Institute of Distance Education

A Warm Welcome to IDE New & Dynamic Leadership

Siyanemukela

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FOREWORD – THE IDE DIRECTOR

AS the Director, I am happy to write the foreword to this second issue of the IDE Newsletter in 2018. This issue is published in a very important year in Eswatini as we continue to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the independence of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the 50th birthday of His Majesty King Mswati III.   What is more, this issue takes stock of significant IDE activities and records some of its achievements. Equally important, is the multiple voices this issue includes whereby contributions are drawn from IDE internal staff members, staff members from collaborating departments as well as from IDE students. Such a multiplicity of voices gives us a holistic and balanced picture of what is happening in the Institute.

This issue is published at a time when two key executive management appointments have been made at UNESWA. We too extend our sincere congratulations to Professor Justice Thwala on his appointment as the new Vice Chancellor of UNESWA and Professor Pinkie Zwane on her appointment as the Pro Vice Chancellor (Administration). We wish them both all the best as they steer UNESWA in a new Strategic Direction and we pledge our support.

One of our key IDE-initiated activity that aligned with the 50/50 commemoration celebrations was the successful hosting of a public lecture in September, 2018 by Professor Romeela Mohee of the Commonwealth of Learning.

Professor C. Maphosa

The public lecture focused on the utilisation of blended learning strategies to increase access of higher education to students. We as IDE plan to enhance the use of e-learning strategies to improve teaching and learning in ways that ensure that our students derive maximum benefits from flexible and cost-effective learning approaches.

The Institute is also in the process of ensuring that a number of new programmes are introduced to cater for the diverse needs of our potential students. This is going to be achieved through working with Faculties and Departments to ensure that existing full-time programmes are also offered through IDE. It is also noteworthy that IDE works closely with other external stakeholders in offering entirely new programmes to meet societal needs.

Lastly, we are sure that all our IDE students did their best in their end of year examinations. We are sure you adequately prepared for them and took your examinations seriously, as each examination is an important step towards attaining your qualification. To all our readers, enjoy reading all the articles selected for this issue. We thank all our readers for finding time to read this Newsletter. We wish you all a peaceful and restful festive season.

IDE Director
Professor C. Maphosa

In This Issue

Read more inside…

Congratulations

The IDE Director, Staff & Students wish to Congratulate
Professor J.M. Thwala on his Appointment as the UNESWA Vice Chancellor

The IDE Director, Staff & Students wish to Congratulate
Professor P. Zwane on her Appointment as the Pro Vice Chancellor (Administration) of UNESWA

UNESWA VC – Professor J.M. Thwala

**UNESWA Pro VC (Administration)
Professor P. Zwane**

The current mode of delivery at IDE does not automatically make it an Open and Distance e-Learning (ODeL) institute. Students still struggle to obtain open access into programmes, which is inconsistent with the open access nature of ODeL. Moreover, Teaching and Learning (T & L) is largely dependent on the print module and a high number of face-to-face contact session hours. Also, students still need to physically visit the UNESWA to register, change courses, submit assignments, borrow books from the library and attend classes. Such issues, and many others, are a negation of the true spirit of ODeL in the 21st century.

"Essentially, the use of the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) shall be enhanced and training for ODeL practitioners and students shall be improved

IDE Vision
IDE hopes to normalise/rectify this irregularity in the following ways:
1. **Increase access -**IDE plans to engage in a formal programme to assist Mature Entry applicants to do well in entrance tests to enhance their chances of acceptance.
2.**Increase in formal and non-formal academic programmes-** Concerted plans are in place to increase the number of formal and non-formal programmes offered through ODeL.
3. **Digitisation of IDE operations-** Students should be able to register their courses and related business online.
4. **Utilisation of ICTs in teaching and learning-**In line with technological advancement of the 21st century, teaching and learning in IDE should utilise existing ICTs in their teaching and learning in limited face-to-face contact sessions.

Outlining a New Vision for IDE
By: Professor C . Maphosa

5.**Movement from synchronous to asynchronous means of communication -** A distance student is generally lonely. IDE plans to embark on vibrant communication strategies with students to minimise loneliness in students.
6. Establishment of regional learning centres - In line with the mandate of taking university education to the people, IDE is in the process of establishing regional learning centres.
7. **Utilisation of expert and competent ODeL personnel** -IDE intends to tailor-make ODeL training programmes that shall be planned and implemented for IDE staff, lecturers and tutors.
8. A business model of operation- In adopting a business model of operation, IDE is in the process of developing an ODeL policy and a Business Plan (2019 – 2022), which is drawn directly from the UNESWA Repackaged Strategic Plan.

Conclusion
IDE, is to refocus and restrategise plans and operations to ensure implementation of high quality distance education courses that are in line with DE key principles of accessibility, openness, self-directed learning, e-learning, relevance and responsiveness. Thus placing IDE at a competitive advantage in customer satisfaction and realisation of the goal of being an ODeL institute of choice in Eswatini and beyond the borders.

Welcome To IDE

MEET THE NEW IDE DIRECTOR
DESIGNATION – PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR

PROFESSOR Cosmas Maphosa holds a Doctor of Education degree in Education Management, a Master of Education degree in Curriculum Studies, a Bachelor of Education Degree in Language Education and Curriculum Studies and a Diploma in Education for secondary school teaching. He taught in secondary schools between 1994 to 2002 and occupied several positions of leadership in the secondary school system namely; Head of Department, Deputy Principal and Principal. He then progressed to work in the higher education sector from 2003 as a Lecturer, Regional Programme Coordinator at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), Researcher, Senior Academic Development Practitioner, Senior Lecturer, Research Associate Professor and Full Professor of Education Management in the Faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare.

