Institute of Distance Education Newsletter

Institute of Distance Education

IDE Taking University and Professional Programmes to the People

Read more inside..........

The Institute of Distance Education Newsletter is published twice a year

Inside this issue:

Send your enquiries and comments to the IDE Interim Newsletter Editor, IDE Block. Office # 017, Private Bag 4, Kwaluseni. Email: karenferreirameyers@gmail.com or kmeyers@uniswa.sz

Foreword—The IDE Director, Prof CWS Sukati

I am delighted to write this foreword to yet another IDE Newsletter, the first edition of our Newsletter for the 2013/2014 academic year. In the Institute, we continue to pursue our mission of "increased access to tertiary education by providing demand-driven educational and training opportunities to individuals (employed, self-employed, unemployed and school leavers) by offering them quality short and long-term credit and non-credit courses using the distance education delivery mode". In this regard, we are guided by our vision—to be an International Centre of Excellence in distance education access, delivery, practice, research and life-long learning.

To achieve this excellence, we place great emphasis on the quality of our products, and hence one of our major strategic issues is the improvement of the quality of our teaching and learning.

Professor CWS Sukati, IDE Director

To do this, our major focus is to offer all our courses online and make them accessible to our students anytime, at home, at work or at any location that is convenient to them. We already have a number of courses online, and our objective is to have all the courses online in a blended format, so that they are engaging, motivating and fun to our learners.

I am pleased to present this Newsletter, which contains a number of articles demonstrating IDE at work and indicating the various activities the IDE staff members have been engaged in. We do note that a number of these activities would not have been accomplished without the support of the University and the staff members in our collaborating departments. We gratefully acknowledge and appreciate their help and hope this assistance will continue to make IDE the ODL Powerhouse in the Region.

I hope that you will enjoy reading our Newsletter … and if you have any questions, comments and suggestions about it or any of our activities and services at IDE, please feel free to communicate this directly to me or to any of my team members in
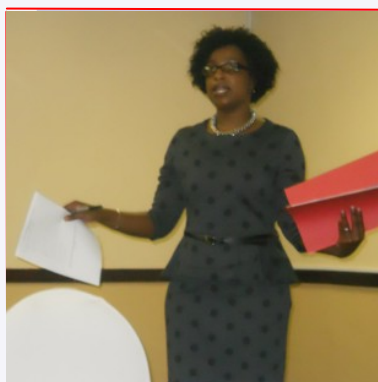
Announcement

M rs. Gciniwe Nsibande has taken study leave. She has embarked on her PhD studies and we are all very proud of her in IDE. Good luck!

Mrs G. Nsibande, Copy Editor, IDE

Evaluation of the collaboration between the University of Swaziland and the Regional Psychosocial Initiative (REPSSI) in offering the Certificate in Psychosocial Support.

Dr. Sharayi Chakanyuka, Dr, Karen Ferreira-Meyers & Ms. Nokuthula Vilakati

Introduction and Contextual Background to the Study

In this paper, the authors seek to discuss the notion of collaboration and apply it to the relationship that exists between the University of Swaziland and the Regional Psychosocial Initiative (REPSSI) and its partners, such as the National Children's Coordinating Unit (NCCU), in the offering of the Certificate in Psychosocial Support in the Kingdom of Swaziland. A definition of institutional collaboration adopted for this study is advanced by COL (2003). In Distance Education, collaboration may be between institutions in the same neighbourhood or state, within the same country or region, or anywhere in the world.

For various reasons, collaboration between institutions is viewed as beneficial to both institutions in that it enables sharing of expertise and resources and broadens the institutions' sphere of operations. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) cooperating with the Regional Psychosocial Initiative (REPSSI) and its partners (UNICEF, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and the Swaziland National Children's Coordinating Unit (NCCU)) in offering the Certificate in Psychosocial Support.

