Distance teacher education – some experiences from Dalarna University, Sweden

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Abstract
Distance teaching is now-a-days used in different shapes. However, it is something different from traditional campus organised education as it systematically uses Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a key element. When the distance teacher education started in Sweden many teacher educators doubted the wisdom of this. They expressed that the educational process to become a teacher would be deteriorated. For instance, they feared for high drop out rates and difficulties to examine in a proper way. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has recently edited a report that showed that this form of teacher education was well adapted to the labour market, but the possibilities for the teacher students to shape their education were relatively limited. However, we still know quite little about the effects of this way to educate teacher students. This paper explores the possibility of using distance teacher education.

In a case study 20 students, who were the first to finish a complete a distance teacher education at Högskolan Dalarna, were asked in a questionnaire how they had apprehended their education. We also interviewed four of these students, as well as five teacher educators.

One of our findings were that the distance teacher education reached new target groups, who not had been able to participate in university studies if it not had been offered in this form. Especially, this was valid for the middle-aged women, living a long distance away from a university, with social responsibilities for children or old parents. Other findings were that these students in general were target oriented and ambitious, wrote more than the campus students and developed that kind of skill better. Marratech, an ICT system for small groups, e-mail and chat were used for the communication. Marratech was considered to permit free and spontaneous communication, both of the teacher educators and the students. Initially the teacher educators were sceptical to distance teacher education, but afterwards they were surprised of how well it had worked. They declared that they had better and nearer contact with their students and more control over the students’ performance, but some parts of the teacher education were better suitable for campus education, for example, power of creating characters. Distance teacher education was considered time consuming and demanded much activity from the teacher educators as the students wanted rapid responses.

This study indicates that distance teacher education works well for mature individuals with high motivation. However, it demands more time from the teacher educators, but it gives in general good results. Still, there are pedagogical challenges to overcome. Maybe we should reflect on a mix of distance teacher education and campus based teacher education, instead of separated ways of accomplishing teacher education?

Introduction
Distance education is now-a-days used in many countries and in different shapes, but can be recognized by some characteristics. It is a type of teaching where teachers and students are geographically separated using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Correspondence tuition existed in Europe already at the beginning of the 19th century and in Sweden from the century shift 1800-1900. At the beginning distance education was performed in two main ways. One centralized and large-scaled that used broadcasting media or material produced in advance, while the other was decentralised and small-scaled, focusing on personal contacts, not only between the students, but also between students and teachers. The first model was represented by, among others, the Open University in England, while the latter was represented in Sweden, probably because of its roots in a long study-circle tradition. Willén also claims that the Swedish method was unique in an international comparison, as it used the telephone to such a high degree. Compared to the Open University in England the Swedish model was also more decentralized and ether media was not used at all. Academic courses were introduced in Correspondence tuition around 1950. Distance education became a task for universities in the 1970s. One main idea was the thought of recurrent education. Regional university colleges were established from the 1980s.

1 Machenzie & Christensen, in Wilén (1982 a).
5 Andersson & Gerge (1985). (Still, a lot of us went to The Open University in the 80ties to learn more about distance education.)
6 Holmgren & Wessman (1985) (One of the most well-known course arrangers were Hermods).
7 SOU 1973:2.
In 1999 DISTUM was established, a Government authority, with the task to introduce and develop distance learning. A governmental official report\(^8\) suggested that a network university should be established and it started later on in January 2002. As a result, the possibilities to participate in academic studies improved for a large group of people. Nevertheless, there are people who live a long distance away from a university, or are hindered from participating for other reasons, for example social situation, fulltime work, or a “narrow” interest, that is an interest in courses not carried through at “their” university. These target groups seem to take advantage from distance education\(^9\).

In the national evaluation of the Swedish teacher programs in 2004, it was obvious that the teacher students had difficulties to answer questions concerning levels of demand in the teacher education. They seemed to lack knowledge of the type as well as levels of demands\(^10\). Many students did not seem to realize any demands at all, especially within the Common subject area\(^11\). On the other hand, evaluations show that higher education, among several faculty areas and particularly in teacher education programs, demands too little from the abilities of the students and that the students could pass with an average working effort far below what was required\(^12\). The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has recently edited a report called: “What is quality in distance education - An evaluation of distance teacher education”\(^13\). The report states that twelve of the in total 26 seats of learning with the right to perform a teacher program, also offered distance teacher education. Half of the programs included were directed towards Mathematics, Science and Technology and five were created towards preschool and preschool class. The possibilities for the students to shape their education were relatively limited. However, the demands put upon the students seemed to be high in this study, even though the picture differs from university to university. Concerning the students tutored practical work in the schools, the results seem more uncertain. The evaluation in 2008 of teacher education concerned the Common subject area, Swedish and Mathematics. The conclusion of this investigation was that some earlier criticised areas have been improved, but there are several universities that still have severe shortcomings. Among other things they do not have the amount of teachers with a PhD-degree, particularly within the Common subject area and for tutoring the degree thesis\(^14\).

