



# Abstracts

**HELTASA**  
Higher Education Learning & Teaching Association of Southern Africa

The University of Limpopo is hosting the annual Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) conference at the Fairview Hotel in Tzaneen from 23 – 25 November 2010. About 200 delegates from across the country will be attending this prestigious conference.

### **What is HELTASA?**

HELTASA is a professional association for educators and other significant role-players in the tertiary sector. Its membership is drawn mainly from staff in Higher Education institutions, but it seeks to work collaboratively with policy-makers, statutory bodies and other professional associations with interest in Higher Education.

The HELTASA conference is an annual interdisciplinary event offering a platform where delegates will confer on Higher Education challenges, as well as best practices, with the aim of engaging in the process of addressing Higher Education challenges. The event also hopes to assist in capacity building, especially amongst young academics and researchers.

### **THE THEME OF 2010 HELTASA CONFERENCE: Higher Education Development: Academic excellence critiques, opportunities & challenges**

This event's focus is on under-preparedness in general (i.e., student's under-preparedness, educator's under-preparedness and institutions' under-preparedness). The rationale for this research focus is the fact that institutions are not performing as expected and the reason for this non-performance is more often than not "under-preparedness".

### **Subthemes**

- 1 Understanding under-preparedness, diagnostics, connotations, ramifications and strategies.
- 2 Facing Information Technology (multimedia) challenges & realities amongst students.
- 3 Innovation in Teaching and Learning.
- 4 Academic/students experience: A critical look at demand and supply of Higher Education.
5. Policy issues in Academic Development & Excellence.

### **Objectives**

- To generate debate (and where possible to find solutions) on how different institutions understand, identify, diagnose and respond to under-preparedness.
- To generate debate and public awareness about what constitutes teaching excellence.
- To come up with an Afrocentric discourse on issues of higher Education.
- To bring together a community of scholars and other parties, particularly in offering young participants an opportunity to share information on issues of common interest.
- To identify a cadre of academics who are able to provide leadership in teaching in their disciplines, institutions and regions.

**Conference Highlights:** The conference will be officially opened by the University of Limpopo Vice Chancellor, Prof Mahlo Mokgalong, and the Minister of Higher Education, the Hon Minister Blade Nzimande, will give the opening keynote address. Other keynote speakers include the following: Prof Peter Seldin, Prof Gina Wiskers, Prof Jaques Zeelen, Dr Lis Lange (CHE) and Mr Sibanda (Umalusi). There are other local and international reputable scholars who will be participating. HELTASA, in conjunction with CHE, will give out Excellence Awards to four best educators.

## Conference Organising Committee

Professor Kethamonie Naidoo, Executive Director: Centre for Academic Excellence

Professor Moloko Sepota, Chairperson: Local Organising Committee

Flora Mkhonto

Dr Thembenkosi Mabila

Frans Thosago

Matshidiso Molotsi

Dr Jesika Singh

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# **ABSTRACTS**

**(WORKSHOPS)**



**Facilitators:** Vivienne Bozalek and Brenda Leibowitz

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**Workshop Title**

The use of participatory learning and action (PLA) techniques in fostering afrocentric education

**Theme or skills targeted by this workshop**

This workshop will address issues of Afrocentric education, working across cultural differences, and engaging in learning with each other. The focus will be on participatory learning and action (PLA) techniques, which have been found to be productive in encouraging critical engagement with issues of difference, marginalization and learner identities.

**Learning outcomes for the participants**

1. A basic knowledge of the potential of PLA techniques in educational development, research and teaching in higher education, based on the experience of using these techniques in small groups:
  - an understanding of the potential of how visual representation and collaborative discussion emanating from these techniques can encourage reflexivity and criticality in professional practice
  - an understanding of the potential of PLA techniques to incorporate a holistic educational experience, incorporating the intellectual and affective
  - an understanding of how to facilitate the use of PLA techniques to subvert traditional power relations between educator and participants, and between participants themselves in contexts of difference.
2. The skill to employ three different PLA techniques in professional practice.

# **ABSTRACTS**

**(POSTERS)**



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**Title of Presentation:** The complex and multifaceted pathway to student success

This poster is based on ongoing working projects at the University of South Africa (Unisa) and its accumulated research on the subject of low throughput rates and under-preparedness as well as the existing massive world-wide pool of research done on the reasons why students are unsuccessful in their studies.