According to the Government of Swaziland's Psychosocial Strategic Plan (GSPSP), 2008-2010, the multiple effects of HIV and AIDS, poverty and natural disasters are having serious repercussions on the lives and psychosocial wellbeing of millions of children in Africa, Swaziland included. The GSPSP states that these children are vulnerable in almost all aspects of their lives. Due to these psychosocial intricacies, a critical need for the empowerment of these children and provision of adequate and effective psychosocial support (PSS) has been identified (Proposal for Localisation of the Open and Distance Learning Programme in Psychosocial Support into the Academic Calendar of the University of Swaziland 2010/11), 2010)

In this regard, the Government of Swaziland, through the National Children's Coordinating Unit (NCCU), UNICEF, the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI) and other collaborating partners have identified the need for a common national focus and understanding of psychosocial support for children in order to provide quality and sustainable PSS interventions. Swaziland then joined in a Regional UNICEF and REPSSI initiated Open and Distance Learning (ODL) certificate. The

Nokuthula Vilakati, Sharayi Chakanyuka and Karen Ferreira-Meyers IDE at the DEASA Conference

certificate programme is aimed at providing an academically accredited certificate for people caring for orphans and vulnerable children at community level.

Statement of the problem

The collaboration between UNISWA and REPSSI has been going on since 2010. There is need to stop and look back to find out how the collaboration has been going on, the benefits accrued and the challenges faced so that these can be addressed for the benefit of all concerned.

Research questions

What policy provisions are available to guide the collaboration?

What are the responsibilities of the partners in the collaboration between UNISWA and REPSSI?

What benefits have been derived by the partners from the collaboration?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration?

How can the collaboration be

How can the collaboration be enhanced?

Research methodology

The study used the qualitative research approach and data was collected through an open-ended questionnaire, document analysis and interviews. Open-ended Questionnaires were distributed to mentors, module coordinators and one member of NCCU. Interviews were conducted with the Director, IDE, and the mentor supervisor. Altogether eleven people responded to the questionnaire and two key people were interviewed.

Strategies for strengthening the collaboration

Most participants argued that the collaboration could be strengthened through the following strategies: -continued collaboration with REPSSI would be beneficial if REPSSI could provide human resources, materials and training. REPSSI support "doesn't always have to be money" (interviewee); continued skills transfer and knowledge sharing; clearly defining partner roles and motivating partners to be committed; entering into mutually binding contractual agreements which spell out partner roles; collaborating in research to inform action and presenting research output at professional conferences; communicating constantly; upgrading product to the diploma and degree levels; revising selection criteria; providing bursaries to deserving students; bringing back all partners and reviving the country team to maintain partner contact; retaining the nature of the programme, and giving opportunities for countries offering the programme to share experiences.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the model of collaboration that applies more to this study is that of the multiple alliances model (Claffey 2009), since UNISWA has had to partner with REPSSI as the main partner and its other partners UNICEF, UKZN and NCCU. This, on its own, has created confusion in the absence of clear Memoranda of Understanding and Agreement which stipulate what each partner's responsibilities are. However, even in this uncertain environment, REPSSI and UNISWA have continued to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that the programme proceeded smoothly.

The benefits seem to far outweigh the challenges in that, ultimately, the programme is benefitting the targeted students who will, in turn, improve the psychosocial wellbeing of orphans, vulnerable children and youth. In this way, the collaboration is achieving its purposes. Nevertheless, there are many lessons that have enriched the practices of all collaborating partners, such as resource sharing and flexibility. The partners have also benefitted from a growth in institutional culture. It is also apparent that the collaborating partners have benefitted from sharing "quality–building" processes and techniques, such as admissions, course design and learner support.

Semester I Examinations are Here…. Words of wisdom

TAKE NOTE — NOVEMBER 2013 EXAMINATIONS

T he Novermber 2013 examinations are around the corner. The dates are from **18 to 29 November 2013**. Please make sure that all your courses have been included in the timetable. Pay attention to the following:

- Clashes should be reported to your programme coordinators without delay.
- Check and re-check the dates of your examinations and be at the venue of each at 30 minutes before the start of the examination.
- Have you registered for the examinations this semester, if you are following a semesterised programme?

