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University of Eswatini
Institute of Distance Education

NEWSLETTER

***“Continuous Professional Development Through
Open Distance and eLearning”***





FOREWORD FROM THE IDE DIRECTOR



Professor C Maphosa

I welcome you to the first issue of the IDE Newsletter in 2022. This issue is published as we continue to entrench our online learning systems at the Institute of Distance Education. One sure way of institutionalising digital teaching and learning is by developing the capacity of the course instructors. Hence this issue of the IDE

Newsletter foregrounds professional development through open, distance and e-learning. Knowledge, skills and expertise in teaching and learning should be developed in line with the digital age. It is the responsibility of individual course instructors to ensure that they possess relevant skills in order to remain relevant.

The Institute developed and launched the Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators (COTE). As covered in this issue, the COTE is an important short course meant to enhance the capacity of course instructors in online teaching. The course equips participants with a variety of skills in online instructional design, digital learning material development, online facilitation and assessment. Acquiring these skills positions course instructors to successfully navigate virtual learning spaces for enhanced online learning experiences for the learners. In imparting knowledge and skills in the COTE programme, we value theorising issues by embracing contemporary theories and frameworks which inform teaching and learning in the digital

age.

Furthermore, course participants learn by practising what they learn, hence the provision of numerous opportunities for active engagement on Moodle, UNESWA’s Learning Management System.

COTE has been a very popular course judging from the number of applicants and successful completers of the course. More than two hundred participants (200) have successfully gone through the six-week intensive and rigorous online course and are now proud holders of the Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators, with the capacity to deliver meaningful online courses. We also applaud the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) for sponsoring twenty special education needs’ practitioners who successfully completed the COTE course. A number of educators at different levels of the education system in Eswatini and beyond the country’s borders have successfully participated in the COTE course. The COTE has buttressed the beauty of online learning as flexible, cost-effective and convenient for the learners.

As reported in this issue staff members from the Institute of Distance Education and the Computer Science department conducted a week-long workshop for special education needs’ educators at the Pigg’s Peak Hotel, courtesy of ESCCOM sponsorship.

We appreciate the partnership between UNESWA and ESCCOM, and the assistance extended to staff members from the Ministry of Education and Training in developing capacity to utilise technology for inclusive teaching and learning.

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We are also pleased to report that with sponsorship from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) the Institute managed to successfully undertake and complete the Employability Project. The project commenced with the sensitisation of Deans, Directors and Heads of Department on the concept of employability in higher education. A task team was then formed to develop an Employability Framework for UNESWA. We appreciate the assistance from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) on this project and more specifically the support which we received from the COL consultant, Dr Ephraim Mhlanga from SAIDE in South Africa. It is our sincere hope that the developed framework shall soon be approved by the relevant university structure for implementation.

This Issue, as other issues of the IDE Newsletter, profiles important activities of the Institute and individual practitioners. We also provide opportunities for the IDE student 'voice' to be heard through selected representation. We appreciate the contributions from some COTE students. Of importance is to note how one of the COTE participants, Ms Gladys Matchaba, was able to study and successfully complete the course from Zimbabwe. She shares her experiences. Ms Thabile Tinky Mthombo, another COTE successful student, shares her thoughts on the importance of planning a live online session, an important skill acquired from the programme.

Editor's Note



Welcome to IDE's Newsletter, Issue 23. The theme of this publication is ***"Continuous Professional Development through Open Distance and eLearning"***.

IDE continues to support professional development through the Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators (COTE).

This publication covers the first COTE graduation, which was held on the 27th of May 2022. A total of eighty three (83) educators received their COTE certificates. We meet Dr Pitikoe, Mr Shongwe and Ms Ginindza who share their COTE journeys. From Zimbabwe we meet Ms Matchaba, who participated from her home country. We also meet Ms Mthombo, who shares an online lesson plan with us.

The Institute congratulates Chief Mkhumbi Dlamini on his appointment as the new Chairman of Council for UNESWA. May I also take this opportunity to welcome new members of staff to the IDE family: Dr Dlamini-Nxumalo (Lecturer and Coordinator – Education), Mr Wandile Maxwell Dlamini (Assistant Binder), Ms Siphehle Msibi (Technologist), Ms Setsabile Pearl Dlamini (Technician). I also welcome Professor Moffat Tarusikirwa, a Sabbatical Fellow from the Zimbabwe Open University. I wish our new colleagues all the best as they join a highly dynamic and ambitious family, to which they are expected to add value.

The issue is published at the time the IDE students are taking their end-of-semester examinations and I take this opportunity to wish our students all the best in the examinations.

I encourage you, our IDE Newsletter reader, to engage with all the articles in this issue. We also appreciate your feedback which you can give by contacting our editorial team.

Thank you.

Professor C Maphosa—IDE Director

Professor Esampally introduces us to IDE's planned "Employability" programme and Dr Mthethwa-Kunene covers the employability workshop which IDE held with stakeholders.

Professor Ferreira-Meyers flew the IDE flag when she attended the "Opening of Minds" meeting in Morocco. We also meet Professor Tarusikirwa who takes us through his ODeL experience, and IDE's new members of staff, Ms Msibi and Ms Dlamini.

Enjoy this publication.

We value your feedback on our newsletters. Please direct comments to: stshongwe@uniswa.sz.

Thank you.

Siphiwe Shongwe



**The Director and Staff of the Institute of
Distance Education (IDE)
congratulate Chief Mkhumbi
Dlamini on his appointment as the Chairman
of
the UNESWA Council**





GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR THE CERTIFICATE IN ONLINE TEACHING FOR EDUCATORS - FROM CORPORATE AFFAIRS, UNESWA.



COTE Facilitators and Tutors: Ms Dlamini, Ms Shongwe, Dr Dlamini, Professor Ferreira-Meyers (Project Leader), Professor Maphosa (IDE Director), Dr Rugube, Dr Mathabela, Ms Ngcobo, Ms Kunene and Ms Msibi

The University of Eswatini through the Institute of Distance Education (IDE) held a Graduation Ceremony for eighty-three (83) awardees who received the Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators (COTE) on Friday 27 May 2022 at the Sports Emporium,

Kwaluseni Campus. In his welcome remarks, Professor Justice Thwala, the Vice Chancellor thanked the Institute of Distance Education, for designing, developing and implementing the Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators short course. He said that

“this short course allows educators from Eswatini and beyond to transition to online teaching and learning partly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and also through the implementation of the UNESWA Blended Learning Policy”.



Professor Thwala

The Vice Chancellor also highlighted that offering the COTE programme was a relevant and timely intervention as it would assist in the attainment of higher order learning outcomes in line with the requirements of the 4th Industrial Revolution. The Vice Chancellor mentioned that the awardees had completed an intensive six-week practice-oriented fully online training course which introduced them to all-important aspects of online

teaching/learning from online course design, digital material creation, online facilitation to authentic online assessment. He further expressed his excitement that he would be the one presenting the certificates of achievement to all those that had successfully completed the programme.

He concluded by congratulating the IDE Director, Professor Cosmas Maphosa, the Project Coordinator, Professor Karen Ferreira-Meyers, the module developers, the facilitators, the e-tutors, the technologist, the technician and everyone else who was involved in the success of COTE programme.



Professor C Maphosa

Following the Vice Chancellor’s remarks was the IDE Director, Professor C. Maphosa who mentioned that those graduating were the first two cohorts of students who participated in the COTE

programme.

The Director mentioned how thrilled they were as IDE to be part of the beauty of online learning, as they were seeing most of the awardees physically for the first time. Professor Maphosa described part of this “beauty of online learning” as:

- Being able to study conveniently from the comfort of one’s own home;
- There is no need for unnecessary and costly travel to campus to receive instruction;
- Learning is generally self-paced and self-directed;
- One can learn on the go through the utilisation of mobile devices;
- The learning material is presented in different formats: print, audio, video;
- Utilisation of exciting virtual interaction through wikis, discussion forums and live web-conferencing sessions;
- Immediate feedback on some tasks through automated responses;
- There is highly engaging learning through interactive material;
- Available access to content at the click of a button, with links to information sources, and

- There are opportunities for online collaboration through add-on features such as Google Docs and Jamboard.”

The Director debunked some myths of online learning and mentioned how, with the support of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), they piloted the course in 2021 and then evaluated and further improved it before launching it in January 2022. Professor Maphosa appreciated the team that worked on all aspects of the course.

He mentioned that IDE had received a total of 428 applicants of which 421 were admissible and 237 were enrolled in the programme after paying the purposefully low tuition fees. He said: “Given the highly interactive nature of the programme, participants were enrolled in five cohorts of about fifty (50) participants per cohort.” Notably also, some participants were from outside Eswatini and they fully benefited from the programme.