Unisa has found that despite the extensive efforts made to improve the academic and learner support of their students, pass rates are still below 7%. Research shows unequivocally that there are complex and multiple numbers of reasons in our complex and changing worlds why students are not achieving better results in their studies. The purpose of the poster is to provide a brief overview of the complex array of factors and qualities that are actually conditional to tertiary students being successful at their studies and that the problem of failing students has to be ultimately addressed holistically and systemically throughout the country to alleviate the problem of under-preparedness.

The authors also hope to illustrate to all the stakeholders, from the parents right through to the policy-makers, the importance of three basic essentials to successful learning, namely the study habits of the students, the levels of their self-efficacy and “well-designed” courseware. If these three are not successfully addressed at grass-root levels, no strategy will succeed to help prepare our students to be active future “knowledge workers” for their, and our, ever-changing and uncertain futures.

**Keywords:** Under-preparedness: insights, diagnostics, connotations, ramifications and strategies



**Presenter:** Prof Albert Kotzé  
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**Title of Presentation:** Online Discussion Forums: Can we predict who will be present and who absent?

*Poster*

Educators seem to be convinced that effective interaction between student and instructor and students among themselves in managed asynchronous online discussions (discussion forums) can promote peer learning and lead to deep understanding of their course material. It seems logical that distance education students should embrace opportunities to engage in discussions about study topics with their lecturers and other students.

Unisa's Learning Management System (LMS), myUnisa, offers students the opportunity to engage in discussions and debates about their work, but participation by students is not always as could be expected. Some modules are characterised by a lack of student participation in discussion forum activities while others enjoy a high participation rate.

The aim of the paper is to establish why students at Unisa either participate in online discussions about their work or do not do so. The findings expressed in the paper are based on an investigation of a number of modules that either enjoy success or failure as far as student involvement in discussion forum activities is concerned.

Information and data about student participation in discussion forum activities was drawn from interviews and a questionnaire. When analysed, the information provides reasons why students participate in online discussions, or not. The information can be used to better strategise around student participation in online activities.



**Presenter:** Nicoline Herman

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**Co-Presenters:** Francois Cilliers, Hanelie Adendorff, Susan van Schalkwyk, Karin Cattell

**Title of Presentation:** "Good things happen when teachers talk"

"One of the most important moves a campus can make is to create occasions for educators to talk, to find colleagues, to be part of a community of practice" Hutchings (2009). Taking these words to heart, the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at Stellenbosch University introduced the Auxin project. The purpose of the project is to enable academics' growth from being reflective practitioners through to becoming scholarly teachers and, for some, engaging in teaching scholarship.

The design of the intervention was informed by social theory and our own and others' research on becoming scholarly teachers and on factors impacting on engagement with educational development (ED) activities. The intervention comprises a series of new growth opportunities, integrated with existing ED activities and small groups of academics are accompanied on a journey through the teaching landscape by educational advisers.

Each growth journey kicks off with a lunch hour “Padkos”-session. “Food” for the teaching journey is provided metaphorically in the form of a presentation by an academic and literally in the form of a meal. Participants can choose to join a focused interest group (FIG) to explore the topic in more depth. The FIG is led by a CTL adviser and activities are jointly determined by the adviser and the participants.

Although this project will reach smaller numbers of academics than other interventions, it should support more academics to engage more deeply with, and possibly research, their teaching.

This **poster** will share more information about the project, the metaphor of the indigenous Num-Num tree and provide insights from the first year of implementation.



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**Title of Presentation:** Learning in Cyberspace: developing communication skills in African languages

#### **Poster**

Inspired by the rapid development of technology, the computer has now become an influential component of language learning. Educators recognize that utilizing computer technology can be convenient to create both independent and collaborative learning environments and provide students with language experiences as they move through various stages of language acquisition. The aim of this presentation is to demonstrate an initiative of the University of South Africa to provide students with the opportunity to develop through multimedia (internet and CD-Rom) communication skills in selected African languages. Matters focused upon include: Curriculum design for open educational resource language acquisition courses, Computer-assisted Autonomous Language Learning (CALL), and basic theory underlying the development of communication skills in an online environment. The designers of the online courses in African languages relied strongly on the five primary domains of computer-assisted autonomous language learning, namely input, output, interaction, exercise and assessment. The point of departure is that a curriculum refers to the whole set of learning experiences constituting a particular course. Included, therefore, are all aspects of teaching and learning such as: why it is to be learnt (context and underlying philosophy), how it is to be learnt (mode of delivery and teaching approach), what is to be learnt (content), when it is to be learnt (structure of the learning process), and how the learning will be assessed. The nature and content of these courses

are illustrated on the poster and some matters regarding the foreseen and unforeseen impact of the courses are also reflected upon.