Professor Cosmas Maphosa

He has ample theory and practice of curriculum planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation combined with outstanding computer application skills. Similarly, Professor Maphosa has hands-on experience in instructional materials development. As a researcher, he has published one book, one book chapter and one hundred and thirteen (113) journal articles in peer-reviewed and accredited scientific journals to date.

His research focus is on education management, curriculum issues and open and distance learning. He has mentored a number of academics in research and publication. Prof Maphosa has to date, successfully supervised thirteen PhD theses and six Master's degree dissertations. He is also an external examiner for Masters dissertations and PhD theses in a number of universities, internationally. He has also read more than thirty papers at international conferences and thrives on working under challenging situations.

He is a motivator and team player. He is married to Tendai and the couple has three children, Ropafadzo (22), Panashe (17) and Kuzivakwashe (8).

IDE Research & Evalution

Dr Khetsiwe Eunice F. Mthethwa-Kunene joined the Institute of Distance Education in August 2018 as the Coordinator Research and Evaluation. She previously worked for the Ministry of Education and Training for many years as a Science Teacher at Swazi National High School; She then advanced to become a Teacher Leader, Science Curriculum Designer and Curriculum Evaluator at the National Curriculum Centre (NCC).

Dr Khetsiwe E.F Mthethwa-Kunene

Whilst at NCC she gained experience in developing, piloting, reviewing and evaluating education programmes and curriculum materials as well as in research. Her passion for research is evident in her ability to write and present papers in local and regional research conferences on curriculum change and implementation; and pedagogical content knowledge for effective teaching and learning. She published her article on 'Biology Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) in the teaching of Genetics in Swaziland' with the International Journal of Science Education. As an active researcher, Kunene serves as the General Secretary of the Swaziland Educational Research Association (SERA). Dr Kunene has taught research methods courses and supervised student research projects in private universities on a part-time basis. Likewise, she has led several funded research projects. Before joining UNESWA in 2018, she led the evaluation of the Swaziland Skills Centre Technical and Vocational Education and Training programme supported by Kindernothilfe in Germany. She also gained some experience in leadership as a Head of the Science department at Swazi National High school and of the Measurement and Evaluation department at the NCC, and chairperson of the Lower primary panel and Editorial Committee of the Biennial conference on curriculum hosted by NCC for many years. Dr Kunene's experience in research, curriculum development, piloting and evaluation justifies her relevance and suitability for her current IDE position. She is married with two children, Sihlelelwe (18) and Hleloluhle (15). WELCOME ABOARD!!!

Online Facilitation at The University of Eswatini

PRETORIA , South Africa – Between 22 and 24 October 2018 IDE's Coordinator Linguistics & Modern Languages, Dr Karen Ferreira Meyers attended and delivered her paper titled '*Introduction of Online Facilitation Techniques at the University of Eswatini*' during the South Africa Education Research Association Conference (SAERA) hosted by North West Univerisity. Her paper was well received by the academic community members in attendance and linked well with the conference theme '*Education 01? In search of a new operating system: making education more relevant , responsive and authentic.'* Dr Ferreira Meyers full paper can be requested directly from her at *karenferreirameyers@gmail.com*

Dr Karen Ferreira - Meyers

UNESWA was well represented at the South Africa Education Research Association Conference (SAERA) held in Pretoria, South Africa between 22 -24 October. IDE former Copy Editor (now CELT Coordinator Learning & Teaching), Dr. GN Nsibande attended and delivered a academic paper entitled *The Nature and Extent of 'Transformed' Pedagogic Practice in A Blended Learning System at The University Of Eswatini (UNESWA)*' Her paper received positive feedback which suggested concrete strategies on supporting instructor's to realise (practice) the appropriate blended learning pedagogic practice.

Dr GN Nsibande LaMboni

Kwaluseni - **The University of Eswatini (UNESWA) Vice Chancellor (VC) was kind enough to agree to share with us his vision of Distance Education (DE) at UNESWA.**

The VC's opening statement clearly articulated the direction IDE should pursue. He said "IDE should continue to be at the forefront of increasing access to higher education to all who deserve it in Eswatini and in the region. It should work closely with all departments at UNESWA to ensure that most, if not all, programmes at the university are offered through both full-time and distance education." He further advised that when liaising with departments, IDE should work towards ensuring programme diversification. Programmes offered should link to the industrialization demands in SADC such as; entrepreneurship to ensure that students are equipped with skills for job creation as well as to fulfil the industrialization strategy of SADC countries. It's important that IDE focuses on increasing access, programme diversification and motivating all faculties to offer programmes through IDE in order to increase enrolments and subsequently funds for the university.

IDE Activities to Feed into the Repackaged Strategic Plan 2018-2022

The VC envisaged IDE being the leader in the implementation of the repackaged UNESWA strategy, through absorbing more students into their programmes, which will result in more funding for the institution. He pointed out that ideally IDE should fully deploy the Blended learning in all their programmes. Justifying this stance he explained that in that way the objective of doubling the number of students would be achieved by 2022. IDEs current student enrolment stands at an average of 25% of the total enrolments at UNESWA.