Harvest time for what you sowed this academic year is here. I wish you success in the examinations.

S Chakanyuka (Dr)

Dr S Chakanyuka, IDE Coordinator, Academic Studies

Mrs LD Vilakati
Sr IDE Coordinator, Students' Support Services

End of the first semester reminder, 2013/14 - Student Support Services Unit

Writing of assignments and tests

Assignments and tests are a continuous evaluation instrument that shows what you have and have not comprehended in your coursework. Your grades are weighted to form a ratio varying from 33%to 60% depending upon the course and programme you are taking.

Failure to do assigned course work results to an award of a zero grade (regulation 033.50). Make sure that you do all your assigned coursework and sign for your continuous assessment (CA) grade before the first day of the end of semester examination.

Your CA grade is part of the end of semester and supplementary examinations.

Plagiarism and cheating in writing assignments, tests and examinations

Plagiarism and cheating in all assigned coursework is discouraged. The penalties vary from an award of a zero grade to expulsion from the University.

Withdrawal from studies

In the event that you are unable to complete your studies for the registered academic year , apply to the Registrar in writing for permission to withdraw. Failure to apply for withdrawal from studies will result in a Fail and discontinue from the programme for first year and repeating students. For the other students it is a Fail and re-apply. The re-application should be done by the 30th of June preceding the next academic year.

Punctuality

You are encouraged to observe punctuality for all the activities assigned to you. Good practice of time management skills enhances punctuality.

Daily practice to avoid anxiety

Sleep for at least six to eight hours. You will avoid poor concentration, memory and energy loss that can all lead to poor academic performance

Discuss personal issues with supportive people

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

TALK TO THE PROFESSOR BEFORE AN EXAM

DEASA Conference 2013 Report by Dr. S. Chakanyuka

This conference was held in Gaborone, Botswana from 20 to 22 September 2013. IDE sent four delegates to the conference: Dr S Chakanyuka, Dr K Ferreira-Meyers, Mr S Shezi and Ms N Vilakati. At the conference, Dr S Chakanyuka, Dr K Ferreira- Meyers and Ms N Vilakati presented a paper on collaboration with regard to the Certificate in Psychosocial.

Dr Chakanyuka presenting the paper

The IDE contingent

Part of the IDE team following proceedings

October Writers' Workshop participants

Innovating ODL practice through blended learning

By Nokuthula Vilakati

Blended learning in higher education continues to progress in promising new directions. A pre-workshop session on blended learning was held at the Kwaluseni Campus on 24 June 2013 facilitated by IDE in collaboration with the Information and Communication Technology Computer Centre. About 20 educators from UNISWA formed a general consensus that blended learning in higher education can enhance the distance teaching and learning practice. Such improvement can be a result of combining elements of online and distance learning activities in much more effective ways than simply for information and communication functions (such as uploading syllabus, course announcements, etc.).

Part of the June Workshop participants hard at work

The June pre-workshop session was planned to support the evolving Community of Practice on blended learning to adequately prepare for the main residential workshop (8 -14 July 2013—Piggs' Peak). The pre-workshop and the June main workshop sessions were fully sponsored by UNISWA, so that the Community of Practice begins to engage with conceptual issues of blended learning. Also, during the pre-workshop session an opportunity was provided for authors to engage in practical hands-on activities on the UNISWA Moodle Learning Management System platform within the enabling SDL Digital Gateway environment.

Towards a blended e-learning approach for distance education delivery
by the IDE Director, Professor CWS Sukati

The importance of arriving at some consensus, at least at the institutional level, on what is meant by "blended learning"

Blended learning is usually the delivery mode that is used by most institutions. IDE too plans to go to the Blended e-learning route "Blended e-Learning is a pedagogical approach in which students have some control over their learning; and the teaching is through online delivery, combined with the use of online learning tools (e.g. discussion boards, online collaboration, blogs, etc.), and technology tools (computers, digital white boards, cameras, etc.) so that instruction and learning can be accessed at any time by the student through multiple electronic devices".