The course attracted participants from diverse backgrounds, including Mr. Lungelo Nhlengetfwa, the Under Secretary – Schools Manager in the Ministry of Education and Training.

Finally, the director stated: “We are confident that the participants who are receiving their certificates today are certified online instructors, competent in the following general areas, with numerous specific competencies in each one of them:

- Designing and developing online courses;
- Creating interactive digital learning materials;
- Planning and facilitating synchronous and asynchronous learning on a Learning Management System, and
- Planning and implementing authentic online assessment”.



Professor K Ferreira-Meyers

Speaking at the same function was Professor Karen Ferreira-Meyers, the Project Coordinator. She mentioned that two cohorts had gone through the programme and were ready to go out and

apply their newly acquired knowledge and competencies. Professor Ferreira-Meyers mentioned that an additional three other cohorts would be getting their certificates in July 2022. “We will be receiving applications for another set of cohorts during the month of July, so that, from August onwards, more educators can gain these extremely essential online teaching competences,” Professor Ferreira-Meyers remarked. She also assured the public that the course will be constantly updated and improved. “Quality assurance is a main thrust in how we work at IDE.” She concluded by thanking the Commonwealth of Learning for the support, IDE’s academic and support staff, the Director, the University of Eswatini at large and the Vice Chancellor.



Professor IO Oloyede

After the award ceremony, the vote of thanks was delivered by Professor I.O. Oloyede. She thanked all who made the course offering and the graduation a success.

Four COTE participants (Dr. Selloane Pitikoe, Dr. Christian Ndlovu, Ms. Nolwazi Ginindza and Mr. Nkosingiphile Shongwe) shared their experiences on the course. They were grateful to IDE for giving them the opportunity to learn so many things in a short space of time and noted that the course was intense, well-designed and highly useful to them as education practitioners.

IDE FACTS AND FIGURES

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Admissions for the Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators (COTE) Programme, for Cohorts 1-5



COTE PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR JOURNEY

“My Unforgettable COTE Journey”



Mr Nkosingiphile Shongwe

Mr Shongwe, Lecturer at Good Shepherd College of Health Services represented Cohort 2. He stated that, right at the beginning IDE’s needs assessment exercise prior to embarking on learning gave birth to a highly targeted and groundbreaking short

course. In my group, we agree that the learning needs that we expressed through the IDE needs’ assessment survey, have been well met and for this we are grateful.

One of my self-taught principles is this - that for every mountain that stands before me, I see myself on the other side. My colleagues will recall that during the very early days of this course, in our WhatsApp platform, I shared the following; “I can’t wait to graduate”. Little did I know that the journey was yet to show me the ‘panoptos’ and ‘screencast-o-matics’ of online learning.

Today I stand here to answer two questions related to my experience with the course. **The first question is ‘How was your experience?’**

If I were to give a one-word answer in response to this question, it would be, “it was great’. The

course was thought-provoking, exacting, demanding and challenging but more than anything it was remarkably fulfilling. Professor Thwala, we learned how to:

- Design and develop **HUMANISED** Online Learning Courses;
- Creating Digital Learning Materials;
- Develop Online Facilitation Skills-**EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR/ONLINE INSTRUCTOR;**
- Create **AUTHENTIC** Online Assessments.

The second question one wishes to answer is: **how will this training impact my professional practice?**

Well for me and my colleagues from Good Shepherd College, this training has been fully sponsored so, as citizens of the organisation, we must reward the institution’s investment. We shall do that by increasing productivity and results, this will enhance the institution’s reputation. Remember, we exist in a competitive space. I am committed to being a resource to students who stand to benefit from my delivery of online instruction henceforth. In addition, I will share the knowledge gained with the rest of my colleagues.

Finally, I see this qualification as a valuable addition to my resume. I mean, there has been professional growth here so - why not?



Ms Nolwazi Ginindza

Ms Nolwazi Ginindza, when sharing her COTE experience started by quoting John Newbern’s law. The law claims that, people are divided into three groups: *“those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened.”* She stressed that those who had completed COTE were

in the “make this happen” category.

Before embarking on the COTE journey, she admitted that she had a vague idea of what online teaching/learning entailed. At the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, she had attempted to teach online. However, there were challenges due to poor online teaching skills. She said, “so, taking part in this course changed my life, it opened my eyes in so many aspects, I can actually tell what made my past experience such a nightmare. Now I can confidently say I can do better than the last time, with all the skills I acquired from the course. The COTE course was a tremendous journey, I had a wonderful experience”. She applauded COTE for equipping her to effectively engage learners online.

Ms Ginindza appreciated the COTE team who “made this course even more interesting”. She was grateful for the team’s hard-work, patience, encouragement and support, which made it all seem easy. She reminded her colleagues that most of them were initially

“technophobic”, however, they decided to face their fears and today they are reaping the efforts of their determination, perseverance and patience.

She thanked UNESWA for affording them an opportunity to sharpen their skills and remain relevant to the prevailing innovation in education. The skills they have acquired will enable them to solve challenges that they face in their professional lives. She mentioned the following as values they will bring to students; learning experience:

- **Enhancing classroom efficiency:** Online teaching will bolster what was taught face-to-face and in completing assignments and homework;
- **Bringing added value in the workplace:** Online teaching will be shared with colleagues back in the workplaces so that innovative ideas are introduced to other educators; and
- **Fully embracing e-education:** Starting online courses especially because education is increasingly moving towards e-education to ensure that students continue to learn by embracing distance learning.

Ms Ginindza concluded by quoting David Warlick who says; *“we need technology in every classroom and in every student and teacher’s hand because it is the pen and paper of our time, and it is the lens through which we experience much of our world.”* She urged everyone to embrace technology in order to “transform our education.”



Dr Selloane Pitikoe

Dr Pitikoe, a Lecturer in the Department of Adult Education (UNESWA), took the audience through an experience of a fictional lecturer called “Ntombi” who “albeit with her limited online teaching and learning skills, was eager to grab the monster by its horns.” The “monster” was online teaching.

To stress her point, Dr Pitikoe narrated that, much as Ntombi was committed to embrace online teaching. However, her efforts bore poor results. What then was Ntombi’s problem, Dr Pitikoe asked. The challenges, she said, were due to lack of basic and critical foundations in online teaching, such as “a humanised approach, online teaching presence and authentic assessment.”

Before embarking on COTE 1, participants were Ntombis who were keen to try online learning but had limited skills which had yielded poor results.

However, going through COTE, participants became “a proud, fearless group, looking ahead to drive online teaching agenda beyond the sky, Dr

Pitikoe said.

“They were a testament to Gloria Steinen who once said *“Online learning must travel the distance from head to heart”*.”

Dr Pitikoe stated that the quote by Steinen “signifies the fundamental role of humanised learning as a process that should be embedded from the course outline, instruction material design, delivery and assessment”.

She emphasised relationship-building and collaboration between the lecturer/student/material, as central to achieving “humanised learning.” All three, she said, must “sing in unison”. As COTE 1, they promised to utilise the skills learned and to “to open up education provision beyond the confines of space and time.” Dr Pitikoe said that they were in agreement with Paul Levinson who said “Online learning can be a lifeline to those who have obstacles, such as geographical distances or physical disabilities”.

“I do not want you to think I got through this undamaged, okay? But I’m learning to live with it. Because otherwise, the damage is all you are.” – David Levithan. “We bear evidence to this quote.

The journey took us through a combination of awful and awesome moments which required patience and resilience”, Dr Pitikoe said. The Cohort 1 representative thanked UNESWA management and the Commonwealth of Learning for supporting IDE to implement COTE. Course facilitators were also appreciated for their humanity, patience and tolerance. She hoped that IDE doors will remain forever open for troubleshooting.



**COTE EXPERIENCE
ACROSS ESWATINI
BORDERS**



Ms Gladys Tenge Matchaba

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted teaching and learning in many countries, including Zimbabwe, where I am based. Many institutions of learning then adopted the online mode of teaching and learning. I wondered how many truly knew what it entailed. This motivated me to enrol for COTE.

I also wanted to keep in touch with my students, including those on teaching practice. As a teacher trainer, I felt strategically positioned to pass on the knowledge, skills and values that I acquired to my students. The COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over. Who knows, there might be a different pandemic that will require learning institu-

tions to suspend face-to-face contact. It is best that, as facilitators of learning, we are ready.

