Institute of Distance Education Newsletter

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INSTITUTE OFDISTANCE EDUCATION IS PUBLISHED TWICE A YEAR.

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Desk of the Director

I am pleased to write this Foreword for the second edition of our newsletter for the 2014/2015 Academic Year. This newsletter, as you will soon discover,

Prof. CWS Sukati

contains several useful informative and interesting articles, which in great part, demonstrate IDE's activities that have been undertaken in pursuit of its Vision of Becoming an International Centre of Excellence in Distance Education Access, Delivery, Practice, Research and Life-Long Learning.

The Institute is proud to be registering more and more students each year, indicating that it is fulfilling its vision and mission of opening up access to university education in the country. It is however, disconcerting that the rate of increase in enrolments is now lower than what it was about 6 years ago due to the lack of scholarships for our students. Despite this setback though, we are certain that this trend of increasing enrolments will, *ceteris paribus*, continue at least for the next ten years.

I am also pleased, on behalf of the IDE Team, to welcome two staff members who recently re-joined the Institute, after completing their Ph.D. degrees. We know that with their further education, they are bringing more knowledge, expertise, skills, experience and enthusiasm to their jobs. Moreover, their hard-

work and commitment will assist greatly in making IDE the ODL Powerhouse in the Region that it wants to be.

As the Examinations for the Second Semester of Academic Year 2014/15 are about to start, I wish all our students the best of luck in their examinations. I urge them to work hard and use all the examination tips that they get and those that appear in this Newsletter. Do enjoy reading our Newsletter, and if you have any questions, comments, views, criticisms and suggestions on it, or on any of our activities, products and services, please feel free to communicate this directly to me or to any of my Team Members in IDE.

CWS Sukati

50th DEASA CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL MEETING

The Institute of Distance Education has been chosen by the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA) to host the 50th DEASA Conference and General Meeting in September this year. In this regard, the Acting Chairperson of DEASA, Dr.Vitalicy Chifwepa and the Honorary Treasurer Dr. Johan Hendrickz visited Swaziland in March 2015 to meet with the relevant stakeholders and to advice the Local Organizing Committee. Preparations for this Conference have started in earnest and several sub-Committees have been set-up. The tentative date for the Conference is the 18th to the 19th of September 2015, and the Annual Meeting is scheduled for 20th September 2015. We shall supply the UNISWA community with details as they become available.

CWS Sukati

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA (OUT) VISITS IDE

On February 13 – 15 2015 The Pro Vice Chancellor, Professor Elifas Bisanda and Dr Michael Ngumbi of The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) visited The Institute of Distance Education (IDE). OUT is a public University, like IDE, and is mandated by the Tanzanian law to conduct Distance Education.

OUT categorises her Academic programmes in three levels, i.e. Non-Degree (Diplomas and Certificates), Undergraduate degrees (Bachelor) and Post Graduate Degrees. The University delivers content through blended learning that combines Orie-

The IDE Director, Prof. Sukati, OUT representatives, Dr Ngumbi, and Pro-Vice Chancellor, Prof. Bisanda and UNISWA Vice Chancellor, Prof, Magagula

ntation face to face to train students on self-leaning and distance learning; Independent study using study materials provided, online resources, etc; Face to face meetings with staff to monitor learning using Student Progress Portfolio and Field practice for subjects requiring practical exposure.

The purpose of the visit was to:
- share experiences and lessons in conducting

ODL courses
- exchange for information relating to both Institutions, structure and course delivery mechanisms, and
-explore areas of common interest for purposes of future development of joint programmes including research and supervision of postgraduate students.

As IDE has moved towards offering her instruction through blended learning, she benefitted immensely from OUT and from the wealth of experience that OUT has in the Distance Learning area.

LN Simelane

Peer -Group Interaction in Distance Education - Its Need & Strategies *By S Rastogi*

Learning through any system becomes permanent if immediate feedback is provided to the learner for his queries, questions and confusions in understanding the content. A teacher, in conventional system, creates a learning environment. This environment facilitates the information to reach the learner's mind easily and be retained there for a longer time. This retained information becomes knowledge. Also, a student, through drill and practice develops mastery in using this knowledge in future as and when he needs it. This mastery converts knowledge into wisdom.

