in the above quote, indicates lack of understanding of the modus operandi of the DODL by many top level managers in Makerere University. The staff in question was not granted a scholarship even after making an appeal that he was the Coordinator of the BSc. programme where Zoology is taught as one of the disciplines.

At Makerere University, distance education is not offered as a discipline, but is used as a mode of study. It is an alternative mode of study to the on-campus mode. The staff in the DODL are drawn from varied disciplines and professions because of the multi-disciplinary nature of the Department. On the B.Cox and BSc. programmes, there are staff with business and science related qualifications. On the B.Ed programme, there are staff with science and education qualifications. On CYP, we have staff with social sciences qualifications. If the Department developed a programme in Bachelor of Laws (External), it would be imperative to have staff with a law qualification. This and many other basic facts are yet to be internalized by some University managers because their mindsets are tuned to on-campus mode of study.

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[1] Cited with permission from the Coordinator BSc. Programme

In their evaluation report of the Makerere University External Programme, Otto & Wrightson (2005) attributed the limited understanding of the operations of the DODL to, among other things, lack of a policy and strategy for distance education at Makerere University. Therefore in 2006, the Carnegie Corporation of New York provided funds to develop a policy and strategic framework for Distance Education at Makerere University (Makerere University, 2006). The policy, whose drafting was completed in 2006, was only discussed and passed by Senate in July 2011. At the time of filing this Chapter, it had not yet been discussed and assented to by the University Council - the University's top governing organ.

Lack of a policy for ODL means that ODL at Makerere University is operated under a very fluid situation, to the detriment of effective student support services. This has led to high attrition levels and low demand for some distance learning programmes yet World over, universities are turning to distance learning programmes to increase access to flexible education and improve on their resource envelopes. This golden opportunity inherent in ODL programmes is acknowledged by some educationalists. In an informal conversation with the coordinator of the distance learning unit at the University of Nairobi, it was revealed that open and distance learning at that university is treated as the goose that lays the golden egg. The coordinator said,

> "I usually receive special status whenever I visit my vice chancellor's office. My vice chancellor has realized that open and distance learning can sustain a dual mode university if well nurtured. My VC gives me immediate attention whenever I present any request for facilitating the operations of my unit."

Within Uganda, some education planners see the value of ODL. An education planner from the Ministry of Education and Sports said, "… If I were a top manager at Makerere University, I would have argued for the creation of a College of External Studies to strengthen the outreach arm of the University and improve the financial status of the University". ODL activities are conscripted at a departmental level with no direct representation to major decision making organs of the University. At this low level, advocacy for ODL at Makerere University is curtailed.

6. Organization of ODL at Makerere University

As has already been detailed, Makerere University is a dual mode University (Aguti & Fraser, 2006; Muyinda *et al.*, 2009). The DODL is mandated to manage all External programmes in the University. The Vision and Mission of the Department is, to offer a variety of relevant educational programmes of adults using a flexible approach that fully enhances access to open and lifelong education, particularly to those who would be unable to attend higher level education on fulltime basis. The Department runs open and distance learning programme on a collaborative arrangement with other units within the University offering similar programmes in the internal mode. In Makerere University, these partner units are commonly referred to as Collaborating Units.

As has already been pointed out, four distance learning programmes are on offer, namely: - B.Cox, B.Ed, BSc. and CYP. The B.Cox programme is offered in collaboration with the College of Business and Management Sciences. The BSc. programme is offered in collaboration with the College of Natural Sciences. The B.Ed programme is offered in

collaboration with the School of Education. The CYP programme is offered in collaboration with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The DODL formerly known as the Department of Distance Education (DDE) is responsible for organizing, coordinating, managing and supervising all ODL programmes in the entire University. The DODL is under the School of Distance and Lifelong Learning (SoDLL) which is in the College of Education and External Studies (CEES). Specifically, the DODL is responsible for;