When I saw the COTE modules on offer, I knew that this was the certificate for me. Since I had done the Diploma in Educational Technology, some of the content was familiar. I, however, looked forward to learning new teaching and learning theories, exciting ideas on how to create online media and the use of social media in teaching and learning. Online facilitation was new for me, so that was an area of interest. I was curious also about online assessment and evaluation, wondering how it differs from that of face-to-face. At the back of my mind, there was always that comparison between online and face-to-face teaching and learning..

How did you find the COTE course?

From the four (4) modules, I learnt a lot. An online facilitator needs to work very hard to create and deliver learning material to learners who are geographically spaced and at times, operating at different times. This necessitates synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning. An online teaching and learning environment requires the facilitator to humanise

learning. Through the different modules, I learnt about various ways of humanising learning based on the three (3) presences; social, cognitive and teaching. In all three presences, facilitator and students are visible through the use of various media like videos and different interaction platforms like discussion forums. What made the course interesting and exciting was that, what we were learning was what we were doing.

With the going down of the COVID-19 infections in my country, we are back to face-to-face teaching. I, however, have students on teaching practice that need to be taught and assessed whilst in the field.

I shall use much of my COTE knowledge and skills with this group. It is my hope that they will also acquire some online knowledge and skills as they do their assignments, and use what they have learnt with their own learners.

Thank you.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING A LIVE ONLINE LESSON



Ms Thabile Mthombo

Planning a live lesson equips a facilitator to ensure that social, cognitive and his/her presence are felt. The facilitator is able to establish a logical sequence for the lesson and an idea on when transitions between activities in the lesson will be made.

ties in the lesson will be made.

A plan enables the facilitator to have clear interaction and collaboration outcomes during the lesson (to include the role of the instructor and role of the learners). He/she remains in control as he/she is more organised, effective and efficient, so that the lesson's objectives are achieved. A planned live lesson will also have authentic, creative and effective assessment for learners. Students will also be made aware of the required data and device for the format of the content to be shared with them.

It is important that facilitators understand the key features of a lesson plan. The following are crucial in ensuring the success of a live lesson:

- **Setting Objectives:** These should be clear, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) and not only state what students should know, but also what they should be able to do after a lesson;
- **Teaching Aids:** These are important because without them, the lesson cannot be effective. It includes both hardware and software teaching aids and most importantly, the selection of the video conferencing platform such as Zoom, BBB, Skype, Microsoft Teams, etc.);

- **Lesson Development:** This informs the sequencing of the lesson and guides when it is best to conduct a certain activity to achieve the objectives. It should be structured in the following sequence; introduction to the lesson, body (lecture/presentation, activities on interaction, individual or group work) and the summary;
- **Authentic assessment:** This helps the facilitator to gauge :

I. **Student learning:** to see if the objectives have been met, e.g. the use of quiz, written assignment, presentations etc.

I. **Overall lesson:** to identify what worked and what did not so that an instructor can plan to re-teach if need be, and

- **Lesson Evaluation:** This phase helps the facilitator to appraise/rate the entire lesson design so that future lessons can be improved to benefit both the students' performance/competence and the instructor's method of content delivery/preparation.

The COTE programme was very enlightening to me as I learned that:

- A Learning Management System (LMS) benefits facilitators by making it easier for them to create courses and disseminate information conveniently and cost effectively to learners, regardless of location;




- There are various technological tools available within and outside an LMS to support teaching and learning both synchronously and asynchronously (in terms of content creation, learning objects, collaboration tools and authentic assessment tools);
- Learning theories relevant to pedagogical aspects of online education are derived from classroom theories (behavioural, cognitivist, (socio-)constructivist and connectivist) with the common one for online environments being the Community of Inquiry learning theory;
- Online course materials should be designed to have social, cognitive and teaching presences to make the online learning environment more humanised like the face to face experience;
- Lessons require a good lesson plan for learning to be effective, whether a lesson is synchronous or asynchronous or face-to-face;
- It is important to acquire these online teaching skills because whatever the circumstances (affecting face-to-face learning) may be, teaching and learning can still continue effectively online, and
- Online teaching and learning is a 'learning journey' for both facilitators and students, but once students understand how to navigate within an LMS, the interaction with the content, the instructor, the technology and their peers, becomes easy and this results in effective learning.





A Plan for a Live Online Lesson

Course Instructor's Name:	Ms. Thabile Mthombo
Course:	CED 205: Food Processing
Date:	26 April 2022
Time:	09:00 -11:00
Topic:	Food Production
Lesson Title:	Cereals
Level:	Year 2
Lesson Duration:	2 hours
Number of Students:	26
Video Conferencing Platform:	 Zoom Meeting
Lesson Objectives:	<p>General Objectives: Students will acquire knowledge and understanding on Cereal Food Production.</p> <p>Specific Objectives: By the end of the lesson the learners will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define cereals. • Identify different types of cereals and their origins. • Describe the structure of a cereal grain and nutrients in each part. • Explain the step by step processing of wheat cereal into flour. • Identify other products that can be processed from cereals besides flour.
Teaching Method:	Lecture and Group Discussions
Teaching Aids:	<p>Materials and Equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laptop with camera (video) and audio capabilities. • Google slides or Power point slides • Zoom Meeting Software • Stable Internet Connection (preferably Wi-Fi with option to switch to mobile data) • Interactive whiteboard collaboration tool • YouTube video links
Course Instructor Preparation:	<p>Share video link for lesson introduction with the students two days before live lesson: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gR2WG1YquVg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Zoom Meeting link and share with the learners • Create breakout rooms for group discussion prompts • Have a teaching assistant from the department on standby to monitor the Zoom chats. • Make sure students have Wi-Fi or mobile data and have downloaded Zoom Meeting app.



Course Instructor Activities	Learner Activities
Record the lesson. Turn on camera and welcome students and ask everybody to test their microphones and cameras.	Join zoom meeting. Test microphones, speakers and video.
Introduction: Explain the 'online etiquette' e.g. raising hand, chat, muting, mutual respect etc. Ask a 3-4 students to describe what they are enjoying with the online course so far or if they have any challenges (to get the learners to relax and concentrate (social and teaching presence) – the warm up!	-Testing these features, making sure their proper formal names are appearing on the participants list and then muting. -Chosen students will mention their experiences on the online course through the microphone and camera and then mute.
Review the topic and lesson objectives. Ask students to comment on the introductory video shared with them earlier and state their expectations for the lesson.	Each student to comment on the introductory video and expectations of the lesson via the zoom chat forum.
Body: 1. Mini lecture - Explain the content in the slides: definition of cereals, types, origin.	Watching, listening and taking down notes.
2. <u>Discussions prompt 1:</u> show the learners pictures of the structure of a wheat grain and a maize grain. 3. Divide the students into two groups: Group 1: Wheat grain Group 2: Maize grain Each group will label the parts of the cereal grain and mention the nutrients that are found in each part. Incorporate the interactive white board and time the discussion for 15 minutes. Regroup the students at the end of 15 minutes and go over points written on the white board with them, clarify and further explain points where necessary (teaching presence). Give the learners feedback on their interactive white board activity. 8. Play the YouTube video showing the processing of wheat into flour and ask students to note the steps carefully: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edvBk7xWKG4 <u>Discussions prompt 2:</u> Students to go into their designated groups again and list as well as explain the chronology of the processing steps on the interactive whiteboard 10 minutes. One student from each group will unmute and present their steps with explanation (part of formative assessment). Regroup learners from the break out rooms and compare the steps from each group, noting the differences and correcting where <u>necessary</u>	Study the grain pictures. -Go into the breakout rooms in the respective groups to discuss the discussion prompt on the interactive white board – cognitive presence -Collaboratively work on the interactive whiteboard for 15 minute -Listening and taking down important points. -Note feedback comments -Watch video carefully noting the steps and equipment being used in the processing of wheat into flour. -Collaboratively work on the interactive white board in the breakout rooms for 10 minutes, explaining the steps and giving reasons for each step. -Nominate one student to present on behalf of the group. Nominated student will unmute and present group work. -Note down similarities and differences
Summary: Summarise the lesson by going through the objectives and share the slides presentation with the students on LMS forum. Share the recorded Zoom lesson on LMS.	-Listening and noting important points. Asking questions where they did not understand on the zoom chat forum.