IDE is further urged to come up with an implementation framework where key issues extracted from the repackaged strategic plan are implemented within the institute. Critical issues cited revolved around increasing student enrolment at the university through a revised Open Distance Learning (ODL) strategy which would ensure that students in remote areas of Eswatini are able to access Higher Education. In line with the strategic plan, IDE was advised to set itself a target activity plan to be achieved in the next 5 years and strengthen their networks with key stakeholders in order to achieve some of the strategic goals.

"The VC envisaged IDE being the leader in the implementation of the repackaged UNESWA strategy, through absorbing more students into their programmes, which will result in more funding for the institution."

UNESWA Management Pledges Support for IDE Activities

IDE can be reassured of commitment from the UNESWA management. "We are prepared to support IDE in all issues including those related to the strategic goals. IDE should lead in innovation in terms of Blended Learning initiatives and in ensuring the development of electronic learning resources to be made available to students" said the VC. Once the proper costing of activities related to the unit of electronic learning resources is confirmed, the university will consider how these would be funded. Therefore, IDE is encouraged to budget for daily operations as well as for strategic plan issues. The university will also be able to fund required equipment especially for the decentralization of IDE functions to remote centres. These established centres should be fully operational with students being able to access materials and other services through centres.

VICE Chancellor's Salient Roadmap for IDE

UNESWA VICE CHANCELLOR – Professor J.M. Thwala

Challenges IDE should Address

The current mode of delivery is not a genuine distance education delivery mode and the IDE should revise this by considering the following:

a. Attracting more students, reducing the number of contact hours, utilizing Blended Learning approaches and enhancing the use of the Moodle Learning Management System.

b. Since IDE does not have its own personnel in terms of lecturers and instructional materials developers, IDE should therefore come up with a model to be semi-dependent of having its own 'fulltime and Part-time' lecturers. This model will alleviate the problem of relying on lecturers who are teaching in fulltime programmes who may be already overloaded

c. There is a need for staff members working in IDE programmes to reskill themselves in developing instructional materials suitable for online learning and teaching. IDE with the assistance of CELT should train in these area so they perform their jobs competently. The VC emphasised that the proposed IDE trainings should be held locally, that is, using UNESWA facilities rather than having costly residential workshops outside the university.

d. Lack of motivation of module writers – It was recommended that IDE should also work on putting in place ways of offering incentives to instructional materials developers such as increasing the module writing fee. For instance, there should be an extension of working hours to approximately 8.00 or 10.00pm. The current arrangement in terms of the almanac may need to be revised so that IDE does not compete for time and space with fulltime programmes.

e. Weak bandwidth at UNESWA is a challenge for both academic staff and students. Management acknowledges this challenge and will work continuously on improving internet access and the strength of connectivity so that students can access facilities from whatever location. As per DE principle students should be able to login anytime, anywhere, anyplace.

THE CREAM OF THE INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION SHINES DURING THE

38th UNESWA Graduation

During the 38th Graduation Ceremony of the University of Eswatini held on the 06th of October 2018, a total of 468 students graduated under the Institute of Distance Education. The graduates per programme are presented in the table below.

PROGRAMME	Number of graduates
1. Certificate in Portuguese	7
2. Certificate in Psychosocial Support	178
3. Diploma in Law	29
4. Bachelor of Arts - Humanities	56
5. Bachelor of Commerce	59
7. B.Ed-Adult Education	21
8. B.Ed-Primary Education	24
9. B.Ed-Secondary Education	31
10. PGCE	63
TOTAL	**468**

Two students from the Institute of Distance Education won the Director's Prize. The students both excelled in their academics and obtained 2 (i) and they are: Ms Nelsiwe Ntombizodwa Kunene in BA Humanities and Mr Sonnyboy K. Khumalo in Bachelor of Education Secondary (Humanities).

Sonnyboy who was available for an interview about his academic achievement, attributed his good academic results to God the Almighty whom he felt it was all through His grace. He was grateful to the Director and IDE as a whole for the prize. In his own words he excitedly said, *"I feel humbled and honoured …"*. He added that his achievement made his family proud and also his school and church as well.

Who is Sonnyboy?

Sonnyboy Khumalo is a teacher at Ntfonjeni National High School. He is a married man with one child. He enrolled at the IDE UNESWA for his Bachelor of Education (Secondary) in 2014. He majored in TRS and took English as a minor. He is currently teaching English and SiSwati. English and SiSwati were his major subjects at Diploma level.

Why choose IDE?

Sonnyboy chose to study through Distance Education because he was already employed and had a family to take care of. To him, IDE was the perfect choice that would allow him to further his studies whilst working, *"It's because I am employed and IDE was convenient because I would come here on weekends only"*.

'To him, IDE was the perfect choice that would allow him to further his studies whilst working'

"GRAB EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO READ AND STUDY"

**IDE Student
Director's Prize Recipient
Sonnyboy K. Khumalo**

Sonnyboy cited financing his education as his major challenge as an IDE student. Without a scholarship, he had to plan and prioritize. The prioritization saw some family related projects being suspended. The source of his funding was mainly his monthly salary which he supplemented with loans from the SNAT cooperatives. He explained that *"I also borrowed money from SNAT. At times I would pay the registration fee with my salary and pay the balance or whole amount through a SNAT loan"*. A grateful Khumalo was thankful to his wife who understood the adjustments that had to occur and further served as a motivational partner throughout his journey as a student.