This whole process from information to wisdom is monitored by the teacher who meets the student very regularly as per his routine prescribed in the time table. A two way communication between a teacher and his students makes the students to be free from confusions and helps them to retain the information easily. This role of a teacher develops confidence in the learner. The learner will always know that in future he will receive similar type of academic support from the teacher. He will therefore be encouraged to study and will feel motivated to complete the programme.

The system of Distance Education is totally based on technology for a need based mass education. The isolated learner being at a distance feels helpless in meeting day to day queries, confusions and questions which might have come in his mind at the time of learning. This distance learner gets a chance to meet his academic Counsellor only as per contact programmes schedule. This academic Counsellor delivers a lecture on a topic of his/her choice from the course content prescribed, in the name of human support. This practice is going on in almost all developing countries including Swaziland.

The students hesitate to put their queries, questions and confusions before the academic Counsellor during classroom teaching. It may be because both the student and his academic Counsellor do not know their role during these contact programmes. Also, most of the students might feel shy and think that fellow students will laugh at them and will be seen as weak students if they table their queries before the Academic Counsellor. Therefore, in order to avoid this label of being weak students, they prefer to remain silent during contact sessions in spite of having a number of queries.

The students of the similar age group and being in the same study level, having similar maturity level become closer to each other. They have a tendency to share the same or similar social status within the group, often sharing common interests, activities or beliefs. Participation in a peer group teaches students the process of give-and–take among peers, which is not generally possible within their relationships wi-

Prof. Satish Rastogi

th their academic Counsellors. The peer group provides a safe environment for experimentation with emotions, feelings, learning to deal with issues, fears, and uncertainties.

They build communication and problem-solving skills, and learn how to deal with sensitive and emotional topics in an acceptable manner. The peer group also helps in meeting some personal confidential queries which a student would not discuss with parents or his teacher. Peer learning brings with it unique motivational and cognitive benefits for participating with peers. It can boost self-esteem among students and awaken their interest in challenging tasks, enhance scholarly achievement, and foster pro-social behaviour. In particular, it is an effective means of enabling students to grasp basic concepts that underlie curricula.

Two different forms of peer learning, known as "**peer tutoring**" and "**peer collaboration**," are distinguished. Each has its potential use: peer tutoring is for transmitting information and drilling special skills; peer collaboration is for facilitating intellectual discovery and the acquisition of basic knowledge. Peer education complements rather than supplements adult teaching, freeing up teachers' time and attention and enabling them to focus more directly and effectively on individual learning needs.

Here comes the use of technology to meet this situation. Peer group interaction among students using variety of media like phones, emails, face to face discussions, may meet this problem of providing immediate feedback to each other. The University of Swaziland has a provision of email ID to every student. The Distance learners too, are

allotted an individual email ID after they register for a programme. Every student should have an email ID of other fellow students and enter the details in his chat group in his Tablet/ Smart phone. The question raised by one student and answered by any other student from that group will be seen by all students. It will generate a two way communication providing immediate feedback to all.

Making a Learner Association by including students of the same level of every programme will bring them closer to each other. They can freely discuss through their phones, emails, and even in a face to face situation for immediate feedback on any query, confusion and question. This will generate interest in studies and finally a feeling of motivation to complete the programme. This may improve learner performance during examinations and can control dropout rates in the Distance Education system.

Peer group interaction may also reduce much load over the academic Counsellor as most of the queries may be met by students through interacting among themselves.

"Distance learning students are committed to their coursework, usually for the purpose of advancing in their careers. For this reason, you can expect quality work and diligent participation from students."
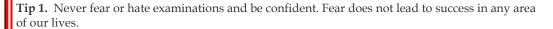
– Academic Technology Center, Worcester Polytechnic University

Examinations! Examinations! *By S Chakanyuka*

April is almost over and there is a chill in the air. Winter is almost here and so are the end of year examinations. You need to fast track your preparations for examinations now:

- Have you handed in all your coursework assignments?
- Are you going to need make up tests for some of your courses?
- Make sure that you are comfortable and confident enough to tackle each examination that comes.
- Consult as much as possible with colleagues and your lecturers and tutors to ensure you succeed in the end of year examinations.

Dr S. Chakanyuka

Here are a few tips borrowed from the Internet. I am picking those I think important:

Tip 1. Never fear or hate examinations and be confident. Fear does not lead to success in any area of our lives.