In order to create high quality in distance education the planning and structuring, the interaction between students and teachers, as well as a functioning ICT are important preconditions. Important is also, of course, the teachers’ educational background and skill and how they adjust their teaching to the target group. The general quality demands in campus education and distance education must be the same. However, there are differences that have to be taken in consideration. The self study period is, for example, a central characteristic in distance education and an important part of the learning process. Furthermore, this influences how the courses have to be organised and how the teachers plan their work. The teacher’s responsibility when the students meet, virtual or physical, is to prepare the self study period and during the self study period to be a supervisor\(^15\).

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\(^10\) Almén (2005).
\(^11\) The concept Common subject area refers to the pedagogical and didactic part of the teacher education.
\(^12\) Lundgren (2001). The student is expected to work 40 hours weekly full-time study which is the same as one and a half point (The Bologna system).
\(^13\) Högskoleverket. Rapport 2007:41 R.
\(^14\) Högskoleverket. Rapport 2008:8 R
\(^15\) Högskoleverket. Rapport 2007:41 R.
Many critics have considered it impossible to carry through a distance teacher education as they claim education of teachers to be something special, something that demands regularly personal and social contacts. Nevertheless, it is now a reality since some years, even at the small Swedish university in Dalarna where we are working. In this paper we will discuss the results of a case study which reflects the situation.

**Aim of the study**
This case study illuminates some aspects of the advantages and the disadvantages of distance teacher education. Questions we want to through light upon are:

- Do teacher students consider distance teacher education to prepare for the teaching profession?
- How did the Common subject area and the subject studies prepare for the teaching profession?
- What pedagogical implications do distance teacher education present?
- How is the teacher students’ relation to fellow students and teachers?
- Did the occupational training work out well?
- Distance education versus campus based education - pros and cons?

**Method and data collection**
This study is conducted as a case study, investigating the first attempt of distance teacher education at Dalarna University. The students involved had started their education in 2003 and the last in 2005. The students were educated for preschool, primary school or compulsory school up to class seven. They were assembled at the University just two times during the whole teacher education.

We have focused the Common subject area and its subject Pedagogical work. This is a rather new subject in Swedish teacher education. All student teachers must attend and they start altogether with Pedagogical work A. After some semesters with other subjects they attend course B and finish their teacher education program with Pedagogical work C, where a degree project is accomplished during 10 weeks.

In the end of 2006 a survey was sent to those students who had finished a complete distance teacher education at Dalarna University, in all 20 persons. We received 16 answers. Despite the fact that we reminded the students two times more, it was not possible to get an answer from everyone. During the spring 2008 interviews were made with four teacher students (three women and one man). Five teacher tutors (two women and three men) were also interviewed. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed and some just listened to several times.

**Results**
When distance teacher education started at Dalarna University there were many who questioned the advisability. There was for example much talk about the process of socialisation to become teachers and that the lack of personal contacts between teachers and students might contribute to loose this dimension. Nevertheless, many of the educators had a constructive attitude to the distance teacher education program, especially after the
implementation of Marratech\textsuperscript{16}. Today some of the former enthusiasts are a little bit more wondering concerning this education due to, among other things, the many drop outs, the difficulties of finding suitable examination modes, reflections on the streamed lectures and reduced resources in a time consuming education.

**The teacher student group**

A majority of the students in this study (14/16) were women in the middle-ages and a rather homogenous group. Most of them had their educational orientation towards primary school (12/16), and everyone was employed as a pre-school or primary school teacher after finishing the teacher education. Some worked in the preschool despite the fact that they were educated for the primary school level. Several had experiences as substitute teachers before they started their education (10/16). Two of them had, for example, worked as leisure time pedagogues for a long time and another as a pedagogical assistant for three years and five to six years on shorter or longer temporary posts, another as a supply teacher and assistant to pupils. “I had a substantial experience from schools before this education and had the luck to have a good VFU\textsuperscript{17}. Important prerequisites I think!” (S)\textsuperscript{18}. A few had shorter experiences, for example, one person had done a 20 week long practice before she decided to join the teacher education. It also seems remarkable that one of the male students worked as a full-time teacher during the whole teacher education.