Prof CWS Sukati

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) in IDE: An Exploratory Reflection on Dilemmas and Opportunities

by Ms JN Vilakati

The need to seek ways in which our practice as teachers can be re-engineered towards being appropriately responsive to the learning needs of both DE students and others. Such reflective practice to then lead to an open conclusion (to develop an agenda for institutional systems of innovation) The presentation was theoretically grounded on the multifaceted concept of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) to explore the implications of the same for the interlocking tasks of instruction and learning at IDE.

Ms J N Vilakati

Conceptualising a pedagogical approach for open and distance learning: From a model to an approach by Dr SS Shongwe

While a model provides a mental picture that helps us understand something we cannot see or experience directly (Dorin, Demmin & Gabel, 1990), a pedagogical approach does more than this. Distance Education pedagogical approaches can be categorised as follows: *Instructor-led & Blended Learning* – that is, online, or e-learning
Key Characteristics of the blended learning approach: *Teacher as facilitator; Learner in control, participative, interactive, etc.*

Preparing for exams by Dr. S. Chakanyuka

The jacaranda is flowering, a sure sign that examinations are around the corner. 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 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 semester examinations.

Here are a few tips borrowed from the Internet. I am picking those I think important. You can read the rest on the website below: ayurveda.hubpages.com/hub/Tricks-to-tackle-**exams**

Tip 1. Never fear or hate exam 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..

Tip 3: Find a place where you can study without disturbances or interference. And comfortably..

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

Tip5: 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 5: No cheating in the exam 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 6: Believe in God, Believe in you.. Prayer to God always gives you confidence and peace. Trust in God and He will guide you. But also believe in yourself. You can do it.

Laugh a Little

First Day at University

Attending his first day of classes at a university, the student took a seat in the front row in his literature class.

The professor advised his students they would be responsible for reading five books to be chosen from a list of authors he would give them. He then walked over to the lectern, took out his class notes and began ...

"Anstead, Aster, Brewster, Brooks, Browning ... "

Working feverishly to jot all the names down, the student felt a tap on his shoulder. Leaning back, he heard the girl behind him whisper ... "he's taking attendance!"

Dr K Ferreira – Meyers

Papers Presented

4-7 April 2013, Asian Conference on Arts and Humanities, Osaka, Japan, paper presented on 4 April 2013: **African masks as Memories of Culture in Selected African Crime Novels**

4-6 April 2013, International conference The Poetics of Multilingualism, Budapest, Hungary, paper presented on my behalf on 5 April 2013: **Multilingualism in contemporary auto-fictional narratives from the African continent**

7-9 April 2013, International conference Le traducteur et son texte : Relations dialectiques, difficultés linguistiques et contexte socioculturel, Cairo, Egypt, paper presented on my behalf on 8 April 2013 : **La traduction et l'interprétation comme lieu idéal d'interculturalité** (paper written by K. Ferreira-Meyers and D. Oakes)

2-3 May 2013, International Conference on Autobiography as a writing strategy in postcolonial literature, Farmington, Maine, USA, paper presented entitled: **In between the Collective and the Individual: African Autofiction** (+ chair of session on Women's autobiographies)

6-9 June 2013, International Conference EPAL (Echanger pour apprendre en ligne), Grenoble, France, paper presented with Corinne Raynal-Astier, **Démarche réflexive dans des enseignements à distance (EAD) exolingues : Etude de cas en Afrique australe et dans l'Océan indien**

6-8 June 2013, International Conference « Cultures of Memory », Bucharest, Roumania, paper presented: **Cultural Objects in the South-African Crime Novel: African Masks as Memories of Culture** (paper read on my behalf)