Tip 2: Prepare a good study time table and follow it religiously. This way you ensure that you give adequate attention to all your courses. No course benefits at the expense of all the others. Every course is important. Give adequate time to each of them.

Tip 3: Find a place where you can study comfortably without disturbances or interference. Secure the support of your family so that you minimise interruptions.

Tip 4: Make notes as you study. Writing helps you to remember what you are reading.

Tip 5: Sleep well and eat well. Some people think that if they spent all their time studying without eating or sleeping they are using their time profitably. No. Your body needs to be strong and refreshed. Food and sleep are therefore absolutely necessary. You may reduce the time you sleep but do sleep each night.

Tip 6: No cheating in the examination room: Cheating is never good. There is always the danger of being caught. Prepare thoroughly so that you won't have the urge to cheat.

Tip 7: Believe in God, Believe in yourself. Prayer to God always gives you confidence and peace of mind. Trust in God and He will guide you. But also believe in yourself. You can do it.

God bless you and give you success in the forthcoming examinations!

LIVE STREAMING OF IDE LECTURES
By CWS Sukati

The IDE has been given some seed money to buy equipment to start the process of live streaming of lectures. The live lectures will be conducted in classroom 004 in IDE and will be watched by students in classroom 2 at the Mbabane Campus. This video-conferencing facility will start in August 2015, when the Academic Year 2015/2016 commences. This now means that students in Mbabane and the surrounding areas will not have to travel to Kwaluseni for the lectures that will be beamed live in Mbabane.

IDE STAFF REQUESTED TO REVIEW OF PREST COURSE MATERIALS

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in collaboration with the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) invited Prof. Sukati (the Director of IDE, and Ms. N. Vilakati (the Coordinator, Materials Design and Development) to a workshop in Gaberone (Botswana) to review the course materials used for the Practitioner Research and Evaluation Skills Training in Open and Distance Learning (PREST) program. This workshop was to review and update the PREST materials for publishing them as Open Educational Resources (OERs). The Workshop took place from 30th November to 6th December, 2014.

CWS Sukati

In Celebration of Open Education Week 2015 *By NT Vilakati*

WHAT IS OPEN EDUCATION WEEK?

Open Education Week is a celebration of the global Open Education Movement. Its purpose is to raise awareness about open education and its impact on teaching and learning world-wide. Open education encompasses resources, tools and practices that employ a framework of open sharing to improve educational access and effectiveness. Open education practice entails an approach to education that seeks to remove all unnecessary barriers to learning, while aiming to provide students with a reasonable chance of success in their education and training.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The following are some of the key principles of open education practice as outlined by the Commonwealth of Learning, (2011).

- Lifelong learning opportunity provided through formal educational and/or training programmes.
- A learner-centred learning process characterized by the acquisition of 21st century skills, particularly independent learning and critical thinking.
- Flexible provision of learning in order to enable students to have a wide array of choices regarding where, when, what and how to learn as well as the pace in which they will learn.
- Recognition of prior learning, prior experience and demonstrated competencies so that students are not unnecessarily barred from educational opportunity by lack of appropriate entrance qualifications.
- Accumulation of credits from different learning contexts; and
- Creation of conditions for a fair chance of learner success.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION

To give practical expression to some of the outlined open education principles, many higher education institutions including the University of Swaziland have embraced the potential role of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to innovate their higher education practices. For example, TU Delft University of Technology recently organized various activities about Open and Online learn-ing in order to highlight how open education can help people meet their goals in education, whether to develop skills and knowledge for something new for personal interest, or looking for additional teaching resources.

One of the activities was a debate session on the following: Is Open and Online education the way forward? See a graphical impression of the debate accessible at: http://www.open.tudelft.nl/activities/debate-a-future-for-open-education/. OER Africa has released a new research report on Open practices in higher education. The report, based on a desk-top review, unpacks the possibilities of Open Education in African higher education. In addition, factors leading to the rise of open education are explored.

The report concludes with a recommendation that African universities can reinvent themselves through making certain changes that will enable them to be more relevant and responsive to 21st century skills demands and ultimately to serve their communities effectively and efficiently.