**The teacher educators**

The teacher educators had been teaching for between 8-15 years. All of them had taught both in campus and in distance and they were all teaching in distance from the beginning of the development of the distance teacher education at Dalarna University. Two of the educators had no experiences of school tuition, while the others had more than 10 years experience from school tuition. The educators said they were now-a-days more engaged in distance teaching than in campus.

**Did the distance teacher education prepare for the teaching profession?**

The distant teacher students were in general rather satisfied with how the courses in Pedagogical work prepared them to work as a preschool or primary school teacher. One student, for example, stressed: “The societal mandate is very important to understand” (S). Especially they were pleased with the practical part (VFU) of Pedagogical work B and C, but less satisfied with Pedagogical work A, both the theoretical (5/16) and practical part (6/16), and the degree project (5/16) in Pedagogical Work C. One of the interviewed students said that none of the courses in Pedagogical work were relevant for her occupation. She asked instead for knowledge of:

> [ ] how to handle all contacts you have to handle in the society. We didn’t learn anything about that, how much contact you have to keep with the social workers, how much contact you must keep with the school welfare officer. It is so much to learn and all forms people give you. How much shall I tell when answering their questions? (I)

\textsuperscript{16} Marratech is an Internet communication system for small groups for teaching, cooperation and conversation, in study groups, seminars, bigger groups, streamed lectures and examinations both individually and made in groups, written or verbally.

\textsuperscript{17} VFU is the occupational training part of the teacher education, located in schools.

\textsuperscript{18} (S) after a quotation means from the student survey, (I) means from the student interviews and (T) from the interviews of the teacher educators.
It seems like the first semester was difficult in many ways for a lot of the students and to become a distance teacher student was arduous. “Pedagogical work A was very laborious, I was at home crying sometimes. It was so many new things and very high tempo” (I).

Pedagogical work A was my first semester and I did not know how to study. I had much of a tunnel vision. I had hard to find words and so on. This course I ought to do again. (S)

The students were very pleased both concerning the co-operation with their supervisors, the staff and the children/pupils during their school-based teacher education. According to the “socialisation task” one student wrote: “The theoretical [part] was good, the practical experience you get in the field. It is not possible to train this in a designed situation” (S). The school-based part of the education was more and more appreciated as the courses went on. “Without earlier experiences from the occupation I feel that the practical part gave me an insight, this [part] could have been longer” (S). The students wrote that these courses were prerequisite to become a teacher. Sometimes they experienced problems in the communication between the VFU-schools and the University.

During the course Pedagogical work A I understood that my supervisor in the school meant that it was very hard to get in contact with someone in the teacher education program [in the University] and [she got] no information [from the University], according to her. (S)

I had wanted them [the University teachers] to come and visit us [during the VFU]. No one did. We were to far away [from the University], but at the last VFU, when we were examined, they came. (I)

There were a few complaints (2/16) of how the degree project worked out. However, from the critical ones rather sharp comments. “The degree project. I do not think it was relevant to manage my work” (I). “The degree project was the worst thing of the whole teacher education program I think, although I got a good grade. Not relevant at all [the degree project]” (S). But, there were also students who had the opposite opinion. “It was fun. I wrote in math, about if it was possible to find a red thread from infant school till year 9. It was giving” (I). In some cases no feed-back was given the VFU-schools concerning the results of the degree thesis (3/16). One student said that the feed-back was not good due to the fact that the school was uninterested, probably because of the subject this student had chosen.

How well did the distant teacher education program bring substantial knowledge of subjects to function as a teacher?

Most of the students were pleased with how their education had contributed to their learning, both concerning subject knowledge and didactic skills. “Yes, the scientific course was good and applicable to school and also the course concerning Swedish and acquisition of reading skills” (I). They also pointed out that the socialisation problems in schools had been well attended and the students’ ability to lead the learning of the pupils had developed, but someone said: “It could have been more focus on the leadership-role” (S). While another student claimed that leadership “is a personal quality you either have or not, at least I do not experience I got this during my education” (I). The teacher education program was considered based on a scholarly ground (16/16). Everybody was content with their education and they would also like to recommend the distance teacher education to others. Someone added: “Yes, to those who already have some experiences from working in schools” (S). Another filled in: “Yes, if I knew that this person had self-discipline” (S).
Pedagogical implications of distance education

Most of the students (14/16) had used both traditional chat and Marratech, complemented by e-mail. Marratech was from all of the involved considered to offer “[...] free and spontaneous communication”. However, sometimes there were technical problems.