Coping strategy

Sonnyboy combined a number of strategies which all bordered around time management to succeed. He was kind enough to share some of the success approaches he applied.

Finishing school work at school – Sonnyboy managed his time well at school. He used free periods for scheming, lesson preparation and marking. This allowed him to use the evenings for his studies and at times he would have sleepless nights depending on the pressure.

Starting early to complete assignments – Sonnyboy immediately embarked on assignments as soon as his lecturers gave them. He would visit the university library and first collect the information/sources required for the assignment before starting the write-up. This habit saw him finish his assignments on time and *"I would be guilty of sometime submitting as early as 2-3 weeks early."* He revealed another important tip and said 'g*rab every opportunity to read and study – I always kept with me a small piece of paper with jotted notes or a book with me so as to read whenever time availed itself e.g. when supervising tests, or on a bus etc"*

Concluding Remarks

Hard work and commitment to his school work yielded good fruits for Khumalo. He used the library diligently and made it a habit to rely on the course outline distributed at the beginning of each semester to guide and direct him as to course topics and then read ahead. Reading ahead and keeping up to date with current news, resulted in him actively participating in class discussions. Sonnyboy has certainly made IDE proud and even more so when he expressed that his recent academic achievement motivated him to do a Master's Degree with UNESWA.

Sonnyboy is truly a shining example to all of us. He affirms the notion that *'Success is no accident.. it's a result of hard work and determination.'* Well done and congratulations once again to him and all IDE Graduates.

IDE DIGITISING TEACHING-LEARNING SYSTEM TO REACH THE UNREACHED

AS part of the University Strategic Plan (2018 – 2022) IDE, UNESWA is transforming to a Digital Teaching-Learning system to reach the unreached. It has already started offering its programmes through blended learning, which combines classroom instruction and online teaching-learning to enable the students achieve quality academic success.

Innovative Teaching & Learning Through Technology

All learning is going to happen digitally in the future. Increasing the use of Technology will erode the division between online and offline learning in the University. As per the strategic plan, learning in IDE has been increasingly taking place online using the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS).

The IDE is also introducing an innovative way of teaching-learning through video lessons. Moroever, in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning (COL) from next academic year (i.e. from August 2019), IDE is in the process of introducing two new programmes such as: M.Ed-Leadership & Management and B.Sc-Nursing through online learning.

Digital Learning Centres

IN an effort to facilitate better communication through online, IDE, UNESWA has identified Digital Learning Centres in three different regions to facilitate country wide access, wherein all digital resources will be available to students. These are namely; Southern Africa Nazarene University (SANU), Siteki, Ngwane Teacher's Training College, Nhlangano and Mhlatane High School, Pigg's Peak. Management of the cited Institutions have in principle agreed to extend their cooperation through entering into Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to

Professor Chandraiah Esampally

share their computer and library facilities with IDE students. This move will permit IDE, UNESWA to be able to Webcast Lectures across the country. This will help IDE students to learn more effectively and perform better because Moodle will enable more accessibility to a global education net-work through links to other websites.

Mobile Technology

The use of mobile devices will play an instrumental role in teaching and learning in the near future. The IDE, UNESWA, is also planning to arrange to use mobile technology. Mobile learning can create a personalized learning experience provided through gaining access to the internet The prospect of a wireless device in every student's hand with real-time assessment and feedback presents the potential for a sweeping paradigm shift from teacher centered education to student-centered education.

Among the top priorities of IDE-UNESWA , is the improvement of digital infrastructure

Increase of Communication

AS mentioned previously IDE, UNESWA also plans to integrate video lessons into blended learning course materials, so that the students comfortably watch video lessons on this digital learning platform.

Currently, IDE started converting face-to-face course modules online. As such the blended learning course materials is a combination of research based writing and enquiry based learning. Hence, they provide various sources of links and knowledge worldwide.

Challenges

The biggest challenge faced by IDE, UNESWA which slows down the implementation of blended learning is the high expenditure/cost of installing electronic equipment and the running of the Audio-Visual studio. Fortunately, the University continuously strives to work on the effective application of the blended/online learning and teaching system through multiple electronic devices.

Conclusion

Among the top priorities of IDE, UNESWA is the improvement of digital infrastructure and fine-tuning the academic programmes through Moodle LMS to achieve better academic standards.

QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) IN BLENDED LEARNING – IDE NOT LEFT BEHIND

by: Dr KE Mthethwa - Kunene IDE Coordinator Reasearch & Evaluation Unit

Kwaluseni - The University of Eswatini (UNESWA) through the Institute of Distance Education (IDE) participated in the Piloting of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines. The COL's Higher Education Programme worked with institutions and national quality assurance agencies in Mauritius, Namibia, Zambia, South Africa, Lesotho, Malawi, Botswana and Eswatini in a Community of Practice (CoP) for quality assurance in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) to develop a set of QA Guidelines for Blended Learning in April 2018. Each member country pilot-tested the guidelines at their local university in order to provide feedback to improve the guidelines and also establish a quality baseline at the institution to track possible changes that could occur

Dr. KE Mthethwa-Kunene updates us on the development of QA guidelines

IDE BIDS FAREWELL TO COLLEAGUES

A FAREWELL NOTE FROM FORMER IDE LAW COORDINATOR

Adieu Professor Santish Rastogi

Former IDE Coordinator Research & Evaluation undoubtedly added value to IDE through doing the institute's related research projects he diligently embarked on. His work over the years has yielded wonderful feedback in relation to some of our programmes and solid recommendations have beeen made to strengthen them. He also proved to be a great reference point in his area of expertise (research) as well as any Open Distance Learning matters.