DEADLINES DO MATTER – HERE'S HOW TO BEAT THEM!!!! *By NC Mabuza*

Ms NC Mabuza

The academic setting is one setting that operates on routines. It is for this reason that all participants, that is students, lectures and administrators adhere to their schedules as means of ensuring that these three arms of an education institution work with strong coherence to meet the vision of the institution. Students as cited are not spared. This to say that failure of a student to submit work on time is **an academic offence**. Students are advised not to take deadlines lightly as they will be held accountable to missing their deadlines. In fact not meeting deadlines is an indicator of a non-willing, uninterested, less focused and non-cooperating student to the lecturer.

Setting the stage

This is about preparing yourself for what you shall embark on. The same with meeting deadlines for schoolwork, it means one should be prepared. The preparation needed is both externally and internally motivated. Preparedness means accepting working hard, forgoing participating in interesting activities at times and also having the goal of not compromising your school work at any point. With these you are then ready to work according to schedules. No regulation, incentive or punishment may prevent you from defaulting if you ha-e not prepared yourself.

Tips for beating deadlines

Create that impression of being an efficient and a successful student by making use of some of these tips below. Remember you are an individual therefore some will work best for you others will not. So be wise and take what is good for you.

⇒ Effective time management. Make good use of this resource. An easy way is to list your time wasters. Ability to identify these is a step towards managing them. This will enable you to begin your work early. The use of a daily time log or time table starting from when you wake up to when you retire to bed at night might also be useful.

⇒ Develop a record of your assignments and work to be done. This may include due dates and an indication of whether the assignment is long or short. This record should include work still to be given such as tests. This should not be another poster on your wall that you will only admire when you think you have time, instead refer to it as frequently as you can to be able to keep track.

⇒ Breakdown bulk work into smaller activities to be able to keep track. For example, **Monday: Data collection** which could be researching in the computer lab or in the library**, Tuesday: preparation of first draft: Wednesday:**   *Continued on page 5*

IN A DIFFERENT WORLD

Report from the Shanghai Open University, Shanghai, China

By Dr. Karen Ferreira-Meyers (IDE Coordinator, on sabbatical leave in Shanghai)

Dr Karen Ferreir-Meyers - Looking out into a different world, from inside the high-speed train linking Beijing and Shanghai

In this short report, I would like to give you some information about the Shanghai Open University, the use of Blackboard (similar to MOODLE) and We Chat (similar to WhatsApp) as extension of the classroom. I arrived in Shanghai on the 16th of September 2014 and have been hard at work ever since. I teach Beginners French, Oral English, Written English and Academic Writing to a variety of learners (all adults, some working, some unemployed, some quite young, others of a more advanced age) in the Shanghai Open University, known as SOU (formerly STVU: Shanghai Television University, which exists since 1960).

Shanghai Open University

In the past 50 years, Shanghai Open University has trained 350,000 graduates with bachelor degrees and associate bachelor degrees. Currently, the number of students pursuing degree education in SOU is 110,000, and the number for non-degree education is up to 500,000.

The Shanghai Open University has 8 Institutes, including Open Education College, Continuing Education College, Institute of International Exchange, Institute of Urban Public Safety Management, College of Disabled People, Institute of Education for the Aged, Institute of New Rural Reconstruction and Institute of Female Education; 8 departments, including Department of Management, Department of Law and Administration, Department of Finance & Accounting, Department of Foreign Languages, Department of Literature & Art, Department of Information & Engeneering, Department of Art of Dance and Vocal Music Teaching, and Department of Compre-

hensive Teaching, and 41 branch schools covering 17 districts and regions of the city.

SOU has opened 61 programmes of bachelor degree and associate bachelor degree successively. In 2012, SOU has totally established 16 undergraduate (upgrading from junior college education) programmes, in which 13 programs are based on the programmes of NOU, and 29 junior college programmes. There are 1480 full-time teachers and 2730 part-time teachers in SOU and its education system.

COL appreciates IDE initiatives for Staff Development among School Teachers in Swaziland.

Professor Asha Kanwar, the President and C.E.O. of Commonwealth of Learning, (COL) Canada has appreciated IDE initiatives for training 67 school teachers through a Research Project entitled, "**Empowering School Teachers with Educational Technology using Distance Education Mode."** In a letter to Prof. S. Rastogi, she has felt a need to <u>scale up this number</u> by replicating this model so that there is a substantive impact on teaching and learning in Swaziland. IDE honours this suggestion and wants to thank the Commonwealth Of Learning for this advice.

Consultations, Thursday finalising work including anything you received from consultation, Friday: Proof reading work and submission or submit on Monday the due date. For longer pieces of work you may use weeks instead of days.