<p>Assessment Tasks:</p>	<p><i>Formative Assessment:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quiz on LMS or Socrative at the end of the lesson 2. Virtual exit ticket on LMS or Socrative/Flip grid explaining what the learners understood well and what they didn't understand.
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are different types of cereals that originate from different parts of the world. • The structure of the different types of cereals has similar parts and nutritive value. • There are different types of wheat that can be processed to produce different types of flours
<p>Take Home Tasks:</p>	<p>Learners will research on other products that can be made from cereals besides flour e.g. pasta, chappatis etc. Learners will do further research on how should cereals be stored.</p>
<p>References:</p>	<p>Tull, A. (2011): Food and Nutrition. Oxford University Press. pp 85-90 Roday, S. (2010): Food Science and Nutrition. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press. pp 60-66 Cereal Names video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gR2WG1YquVg</p> <p>Processing of wheat into flour video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edvBk7xWKG4</p>
<p>Lesson Evaluation:</p>	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course instructor has prepared well in advance for the lesson. • The use of YouTube videos to enhance learning • Creation of breakout rooms for group work discussion prompts. • Use of interactive whiteboard • Assistant to help monitor Zoom chat <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course instructor is not so confident on the use of the interactive whiteboard. • A lot of time may be spent by the students re-watching the video on the steps for processing wheat to flour and this might affect the completion of the lesson on time. • Use of two videos might be expensive for the students streaming on mobile data.



Professor Chandraiah Esampally –
Coordinator Academic Services

EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMMES AT THE INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION — UNESWA

In the Kingdom of Eswatini, youth and communities are exposed to various challenges, such as poverty, violence, HIV/AIDs to mention but a few. Currently, these challenges have been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many frontline practitioners or caregivers lack the necessary capacities and skills to provide economic, psychosocial care, support and protection to the youth and communities in Eswatini (Mandla Mazibuko, 2020).

The Kingdom is currently facing a serious socio-economic situation characterised by a sluggish economic performance, high levels of poverty and growing unemployment. According to an ILO estimate, the Eswatini unemployment rate for 2020 was 23.4%, a 1.2%, an increase from 2019. A high rate of unemployment results in economic and social crisis in any civilised society (ILO, World Bank Data, 2021). The increasing trend of unemployment in the country is forcing most Educational Institutions and Industry to periodically collaborate to think about possible future skill requirements that are relevant to the changing context of new technologies. The institutions also update/create courses to meet needs of the labour market, because the increasing number of unskilled, unemployed and underemployed young people becomes a threat to the stability of the country. One of the key results of the skills survey (UNESWA, 2019) was that there is a mismatch between the kind of skills and competencies that are required by the industry and those being supplied by the institutions of higher education.

Psychosocial and Economic Support

Psychosocial Support

An effective and sustainable programme to support Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and Youth at community level, is heavily reliant on community volunteers and community-based Government and Non-Governmental Organisations' (NGO) personnel. This large group of humanitarian aid workers includes teachers, community health care workers, youth leaders, law enforcement agents, programme officers, social workers, etc. All of these individuals have an essential and on-going need for relevant, up-to-date skills and psychosocial knowledge to support and enhance the work they do with children and families every day (Mngomezulu and Bhembe, 2013).

Economic Support

According to a FinScope Survey (2017), the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Sector is estimated at 59,283 business owners and employs approximately 93,000 people. The estimated adult population in Eswatini (18 years and older-working age group) is 600,000. This means that only 15.5% people are absorbed by the MSME Sector (FinScope Survey, 2017). Further, the survey indicates that the MSME sector in the Kingdom of Eswatini has been recognised as a significant contributor to livelihood, mass employment and economic growth.

A proposal was developed based on the reason explained above and the results of the following surveys: (i) conducted in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in



May-June 2019, for entrepreneurship and (ii) conducted in collaboration with the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiatives (REPSSI) and Small Enterprises Development Company (SEDCO), in April-May 2019. The Proposal was developed by IDE, UNESWA REPSSI and SEDCO and it was about upgrading the current “Certificate in Psychosocial Support” programme to a Bachelor’s Degree programme in Psychosocial and Economic Support.” This upgrade will up-skill and enhance learners’ knowledge in their relevant field with graduate employability skills.

Based on the entrepreneurship survey data results, the following training models were proposed:

- (i) non-credit system programme and
- ii) credit system programme to MSMEs. IDE submitted a research results’ report to COL in 2019.

In March 2022, IDE, UNESWA submitted a project proposal to COL for their support to repurpose entrepreneurship courses developed by COL’s Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). Now we are planning to introduce a credit system degree programme in “Psychosocial and Economic Support” integrating employability skills.

Graduate Employability

Employability refers to the attributes of a person that make that person able to gain employment or able to start a business enterprise and create jobs for employment. Employability is the combination of attributes, competencies and skills needed to increase the livelihood of an individual to secure gainful employment (formal employment, self-employed, and/or entrepreneurs) after completing a programme of study or training,

retaining that employment and being able to move to other jobs (COL, 2019a).

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL, 2019b) defines employability as “a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attitudes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefit themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”. Empowering young people with necessary employability skills will enable them not only to be employable, but also to acquire skills to become job creators by creating their own business enterprises and employment for others instead of focussing on seeking to be employed.

Degree Programme

The main purpose of planning to introduce a Degree programme is to:

- Equip candidates with up-to-date skills and appropriate attitudes in social work to carry out community-based work with children and youth in the communities in order to achieve holistic psychosocial development; and
- Equip the students with employability skills including entrepreneurship skills either to start income-generating business enterprise or to get employment for their livelihood in order to achieve economic development.

Thus, the programme aims at equipping candidates with the knowledge of employability skills that enable them to be agents of psychosocial and economic development as well as to alleviate poverty.

Broadly, the subject areas covered in the programme are: psychosocial support and entrepreneurship courses.

**Table-1. Basic Structure: Distribution of Courses Semester-wise**

Semester	No. of Courses	Total Credits	Total Credits	Cumulative Credits
Semester-I	7	18.3	36.6	36.6 (Certificate)
Semester-II	7	18.3		
Semester-III	6	18	76	112.6 (Diploma)
Semester-IV	6	18		
Semester-V	6	19		
Semester-VI	7	21		
Semester-VII	7	19	34	146.6 (Degree)
Semester-VIII	5	15		
	51	146.6	146.6	

Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit Options

The structure of the proposed programme is based on the specialised areas of psychosocial and economic support and the University Credit System Regulations. The basic structure of the proposed 4-year flexible degree programme system is given above in Table-1.

The four-year degree programme is designed with a flexible system of multiple entry and multiple exit options to award three (3) qualifications (Certificate, Diploma and Degree) as shown above in Table-1. The entry and exit options would be as mentioned hereunder.

- A certificate is awarded after completing 1 Year of Study of the 4-Year Degree programme.
- A diploma is awarded after completing 3 Years of Study of the 4-Year Degree programme.
- A Bachelor's degree is awarded after completion of the 4-Years of Study of a Degree programme.

For the above programme, there are three (3) entry and exit options.

The entry points are based on entrance requirements and the exit options are based on the candidate's convenience/ workload options. The proposed **Bachelor's Degree in Psychosocial and Economic Support** programme will include general education, psychosocial support and entrepreneurship courses in order to meet the requirements of the labour market.

This programme seeks to empower students to enhance their employability by developing the mind-set and capabilities to succeed in any path they choose. Upon completion of the programme, the trainees will be able to: (i) apply principles of socio-psychology, personal and professional development to protect children and youth; (ii) apply entrepreneurial skills to motivate youth to start income generating activities for their livelihood.



Instructional delivery is a collaborative training model. The collaborating institutions are IDE-UNESWA, REPSSI and SEDCO. They provide blended teaching and learning through multi-model channel. The collaborative training optimises the institutional approach to student-employability development through an experiential learning framework and supports the transition of graduates into the work place.

Furthermore, UNESWA and SEDCO need to forge relationships with key players in the sector such as; the Royal Science and Technology Park, SEDCO, MSME Unit of Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, Financial Institutions for enterprise support may provide incubation facilities and mentorship for its graduates in the programme. This ecosystem plays a pivotal role in implementing a multi-faceted, holistic and embedded approach to employability

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IDE's MISSION STATEMENT

“To increase 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.”



Professor Karen Ferreira-Meyers, Coordinator Linguistics and Modern Languages

ONLINE FACILITATION WORKSHOP FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS' INSPECTORS AND TEACHERS

UNESWA's Institute of Distance Education (IDE) and the Faculty of Science and Engineering,

sponsored by the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM), organised a 5-day workshop to support SEN (Special Education Needs) practitioners from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) to introduce participants to basic concepts, procedures and applications of online teaching and learning. The participants comprised of the Senior Inspector, Regional Inspectors and primary and secondary school teachers from the four different regions of the country.

The workshop was held between 27 March and 1 April 2022. The facilitators, all from IDE (UNESWA) were: Prof. C. Maphosa, Prof. K. Ferreira-Meyers, Dr. P. Dlamini and Dr. T. Rugube. The team also benefitted from the support of the IDE Technician, Ms. S. Dlamini, and the colleagues of the Faculty of Science and Engineering, Dr. A. Metfula and Mr. E. Dube.