Even though his presence is missed, thankfully through technology he is but a click of a button away. He is wished only the very best success in all his future endeavors.

Hamba Kahle Professor Wetfu.

Professor Rastogi captured during his IDE hosted farewell occassion

IDE Director & Staff

As I move on, I take this moment to thank you all for the time spent interacting with you all through work. Your ceaseless support & general cooperation as we worked on various work related assignments is something I will always cherish. Physically, I am not faraway, as my new post is within the UNESWA Faculty of Social Sciences, specifically in the Law Department.

Best Wishes
Dr MN Shongwe

Changes in IDE Copy Editor Office

It's hard to say good bye!

On the 6th of November 2018, the IDE staff bid farewell to one of their own and long serving Copy Editor, Dr GN Nsibande LaMboni.

Dr. Nsibande was a colleague, friend, sister, and mentor in the IDE family.

She joined IDE in 2009 as a Copy Editor under the Instructional Design Unit. Her contribution to the Institute has been witnessed through the quality editing of module manuscripts, training of course lecturers on the integration of e-learning in IDEs instructional materials as per blended learning approach utilised at UNESWA. Over the years, as part of her IDE job portfolio, she diligently coordinated, managed, edited and published this IDE Newsletter. Her love for the use of technology for learning and teaching purposes was apparent and resulted in her recent appointment as the Coordinator Learning & Teaching in the UNESWA Centre of Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT). Her departure does not mean the end of our magnificent working relationship because she willingly extended her hand towards designing and editing this particular newsletter publication.

The IDE wishes Dr. Nsibande LaMboni well in her new assignment.

UNESWA Institute of Distance Education Takes a Leap into the Future!

Dr SS Shongwe - IDE Coordinator Education

THE UNESWA Institute of Distance Education views the near future as a time of making giant leaps in making the Institute visible and fully carrying out its mandate.

In fulfilling its mission, the IDE is autonomously introducing new programmes that are market-driven and in demand by industry and society. One such programme is this online Masters in Educational Leadership and Management (M.E.L.).

The purpose of this programme is to enhance the leadership skills and knowledge of educational leaders employed in support of the public school system, higher education and education related industries in the Kingdom of ESwatini and other countries of SADC and the Commonwealth.

The programme employs a variety of online teaching approaches. There are six core modules two optional modules and a dissertation in an area of leadership and management in which individual students will be particularly interested in.

IDE Activities

IDE EMBRACES 21ST CENTURY SKILLS FOR EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS IN MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

By: SP Dlamini
IDE Assistant Coordinator Instructional Design & Development

Ms. SP Dlamini

The instructional design unit trained course authors on developing blended learning modules to meet needs of the 21st century students. This exercise was achieved through a week long authors' workshop that took place at Maguga Lodge from the 9th to the 13th July 2018. This workshop was themed: "*Towards 21st Century Skills for Education Practitioners: Rapid Development of interactive learning materials through mobile learning applications.*"

'...explore a blended learning approach for distance learning'

The UNESWA particpants in the online materials development workshop seated with UNESWA Activing Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Masuku and IDE Director

Online Teaching and Learning
The advent of new technologies for Teaching and Learning (T & L) has seen UNESWA also moving towards online T & L. The IDE at UNESWA believes that integrating information communication technology (ICT) will add a better dimension to IDE and improve students' access to learning materials. To exemplify ICT integration in T & L, UNESWA Professor S.S. Motsa took the lead in facilitating practical sessions on designing pod-casts and screen-casts.

A collaborative approach was followed in this materials design session whereby course teams worked together to develop learning materials.

This approach is supported by many ODL systems in Europe and other places.

Quality
Throughout the workshop emphasis on the conception and production of high quality learning materials, based on sound instructional design was made. This was said to be a critical consideration applied to ensure that suitable self-learning materials are available for our distance learning students.

IDE STAFF LEARNS FROM EXPERIENCED ODL PRACTITIONERS

I still work hard to know my business. I'm continuously looking for ways to improve all my companies."

— *Mark Cuban*

Pretoria, South Africa – On Thursday 27 September, 2018, a team of nine Institute of Distance Education (IDE) University of Eswatini (UNESWA) academic staff members were led by IDE Director Professor Maphosa to a benchmarking visit at the University of South Africa (UNISA), in Pretoria.

The UNISA Institute for Open & Distance Learning (IODL) headed by Professor Mpine Makoe hosted the IDE team. The objective of this visit was to learn effective ways of running an Open and distance learning institution. Moreover, IDE wanted to observe an open and collaborative evaluation of services and

UNESWA IDE and UNISA Personnel

Among other issues that were discussed, the IDE Director stated that IDE is in the process of implementing the Strategic Plan (2016-2021) which foregrounds Blended Learning, Open Educational UNESWA Resources and Programme Diversification.