⇒   Create schedules for your work. You may plan your work for the day, week, month or semester. This means prioritising your work. Do it just as you budget your money but this time it is work and your time.

⇒   Avoid procrastination. This is a tempting notion that encourages you to postpone doing your work till late. It includes your concentration on distractors that you entertain instead of shaking them off such as noise, emails, texting, chilling with friends, entertainment, the list goes on. The danger of procrastination is that it is justifiable when you do as it relieves you of your stress and finally provides that psychological thrill. Here is how you check if you are the procrastination type:.

Take this test:

Answer true or false for the questions that follow:

I put off doing assignment/ project/ task if it seems too difficult…..
I put off doing assignment/ project/ task if it takes a long time ……
I put off studying if I do not like the subject……
I put off studying if I am not in the mood…..
I put off studying when I do not know how to begin…..
I put off studying for a test when I do not know what it shall cover….
I put off studying for a test when I get hungry….
I put off studying for a test when I am too tired….
I put off studying for a test when there is something else I would rather do…..
Go beat the deadlines, become the efficient student and everything will fall into place!

Visit the Student Support Services Office to get the interpretation of your test.

BLENDED ONLINE LEARNING EQUIPMENT FOR IDE

The IDE has been given a grant by the Republic of China on Taiwan to purchase Online Learning Equipment for the Institute. The overall objective of this grant is to enable students studying through the IDE at UNISWA to use blended online learning mode as their main media for learning. This will enable the students to access their learning materials and learn at anytime and at anyplace that is suitable for them. This will allow more subject experts from around the world to offer or contribute courses and lessons to IDE students, and further ensure that UNISWA staff members are not inconvenienced by having to teach on week-ends.

CWS Sukati

READY OR NOT EXAMINATIONS BEGIN on 11 MAY 2014

Have you :

1. Checked your time table to ensure if all the courses you will be writing this semester are reflected on it?
2. Taken note of the days and times you had clashes and have that fixed?
3. (*If there were clashes*) seen the Director (Academic)?
4. Taken note of the days, times and venues of your examinations?
5. Collected your Examination Attendance Card?
6. Prepared enough for the coming examinations?

Note the following gross transgressions in the examination venues:

1. Late arrival.
2. Taking foreign material into the examination room.
3. Borrowing material from your neighbour.
4. Copying from your neighbour.
5. Failure to follow the Invigilator's instructions.
6. Talking (verbally, gestures or using sign language) while the examination is in progress.

The list is endless. At IDE we trust you will refrain from all cheating avenues. IDE staff wishes you all the best and hope that in this examination you will excel.

GOOD LUCK!

IDE VISITS THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INNOVATIVE, UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
By GN Nsibande

On Monday, 30th March 2015, the Director of IDE, Professor CWS Sukati led a team on a one day visit to the University of Pretoria (UP), South Africa. The team comprised of ICT Director, Mr. T.P Thwala, IDE Coordinator, Materials Design & Development, Ms. N.T Vilakati, IDE Copy Editor, Ms G.N. Nsibande, IDE Coordinator, Mr S. Shezi, Commerce Program, ICT Centre Technologist, Mr T. Ngubane, Lecturer in Academic Communication Skills, Mrs J. Nkosi and Lecturer in Business Administration, Mr. T. Lukhele (IDE Assitant Tutors).

The key people met at UP were Mr. D. Jordaan and Mr. M. Coetzee. The former is the Deputy Director of E-learning and Media Development . The latter is the Infrastructure Manager who works closely with the E-learning and Media Development Department and specialises in providing IT support to the educational technology business.

Mr. Dlof Jordaan, the Deputy Director of E-learning and Media Development with Mr. Mike Coetzee, Infrastructure Manager.

IDE visited UP to observe how they operate and offer teaching and learning through E-learning. Moreover, the team wanted to hear what kind of equipment IDE requires to effectively implement the E-learning approach in a blended learning system. With the equiptment in place it is envisaged that our IDE students can cut down on traveling costs of attending contact sessions on campus and concurrently adhere to the ideal distance education practice of attending minimal contact face-to-face class or tutor sessions. This is attainable because IDE (UNISWA) already has Moodle Learning Management Systems (LMS) in place, and continuously strives to improve the usage of Moodle and cutomise it to support lecturers.