The streamed lectures mostly had a flapping sound, perhaps depending on my computer. Group-tasks worked very well when working with someone physically, on the net [it is] more difficult. (S)

Despite some technical problems the students experienced they had good support from the University ICT-department. “It functioned very well and you learned a lot about computers. I must say the ICT-department was super to help” (I). During the teacher education the communication technique also developed gradually. It had been “rather flapping at the beginning, but better in the end” (S).

In the beginning I had some problems. It did not function where I live, it was not [the IT-net] extended enough here, but it became better when I got help from the IT-unit. I could call a guy there and he tutored me so I came out and it was good. (I)

A few experienced problems not to be able to communicate live: “I have sometimes missed the possibility to use and read body language and the facial expressions in this forum” (S). Someone also found it hard to create “a near relation with your fellow students” (I). Nevertheless, everybody meant that the Marratech seminars worked well. The students were in general rather content with this way to communicate with their teachers and fellow students. One student expressed it as: “A very nice way to communicate. Besides I have learnt a lot about computers and the Internet. It also gives skills to bring with you into school” (S). Another said: “My ICT-skills have improved a lot due to the distance education, something that is important and good to master fairly well” (S).

There were only a few complaints (3/16) concerning the teaching methods used. From a pedagogical point of view: “The streamed lectures functioned very well; you could listen when you had time, sit down, relax and at the same time take notes” (I). “You could listen to the streamed lectures at any time you wanted and were fit as a fiddle” (I). But, it seems that the students had to find out ways to handle the situation. “Streamed lectures: Yes, it was clearly hard work if they continued for hours. It really was, but in due time you learned to take a pause, so in the end it functioned well” (I).

The teacher educators also seemed to have a constructive attitude to the distance education.

I can see advantages with seminars in distance. The students are more alert and you are more aware of the knowledge of the students. In campus seminars it is easier to disappear in the number of students. I also think that at least the first distance students I taught had more ambition than the campus students. They were more focused. This might depend on the age of the students. They were in average older than the campus students (T).

Some teachers mentioned logistic problems during the streamed lectures. “It is difficult to answer questions both from the students who are on campus and those from the distance students”19 (T). The teachers also wondered what could happen if the lectures

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19 That is when the lectures are given on campus and distance at the same time, which happens some times. The distance teacher students write their questions on a monitor.
were recorded and sent year after year. “There is a risk that the lectures will be sent more than one semester. That can make the lectures static, old and deteriorated” (T).

Nevertheless, there were some who had experienced pedagogical problems.

I experienced it was more difficult to ‘get/take’ the word in Marratech if the seminar supervisor was no good in allocating the word and permitted everybody to speak. Chat could be a little frustrating sometimes, when you had difficulties to formulate your self. (S)

Even the teacher educators thought there were problems with the chat. “It [the chat] was too slow and we loose focus. Some students did not manage to answer and discuss due to problems with typewriting. Marratech is much better” (T).

One of the students expressed that group projects were “hard to manage on the net. The students must have help and be given hints for how to do. It was obvious that we had different experiences of computers” (S). There were also some students who said that there were too few lectures in some of the courses.

You could have had more lectures in some of the courses. In some there were no lectures at all. The teachers did not think it would function, but we as students thought “why not”. Might it have been more work for the teachers to prepare for the studio? (I)

The teacher educators said that the advantages for the students in distance education were the flexibility in time and room and that more students had the opportunity to study. “Both the students and I have more flexibility to work. I can for example work from home” (T). However, they often missed social contacts with other students. “I think both the students and I feel isolated sometimes” (T). Distance students were also considered more focused on the task and very ambitious compared to campus students.

[...] they [the campus students] are not so ambitious as the distance students. They are another type of students, at least this group. They have made a more active choice, they are disciplined and motivated”. (T)

Some of the teacher educators said that they knew the distance students better, due to frequent written contacts. “[...] I think I know these students better than the campus students” (T). Disadvantages mentioned were that it was difficult to find methods for examination. The teacher educators also experienced higher demands of the teacher. It was considered time consuming, more expensive than campus teaching, due to small seminars groups and extra preparing time for the teachers.