"... craft a dual mode institutional policy & strategy "

Advise to mitigate some of challenges IDE encountered in its operations were to craft a dual mode institutional policy and strategy as part of the institutional vision and mission. This would ensure that they are inclusive of both components of the dual education modality. The UNISA team pointed out that a challenge of not addressing structural issues is that operating within a confining space would stunt the growth of ODL. For example, IDE may need to put in place new mechanisms such as curriculum development policies and an institutional ODeL policy to guide and regulate practices.

Report Compiled by: SP Dlamini
IDE Assistant Coordinator Instructional Design & Development

Participants in the 50/50 IDE Public Lecture & Workshop on Project Design

PROJECT DESIGN WORKSHOP

Thirty eight participants including members of staff from University of Eswatini and the Ministry of Education & Training participated in a training workshop focused on project design on 18- 19th September 2018. It was facilitated and funded by the Commonwealth of Learning. This workshop was officially opened by the Acting Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. Masuku who appreciated the support of the Commonwealth of Learning both in the public lecture held on September 17, where Prof. R. Mohee was the guest speaker and the funding and facilitation of this project design workshop facilitated by Dr Ephraim Mhlanga from Saide and Prof. R. Mohee.

Kwaluseni – On September 17, 2018 the UNESWA IDE hosted a public lecture that was attended by staff, students and members of the public. Various local media houses were present to cover this academic event.

The Vice Chancellor, Professor J.M. Thwala addressed the attendees highlighting the challenges faced by tertiary institutions in terms of opening access to tertiary education to qualifying students in Eswatini. Prof. Romeela Mohee, Commonwealth of Learning Higher Education expert was the guest speaker in this event.

Both Prof Mohee and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. J. M. Thwala highlighted that the University of Eswatini only admitted 40% of the applicants qualifying for tertiary education because of infrastructure challenges. Prof Mohee then pointed out to all present that Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is the best approach to open access in tertiary education She commended the UNESWA, IDE on its ODL initiatives which need to be strengthened in order to respond to the increasing demand for tertiary education.

Developing and Designing an Online Course

UNESWA personnel within various UNESWA faculty's who completed a online course on developing and designing an online course were awarded with certificates. In line with the capacity building initiative of the UNESWA, 17 staff members participated in an online training programme on "Developing and Teaching Online Courses" offered by the Centre for Innovative and Lifelong Learning (CILL), University of Mauritius, in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning. These colleagues are truly commended for a job well done.

Professor Romeela Mohee COL Higher Education Expert seen delivering her brilliant presentation during the public lecture titled " *The Role of Blended Learning in Higher Education"*

Submission by: VT Dlamini (Faculty of Humanities & IDE Tutor)

We congratulate all participants on the successful completion of the online training programme. The names of these successful receipients of certificates are shown below.

(1) Mr. Happyson Bihma
(2) Mr. Bheki Gule
(3) Mr. Peles L. Biswalo
(4) Dr. Sipho S. Shongwe
(5) Dr. Petrovious Horton
(6) Dr. Thabile Ndlovu
(7) Ms. Nokuthula Vilakati
(8) Ms. Nokuthula Mabuza
(9) Prof. Chandraiah Esampally
(10) Mr. Simon P. Maphanga
(11) Prof. Sandile Motsa
(12) Dr. Minenhle S. Ngcobo
(13) Mrs. Jane H. Nkosi
(14) Ms. Ntfombi Kunene
(15) Dr Liphie Pierreira
(16) Ms. Sindisiwe Malindzisa
(17) Mr. Poncian O. Tagutanazvo

Time to Reflect

Encouragement of higher education for our youth is critical to the success of our collective future

Charles B Rangel

A Seminar of Young People and Mental Health in a Changing World
By Thobeka Phila Motsa – BEd. Secondary Humanities (IDE)

ON the 8th of November 2018, PCE's (Full-time and IDE) were invited to a seminar held at The George Hotel by the Ministry of Health in commemoration of the mental health month. The theme for the seminar was "young people and mental health in a changing world". As an IDE Student I had the privilege to attend and participate in the Mental Health Day Commemoration and today I am happy to share some interesting information with my peers.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?
I got to understand that mental health is a person's condition with regard to their psychological & emotional well-being. I also learnt that mental health status affects how we think, feel and act. Infact, it helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices.

WHO IS THEIR TARGET?

The Ministry of Health intends to engage in mental health projects that mainly targets young people between the ages of 14 to 29. WHO statistics has proven that half of all mental age conditions start at the age of 14 and may go undetected and not treated.
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BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND: TRANSITIONING TO INDEPENDENT RESEARCH WORK! A CAUTIONARY NOTE TO COMPLETING STUDENTS
By: Dr SS Shongwe – IDE Coordinator Education

Dr S.S Shongwe

Have a plan as to when you want to finish the major steps in your independent research process (completion of research proposal, proposal defense, etc.).

I guarantee you the dates will shift, because life gets in the way, but it is important to have a plan to aim towards. Decide on your committed writing times and stick to them as best you can. When I was doing my undergraduate research, it was important to write daily so as not to break the writing rhythm. However, when it came to editing the document, it was better for me to edit the document, put it down for a few days and then pick it up again with fresh eyes on another day.

Find a Writing Partner
It is crucial to find a writing partner or someone who can read your work critically. The more feedback you obtain, the better.

just know when to stop reaching out for feedback and just finish the document. Realize that you can edit the document (research proposal or report) to death. So know when to stop and be done with it.