Support such as providing training to lecturer's on how to use Moodle for teaching and learning purposes will have a positive impact on them in terms of pedagogic practice in the blending learning system practiced at IDE. Likewise, its pertinent that students have access to an computer enabled device. This includes catering for those who don't own nor have electricity at home hence ensuring the availability of computer laboratories.

The UP visit was fruitful and IDE received concrete advise to motivate and pursue the E-learning route. Thank you UNISWA for enabling this trip.

Professor Sukati with Deputy Director, E-learning & Media Development Mr Jordaan and the IDE team.

Yes, Reading Magazines is Okay *By GN Nsibande*

A weak reading habit (meaning the reading and buying of reading materials) inevitably limits the publishing market in terms of its growth. I decided to write this article to briefly discuss *what is read.* I particularly refer to magazines in this article.

I choose to use magazines to illustrate that reading them can help groom and sustain the reading habit while concurrently being a leisure activity. Often reading is dissociated from leisure, such as snuggling up in bed with a good book or having reading sessions with the family. The communal syndrome argument presupposes that it is a contradiction to expect the average African literate to spend his leisure time reading, instead of socialising Kotei, (1981:122).

Text is incomplete without a reader because it is the way in which meaning can be derived. A reading public exist because of text and it requires active participation from the reader in order for him or her to deduce meaning from the written text.

Why Magazines are read?

Magazines have been identified as an example of print media which promotes reading for leisure. Moreover, they are proving to be another form of media containing useful information. Admittedly, they are sometimes conceived as frivolous as opposed to books which are usually presented in a formal manner and are viewed as 'serious'. What is overlooked is that magazines do provide information which is 'serious'. The main difference is in the style of the presentation of text. This then brings in the notion of modern technology - magazines exemplify print media interacting with other media technologies.

Modern Technology& Magazines

Modern technology has been utilised in magazines so that the presentation of the layout design is professional and appealing. Here, printed text is relayed through numerous other media, one of which are websites on computers. Therefore, the website page can be considered a way of reinforcing the reading habit. People who log in are consumers who do so because they identify with the magazine content.

The fact that magazines can be accessed on the web is an indication that print media is constantly revolving by interacting with different media. For instance, the handwritten format may nowadays be computer generated for specific purposes such advertising. The font and format used

Ms GN Nsibande

is adjusted according to how the text is to be perceived (e.g. in advertisements words are big and colorful). Consumers identify with the outlets advertised in magazines because they buy from them. This motivates them to buy the magazine and read it for leisure, which promotes the reading habit. Ardent book readers are kept updated on bestsellers of fiction and non-fiction titles which are usually reviewed and rated in magazines, thus whetting consumers' appetite to purchase the books. Next, I cite a few reasons which make magazines interesting to read.

Magazine Cover & Identity

Consumers make the decision to purchase magazines based on whether they identify with something in the text or not. This proves the notion that text identifies the reader as true. Also, both the written text and non-verbal text conveyed through the printed text and pictures have meaning and send messages.

The pictures on the cover of the magazines convey some non–verbal meaning which is textual in that it plays a part in attracting attention to its consumers. The pictures and design are either in the form of artwork, pictures or objects which reinforce the message of the text. What is likely to occur when a reader is perusing through magazines with the intention to buy, is that s/he will be attracted by either the title itself or the cover design or both, because it is something they can identify with and which reflects a bit of an individual.

Magazine can also be regarded as accessories. I say this due to the fact that a reader can be identified by different types of magazine s/he reads. For example, academics are perceived as serious and will be expected to read the more serious academic magazines or journals. Men and women are generally associated with fashion and sports magazines respectively.

Generally, magazines are more affordable and accessible, which possibly explains their popularity. Students tend to spend time reading magazines for leisure and this may be attributed to the fact that the articles are simple, short and do not need much concentration for the information to be digested. They usually discuss interesting, relevant and recent events, which is more alluring. These may be articles on careers, motherhood, healthy eating and lifestyle and the readers' emotional response to these is often strong because they relate to issues which have meaning to them. Moreover, the fact that magazines are distributed in the public sphere timeously means they are reliable thus never letting consumers down.

To end, I reiterate that the purpose of this article is to highlight that the initial steps towards instilling the reading habit can be achieved through reading magazines. The buying and reading of print media, for leisure is a habit which is gradually built. In this way it is hoped that, the habit will become firmly entrenched. If reading regularly means buying more books and magazines it would ensure both the profit and sustainability of the publishing industry.