9-16 June 2013, International Conference CIEF (Conseil international des Etudes francophones), Grand Baie, Mauritius, paper presented: **Femmes et mères dans les romans policiers africains : où sont-elles ?** (+ secretary of the session)

20-22 September 2013, International DEASA Conference, Gaborone, Botswana, paper prepared by Dr. S. Chakanyuka, Dr. K. Ferreira-Meyers and Ms N. Vilakati and presented: **Evaluation of the collaboration between the University of Swaziland and the Regional Psychosocial Initiative (REPSSI) in offering the Certificate in Psychosocial Support**

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE IDE OF THE UNISWA: AN ANALYSIS - PART II

S. Rastogi

Quality control is a major concern for IDE. The programmes delivery modes, treatment needed to be given to our students, study difficulties in course content, etc. are to be diagnosed through programme evaluation.

The findings of such activities will focus on the gaps between perceptions and expectations. Bridging the gap between perceptions and expectations will bring more quality to the various IDE activities. Programme Evaluation may help in achieving the quality goal for every IDE programme.

Swaziland has a good network of cellphones and Internet. This may be used to meet students' academic and administrative queries. The switch-over to high-tech blended and e-learning is IDE's dream. Various other countries, such as China, have been using multimedia and online technologies for educating its masses in various fields. It can be said that all Chi-

Professor S Rastogi, IDE Coordinator, Research & Evaluation

na's technological advancement is because of distance education.

Swaziland may also achieve this target of using hi-tech facilities and modalities in offering its programmes. This would, of course, require a high fixed cost in the beginning, especially for capacity building. The University of Swaziland may request international partners and donors for assistance, for example the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) or the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) could perhaps meet this fixed cost.

Once it is done, the blended and online delivery mode will be very economical and frequent interaction between students, lecturers and tutors, as well as among students, will be possible in practice. Using such new infrastructure will require capacity building and training of students and their academic counsellors. The Institute of Distance Education is therefore preparing itself to offer more workshops.

"Quality control is a major concern for IDE. "

CHAPTER PUBLICATION
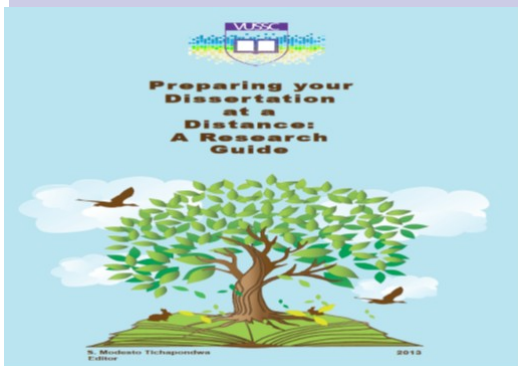
Dr. S Chakanyuka wrote a chapter in a recently published book entitled "Doing your dissertation at a distance: A Research Guide", edited by S Modesto Tichapondwa. The book launch was held in Gaborone, Botswana on 2 August 2013.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN IDE AND MADRID OPEN UNIVERSITY   Report by Prof. CWS Sukati

The University of Swaziland (IDE) has signed an Academic Co-operation Agreement with the Madrid Open University (UDIMA). UDIMA is an innovative, open and flexible university that offers its instruction via an online Campus that is open 24/7 365 days a year. As such UDIMA offers an opportunity to all those who, due to different reasons, are unable to attend classes in the traditional way.

UDIMA and UNISWA have agreed to develop plans for scientific and cultural exchange that will entail:

- Development of joint research projects
- Programs for undergraduate and postgraduate study/ research
- Exchange of academic/administrative staff, researchers and students
- Exchange of information relating to its organisation, structure and course delivery mechanisms
- Development of course materials, holding of seminars and symposia, undertaking of academic visits, etc.
- Exchange of written and other study material, printed publications, etc.

As IDE is moving towards offering its instruction through the blended e-learning mode, it stands to benefit immensely from this Academic Cooperation Agreement and from the wealth of experience that UDIMA has in this area.