The workshop goals were as follows:

- To capacitate special education practitioners on the principle of designing for online teaching and learning
- To equip special education practitioners with skills to develop online learning and



Participants performing an activity during the workshop

teaching materials

- To expose special education practitioners on the dynamics of online facilitation
- To show special education practitioners how to develop authentic assessment
- To guide special education practitioners on the use of different online tools to meet varied learner needs.

After brief introductions by the programme director, Dr. P. Dlamini, the official opening proceeded with remarks by the Director (MOET), the Director (IDE), ESCCOM's Mr. Mtshali, and the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Prof. H. Gadaga, on behalf of the UNESWA Vice Chancellor, Prof. T. Thwala. The Senior Inspector, Ms. C. Nxumalo, then gave an overview of the salient aspects of inclusive education. After the official opening, Dr. Dlamini facilitated the sessions on Module 1: design and development of online lessons and courses.

Day 2 focused on Module 2: creation of digital learning materials. Dr. Rugube was the main facilitator. She presented on assistive technologies too. In the afternoon, Dr. L. Bowers (OU, UK) gave an online talk entitled *Developing a social model to support student accessibility*. The presentation was well received and led to an interesting discussion on SEN student support.



On Day 3, Prof. Maphosa introduced principles of online facilitation, and together with the participants, identified the key facilitator competencies. On day 4, Prof. Ferreira-Meyers tackled authentic online assessment. Again, the participants were exposed to theory and had an opportunity to practise through some group and individual activities.

The final day was geared towards introducing the participants to the COTE course (Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators), mode of delivery,

IDE always seeks to respond to the needs of the Eswatini society. The workshop described above is an example of such response through which participants from the MOeT were equipped with pedagogical and technological knowledge and skills for effective online teaching.

duration, content and all aspects related to the course. All participants were then enrolled in the COTE course which is a fully online 6-week short course. A WhatsApp group was also created to ensure that participants and facilitators can continue to interact beyond the Pigg's Peak workshop.



Ms Nxumalo and the Inspectorate Team



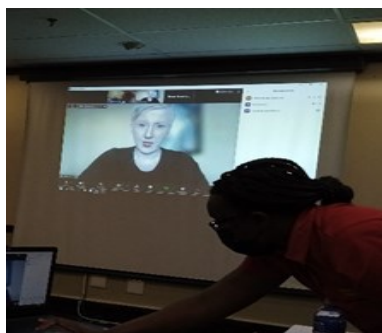
Participants sharing information



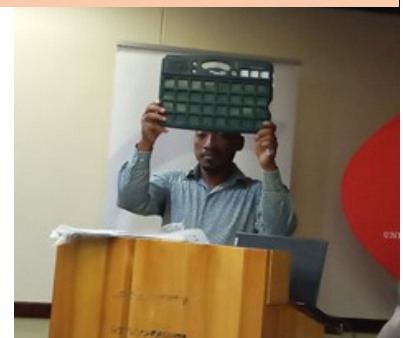
Professor Maphosa and the UNESWA Team



Participant enlightens audience on Autism Day



Zoom with Dr. Lisa Bowers



Picture caption



ESTABLISHING A CHAIR OF AFRICAN LITERATURES AND ARTS



Professor K Ferreira-Meyers –
Coordinator Linguistics and Modern
Languages

Abderrahman Tenkoul (Dean of the Faculty of Fez), Prosper Abega (Cameroonian lawyer, musician and academic), Karen Ferreira-Meyers (Professor at the University of Eswatini), Rabiaa Marhouch (Moroccan writer, editor and lecturer) and Oumar Diallo (Senegalese editor) discussed the establishment, structure and activities of a Chair designed to accelerate the de-compartmentalisation of linguistic boundaries and to support various artistic disciplines

As part of its projects for the promotion and the spread of culture and knowledge, the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco decided to create a Chair of African Literatures and Arts in 2022. Prof. Karen Ferreira-Meyers was invited by the Permanent Secretary of the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco and Director of the Royal College, Prof. Abdeljalil Lahjomri, to a brainstorming meeting entitled

and traditions highlighting African cultures and literatures.

Through this project, doctoral students will benefit from the knowledge that will be deployed within the framework of the Chair, a permanent and effective educational partnership and a space of cooperation and exchange. The Chair will mobilise literary knowledge and highlight African oral literature as part of an endeavour to re-qualify the modes of production, definition and interpretation of Afri-

“Opening the Minds” held on the 26th and 27th March 2022 in Rabat, Morocco. During this meeting, Prof. Abdeljalil Lahjomri, Eugène Ebodé (writer and academic from Cameroon, president of the literary prize William Sassine), Jean-Noël Pancrazi (writer, member of the jury of the Renaudot prize), James Cohen (professor at La Sorbonne), Lopito (Angolan writer and academic), Mathurin Ovono Ebé (lecturer from Gabon),

can literatures. It will include the setting up of an inventory, both in terms of time (chronology) and in terms of the different schools or genres of African literary heritage, not only according to the territories of expression (colonial division) or according to the linguistic areas (legacies deriving from the international languages), but also by taking into account the various indigenous African languages and oral traditions.



Professor Karen Ferreira-Meyers (second from right) at the “opening of minds” meeting in Morocco

The Chair of African literatures and arts should be seen as an ambitious project for the promotion of African literatures and arts, a combination of a teaching space and a performance space. There will be a space called Espace Togouna (in

Rabat’s Oudayas, a historic site), which will allow African arts to be performed. It will offer an extension to what will be done in the teaching space: academics and experts of all origins will organise conferences, roundtables, seminars and

webinars, courses and scientific programmes to disseminate knowledge on African literatures and arts.



Professor Ferreira - Meyers In one of the sessions



Development of UNESWA Employability Framework



Dr KE Mthethwa-Kunene –
Coordinator Research and
Evaluation

More than ten years ago, a review of higher education challenges and data infrastructure responses cited student employability as one of the major challenges facing higher educations the world over (Sarker, Davis and Tiropanis, 2010). Unemployment of university graduates is increasingly becoming a worrying trend, globally. Employability remains high on agendas for many institutions of higher education.

It is for this reason that the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) was proactive in deciding to tackle the problem. With the support from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), UNESWA developed a draft employability framework from February to April 2022. The development process began with a two-day sensitisation workshop aimed at assisting participants to gain a better understanding of employability, why and how it can be integrated in higher education. The workshop was also about how to develop an institutional framework for the integration of employability. The Pro-Vice Chan-

cellor, Professor T. H. Gadaga officially opened the workshop and it was facilitated by Dr. E. Mhlanga, a COL consultant. The workshop was attended by representatives of UNESWA Management, Registry, Deans of Faculties, Directors, Heads of Department from Faculties, Coordinators of units and programmes in the Institute of Distance Education, Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching and University Planning and Institutional Advancement Centre. The workshop was hybrid with most participants in a common venue while others together with the consultant, joined online. The photo below shows participants at the venue.

Following sensitisation, an eleven-member Task Force with a representative from each of UNESWA’s faculties, institutes and Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching was constituted to draft the framework. The wide representation and collaborative approach to the development of the institutional employability framework ensured relevancy, practicability and ownership of the framework. A draft was submitted to COL at the end of April 2022. However, it still has to go through internal approval structures before its implementation.



UNESWA employability workshop participants at Bethel Court Hotel



Effective Communication in Online Learning



Ms Siphwe Shongwe
- Copy Editor

The English word 'communication' is derived from the Latin *communis*, which means 'common sense'. The word communication also means sharing the same ideas. In other words, the transmission and interaction of facts, ideas, opinions, feelings or attitudes

(<https://www.vedantu.com/>).

There are six (6) types of communication: non-verbal, verbal face-to-face, verbal oral-distance, written, formal and informal communication. These are the basics and with the advent of the Internet, there are now countless opportunities of means of communication and online teaching and learning is one of them.

Communication is crucial in a teaching/learning environment as it involves transmitting content to learners. Content delivered to students is made possible through communication, be it in a conventional face-to-face classroom or in an online environment. In an online environment, there is a medium of information and communication technologies which include, mobile phones, comput-

ers.

Online content is designed, packaged and delivered according to quality standards that take teaching/learning approaches into consideration. The content is relayed to the target group – students – through communication. In a face-to-face classroom environment, an educator has the advantage of reading body language, picking cues and coaxing responses from students. In online teaching and learning, such deciphering of non-verbal communication, may not be that easy.

For example, a facilitator posts a question, invites learners to participate in a chat and only twenty percent (20%) partake. Suppose they were all able to connect online. What then could be the reason for poor participation during a lesson? Could it be that instructions were not clear or the learners could not hear (sound) the facilitator? Clearly, effective communication approaches need to be embraced in online teaching/learning.