a. Training staff from the DODL and Collaborating Units in ODL pedagogy.
b. Managing the delivery of programmes offered by Makerere using the open distance and eLearning (ODeL) mode.
c. Initiating the design and development of ODeL programmes in Collaborating Units.
d. Co-ordinating the design and development of ODeL academic programmes.
e. Co-ordinating the development, production and distribution of quality ODeL study materials.
f. Co-ordinating the evaluation of ODeL programmes on a regular basis and disseminating findings there from.
g. Forging links and partnerships with organizations involved in ODeL delivery practice.
h. Developing and promoting the use of ICTs in ODeL programmes.
i. Easing feedback on students' academic records by having registrars dedicated to the processing and management of ODeL students' academic records.
j. Managing all administrative records of ODeL students.
k. Carrying out advocacy in ODeL at institutional and national level.
l. Marketing Makerere University ODeL expertise and study materials to various stakeholders.
m. Initiating market research for demanded ODeL programmes.
n. Co-ordinating and facilitating the continuing capacity-building for ODeL managers, administrators, and practitioners.
o. Managing its staff, infrastructure and resources in order to carry out all roles, through the development of effective systems.
p. Undertaking appropriate planning of both short- and longer-term, strategic dimensions for ODeL programmes, in collaboration with Collaborating Units.
q. Initiating policies and regulations for the usage of Makerere University ODeL study materials and resources by third parties, in conformity with institutional and national laws.

The Collaborating Units are responsible for;

a. Developing and implementing of the curricula.
b. Identifying academic staff to teach on the various courses.
c. Identifying and seconding writers and reviewers of the study materials.
d. Vetting and/or recommending study materials for purchase.
e. Carrying out progressive assessment of students.
f. Setting and marking examinations.
g. Presenting results to the University Senate.
h. Any other academic duties required of her.

The roles identified above show that a unit responsible for managing, coordinating and supervising ODL programmes has unique duties that require a unique mandate. Such a unit

handles a multitude of unique pedagogic and administrative tasks. The tasks are vital as their non-execution leads to pseudo ODL programmes hence inability to harness the treasures and potentials therein. Dual mode universities are grappling with the problem of ensuring double standards, that is, permitting flexibility needed in ODeL programmes while at the same time maintaining the standards required in on-campus programmes. The end result has been following on-campus based standards, which in most cases suffocate the flexibility needed in ODL programmes.

7. Demand for and attrition on ODL programmes

In the *Tables 1* to *4* below admission quotas allocated to different distance learning programmes per year of study and those that were actually admitted and registered are given with a view of determining the demand for and attrition on ODL programmes at Makerere University.

Year/Cohort	Allocated Admission Quota	Admitted	Registered As of 31st December 2010	Attrition (%age)	Demand (%age)
Yr 1 (2010/2011)	1,200	1,031	755	27	86
Yr 2 (2009/2010)	600	591	416	30	99
Yr 3 (2008/2009)	600	657	436	34	110
Yr 4 (2007/2008)	600	669	494	26	112
Total B. Com			2,101	Avg = 29	Avg = 101

Source: Academic Registrar's Office

Table 1. Enrollment on the Four Year B.Cox Programme.

As at 31st December, 2010, the average attrition rate on the B.Cox programme was 29%. As is expected, attrition rate increased from Year 1 to Year 3 cohorts but declined in Year 4. The decline in attrition rate in Year 4 is attributed to the blanked amnesty given by the Academic Registrar to all students from 2004/05 academic year and below who had not completed their studies to come back and complete them before 31st December, 2010 (Makerere University, 2010b). This good gesture from the Academic Registrar, cements the need for flexibility in administering ODL programmes. Flexibility in the running of ODL programmes increases throughput.

Table 1 further shows that the B.Cox programme is on high demand. On average, there was a demand of 101% of the allotted number of places. This implies that the number of students admitted on the B.Cox programme, in some academic years, exceeded the number of vacancies allotted to the programme. This vote of confidence demonstrates the high quality of the B.Cox programme. It calls for strengthening of the existing student support services on the programme. This also shows that the programme is well popularized in Uganda and beyond as it even attracts foreign students. This impressive picture is not replicated on the B.Ed programme as is shown in *Table 2* below.