Reference

Kotei, S.I.E. *The Book Today in Africa*. (1981) United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. Paris.

To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting.

- Edmund Burke

IDE FINISHES 2015 ON A HIGH NOTE
By LN Simelane

Ms LN Simelane

We are almost at the end of yet another very interesting Academic year. Once again IDE will finish 2014/2015 Academic year on a high note. The IDE family has worked hard to get things done right, the first time, on time. Having now and then update meetings on our work has helped to keep us all focused on priorities.

Through the fruit of their hard work IDE has generated a closely knit family that works together and yield good fruit of their labour. Let's break down the process and see how we make things interesting and doable. Imagine the parts of a C Class Mercedes Benz that work together to keep it moving and once there is a malfunction of one part it stops working.

The Director's Office is the *steering wheel.* If there was no steering wheel, our C Class will not have direction. The Director's office has been able to procure IDE Online Learning Equipment. Seeing that most of Open Distance Learning Institutions have gone Digital, the Director wishes that IDE as well should at least follow this educational trend and go digital. He also has facilitated the exposition of staff to other DE Institutions to ensure that the IDE vision and focus for 2015-2016 is extended.

The Registra's Office is the *petrol tank*. Once filled up all the other parts of the car work harmoniously and the car gently moves forward. He sees to the everyday running of IDE supporting the Director and staff to achieve the goals of the Institution.

Materials Design and Development is the *engine*. If there was no engine the car will be immobile. If the engine freezes the going will be slow and so everything will be awry and can come to a standstill. The unit works tirelessly to see that all modules are produced and published on time. The Copy Editors' office also strives to publish student-reader friendly and quality modules.

The other units - Academic Services; Research and Evaluation; Commerce; Humanities; Law; and Morden Languages are the *engine pistons* of our Sleek Car. Without the pistons the car will not move forward and will collect dust and die a natural death. These units see to it that Lectures take place and on time, Lecturers are in class at the right time and every activity of each unit is taken care of.

The Student Support Services is the *oil* of this Lustrous car. Without the oil our car will not be able to oil all the other parts (students) that need some greasing. Among other things, this office takes care of the welfare of our students , relations among lecturers and students etc. They (students) come for counselling, advice and always come out of this office oiled and their problems reduced to manageable issues. The care that they receive from this unit gives them the resilience to work zealously.

The Research and Evaluation unit is the *Oil Deep Stick* used to measure the level of oil in our car. For the oil to last longer the engine needs to always have proper level of oil. This unit measures and evaluates our programmes if they are still at par with the on going changes of Distance learning. By checking the oil of the car, the unit is able to tell whether the oil has become dirty and if its time for an oil change. Likening this check with our programmes, this unit helps us take note of programmes that need to be introduced, changed and also ensures that the Institution delivers professional programmes.

The Print Shop is the *License Disk* which we all stick on our windscreens and forget about it only to remember that we have it when we are stopped by Police officers on the roads. The unit makes sure we are covered no matter what. Some of us do not even care to know what exactly this unit does but be rest assured it makes stuff happen, always running in the background, producing our modules, Time tables, Schedules of Study days and Tutorial days etc. Without this unit you do not want to imagine what IDE image would look like.

Without the *seatbelts* of our Mercedes Benz, our Secretaries, who hold the passengers (staff and students) in place, we would be flying through the air whenever the car decelerates quickly. Bravo for your flexibility.

In essence each is useless without the other.

DID YOU KNOW?

"Online learning can be a lifeline to those who have obstacles, such as geographical distances or physical disabilities."

- Paul Levinson, author, "The Soft Edge"

One of the perks of being an IDE family member (including our IDE students) is that you can contribute to this Newsletter. We would love to have any news or information you would like to share with the rest of our IDE family. To contribute updates and/or information you'd like communicated in the next issue of the newsletter, please forward your contribution in a Word format to lnsimelane@uniswa.sz Any supporting photographs you may wish to share should be saved as a hi-resolution Jpeg and attached to your mail.

Important: Students, all contributions will be scrutinised to see if they are not slanderous, intimidating or fraudulent before they are accepted.

THANK YOU

TO ALL THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS NEWSLETTER!

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