One of the modern models of effective communication, which is the two-way symmetrical model, is advanced by Gruning and Hunt (1984). This model is considered the most effective way of communication, as it advocates for free and equal information flow between source and receiver.



<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=gruning+and+hunt+two+way+symmetrical+model>



With the two-way symmetrical approach, a message is communicated to a receiver, the receiver processes it by decoding the message and then responding to the originator of a message. This process involves – hearing, listening, deciphering and responding. Therefore, a response from students that aligns with a facilitator's expected outcomes and objectives is good because it proves that the learning process is successful. There are skills and competencies that facilitators and students could develop to enhance effective communication. Competencies such as the following:

Self-efficacy: Rooted in the theory of self-efficacy, an individual's belief in his/her ability to successfully undertake a task is important in effective communication. Milica Vukadin (2020) states that “when you achieve a certain level of self-efficacy, you notice your teaching methods becoming more effective. This also applies in learning. Once students believe in their ability to learn online, their performance improves;

Empathy and comparison: This links to what is referred to as ‘understanding of being privileged’. Feeling empathy and compassion towards struggles of students, results in a facilitator

honing his/her emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is also developed through effective communication. By understanding students' struggles, a facilitator will communicate with them with empathy. Once one develops emotional intelligence, Vukadin (2019) says “students are able to respond better and act accordingly to content”.

Some scholars refer to “understanding of being privileged’ as “open-mindedness”. As a facilitator, it is likely that you have the security of a job and therefore, you afford shelter, gadgets and data. Now ‘open your mind’ by understanding that there are students who lack these resources. These are students who need support. For example, synchronous lessons that last two hours may not be afforded by many. Know your students. (<https://blog.genial/en/techniques-online>)

Assertiveness: This is a quality of being self-confident without appearing arrogant or aggressive. Assertiveness is important in online teaching. An assertive facilitator will be respectful, friendly and still call wayward participants to order when the need arises. Assertiveness also sharpens a facilitator's sensitivity

for introverted students who may not have the boldness to participate, compared to others who do not hesitate to communicate. It is also imperative that students develop assertiveness in order to effectively communicate with a facilitator and with fellow students.

Facilitators' Role in Communicating Effectively

Akash Chander (2018) stresses that facilitators and students must “transfer” skills that exist in face-to-face engagement to online environments. The ‘transfer’ will be a success if facilitators adopt the following skills:

Humanising teaching/learning: a facilitator must be ‘present’. Reduce the barrier posed by gadgets by being ‘seen’. Post a video of yourself conducting a lesson and communicating directly with students. “Being present motivates students, improves learning and creates a sense of classroom community” (<https://sbccimplementationkits.org/sbcc>). Synchronous lessons are an opportunity also for students to respond to content. Provide an opportunity for them to provide feedback also for asynchronous teaching/learning sessions.



Carlton University proposes that once presence is established, facilitators should;

- * Acknowledge initial responses immediately;
- * Respond to comments that that have not received a response;
- * Encourage students to respond to each other;
- * Coax reluctant, 'quiet' participants;
- * Note dominant participants and make sure that a balance is created to include even the 'quiet' ones;
- Reward quality, over quantity;

In addition, facilitators should make an effort to adopt the following:

- **Listening:** Listen to students, involve them in research, discussions and interpretation. Motivate them to listen to fellow students as well. This will help you gauge their level of understanding and enable you to further improve your communication with them;

Friendliness: Even through a screen, it is important to portray an amiable attitude. Engage your students as you would in a face-to-face scenario. For instance, begin by asking them how their day is. Acknowledge their emotions and provide motivation even before a lesson progresses, it will increase connectivity.

Feedback: Content shared with students is one of the most important part of learning. Some researchers argue that it is better to complete fewer activities and content but focus of providing feedback to learners' activities and questions. Feedback fosters a positive impact on learning and on their mental well-being.

Adopted from [https://blog.genial/en/techniques-](https://blog.genial/en/techniques-online-communication-students-and-teachers/)

[online](https://blog.genial/en/techniques-online-communication-students-and-teachers/)communication-students-and-teachers

Students' Role in Communicating Effectively

Students also have a responsibility to adopt responsible behavior to exhibit in order to foster effective communication. Communication will not be effective if a facilitator dominates a learning platform whilst students maintain silence.

Pay attention and listen: This is an important part of communication. It ensures that your response matches a lesson's expected outcome. It is disappointing to facilitators when responses from students indicate that instructions were not followed simply because they were not read or listened to.

Be respectful in your communication to your facilitator and with fellow students. Respect fosters a positive learning environment;

Contribute meaningfully: do not just to register participation by contributing vague and shallow content. Meaningful and quality response is possible if you pay attention and follow instructions;

Do not be sarcastic: even when you believe that a post is nonsense, that is not for you to judge, and

Do not hesitate to ask questions if you need clarity in some issues. If you are not sure what is happening in an online lesson, better ask than remain silent.

Adapted from <https://blog.genial/en/techniques-online-communication-students-and-teachers/>



Professor Maphosa—IDE Director



Professor Ferreira-Meyers—Coordinator
Linguistics and Modern Languages



Professor Esampally— Coordinator
Academic



Dr Dlamini— Assistant Coordinator,
Instructional Design and Development



Dr Rugube

IDE Members of Staff discuss strategic approaches to implementing COTE, the Employability stakeholders' meeting, Employability Programme and Commonwealth of Learning Projects.



THE INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION LAUNCHES THE CERTIFICATE IN ONLINE

TEACHING FOR EDUCATORS



Professor J Thwala—Vice Chancellor

On the 9th December, 2021 IDE launched the Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators (COTE) programme. This auspicious event was followed with the certification of eleven (11) COTE participants who piloted the programme.

Professor Thwala, UNESWA’s Vice-Chancellor, applauded the Institute of Distance Education for successfully implementing the COTE programme. He stated that COTE came at an opportune time when UNESWA was transitioning to online learning partly because of the Covid-19 pandemic and also an effort to implement the University’s Blended-Learning Policy. The Blended Policy indicated the need to combine face-to-face

teaching/learning with online learning long before the covid pandemic occurred. In addition, UNESWA also conducted a customer satisfaction survey and one of the results was a call for enhanced learning for students, in particular online learning. Therefore, UNESWA Faculties are expected to engage students online.

Professor Thwala emphasised the importance of continuous professional development at all levels of education for an individual. This is because development has a bearing on the quality of a program which depends on the training and support of course instructors.

He stressed that COTE was relevant as it produced skilled educators who are competent in handling online classes without compromising quality. Effective learning experience was also another aspect of online learning. A Learning Management System (LMS) such as Moodle, he said, is not an information dumping-site, where facilitators simply dump information. Learners must be taught how to navigate through Moodle, engage and work collaboratively

with others to generate and share knowledge virtually.

Such interactive learning enhances problem-solving skills and attaining higher order learning outcomes which align with requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The Vice-Chancellor also applauded the fact that COTE is offered entirely online. This, he said, puts into practice (in the work space) what has been learned.

He congratulated participants for successfully completing COTE within the stipulated time. COTE participants were encouraged to be ambassadors of online learning by practising what they learnt as they interact with learners. He thanked the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) for supporting UNESWA in promoting distance education and he officially launched COTE as the online learning programme for UNESWA and sister institutions.



Professor Maphosa

Professor Maphosa stated that, whilst IDE continuously provides support in online learning through workshops internally, there was still a need to impart skills which address gaps and challenges associated with teaching online. One of the advantages of COTE, was to exploit the many functions of Moodle, UNESWA's Learning Management System (LMS) by harmonising it with pedagogically sound approaches.

He emphasised the importance of ensuring that learning does take place otherwise, the Institution would not be doing justice to the learning process. COTE aims to address the lack of constructive alignment. This is addressed by carefully planned lessons whereby, a facilitator indicates what should be achieved in terms of objectives and outcomes. This needs to be done right at the begin-

ning, because if outcomes are not established before one teaches, a lesson becomes an incoherent exercise. Therefore, IDE considered a programme that is more sustainable and effective in facilitating effective online learning for tertiary and all other levels of learning. Professor Maphosa also stressed the importance of quality assurance. COTE was quality assured by Dr Mhlanga who was engaged by the Commonwealth of Learning. He ensured that the programme was at an acceptable standard. IDE also had to ascertain that the programme was implementable by piloting it to eleven (11) participants who were educators.