As at 31st December 2010, the average attrition rates for the B.Ed programme was 43%. The attrition rate for Year 1 and 2 remained constant at 41% and increased to 47% in Year 3. This

Year/Cohort	Allocated Admission Quota	Admitted	Registered as of 31st December 2010	Attrition (%age)	Demand (%age)
Yr 1 (2010/2011)	1,000	309	181	41	31
Yr 2 (2009/2010)	500	438	257	41	88
Yr 3 (2008/2009)	500	390	207	47	78
Total B. Ed			645	Avg = 43	Avg = 66

Source: Academic Registrar's Office

Table 2. Enrollment on the Three Year B.Ed Programme

high attrition rate has been attributed to increase in tuition fees from UGX 400,000 (USD 143) to UGX 800,000 (USD 286) per year, starting with the 2009/2010 Academic Year. This fees increase also provides the reason for the low demand (31%) for the B.Ed programme in the 2010/2011 Academic Year. It is also said that the target clientele for the B.Ed programme is fast dwindling following competition from other universities offering similar distance learning programme.

Whereas the increase in fees was made with the view of availing resources for developing study materials, little gains have been realized in this arena especially on the B.Cox programme. This was mainly due to failure by the Department to realize the full release of funds to it from the central administration for materials production. Furthermore, financial constraints negatively affected the student support system, in that key activities in distance education such as student support at study centers, tutors' training workshops, etc. were long shelved.

Overall however, the B.Ed programme is reasonably demanded at an average of 66% of the allotted vacancies. This percentage could be increased if effective student support services were provided to enrolled students and wide publicity of the programme made within and outside Uganda.

The alumni of the B.Ed programme who number over 7,000 since 1991 have long demanded for the introduction of a Master of Education (External) programme. Plans are under way to develop B.A and BSc. Education programmes to run concurrently with B.Ed on the external programme so as to cater for fresh 'A' Level leavers who wish to have a Makerere University degree but cannot afford full time courses and fees attached. The B.Ed programme admits only holders of Grade IV Teacher Education diploma certificates. The demand and attrition on the BSc. programme is not any better as is shown in *Table 3* below.

Year/Cohort	Allocated Admission Quota	Admitted	Registered as of 31st December 2010	Attrition (%age)	Demand (%age)
Yr 1 (2010/2011)	300	39	7	82	13
Yr 2 (2009/2010)	150	44	24	45	29
Yr 3 (2008/2009)	150	102	50	51	68
Yr 4 (2007/2008)	150	107	54	50	71
Total BSc.			135	Avg = 57	Avg = 45

Source: Academic Registrar's Office

Table 3. Enrollment on the Four Year BSc. Programme.

Table 3 above shows that there has been declining demand for the BSc. programme since 2007/08 academic year to date. In 2008/09 Academic Year, tuition fees for the BSc. programme were increased from UGX 700,000 (USD 250) to UGX 900,000 (USD 321). This increase may have led to the increased attrition and low demand for the programme. The increasing attrition plus the declining demand on the BSc. programme forced the University to stay the commencement of 39 students who had been admitted on the programme in 2010/2011 Academic Year. Prior to the decision to stay the commencement of the 39 admitted students, only seven students had already registered resulting in an attrition of 82%. The commencement of the 39 admitted students was stayed until the 2011/12 academic year when more students were admitted so as to get a break even student number.

Among all external programmes, the BSc. programme has the second highest average attrition rate of 57% and the lowest average demand of 45%. Its attrition rate is only second to that of the CYP programme which is at an average of 79% (see *Table 4* below). No exhaustive research has been carried out on the causal factor for the high attrition on and low demand for the BSc. programme but preliminary investigations have shown as follows:

a. The BSc. programme is not popularized among target audience hence the need for massive advertisement of the programme.
b. Just like any other distance learning programme, the BSc. programme has been affected by the poor student support system occasioned by the prevalent financial constraints. This has had a negative effect on the programme as currently enrolled students discourage would be applicant from joining the programme due to the poor support they receive.
c. The catchment for students who wish to offer BSc. programmes is small.

As is already mentioned above, attrition rate is worst on the CYP programme (see *Table 4* below).

Year/Cohort	Allocated Admission Quota	Admitted	Registered as of 31st December 2010	Attrition (%age)	Demand (%age)
2010/2011	300	204	52	75	68
2009/2010	300	338	55	84	113
Total CYP			107	Avg = 79	Avg = 90

Source: Academic Registrar's Office

Table 4. Enrollment on the Two Year CYP Programme.