The Moodle LMS: How do students react ?

Article by Dr. K. Ferreira-Meyers. For additional information on this study, please contact Karen at karenferreirameyers@gmail.com

Learners' Feedback on the effectiveness of IDE-Eng302/Eng302 using Moodle as a Delivery Platform

This article is a short report on research undertaken for the completion of a Master in Instructional Design and Technology

This particular study aimed at determining the meanings/sense learners give to their autonomous learning situation in a learning management system such as Moodle. The problem was centered around the learners and sought to find out how these learners rate/perceive their learning process and whether the instructional design of the environment in Moodle could assist in the learning of a course like ENG302 (Writing, composition and stylistics). It also sought to find out whether there were significant differences between respondents from the Institute of distance education IDE (part-time learners) and respondents who took the same course but on a full-time basis.

Objectives

This particular study aims at determining the meanings/sense learners give to their autonomous learning situation in a learning management system such as Moodle. The problem is centered around the learners and seeks to find out how these learners rate/perceive their learning process an whether the instructional design of the environment in Moodle can assist in the learning of a course like ENG302 (Writing, composition and stylistics). It also seeks to find out whether there are significant differences between respondents from the Institute of distance education IDE (part-time learners) and respondents who take the same course but on a full-time basis. The objectives of this study were to:

1. Determine learners' opinions of an online learning management system such as Moodle

2. Determine learners' views on possible (dis) advantages of LMSs and/or Moodle

3. Analyse the possibilities of teaching English language courses such as ENG302 (Writing, composition and stylistics) using Moodle as the main platform (in addition to face-to-face classes)

4. Verify whether the learners' views are related to their educational setting (full-time face-to-face or part-time blended learning)

The objectives assisted the researcher to look at previous TAM Models and determine whether Moodle as it is used at the University of Swaziland fitted into the model. The research propose an adapted TAM model.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use a technology. The model suggests that when users are presented with a new technology, a number of factors influence their decision about how and when they will use it, notably:

• Perceived usefulness (PU) - This was defined by Fred Davis (1989) as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance".

The TAM has been continuously studied and expanded-the two major upgrades being the TAM 2 (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Venkatesh, 2000) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (or UTAUT, Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003). A TAM 3 has also been proposed (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). We have found that, in recent years, a number of studies on education have used TAM to examine learners' willingness to accept e-learning systems (Lee, Cheung, & Chen, 2005; Liaw, in press; Ngai, Poon, & Chan, 2007; Ong, Lai, & Wang, 2004; Pan, Gunter, Sivo, & Cornell, 2005; Pituch & Lee, 2006; Raaij & Schepers, in press; Yi & Hwang, 2003) or online courses (Arbaugh, 2002; Arbaugh & Duray, 2002; Gao, 2005; Landry, Griffeth, & Hartman, 2006; Selim, 2003).

The study has been able to provide answers to all aspects indicated in the objectives. Learners' opinions were invited and received. Learners' views are quite explicit on the advantages of Moodle, but the disadvantages were also tackled. The disadvantages have more to do with the use of technology (difficulties to log on) than with inherent Moodle features. In general, the learners perceived the Moodle environment as advantageous to them. The third point, analysis of the possibilities of teaching Eng302 mainly via Moodle, was not fully discussed. The data obtained via the survey were not sufficient to draw a similar conclusion. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that the Eng302 students accepted Moodle and saw the benefits from the platform. No full conclusion can be made with regard to point 4 either, as both groups, the face-to-face full-time learners and the IDE part-time blended learning respondents, reacted in quite similar ways. In some respects, reactions were foreseeable and in line with earlier studies, while, for certain aspects, this study gave different results from what could be expected. The latter is the case where full-time students agreed 100% with using Moodle in other courses, while the IDE respondents, who normally should benefit more from the Moodle platform than their full-time colleagues, indicated the same at 61,54%.