The pilot-team included participants from UNESWA, other tertiary institutions in Eswatini and high school teachers. The pilot group embraced the programme with vigour, dedication and willingness. They went through all four modules and qualified to be awarded certificates. In closing, Professor Maphosa quoted Alvin Toffler, who said: "The illiterate of the Twenty-First Century will not be those who cannot read or write but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn". This means that there are skills that can be obsolete overtime and it is up to an individual to learn relevant skills that come with the dynamic world.

"If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow"- John Dewey

Quoted by Professor Maphosa during the COTE launch



Professor Ferreira-

Professor Ferreira-Meyers, the COTE project leader, presented a review of the COTE programme. She stated that COTE was important as it addresses poor skills of online teaching, facilitation and assessing. These skills are crucial in the Kingdom and in the Region .

COTE, she said, was a six-week course, offered fully online, with four modules that harmonise in knowledge and competency skills, as they are transferable to professional lives as educators. The course aims to develop the following competencies: needs’ analysis in online teaching, applying principles in designing online courses utilising the different functions of Learning Management System (LMS), creating useful and en-

gaging software and digital learning material, planning and facilitating a live online lesson, creating authentic online assessment, providing meaningful feedback in an online learning, environment and addressing ethical issues in online learning.

Any new programme requires to go through a quality assurance test. Hence IDE identified educators within UNESWA and outside the University who were keen to learn. Eleven (11) educators participated in the pilot phase and they embraced the opportunity with excitement and completed the course within the allocated time. They provided feedback that was constructive and invaluable in assisting IDE to improve the course before it is promoted to the public. IDE will continuously work of improving COTE to ensure that participants are taught a quality assured programme.

COTE Pilot Participants Respond - Dr Tsikati UNESWA



Dr Tsikati receives his COTE certificate from Professor Thwala

Dr Tsikati, a lecturer in the Faculty of Agriculture (UNESWA) was one of the participants who complete the piloted COTE course. He said that he was excited about COTE because it added value to one of the courses that he teaches, which is Instructional and Communication Technology. He also mentioned that the Faculty of Agriculture was supportive as it intends to introduce Digital Learning at Master’s level. Therefore, his exposure to COTE will en-

hance his capacity for the benefit of the Faculty.

He stated that the importance of online teaching cannot be ignored, in particular after Covid-19 and the political unrests that disrupted teaching and learning. COTE addresses this by teaching how to design, create and develop content and assess online.

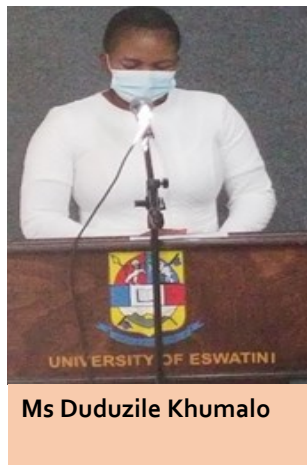
Dr Tsikati said that the ‘humanising’ element was also of interest as it ensured that a facilitator ‘feels’ students. COTE comes at a time when online courses teaching/learning courses are in demand. However, he said, there are hurdles that educators face which relate to incompetency in online teaching due to what Dr Tsikati referred to as ‘BBC’ that is, Born Before Computers, hence the “technophobia” experienced by many educators. He also mentioned the issue of connectivity as another challenge in online teaching/learning.



To stress his point, he alluded to a study that he was involved in by EPA which confirmed the need for the Government to invest in enhancing connectivity to the Internet. As an external examiner, he realised that, except for South Africa, most African countries have a poor and slow Internet connection. Dr Tsikati recommended that; the programme be available in an external hard-drive, secure licenses that will enhance collaborative work and for COTE participants to make use of the

knowledge gained, by practicing it in the workplace.

He congratulated UNESWA, the “University of Choice”, for implementing a programme that will enhance the image of the institution. He also congratulated the pilot group for completing COTE and for their dedication and willingness to encourage each other during the learning experience.



Ms Duduzile Khumalo

M^s Ms Duduzile Khumalo - Lavundlamanti High School

Duduzile Khumalo, a teacher of Languages and Literature in English at Lavundlamanti High School, quoted scripture in Proverbs 27, where there is mention of ‘iron sharpening iron’. She said as COTE participants they

experienced this by learning from each other. Ms Khumalo stated that they knew some Education concepts that they were exposed to and so they assumed that it was going to be a ‘brush through’ the programme. They however, realised that they had to ‘relearn’ to accommodate new knowledge. She proceeded to mention that from COTE, they learned:

- Utilisation of current approaches in particular how to structure online lessons. This also promotes learning to be enjoyable and valuable even for students with a short concentration span;
- Creating authentic assessment equipped them to effectively utilise unique and innovative ways of proving what students have learned;

- Catering for all learning styles for different types of learners;
- Designing courses, effective delivery of content, as a continuous process that ensures successful engagement of facilitators and students. This also enhances a facilitator’s ability to identify what teaching methods work and those that do not;
- Monitoring interaction and collaboration of learners as they interact amongst themselves when they work with content and create new experience for themselves;
- Humanising the learning experience. Is what most high school educators are concerned about. They deem online learning as being ‘robotic’ when there is no familiar voice behind content. This means that facilitators should understand the social environment of learners to guarantee a successful learning experience.

Ms Khumalo stated that as COTE participants, they will “will keep fire burning” and they will be in constant contact with IDE for more support in online learning.



Meet Professor Moffat Chitapa Tarusikirwa (PhD)



Professor Tarusikirwa (PhD)

Professor M. C. Tarusikirwa is on a Sabbatical fellowship at the Institute of Distance Education (IDE). He is from the Zimbabwe Open University where he is the Chairperson of

the Teacher Education Department in the Faculty of Education. Professor Tarusikirwa shares his academic journey and his views on distance learning.

Professor Moffat Chitapa Tarusikirwa holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Education (University of the Western Cape, R.S.A.), a Master's degree in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (University of Zimbabwe, UZ), a Master of Science degree in Marketing (National University of Science and Technology, NUST), a Bachelor of Education degree in Biology (UZ), a Higher National Diploma in Marketing Management (Harare Polytechnic), a Diploma in Business Studies (UZ), a Certificate in Education, majors Mathematics and Science (University of Bristol, UK), a Certificate in Computer Application in Educational Research (Bulawayo Polytechnic), a Certificate in Labour Relations (Contact Human Resources, Zimbabwe (PVT) LTD, Zimbabwe, a Certificate in Mentoring (University of the Western Cape), a Certificate in Microsoft Project, Level 1, X-llent Training, RSA, a Certificate in Research Writing Skills (NUST and INASP), and a Certificate in Basic Higher Education Teaching Skills (Association of African Universities).

Professor Tarusikirwa has forty-two (42) years of experience in the field of education (inclusive of secondary school teaching), eighteen (18) years,

university teaching (24 years) and over thirty-five (35) years of Educational management experience. He held several positions as a Mathematics and Science Teacher, Head of Department (Mathematics and Science), Senior Master, Deputy Head/ Head at Secondary School level in Zimbabwe before moving onto Higher Education. Furthermore, he has served as a Lecturer and Regional Programme Coordinator for the UZ and later the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) in the Department of Educational Studies for fourteen (14) years and that of Teacher Development for ten (10) years. He has also served as Regional Director (2005- 2006) for Matabeleland North Region and as Dean of The Faculty of Arts and Education (2013 to 2015).

In Zimbabwe and at international level Professor Tarusikirwa, served as National Chief Examiner (Additional Mathematics) for the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC), as an Associate, Zimbabwe Institute of Management (ZIM), Member Zimbabwe Academic and Non Fiction Writers Association (ZANA) among others. He has also been Team Leader and Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Open University Project Team that came up with a grant winning proposal for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education UNICEF Teacher Capacitation Programme launched in 2014.

Moreover, he also served as External Examiner (UZ Department of Teacher Education), PhD External Examiner, for the Universities of Fort Hare, the Free State and currently, for the Durban University of Technology and the University of Zambia, (UNZA).



Additionally, Prof. Tarusikirwa served as a Peer Reviewer for ZIMCHE since 2014. Furthermore, he taught Mathematics and Science in the UK in the late 1970's to 1980 and had a stint in South Africa at the University of the Western Cape where he tutored in Research Methods and Statistics and Life Sciences to BSc. Honours and B.Ed. Honours students.

He took part in the University of the Western Cape Peer Mentoring Programme where he trained Tutors and Mentors and was a Consultant in the Train-the-Trainer Programme. Moreover, he worked as Researcher and Consultant in the Department for Student Support Services and sat on the Department Board. Furthermore, he created a Research Journal Database for the Faculty of Education in addition to updating the Postgraduate Database for the same Faculty. Additionally, Prof Tarusikirwa, served as an Academic Support Consultant as well as giving Guidance and Mentoring to junior staff.