Whereas the demand for the CYP programme stands highest at 90% of allotted places (*Table 4* above), attrition rate on this programme is highest at an average of 79%. This state of affairs can be explained by the low entry requirement for diploma programmes at Makerere University. Students with good 'A' Level grades place the CYP programme as their first choice programme when applying for entry into Makerere University. With their good grades, they are automatically admitted onto the CYP programme and as soon as they set foot into the University, they apply for change of programmes to programmes such as social sciences, social works and social administration, law, and others. Because they have good

grades and they qualify for the programmes being changed to, they are permitted to change hence causing such a high (79%) attrition rate. To avoid this scenario, the Department is in process of upgrading CYP diploma programme into a degree programme.

Generally speaking, the demand for ODL programmes at Makerere University is high. As at December 2010, *Tables 1* through to *4* above show that the total available places on all ODL programmes were 6,350. Of these 4,919 were taken up at admission representing a percentage demand of 77.5%. Whereas the demand is high, attrition rates are equally high. As at December 2010, there were 2,988 students registered on all the ODL programmes out of 4,919 admitted students representing an attrition rate of 60.7%. According to Aaron and Writson (2005), this high attrition rate is due to several factors, including: 1) lack of policy for ODL at Makerere University; 2) limited resourcing for ODL activities, especially materials development, insignificant position of the DODL and over centralization of the student support services. When Makerere University addresses these challenges the demand for ODL programmes will rise and attrition rates will decline significantly. Increased funding to the DODL and the ratification of a policy for ODL at Makerere University are key issues that should be dealt with in the short run.

## 8. How tuition is extended to ODL learners at Makerere University

Each ODL programme at Makerere University is provided using self-regulated print-based modules. The modules are specially written with a number of activities aimed at stimulating self-study. The self-regulated print-based modules (distance education modules) are supplemented with two residential (face-to-face) sessions at the main campus, each of two (2) weeks, in a semester of seventeen (17) weeks. In effect, each student attends four (4) weeks of face-to-face session at the main campus in a semester of seventeen (17) weeks. The remaining two (2) weeks are used for completing final semester examinations.

The first face-to-face session is undertaken at the beginning of the semester while the second one is undertaken in the middle of the semester. For each face-to-face session, ODL students are invited from wherever they live or work to congregate at the main campus for the period of the face-to-face session. ODL students live and/or work in different parts of Uganda and neighboring countries. When they come to the main campus for face-to-face sessions, ODL students may reside within or nearby the University campus. All the students (6,350 No.) on the four ODL programmes may or may not be invited for a face-to-face session at the same time. However, B.Ed and BSc. students are invited for face-to-face sessions during secondary/primary school holiday time.

In the first face-to-face session, lecturers give an overview of the courses for the semester after which, take home assignments are given. Briefing sessions are also held in the first face-to-face session to communicate to students any salient administrative and/or academic issues. In the second face-to-face session, further guidance on the courses is given and students are given timed tests. In the last two (2) weeks of the semester, students write examinations in the courses on offer. Examinations are conducted from the main campus. The examinations are done at the same time as those of the internal programmes. This examination arrangement removes the flexibility required in ODL programmes.

In the remaining time of eleven (11) weeks when the students are not attending residential sessions (4 weeks) or undertaking examinations (2 weeks), students do independent study through self-study materials and group discussions. During this period, student-student,

student-lecturer and student-university interaction is encouraged. The DODL offers academic, administrative and social support to the students through organized tutorials at study centers. Sometimes, when resources permit, ODL staff pay physical visits to students in their homes or workplaces to establish impediments to their studies with a hope of providing solutions. The visits are also intended to reduce the 'distance' in distance learning. The visits are mainly executed when staff are delivering or checking on study materials at different collaborating up-country libraries. The two way communication channel is always open between the students and Department during face-to-face or non face-to-face times. Sometimes, communication is made to and from students via electronic and non-electronic media. Electronic communication is accomplished using e-mails, mobile phones, Internet and radio. Non-electronic communication is provided through course handouts, brochures, fliers and face-to-face meetings or briefings. On the whole however, ODL at Makerere University relies more heavily on face-to-face tuition than on self-study materials.
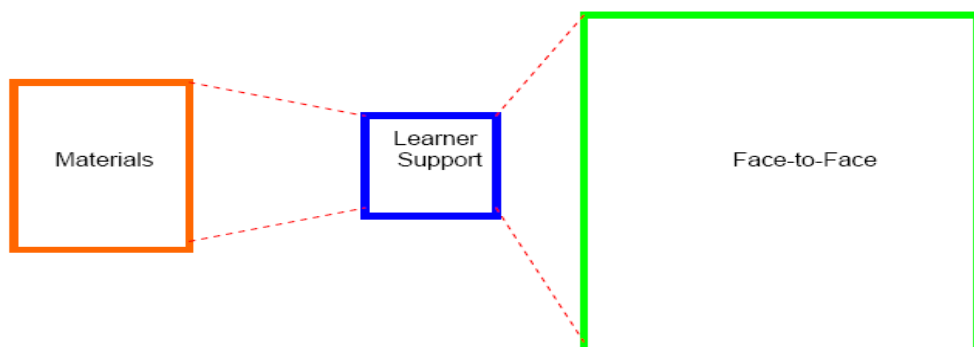
Source: Otto & Wrightson, 2005