The research findings were indicative of the fact that learners in general are comfortable using Moodle, enjoy various Moodle features (such as the link between the forum and their email, updating their profile, viewing forum messages in different ways). The data reiterate the straightforward and intuitive nature of Moodle in general and state that learners would like to see Moodle implemented in their courses, over and above of its usefulness for the Eng302 course.

The study gives evidence that the use of Moodle is a bonus as it offers learners an extension of the classroom, giving them more opportunities to practice their writing skills. The learners also indicate that using Moodle for the course was beneficial as it improved their general computer skills, a competence that is of extreme importance to young professionals in today's world. While the application of Moodle to an EFL learning environment is not new, it seems to be quite an under-researched field in an ESL environment, and more particularly when it comes to the writing component of language learning, even though Moodle has different features which are useful to learners wanting to develop their writing competencies.

Change takes time and requires effort and patience. This study shows that students are still very used to being passive learners. This role brings a set of perceptions and beliefs that are difficult to modify. Implementing Moodle as a tool to enhance the written competence among year 3 Eng302 learners proved to be a challenge, as students were new to the environment. However, Moodle proved to be an excellent tool to make students aware of their responsibility as learners as they understood that they have deadlines to meet and challenges to overcome. They also learned that learning is an active process that involves doing and redoing.

I can conclude that the new virtual learning management environments, like Moodle, that new technologies offer as a resource in different learning contexts bring many advantages for those involved in the teaching and learning process. However, virtual environments demand higher levels of commitment, autonomy and responsibility for students who are used to being passive receptors and learners, and those (even though in my study they proved very few) whose response to any attempt of change is resistance as they feel that their comfort zone is being affected. Yet, the challenges that virtual environments present us with are necessary in order to produce the autonomous individuals that our society needs.

Swaziland Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) hosts stakeholders' forum on draft Swaziland and SADC Open and Distance Learning (ODL) policy frameworks

The forum was held on 16-17 May, 2013 at Sibane Hotel Conference Centre, Ezulwini, Swaziland. The overarching aim of the forum was to review and harmonize drafts of the Swaziland and SADC Open and Distance Learning (ODL) policy frameworks. This forum was fully sponsored by the SADC-Centre for Distance Education. The Chief Inspector, responsible for Tertiary Education, Mr PS Dlamini, welcomed the SADC-CDE Director, Dr G Gatsha; the Technical Team that drafted the ODL Policy and all key stakeholders represented at the forum. The members of the Technical Team are Professor CWS Sukati (Team Leader); Mr GB Mazibuko and Ms NT Vilakati. Many stakeholders were from IDE, UNISWA; Emalalatini Development Centre and the Ministry of Education and Training.

Acting PS of the Ministry of Education and Training, Mr T Malangwane

In his opening remarks, the Acting PS in the Ministry of Education and Training, Mr T Malangwane highlighted the following:

♦ Swaziland was on the right track towards meeting MDGs, and free primary education. Through ODL the MOET can upscale the training of teachers to meet the demand for more teachers

♦ The commitment by the Ministry of Education and Training to contribute towards social stability, through focus on the quality of life to curb unemployment and poverty by widening access to education. As a result, education subsector policies must be put in place to mitigate the challenges because all Swazis must be empowered through education. The benefit of ODL is that it can accommodate more students than the conventional education system.

♦ Swaziland must invest in human resource development through ODL. The ODL sub-sector policy will state how Swaziland can provide access to quality education to all learners, by taking into account pertinent issues, to provide accessible and relevant education of high quality

♦ An ODL Policy will contribute to improving our education system as outlined in the National Development Strategy Vision 2022.

Professor CWS Sukati

Professor Sukati led forum session on the Scope of ODL Provision in Swaziland. In his remarks he also highlighted that national ODL policy issues can help to ensure proper coordination of all services, with well formulated guidelines and policies such as for credit transfer purposes. Such policy issues can also address the misconception that science and vocational subjects cannot be taught through ODL methodolo-

Participants to the Stakeholders' Forum