Our working conditions are changed. This [the distance education] demands more, you feel more dissociated from both students and colleagues. The working efforts for the teacher increase and you must be more active as a leader of the seminars. (T)

ICT is complex and demanding and it takes some time to learn. ”The technique is heavier and more demanding” (T). One of the teacher educators also pointed out the risk with recorded lectures. In times when the universities are short of money it is easy to give away to the temptation to save recorded lectures for years, something that can lead to stagnation instead of development.
Teacher students’ relation to fellow students and teachers – social aspects of being a distance teacher student

In general the students were rather content, both with the relations and the feedback they got: “The contact with the educators was very good. If you were wondering about something you just called or sent a mail – very good” (I). The educators were in general appreciated: “Most of the educators were good and good teachers. Unfortunately there were also a few who were no good educators” (S). There were also some comments about big differences between educators.

Very varying. Some educators are very committed, but it was not fun to get back a written paper you have worked with ‘day and night’ during several weeks and receive a little note ‘Passed’ in the corner and no more comments. Today I feel it was aggraving, at the same time I understand it might have to do with the work-loads of the educators. (I)

Some of teacher students (7/16) expressed that they missed social contacts. “Of course you missed social contacts, but I have had good fellow students and we have met physically anyhow and [talked] through telephone, e-mail and chat” (S). One student wrote that the relations with the educators were very varying and that she did not co-operate very much with her fellow students, “but [we] had valuable meetings through the computer” (S). “Possibly you should have had more spontaneous discussions if you were in campus and you might have been able to do more laboratory experiments” (I). However, the relations and the co-operation were in most cases considered to work well (14/16). Just one student wrote she did not have much contact with her fellow students, “but more contact with my VFU-school colleagues” (S). Yet, several seemed to experience their student role as: “Rather unsocial to be a distance student [ ]” (S). “If you study at campus you will probably get more classmates and will be able to discuss more. In distance education you are more alone” (I).

The teachers had diverse ideas but thought on the whole that it functioned rather well. “I have changed my opinion about natural, personal meetings. Eye contact is not necessary” (T). “The students can be isolated” (T). “These students are mature, middle aged and have a social life already. They do not have the same wish to meet others” (T). “I think they keep a living contact on the net” (T).

For almost everyone (14/16) the distance education seemed to be the only way to make it possible to study, something that is strongly connected to the students’ family situation. “I could not come to campus. I am too old for that. This form suited me better when I decided to re-educate for another profession” (I). Another said: “No, I had probably been forced to wait until the children grow up” (I), or: “The person with whom I live, work in shifts and we have no relatives in the neighbourhood” (S). To be a distance student opens new possibilities: “In this way I was able to combine family, leisure time, work and studies in a meritorious way” (S).

No, I could not [go to campus]. My intension was to be a teacher already in 1998, but I could not, as me and my husband lived in separate cities and we already had children and dogs. But, when I received this opportunity I took it and it was distance education. (I)

In conclusion, many of the students claimed they could not have been able to attend a teacher student program if it not had been possible to become a distance student. “It had not been possible to study, small children, work sometimes and be able to have a normal life (I). There seems to be two main reasons to this. One is that many of the participants had a long distance to campus and in most cases they had a family situation with small possibilities to move.
Different demands in campus and distance education and some pros and cons

Some of the distance teacher students considered that there were higher demands for them, than for the campus students.

As a distance student you have to work more and deliver material all the time to prove you do something. I know there where several [students] during my campus semester that, for example, did not buy or read a single book. (S)

On of the teacher students is even more convinced of the higher demands:

During a campus course I attended, I discovered students who did slide through without having read the literature before the seminars. We who study on distance read the literature and write 3-5 pages logs/reflection protocols every week. During an oral physical seminar it is easier to pass without being noticed. The written papers on campus were very few in relation to those in the distance courses. If it was possible to measure the knowledge and skills between campus and distance students I am convinced that distance students have considerable higher knowledge and skills. I consider ‘our’ way to elaborate the literature in writing, very instructive. To only read do not give an automatic reflection (S).

The teacher educators claimed that the distance students got more time from the educators as they always got a quick, written answer. “They [the distance students] get more individual feedback, which means a lot for the quality. I think they might succeed better through this” (T). “The discussions on distance are more concentrated. We keep more to the subject. The students are more prepared [than the campus students]” (T).