Fig. 1. Distance Learning Delivery Situation at Makerere University.
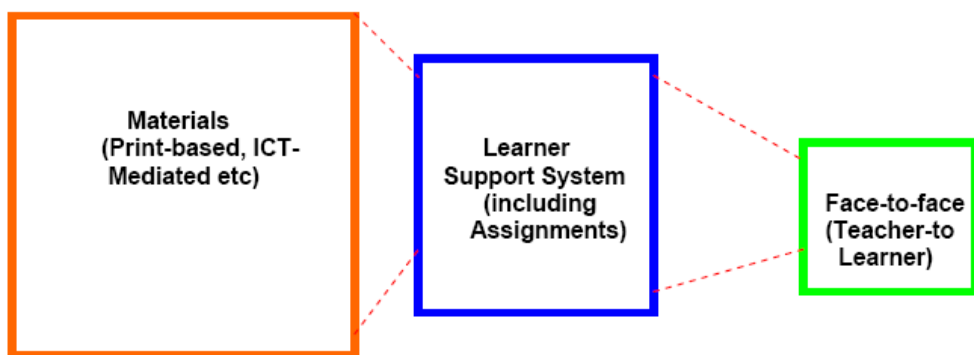
Source: Otto & Wrightson, 2005

Fig. 2. Ideal Distance Learning Delivery Situation.

Makerere University is yet to fully partake of the ideal ODL model. The mental attitude of most faculties is still that of on-campus based learning and teaching. Adjusting this attitude to rhyme with the requirements of ODL is still a major huddle.

9. Staffing position for ODL at Makerere University

As alluded to earlier, the teaching staff for the majority of courses on the ODL programmes is drawn from Collaborating Units. The DODL, which is supposed to manage and support 6,350 distance learners has only 10 fulltime academic staff on the ground. In addition to teaching, the 10 academic staff perform various administrative functions.   During examination time, staff are assigned special responsibilities to ensure that examinations are run smoothly. The staff ensure that only fully registered students, with all requirements for sitting an exam, are let into the examinations venue. In so doing revenue loss is averted.

The Department has a staff responsible for coordinating all tutoring activities in the Department. The B.Cox programme has three coordinators. The B.Ed programme has one overall coordinator and three year coordinators. The BSc. programme has one coordinator. There is a staff responsible for coordinating ICT and e-learning services. One staff is responsible for coordinating materials production. Due to the large number of students, the academic staff coordinating various activities in the Department are assisted by a number of administrative and support staff. There are 35 administrative and support staff in the Department.

10. Infrastructure position for ODL at Makerere University

The 10 academic and 35 administrative/support staff running the DODL, which is supposed to manage and support 6,350 distance learners are housed in Nsubuga Block shown in *Figure 3* below. Nsubuga Block is one of the antiquities of Makerere University as it was one of the first halls of residence for Makerere University built in 1922.

Fig. 3. The Rear View of Nsubuga Block.

Since Nsubuga Block was originally meant to be a hall of residence, it is not suitable for the industrial like activities of ODL. Besides, Nsubuga Block is in dire need for renovation. Other than office space, Nsubuga Block does not have any lecture space to use during face-to-face sessions and examination time. The Department does not own any lecture space for tutorial/group discussion at the main campus or in regional study centers. Over the years, lectures, tutorials, group discussions, tests and examinations have been conducted in space hired from dining halls at Makerere University, lecture halls of other colleges and nearby secondary schools at very exorbitant rates (USD 25 per room per day and USD 40 for a hall per day). Regional centers are housed in rented premises. This has had a negative impact on the Department's budget. One would argue for the case of having face-to-face lectures, tests and examinations in lecture halls at the main campus, but during times when internal students are in session, this has proved to be impossible. The Department is looking for donors to help it get out of this infrastructure quagmire.

