

INTERVIEW

THE ROLE and FUNCTION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION WORLD FROM WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE:

An interview with Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI for WOJDE

Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI is an assistant professor and director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication and in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine.

Interviewed by Dr. Harun SERPIL
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Distance education -DE- has an increasingly powerful impact on the education systems around the world and plays an especially vital role in the education of developing countries. It enables a large number of populations to access educational opportunities which would not be otherwise possible through conventional systems of education. This semi-structured interview aims to benefit from her experiences, feelings, and perceptions about distance learning/education by eliciting her deep insights on the issue. As being a member int.WOJDE team,

Harun SERPIL has interviewed with Lisa GUALTIERI, PhD, ScM. **Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI** is an assistant professor and director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication and in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine.

int.WOJDE: Hi your welcome, who is Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI?

Lisa GUALTIERI: From the perspective of distance education, I have developed and delivered online courses for many years and still teach online! I was Editor-in-Chief of eLearn Magazine and spoke at many e-learning conferences. In addition, I am an assistant professor and director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine. My research focuses on the use of social media for participant recruitment in clinical trials and on the use of wearable activity trackers with older adults with chronic medical conditions. I am the founder of RecycleHealth, which collects unused wearable activity trackers and donates them to underserved populations. I serve on the FDA's General Hospital, Personal Use Devices Panel. I have a Ph.D. in computer science from Harvard University, a Sc.M in computer science from Brown University, and a B.A. in mathematics from the University of Massachusetts.



int.WOJDE: What are your views about distance education? How does distance education support the education system of your country?

Lisa GUALTIERI: The biggest advantage I see is the increased reach and flexibility. Many of my students are working professionals. The certificate program we offer on Digital

Health Communication offers courses to fit into students' busy lives while giving them the opportunity to learn new skills. While some of my students are in Boston, many are in other locations and as far away as India.



int.WOJDE: What has been your experience at your current workplace for distance education/learning?

Lisa GUALTIERI: At Tufts University School of Medicine, I developed the first fully online course, Mobile Health Design. That led to an online certificate program. While most courses at Tufts are offered in the classroom, my colleagues and I also realize the benefits of tools like WebEx to be able to offer a class when there is a snowstorm and the university closes due to weather.



int.WOJDE: What are the advantages of distance education model of learning over traditional model of learning?

Lisa GUALTIERI: Personally, I like teaching in person best. Here's why: First, I like to stand to lecture and it is hard to do that when you're at your laptop. Second, I like seeing my students in person, chatting with them before and after class, and seeing their faces light up when something I say excites them. Of course, online is convenient in many ways-especially for professional development. I feel like I get to know my students well, but I especially like meeting them in person.



int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance education instructors?

Lisa GUALTIERI: My suggestions are to prepare for the worst case – have a back-up plan for everything – and do everything possible to encourage students to participate. It is also important that your mastery of the topic and knowledge of how to apply it is apparent no matter how a course is delivered. I am very proud that one of the instructors I mentored, Bradley Moore, MPH, taught an online course alone for the first time to glowing student evaluations.



int.WOJDE: What are your suggestions for distance education administrators?

Lisa GUALTIERI: My suggestion is to make technology transparent. It is a delivery mechanism. For students and faculty, it ideally should be no harder to be in an online course than to be in one delivered in a classroom.



int.WOJDE: Which areas of distance education have you been involved so far, and what are some of the lessons you have learned from them?

Lisa GUALTIERI: I have taught online for years, mostly using synchronous technologies. I direct a certificate program that is delivered online except for a one-week in person course. In addition to teaching online, I have mentored faculty who are new to teaching online.

int.WOJDE: Did you have supportive practices/programs for the education of women and girls through your work at University?

Lisa GUALTIERI: I don't think we distinguish in any way between students. They are all people!



int.WOJDE: As a woman, what do you think should be done for a more effective distance education of women?

Lisa GUALTIERI: There is exciting work being done for outreach in developing countries where there are fewer educational opportunities for girls.

int.WOJDE: You must have had interesting experiences during your work in distance education. Could you please tell us about some of those?

Lisa GUALTIERI: My most interesting experiences have been opportunities to bring in guest lecturers to share their expertise even though not local. When I think about the highlights of my teaching career, it has been some of these amazing guest lecturers, such as Dr. Richard Besser and Dr. Deanna Attai.

int.WOJDE: Our thanks go to Dr Lisa GUALTIERI for sharing her invaluable distance education/learning experience as a female professional with the int.WOJDE readers.

BIODATA of Lisa GUALTIERI

Dr. Lisa GUALTIERI is an Ass. Prof. Dr., director of the certificate program in Digital Health Communication and in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine. Her research focuses on the use of social media for participant recruitment in clinical trials and on the use of wearable activity trackers with older adults with chronic medical conditions. Lisa is the founder of RecycleHealth, which collects unused wearable activity trackers and donates them to underserved populations.



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