Keep Contact with Cohort
Keep in contact with your cohort members; they will be a source of encouragement when you really need it! of course your Research Supervisor or Coordinator is there to assist you, so take advantage of their knowledge when needed.

Set Goals
It is important to set broad goals and an anticipated date in terms of when you want to be able to finish your proposal and begin your research. Have an end date in mind, then work backwards to establish a timeline of what needs to be completed and by when. Stay in contact with your Research Coordinator to get advice and discuss

"Your Research Supervisor or Coordinator is there to assist you, so take advantage of their knowledge"

issues as they arise, so you do not lose direction. Since personal or professional obstacles may occur unexpectedly, it is important to stay committed to your research proposal and realistically reassess your expectations and strategy for moving forward. I recommend that you do not allow too much time away from working on your research, but keep setting goals, even if achieving only smaller ones.

Feedback
Assess any feedback. For example, set deadlines for addressing any feedback so that you are continuously making progress gradually. Also keep up to date on current research on your topic as it helps you begin building a network for data collection down the road.

The Institute of Distance Education and the '4th Industrial Revolution'
BY: Dr Karen Ferreira- Meyers - IDE Coordinator Lingusitics and Modern Languages

Dr K Ferreira- Meyers prepares us for a future comprised of mixed technologies

What have we learned from history so far? We know that the First Industrial Revolution was based on water and steam power to mechanise production, while the Second one used electricity to mass produce goods. The Third Industrial Revolution (we may argue this is the one we are currently implementing in Eswatini) needs electronics and ICTs to automate production. At the eLearning Africa Conference (held in Kigali at the end of September this year) which I actively participated in, the focus of many discussions was the Fourth Industrial Revolution which is characterised by a mix of technologies blurring the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres of life. At this international conference the difference between the previous Revolutions and this last one was highlighted: the speed of the current breakthroughs has no historical precedent, this Revolution is evolving at an exponential rather than a linear pace and disrupts almost every industry in every country.

"…the speed of the current breakthroughs has no historical precedent…"

The graphic below, taken from Kang's 2017 blog post (available at https://www.qnowbe.com/blog/education-learning-2030), shows how the 1st industrial revolution impacted on education and what is expected to happen during the 4th one:

	First Industrial Revolution	Fourth Industrial Revolution
Learning Objectives	Mastery of basic skills and knowledge (e.g., reading, math)	Development of whole person across multiple intelligences (e.g., emotional, intellectual, social)
Role of Educator	Expert	Facilitator
Learner Experience	'Factory model' - Passive, structured, directed, en masse	'Custom model' - Active, self-directed, exploratory
Target Age	K-12	Lifelong learning
Expertise	"Teacher knows best"	"Anyone can teach"
Access	Physical classroom	Anytime, anywhere, any device

This means that educational institutions, such as the University of Eswatini and its Institute of Distance Education, have to radically shift focus, especially since all the forecasts of the type and depth of skills citizens need to participate fully in their communities indicate a necessary transformation.

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when the guidelines are implemented

For IDE, it was convenient to select the Humanities Year 1 programme for the piloting. Here particular focus was on general education courses offered to all new students. Relevant UNESWA staff including administrators, course lecturers, coordinators at IDE, and students voluntarily participated in the piloting and were interviewed about related standards.

The piloted quality standards rated differently as follows: Programme/Course design (64%), student support (40%), materials development (67%), student assessment (50%), infrastructure and facilities (49%), and Open and Distance Education systems and structures (59%) with an average score of 55%. The average of above 50% suggested that there were some identified strengths as well as areas for improvement. For example with materials development, the investment by UNESWA towards training of teaching academics (including part-time) in open and distance learning materials design and development as well as the development of modules by course teams and review by subject matter experts were seen as strengths.

On the other hand, the standards about student support, infrastructure and facilities were found wanting as they scored less than 50%. The institute is still challenged to offer true distance education characterised by

"…the investment by UNESWA towards training of teaching academics (including part-time lecturers) in ODL learning materials design & development by course teams & review by subject matter experts were seen as strengths…"

Actions to consider (way-forward)

Among other things there is a need to finalise existing institutional draft policies related to QA; advocating for the development of a National ODL Policy, increasing convenience and flexibility by providing full online registration, so that IDE students do not have to come to the university for registration thus making the process fast, efficient and convenient to students; providing unlimited access to the library and IT laboratories for ODL students; having an accurate profile of students to decide on the appropriate support for the different students; and building capacity on special needs and inclusive education.

Final remarks

Improving the identified weaknesses calls for commitment and cooperation from all relevant structures. Commonwealth for Learning (2009) cautioned that 'undertaking self-assessment against fixed quality criteria requires commitment from the top that weaknesses identified will be addressed; strong leadership from a designated champion with delegated authority and good communication skills; a high level of trust between management and staff; and good communication and coordination among and within academic and administrative units and functions'.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MATTERS

"…Improving the identified weaknesses calls for commitment and cooperation from all relevant structures…"

Student Support Services Desk
By: N Mabuza Dlamini – IDE Coordinator Student Support

WHILE test/examination anxiety may prevent one from executing themselves to their utmost ability, it is important to know that it is manageable and preventable.

Coping skills
Though anxiety is preventable, there is need for one to consult the Student Support Services Office for coping skills development. These may include breathing, positive self - talk, Imagery and relaxation techniques. One easy technique you may try on your own is the progressive muscle relaxation technique.