Still on the international scene, Prof Tarusikirwa has for twelve (12) years coordinated the Zimbabwe Open University Postgraduate Collaboration Partnership with the University of Zambia as Chairperson and Team Leader. He has also been a member of the Society For Research Into Higher Education (SRHE) U.K. (2001-2005), member of the Network for the Coordination and Advancement of Sub – Saharan Africa – EU Science and Technology Cooperation (2009 – 2010), member: African Network for Internationalisation of Education (ANIE) and has been a member of Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA).

Prof. Tarusikirwa is also an Editorial Board Member on the African Journal of Social Sciences, the Journal of Development Administration (JDA) and the Zambia Journal of Distance Education (ZJDE). He has reviewed numerous articles for a number of both local and International Peer Reviewed Journals. In addition, he has been a voluntary member of the Zimbabwe Ostomates Support Trust (ZOST).

Some of his areas of research interest are as follows, Comparative Education, Supervision of Personnel, Management, Leadership, Organisational Effectiveness, Organisational Development, Gender Equity in Higher Education Gender and Equity, Higher Education Studies, Educational Management, Leadership and Supervision, Entrepreneurship, Small to Medium Scale Enterprises (SMSE's), Organisational management, Marketing and Market research, Globalisation and Higher Education, The role of information technology in educational provision, Research Methodology, The role of the manager and organisational effectiveness, Internationalisation of Education, Measurement and Evaluation, Teacher Education, Policy, Culture and Gender Studies.

He has contributed to thirty (30) book chapters in ten (10) books, has published twenty-nine (29) refereed journal articles and a number of non-refereed journal articles. Moreover, he has presented fifty-seven (57) international and local conference papers and has been privileged to chair a number of conference sessions over the years at international conferences



Additionally, Prof Tarusikirwa has supervised many PhD candidates both locally and internationally over ten (10) years. Currently he supervises five (5) D.Phil. candidates at ZOU and three (3) at the University of Zambia. Furthermore, he has examined 24 PhD candidates as external examiner and eight (8) candidates locally in Zimbabwe over the years.

In the past, he has been a Sabbatical Fellow at the University of the Western Cape and at the Women's University in Africa where he taught Advanced Qualitative Research Methods at Master's level as well as supervised nine (9) Master's student theses. In addition, he was an invited member of the Senate at WUWA.

His subject areas of interest include but not limited to the following; Comparative Education, Research Methods, Educational Management and Administration, Planning and Policy Studies, Politics, Governance and Administration, Supervision of Personnel, Qualitative analysis for Business, Industrial and Labour Relations, Collective bargaining, Business Administration/Management, Leadership and Supervision, Organisational Effectiveness, Organisational Development, Measurement and Evaluation, Teacher Education, Gender Studies and Marketing Management.

What (in your opinion) would be the best way for academics to embrace distance education?

Given that in the last two years, many academic institutions were compelled to migrate to the de mode, due to covid-19, tertiary institutions can;

Through ICT skills capacitation, by train both academics and students, build an enabling environment for ODeL through the sourcing of ICT equipment and software as well as proving the necessary bandwidth for ODeL activities to take place and Training both staff and students in E-Teaching and E-Learning skills.

Is there another country or institution that we can learn from, in terms of fully implementing DE programmes?

There are the Americans, Canadians, British and Chinese to mention a few, who have been at it long enough. However here in Africa, UNISA, ZOU, UNZA, to mention a few have also been doing DE for some time.

Please share where you are at now and which areas/disciplines you intend to influence

Educational Management and Research Methods, including PhD supervision.

How do you envisage the impact/contribution of DE in future, in the region?

Immense, Distance Education, as a matter of fact ODeL, is the future of education provision.



EFFECTIVE INDIVIDUAL LEARNING SPACES FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS



Ms Mabuza—Coordinator Students' Services

Where a student studies is said to be critical in ensuring that s/he is able to learn effectively.

Dedicating a particular space for studying will programme a student's brain to associate the area with studying, hence promoting concentration, focus and productivity. Dillon (2016) summarises the importance of individual study space by citing a few reasons. The first being that people feel more secure and in control when they are within their own space. The second is the relationship between space and reinforcement of habits. This means that, if one is finding it difficult to study for whatever reason, entering your study space will generate a spark of motivation to study. Dillon concludes by relating physical spaces to moods, suggesting that learners need to identify spaces that uplift their moods and see how they may utilise these spaces to reinforce good study habits. The experience learners had due to COVID 19 was that universities had to change their delivery mode to more virtual contact and less face-to-face engagement. Automatically, learners felt more alone than before. This became the new normal and it required learners to improve their home environment to become effective study spaces because the time on campus was reduced.

Choosing Individual study spaces

Self-awareness is the starting point. Learners need to be aware of their preferences. This will enable them to appreciate what works for them and what does not work for their situation.

However, in general, the elements of effective study spaces include good lighting, favourable temperature, comfortable seating, organisation, welcoming touch and space dedicated exclusively for learning. When setting up your space, keep to what is at your disposal. This means that it does not need to be another room if you do not have a spare room; it will work best even if it is a corner of a room used for other things and still accessible to other people who live with you. In order to limit distractions when choosing study a space, consider:

- Choosing a place that is not associated with another activity of interest so that it will be gradually associated with study, thus enhancing focus;
- Choosing a space that will always be available when needed. This may mean more than one study space. For example, one on campus, one at home and another one at work;
- Meeting your study needs, a good light and a couch may work for reading but certainly not for note-taking. A chair and desk or table are best;
- Choosing a space that attends to psychological needs. One needs to be in a space that has a stimulus to attend to one's psychological needs such as concentration and motivation;



- Seeking support from people you live with, so that everyone respects that space which can then become an effective study space;

- Choosing a space that will be easy to organise and ensure it stays free from clutter.

- This applies also to electronic space, always clear your digital space (Mary Shier, 2020).

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR STUDY SPACE AND TIME

WELCOME ON BOARD! IDE WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF



Dr Nkhululeko Dlamini-Nxumalo

The Institute of Distance Education welcomes Dr Nkhululeko Dlamini-Nxumalo who is a Lecturer and Coordinator of the Education Programmes. She holds a Doctorate of Philosophy in Assessment and Quality Assurance in Education and Training, a Master’s degree of Education in Curriculum and Teaching and a Bachelor’s of Education. She was at the University of the Witwatersrand for a post-doctoral programme. She has attended a number of conferences in Eswatini, Lesotho, South Africa and Botswana. She has also published a number of articles with highly accredited journals



Ms Siphesihle Msibi – Technologist

Ms Siphesihle B. Msibi joined the Institute of Distance Education in January 2022 as a Technologist. Ms. Msibi holds a Diploma in Computer Science and a Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) in Information Technology.

She joined the University of Eswatini in 2018 as a Database Officer in the Academic Office and was later promoted to the position of IT Technician.

Whilst at the Academic Office she was part of the implementation of the ITS Integrator System in 2019 and also gained experience in processing applications, admissions, students’ registration, examinations and the release of academic results to students. She prides herself in fulfilling her duties to satisfactory levels and always displays a very positive energy in dealing with people as the work environment at the University is very diverse. In the Institute of Distance Education (IDE) she is responsible for staff and student support, since IDE offers its various academic and professional programmes in the Open and Distance e-Learning mode. She aims to ensure that both staff and students requirements are met in the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in order for them to succeed.



Ms Setsabile Dlamini—Technician

IDE welcomes Ms. Setsabile P. Dlamini, an IT Technician based at IDE as of February 2022. She is new to IDE but not to UNESWA she started as an Intern at the ICT centre from 2019 -2020. She then became a consultant on a CELT project in 2020 to 2021. After which she was then hired by IDE to be a technician in 2022.

Ms Dlamini holds a Junior Degree in Computer Science, and a Diploma in computing.



Mr Wandile Dlamini— Assistant Binder

Mr Wandile Dlamini joined the University of Eswatini in 2017 as a casual employee. Initially, he was IDE’s Assistant Binder and from there he never looked back as he served IDE with sheer dedication and commitment. He broadened his experience by doing other duties that were assigned to him, and he quickly adapted to IDE culture. When he joined IDE , he had an O’Level certificate as well as a Grade III certificate in Bindery and Warehousemanship. His hunger for more knowledge led him to enrol in the Bachelor of Education in Secondary Studies programme in 2019. Currently, he is at the third level.

In July 2022, Mr Dlamini joined IDE as a permanent staff member. He is based at the IDE Print Shop and is responsible for binding course modules, printing, storage and issuing learning material.

Welcome to the IDE Family.