11. ODL student support system at Makerere University

Student Support refers to the culture of care accorded to an ODL student with the aim of ensuring that he/she accomplishes his/her study programme within the stipulated time. This care can be seen as a range of services to the student; for example, study materials provision, extending services nearer to the student, provision of up-to-date feedback to student's problems, synchronous and asynchronous interactions, tutorials, self-help study groups, counseling services, personal tutorship, and so on. Student support begins with pre-enrolment support to on-programme support.

At Makerere University, pre-enrolment support stops at calling upon prospective candidates to apply for admission into the external programmes. No further support is given at that level. Ideally, the university should be providing prospective applicants with information about the ODL mode of study and timely responses to all inquiries from interested parties. It should be following up the applicants that are not admitted and advising them on the way forward and having an enrolment advisor or persons performing the role of an enrolment advisor to track inquiries and applications and be in contact with the applicant and the administrators.

On-programme support and care at Makerere University is done by holding regular briefing session, educating learners and staff about the ODL mode of study, providing appropriate and regular information to learners, ensuring that regular contact is made with all learners and obliging tutors of ODL students to provide clear and useful feedback to learners in their assignment/coursework scripts. Further, tutors of ODL students are obliged to return assignment/coursework scripts to students in time to allow them internalize the feedback provided therein before undertaking examinations. Other on-programme support extended include: creating a friendly contact environment which ensures that learner needs and concerns are dealt with in a timely and effective manner, conducting and co-ordinating face-to-face sessions at the main campus, conducting examination sessions at the main campus and providing regular communications to students through the SMS broadcast systems and voice telephone calls. Makerere University is not doing the following on-programme student support services:

a. Providing special care for students with special needs, e.g. mothers, those with disabilities, etc.

b. Decentralizing services such as admissions, registration and examinations at different learning centers.
c. Obliging all academic staff in the University to serve on ODL programmes as part of their normal duties.
d. Ensuring that each ODL academic staff has a substantial part of his/her course material provided online.
e. Ensuring that all University service units provide all registered students on ODL programmes with access to libraries, computer laboratories, lecture rooms/theatres, laboratories and other learning resources.
f. Ensuring that the University library provides flexible policies and services unique to ODL learners at all ODL centers, for example longer borrowing periods.
g. Equipping learning centers with all the necessary infrastructure and staff necessary for the smooth running of ODL programmes.
h. Regularly training university staff in ODL delivery methodologies.
i. Allocating a personal tutor to each ODL student.
j. Appointing tutors at learning centers to facilitate on ODL courses based on study materials developed for those courses.
k. Providing drop-in counseling services at each learning centre.
l. Providing ODL based study materials on all programmes.

The last item in the list of things Makerere University is not doing for on-programme student support deserves more mention. On the B.Cox programme, only 2 out of 56 courses (3.6%) have materials written in distance education (self-study) mode. Distance education mode refers to materials that are self-regulated and are aimed at facilitating self (independent) study. Ironically, the B.Cox programme is one of the 'cash cows' of Makerere University. Lack of study materials on this programme has forced students admitted on it to relocate to Kampala so as to attend "evening coaching", a practice that is increasingly erasing the philosophy of ODL. An investigation into why materials for B.Cox programme have not been written reveals four main reasons: insufficient resources at the disposal of the Department to inject in materials development, study modules written for distance education programmes not being considered as full publication for promotion purposes, and until recently, there being few lecturers on ground hence huge teaching load that has left them with no time to write. On the B.Ed programme, 20% of the courses have study modules that have been reviewed, corrections done and are ready for editing and publishing. Those that are being written but are not complete cover 45% of the courses. About 35% of the courses on the B.Ed programme have no study modules written. The materials development outlook is different on the BSc. and CYP programmes. Sixty Percent and 100% of the courses on the BSc. and CYP programme respectively have fully written study modules. The study materials situation on the BSc. and CYP programmes is impressive because these two programmes received materials development funding support from Carnegie Corporation of New York and Common Wealth of Learning respectively.