Before practicing Progressive Muscle Relaxation, consult with your doctor. This is because if you have a history of muscle spasms, back problems, or other serious injuries they may be aggravated by tensing muscles.

TIPS FOR CALMING DOWN

1. Loosen your clothing, remove your shoes, and get comfortable.
2. Take a few minutes to relax, breathing in and out in slow, deep breaths.
3. Shift your attention to your right foot. Take a moment to focus on the way it feels.
4. Slowly tense the muscles in your right foot, squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for a count of 10.
5. Relax your right foot. Focus on the tension flowing away and the way your foot feels as it becomes limp and loose.
6. When ready, shift your attention to your left foot. Follow the same sequence of muscle tension and release.

Thank You Faculty of Commerce

The commissioning of the renewed IDE Lecture Theater was conducted on the 13th of September 2018. The IDE is indebted to the Faculty of Commerce and UNESWA management for the kind gesture of renovating the IDE Lecture Theater.

My Journey as a Peer Counsellor and Educator (PCE) *By Nokubonga Zwane (Bcom final year)*

This article is about my journey as a Peer Counsellor and Educator (PCE). Being a PCE is about discovering and embracing who you are as a person and helping others.

Being a Peer Counsellor Educator (PCE)

I became a PCE because I wanted to explore the Kingdom of Eswatini. I saw my friends pleased about being part of this office which I later I joined. I was oriented as a member and I bought into the idea, thanks to Lindokuhle Mtsefwa and Sincobile Mabuza (2017/18 Bcom graduates). I liked the idea of travelling to schools to motivate students by giving them studying techniques, in order for them to qualify to enter tertiary. Engaging with these students on every aspect of academic life and non-academic issues makes one feel good because you are changing other people's lives for the better. When they get into varsity, one sometimes meets them around campus and they ask for advice on how to survive varsity and other related questions. These encounters make one realize that you have contibuted some guidance in another person's life.

Being A Peer Counsellor Educator (PCE)

I recognise within me that I have the passion and dedication to be a Peer Counsellor Educator (PCE) and the only thing required of me is to sacrifice your time. Admittedly, I initially became a PCE for the tours but I ended up loving it. Being a peer educator means you are trained to talk about things that sometimes the older generation may find offensive, yet they should be discussed to guide youngsters, especially at varsity. Similarly, you are also trained to be a leader. Meaning you lead by being a good example academically and socially. Instead of telling people to sweep, you pick up the broom and sweep so they can see what needs to be done. You don't become a judge but a safety net.

Therefore, you should not discriminate against anyone but remain friendly and approachable. I am fortunate and grateful that all these qualities come naturally to me. I am normally an introvert but now I have people I meet through the PCE office and now interact with them outside the PCE office.

Trials of Peer Counselling

Peer counseling is hard. You tell yourself you are a good listener which is important in peer counseling, but it is more than merely listening. It calls for deep self-introspection, dealing with your own issues and skeletons that no one knows about. So to avoid being drawn in a client's pain and misery (which is emotionally exhausting), we were trained on how to handle and cope with the emotions that you have when working with any client.

Taking the oath to become a counsellor is crucial because it helps one avoid the possibilty of being sued by clients if you breach the confidentiality clause and discuss their issues with other people. What I find difficult is building trust with some clients because one is never sure if they are testing you to verify if you are professional and able to provide solid advise when or if they come to you with their issues. Afterall, some still battle to seek counselling help because of a stigma which believes they cannot talk to another student about their issues and others are simply not convinced that counselling helps anyone.

Being the IDE Peer Counselling Educator Ambassador

When I was made the ambassador of the IDE, PCEs I was overwhelmed and excited to execute my duties which I did happily. Being a PCE gave me skills that no one will ever take away from me. I am now a confident public speaker and, enjoy presenting in front of any audience. I have also noted an improvement in my writing skills and I think this is huge plus. Being an ambassador has allowed me to create acquaintances within the kingdom and globally through my newly acquired socializing skills. Lastly, I have gained confidence and skills to deal adequately with different situations that I come across.

Nokubonga Zwane (seated) with Nomvuselelo Sihlongonyane (standing) getting prepared for the day's activity at Bhunya during the commemoration of the International day of the Girl child.

DEPRESSION

Depression can be understood as a mood disorder which causes negative changes in mood, thinking and behaviour.

Sign and symptoms of depression

1. Feeling sad most of the day and loss of interest to previous pleasurable activities.
2. Unexplained physical problems such as back pain, headache, and muscle or joint ache.
3. Feeling guilty or worthless.
4. Decrease or increase in appetite and /or weight
5. Diminished ability to think or concentrate.
6. Feeling tired and sleepy most of the time.

How to help a depressed peer?

a) Let them know that you care.
b) Accept them as they are, without judging them.
c) Gentle encourage them to help themselves by staying physical active, eating a balanced diet and doing things they enjoy.
d) Get information about services available to them, such as psychological therapy.
e) Stay in touch with them by texting, messaging as depressed people become isolated and find it difficult to leave home.
a) Try to be patient.

I felt honoured to be given a chance to inspire young people "WE ARE IN CHARGE OF OUR MENTAL HEALTH".

Should you be feeling depressed contact any peer educator on Campus or Student Support Services Office.