

Distance English Language Teaching (DELTA) Programme: A New Model for Turkey

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at introducing a new interactive distance education application model in English Teacher Education.

There is an ever-increasing demand for English teaching and learning activities in Turkey, with the implementation of new eight-year compulsory primary education in 1998. Eight Yearly Development Plan (1999-2006) estimates the English teacher need of Turkey as approximately 60,000. In order to meet this demand Turkish Ministry of National Education (MNE) and Eskisehir Anadolu University signed a protocol in February 2000. Anadolu University is authorized to initiate a four-year Distance English Language Teacher Education Program.

The program has accepted first group of students (2500) this academic year (2000-2001) according to the results of the University Entrance (ÖSS)- Foreign Language (English) Exam.

Keywords: OEF, Anadolu University, Turkey, Distance Education, Language Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims at introducing a new interactive distance education application model in English Teacher Education.

There is an ever-increasing demand for English teaching and learning activities in Turkey, with the implementation of new eight-year compulsory primary education in 1998. Eight Yearly Development Plan (1999-2006) estimates the English teacher need of Turkey as approximately 60,000. In order to meet this demand Turkish Ministry of National Education (MNE) and Eskisehir Anadolu University signed a protocol in February 2000. Anadolu University is authorized to initiate a four-year Distance English Language Teacher Education Program.

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EDUCATIONAL MODEL

Parties Involved

This four-year program is developed by Anadolu University in cooperation with the Higher Education Council and Ministry of National Education-MNE. Anadolu University is authorized to initiate a four year Distance English Language Teacher Education Program. The curriculum is developed by Anadolu University. The university is also responsible for the design, development, procurement and distribution of all the teaching materials such as books, video cassettes, CD-ROMs and computer software as well as broadcasting of TV programs. The university also provides "in-service training" for the MNE teachers every summer on its campus. The Ministry of National Education is responsible for providing premises to be used

as teaching environments, to assign teachers, administrators and other support personnel to conduct the classroom (face-to-face) instructions.

Curriculum and the Teaching Activities

Face-to-face tutorial classes (10 hours per week in the first year and 12 hours in the second year of the program) are conducted in 16 cities in the premises allocated by MNE. In all cities except Eskisehir English language teachers assigned by MNE tutor the face-to-face activities. In Eskisehir, the instruction is given by Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages academic staff besides MNE teachers. In each of the 16 cities there are local academic coordinators responsible to Central Academic Coordinator. They are required to submit a report to the Central Coordinator every two weeks.

The curriculum approved by Higher Education Council is composed of three groups of courses. The first group includes face-to-face English Language tutorials which are conducted in the first two years of the program, in 16 cities. The second group courses in educational sciences, such as Introduction to Teaching Profession, are offered in Turkish and through open education. The third group of courses are content courses in English such as Introduction to Linguistics, Introduction to Literature, and will be offered through interactive web-based education technologies. The courses offered throughout four years are as follows:

Year 1

English Grammar I
Reading Skills
Speaking Skills
Writing Skills
Introduction to Teaching Profession
Introduction to Computers

Year 2

English Grammar II
Advanced Reading Skills
Advanced Writing Skills
Translation (Turkish-English/English-Turkish)
School Experience
Writing and Speaking Skills in Turkish Language
History of Turkish Republic
Planning and Evaluation in Teaching
Development and Learning

Year 3

Introduction to Linguistics
Introduction to English Literature
Language Acquisition
Approaches to ELT
Research in ELT
English Language Teaching Methodology
Turkish (Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics)
Classroom Management
Guidance

Year 4

Testing and Evaluation
Educational Technology
Materials Evaluation and Development
Sociolinguistics
Discourse Analysis and Language Teaching
Teaching English Literature (Short Stories/Novels/Plays and Poetry)
Teaching English to Children
Applied Linguistics
Semantics

Psycholinguistics

Teaching Practicum and School Experience

Authors Note: The courses in italics are offered in distance education method.

Teaching Materials

Syllabi A syllabus for each course has been prepared by the course coordinators in Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages, and they have been sent to all the teachers in the program. These syllabi are to be followed by all the teachers in 16 cities.

Books For the 1st group of courses " Cambridge Skills for Fluency" series (reading, writing, speaking) by CUP as well as "English Grammar in Use" book (by CUP) have been chosen. The upper-intermediate level series are used for the first year students, and the advanced level series are used for the second year students. These books have been chosen because they are self-study books and they are suitable for distance education. Since the students were admitted to the program according to the English language scores they got in the University Entrance Exam, they are considered as "upper- intermediate level" students.

Handouts Besides the course books, some supplementary materials for all 4 courses (reading, writing, speaking and grammar) have been prepared by the course coordinators in Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages, and they have been sent to all the teachers in the program. Supplementary materials have been prepared in this way so that consistency among all the teachers in 16 cities could be ensured.

For the 2nd group of courses, which are the pedagogical courses, the textbooks have been written by Anadolu University, Education Faculty academic staff, and published by Open Education Faculty.

As for the 3rd group of courses, interactive web-based materials are still in the process of preparation in association with British and American Cultural Attaches' Office.

Testing

For the 1st group of courses, the students are required to take one midterm exam, 4 quizzes and a final exam. They must get the score of 70 and above out of 100 to be able to pass each course. The students who fail to get 70 can take a re-sit exam at the end of the year to recover their final grades.

For reading and grammar courses as well as pedagogic courses conducted in Turkish, multiple choice tests are given and these tests are scored by Anadolu University Information Processing Center.

As for the testing of productive skills, i.e. speaking and writing, the test type is organized as the course content dictates. That is, writing skill is tested in a writing exam and speaking skill is tested in a speaking exam.

Writing exams and quizzes are prepared by the course coordinators in School of Foreign Languages and they are evaluated by the academic staff in the School of Foreign Languages. For each of the exams, criteria for evaluation as well as guidelines for teachers are set and the papers are scored according to the given criteria. Once the evaluation of exam papers is complete, students' papers are photocopied and sent to all of the students in the program so that they can see their errors and read the comments written by the evaluators in their papers.

Speaking skills exams are in the form of oral presentations and interviews. Speaking skills course coordinators in School of Foreign Languages prepare the tasks and the evaluation criteria for speaking exams. For quizzes, students are evaluated according to oral presentations they are required to make in their classes during speaking class hours. For the midterm and final exams, students are given oral interviews by a jury consisting of two

teachers. One of the teachers in the jury in each of the 16 cities is an instructor from Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages.

In brief, Anadolu University, School of Foreign Languages is responsible for the preparation of all face to face English tutorials as well as for the evaluation of speaking and writing exams.

CONCLUSION

Advances in computer and communication technologies provide vast amount of alternatives in the design of distance education system. Anadolu University is investigating the possibility of employing computer and communication technologies to increase educational effectiveness, improve access and provide flexibility to the system. Following three issues are identified as main fields for the improvement of the current educational model:

- Establishment of "Remote Electronic Classrooms"
- Development of teaching Materials
- Employing Foreign Experts

This project, when implemented, will not only alleviate the desperate need for professional ELT teachers in Turkey education system, but will also be a successful teaching model which can be used world-wide since it employs traditional distance and open education system together.

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Editor's Note:

This paper was presented at EDEN 10th Anniversary Conference, 10-13 June 2001, Stockholm, Sweden.