The few negative points in distance education were mentioned as not been able to see the study mates and that strong discipline was required. “The cons I can see are, if they are any cons, that you can not meet your study mates as often as in campus” (I). To conclude, the teacher students seemed to experience special demands to be a distance student. “If you do not have self-discipline you do not manage the distance studies. You have to be more present as a distance student” (S). Many students underlined the need of self-discipline. “Strong discipline was required. I devoted the mornings to this and the afternoons and then I was free for some hours” (I). The teacher educators mentioned on the negative side, as already is pointed out, their increased burden of work.

The good points in distance education were pointed out as the freedom to study when you wanted and the possibility to combine the studies with children and work. “The pros are that you can stay at home and perhaps work 30-40 percent or something like that and you do not require so much study loan” (I). “I can not see any disadvantages. I think all functioned very well. We received response on our work. ‘[]’ I think I will apply for more distance courses if I decide to continue to study” (I).

You can study more independent, when you have time, but at the same time it is necessary that you really do so. You must have a strategy and you must accomplish it. Those who lack discipline can not study in distance. (I)

To be at home, that you have the possibility to be educated. And the courses we had together with the campus students, I found the distance students more motivated and interested. We [the distance students] gave each other much more during the lessons on the net, then when we met with the others on campus. (I)
When asked what form of tuition the teacher educators preferred they said that the two forms had both pros and cons. However, they did not prefer any form before the other. When asked “what do you prefer” some answers were:

There are strengths and weaknesses with both forms. Lectures are easier in campus when you are in the same room. You are nearer in campus. Streamed lectures is easier then recorded, but it is laborious as you must have split vision and answer questions from the students that not are in campus (T).

You are nearer in campus and it is easier to form an opinion of the suitability of the student, that is, suitability to become a teacher. On the other hand it is easier to loose focus on the subject in campus and you can become to kind (T).

In this case study it seems that the distance teacher education worked rather well compared to campus education. The outcomes were in many aspects very good. However, one explanation might be that these first students were very motivated, as this was the first chance for many of them to fulfil their ambition to pass a teacher education. We consider it important not to draw too far-reaching conclusions from this study as both the students and the teachers involved, from the beginning, were motivated to get through with this education.

Discussion
To make an interpretation of possible answers to our research questions we think it is necessary to consider that: “The design of the learning activities has to be evaluated in terms of the thinking they elicit”\(^{20}\). From this point of view, we can for sure say that the teacher students in this study said that the Common subject area had prepared them for the teaching profession. Nevertheless, there were some students of a different opinion. We also noticed that the students in general were target oriented and ambitious. The many written study tasks developed their writing skill as they always got response from the teacher educators. It was also obvious that the distance teacher education program reached new target groups of students, who not had been able to participate in university studies if it not had been offered in this form. This was particularly valid for the middle-aged women, living a long distance from a university, with social responsibilities for children or old parents. A report from the Swedish national Agency for Higher Education showed a similar result, where a big majority of men and women had a family situation, where it was of crucial importance to choose distance teacher education to be able to accomplish the education\(^{21}\). We think that there has been an unmet need for this type of education at least concerning the students in our case study. When this need is satisfied there might be no students left with the motivation mentioned above, something that might change future target groups and radically change the preconditions to run the distance teacher education successfully. We have already heard of some problems.

However, an important conclusion is that it was no limitations in order to establish a functioning communication between students and their teachers using ICT. In this case the Marratech system was considered to permit free and spontaneous communication both of the teacher educators and the students. It was possible to stream lectures and to have seminars on the net. Initially the teacher educators had been sceptical but at the same time motivated to try, but they were surprised of how well the communication functioned. They also declared that they, compared to campus teaching, had better and nearer contact with their distance

\(^{21}\) Högskoleverket. Rapport 2007:41 R.
students and more control over the students’ performance in seminars and in written tasks. As a distance teacher you must often write to your students and read all they write to you. As a teacher you must be careful with what and how you write to your students. In seminars on campus you easier lose focus on the subject and you might mostly remember the students who talk much and not so much what they said. However, there were also limitations in distance education. Some parts of the education were better suited for campus, for example drama and creating characters. It was also easier to find ways of safe examinations. Distance teaching was considered time consuming in preparing the teaching and demanded much activity from the teacher educators as the students wanted rapid response. Distance learning also requires more financial resources as it is time consuming for the educators.

To conclude, this study indicates that a distance teacher education works well for mature individuals with high motivation. However, it demands more time from the teacher educators, but showed in this case good results. Still, there are pedagogical challenges to overcome. Maybe we should consider thinking of both distance and campus education in a mix, where the most optimal pedagogic considerations are reflected upon.
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