12. The strength of the DODL

Many challenges have been alluded to in the foregoing exposition. These include, among others: highly centralized student support system, lack of or inadequate supply of ODL materials, inadequate and inappropriate staff establishment, inappropriate and inadequate

infrastructure, lack of recognition of the unique nature of the DODL and lack of dynamism in offering of ODL programmes. Amidst all these challenges however, the Department can positively identify itself with the following strengths.

a. Considerable deposit of staff with ODeL pedagogy training: Through a series of short courses, the Department's staff have received ODL pedagogy training. Two (2) members of staff have PhDs in the field of ODeL while four (4) are at various stages of completing their PhD studies in ODeL related fields.
b. Ability to manage large students numbers (20% of the entire students' body).
c. Ability to continually grow the student numbers.
d. Collaborations: The Department has established numerous networks and collaborations with other institutions and organizations in running its programmes.
e. Study materials: The Department has now published nearly 20% of its study materials locally. The rest have been procured internationally from other academic institutions.
f. Existence of regional centers: The Department has regional centers all over Uganda in Arua, Lira, Jinja, Gulu, Mbale, Kabale, Fort-Portal, Kabale, Hoima and Kampala to provide services nearer the learners, especially in the provision of study materials.
g. ICT facilities: The Department has a computer Laboratory with 30 computers and 17 other computers in different offices. All these are networked and connected to the Internet.
h. Huge budget: ODL breaks even when critical mass of student numbers is realized. The ODL programme at Makerere University has reached this critical mass. Great student numbers mean great income. ODL programmes are generating enormous amounts of revenue for Makerere University.

These strengths can be harnessed to tap into the unexploited treasures of running ODL programmes.

13. The unexploited treasures of running ODL programmes

The social, economic and political environment in Uganda is increasingly encouraging fresh 'A' level leavers and lifelong learners to prefer the ODL mode of study. Presently, over 20% of Makerere University's student population is made up of distance learners. This population is contained in only 4 programmes (less than 1% of the entire programmes) of the university. At the current admission quotas, it is projected that 6,571 students shall be enrolled in the existing four external programmes over the next five years as is seen in *Table 5* below.

In its strategic plan for 2008/09 – 2018/19, Makerere University intends to initiate 6 more ODeL programmes "in at least six faculties" (Makerere University, 2008, p.15). In each of these six programmes, an annual recruitment of 1,000 students per programme is anticipated. This shall give a total of 6,000 students per annum in the new ODeL programmes. When this is done, ODeL shall on average have an enrollment of 12,571 students per annum (6,571 (on existing programmes) plus 6,000 (on the proposed six programmes). This student number presents a golden opportunity for Makerere University in-terms of increasing access to higher education and providing the much needed financial muscle for running the University's activities. The revenue projections from the above enrolment scenarios are shown in *Table 6* below.

Programme	2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17		Yearly Average Enrolment
B.Cox	Year 1	900	Year 1	1000	Year 1	1000	Year 1	1000	Year 1	1200	B.Cox
	Year 2	900	Year 2	950	Year 2	950	Year 2	950	Year 2	980	
	Year 3	400	Year 3	900	Year 3	950	Year 3	950	Year 3	950	
	Year 4	350	Year 4	400	Year 4	800	Year 4	800	Year 4	950	
	Total	**2550**	**Total**	**3250**	**Total**	**3700**	**Total**	**3700**	**Total**	**4080**	**3,456**
BSc.	Year 1	100	Year 1	100	Year 1	100	Year 1	100	Year 1	100	BSc.
	Year 2	0	Year 2	80	Year 2	80	Year 2	80	Year 2	80	
	Year 3	25	Year 3	0	Year 3	75	Year 3	75	Year 3	75	
	Year 4	60	Year 4	25	Year 4	0	Year 4	70	Year 4	70	
	Total	**185**	**Total**	**205**	**Total**	**255**	**Total**	**325**	**Total**	**325**	**259**
B.Ed	Year 1	900	Year 1	900	Year 1	980	Year 1	980	Year 1	980	B.Ed
	Year 2	350	Year 2	800	Year 2	850	Year 2	950	Year 2	950	
	Year 3	180	Year 3	300	Year 3	750	Year 3	800	Year 3	900	
	Total	**1430**	**Total**	**2000**	**Total**	**2580**	**Total**	**2730**	**Total**	**2830**	**2,314**
CYP	Year 1	250	Year 1	280	Year 1	300	Year 1	300	Year 1	300	CYP
	Year 2	200	Year 2	230	Year 2	270	Year 2	290	Year 2	290	
	Total	**450**	**Total**	**510**	**Total**	**570**	**Total**	**590**	**Total**	**590**	**542**
Total	**2012/13**	**4615**	**2013/14**	**5965**	**2014/15**	**7105**	**2015/16**	**7345**	**2016/17**	**7825**	**6,571**

Table 5. Projection for Existing ODL Programmes Based on Current Admission Quota.

In the next five years beginning 2012/13 to 2016/17, the average projected annual enrollment on the existing ODL programmes (shown in *Table 5* above) shall be 6,571 students.

Programme	Student No Per Year	Yearly Tuition (UGX)	Total (UGX)
B.Cox	3,456	1,000,000	3,456,000,000
BSc.	259	900,000	233,100,000
B.Ed	2,314	800,000	1,851,200,000
CYP	542	980,000	531,160,000
Proposed ODL Programmes	6000	1,000,000	6,000,000,000
Total			12,071,460,000

Table 6. Annual Tuition Revenue from Existing and Proposed ODL Programmes.

At an exchange rate of UGX 2,800 to USD 1, Makerere University will be able to generate about $4.3 million per annum from ODL programmes alone. This is a golden treasure Makerere University is yet to exploit. Just like any other investment, there must be an initial capital outlay into the ODL programmes before the projections in *Table 6* above can be achieved.

14. Recommendations

ODL activities are industry like. Once it is fully established, a distance learning dispensation has ability to sustain itself. Dual mode universities should invest in infrastructure (on-campus and off-campus) and study materials and human resources development for ODL.

Dual mode universities should put in place policies and strategies governing the day to day running and management of ODL programmes in their institutions. This will iron out the rifts and conflicts in the internal and distance learning modes of study.

Activities in distance learning units of dual mode universities are quite unique from those of sister departments offering contact tuition. To enable for the much needed flexibility, ODL units should be granted freedom and resources to execute their unique activities.

Due to increasing use of ICTs in ODL, delivery of ODL is rapidly evolving. Dual mode universities should permit this dynamism to flourish so as to benefit from modern forms of ODL delivery.

So as to embrace ODL, continuous sensitization about ODL amongst stakeholders is vital.

15. Conclusions and future work

This Chapter has highlighted the challenges of ODL in dual mode universities with particular reference to Makerere University. It has shown that adequate funding is the key to efficient student support services. With a proper ODL policy in place, ODL programmes themselves can generate funds that can sustain them and other activities of the universities where they belong. The Chapter has also shown that an on-campus based programme mindset is so awash in dual mode universities and is detrimental to the successful running of ODL programmes as staff treat ODL learners in a similar way as on-campus based learners. Despite all these challenges, ODL present enormous possibilities for increasing access to higher education and improving universities' balance sheets. When these basic facts are known, the unexploited potentials of running ODL programmes shall be harnessed. The future of ODL in dual mode institutions lies in recognizing the uniqueness of this mode of delivery by operationalising separate sets of policies and strategies for ODL and on-campus based learning.

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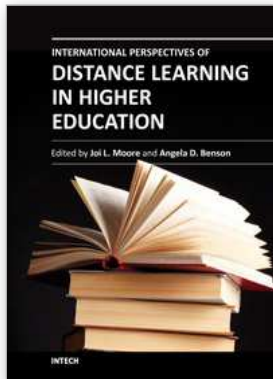
International Perspectives of Distance Learning in Higher Education

Edited by Dr. Joi L. Moore

This book, written by authors representing 12 countries and five continents, is a collection of international perspectives on distance learning and distance learning implementations in higher education. The perspectives are presented in the form of practical case studies of distance learning implementations, research studies on teaching and learning in distance learning environments, and conceptual and theoretical frameworks for designing and developing distance learning tools, courses and programs. The book will appeal to distance learning practitioners, researchers, and higher education administrators. To address the different needs and interests of audience members, the book is organized into five sections: Distance Education Management, Distance Education and Teacher Development, Distance Learning Pedagogy, Distance Learning Students, and Distance Learning Educational Tools.

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