**Presenter:** Lee Scott

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**Title of Presentation:** “Roll up, roll up! Come and see, pick a card, any card, don’t let it be”:  
The use of Pictographic cards as Educational Creative Prompts

As an artist, designer and educator I firmly believe that the act of ‘just playing’ is a very important part of any creative process. A playful way to allow the unconscious to unlock and set in motion new ideas can be a useful educational approach. I have conceptualized a simplistic and playful way to encourage positive creative experiences. I have devised a set of playing cards with pictographic images on them. (An example of a pictographic image would be the triangular warning sign depicting the silhouetted figure of a girl leading a smaller boy).The use of these cards can encourage interaction between students and the playful nature of the concept elicits original and sometimes thought provoking responses. I will, in this poster presentation, discuss and demonstrate how these simple visual prompts are innovative tools. I would like to interact with the members of the conference so that they may see the simplicity of the cards as creative prompts. I would also like to show the adaptable and imaginative ways they may be put to use.

# **ABSTRACTS**

**(PAPERS)**



**Presenter:** Frade Nelia

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**Title of Presentation:** A Blended Approach to Tutoring: The Role of the Tutor

This study is framed within the context of institutions of Higher Education (HE) and particularly the UJ, who are increasingly under pressure to utilize technology to reduce costs, to widen access and increase retention rates, all without compromising their high standards of quality (Hewitt & Powers, 2007). In addition, increased student numbers, less formal contact time (lectures) and reduced resources have resulted in larger class sizes, compelling Institutions of HE to reconceptualise their current approach to teaching and learning. Largely this has resulted in a reduction in small group and tutorial contact (Papo, 1999). Consequently, this study will focus on the implementation of a blended learning environment with particular relevance to how this can be incorporated within traditional tutorials. Accordingly, blended learning within the tutorial space can combine face-to-face interaction with technology-mediated or online interaction with the aim of creating an interactive learning environment. Blended learning can use asynchronous and synchronous modes of instruction both online and in the classroom. This study supports the use of online tutoring to enhance traditional face-to-face tutorials and examines the role of the tutor and the key components which will enable tutors to assume their role as tutors in a blended tutorial environment (Harasim, in Macdonald, 2008). To this end, tutor training, development and support are crucial as the tutor with a blended tutorial environment must be adept at creating an online and classroom learning environment that provides an opportunity for interaction, for peer relationships to be formed and that encourages collaborative and interactive learning environments (Herbert, Chalmers & Hannam, 2003).



**Presenter:** Z.M.M. JOJO

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**Title of Presentation:** The Students' Understanding of the Concept of Chain Rule in Calculus

This paper reports on the work done on exploring the conceptual understanding displayed by first-year University of Technology students in learning the chain rule in calculus using APOS (Actions-Processes-Objects-Schema). This study is designed to collect data to test this theory, focusing on how students learn derivatives of trigonometric functions using the chain rule. This paper will discuss the types of objects constructed by students when learning the chain rule with the view to clarifying their understanding of the composition of function and derivative. It will also address the problems that students have in understanding the chain rule. The framework used will result in a genetic decomposition

which consists of a set of mental constructs which might describe how the chain rule develop in the mind of an individual.

Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in the first phase of this study. Data were collected via a questionnaire on a group of calculus students' (n = 22) knowledge of and skill with function, composition of functions, differentiation and the chain rule. The purpose of the questionnaires was to determine the correlation between a student's ability to deal with the composition of functions and using the chain rule successfully. These were previous semester students of known ability, willing to participate in the study. The students had already written an examination on first year calculus and passed it.

The data were analyzed to investigate how their performance on the composition of functions' items related to that of the chain rule. Follow-up interviews based on the questionnaire responses were conducted with ten subjects. A few other subjects had to be interviewed on at least one interesting response that they gave in the questionnaire. Two fold types of interviews were conducted: (1) to get feedback on how students perceive chain rule. (2) for the purpose of verification where the individual student's written task is clarified. The interviews followed a guide designed to elicit the students' understanding of the chain rule based on the tasks given in the previous instrument. This aspect of the study was based on APOS. This study is intended to address some of the difficulties students have related to the concepts of function, its composition and inversion. The APOS paradigm using selected activities will bring the students to the point of being better able to understand the chain rule and inform the teaching strategies for this concept.



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**Title of Presentation:** 'Quality' Assessment Practices: Interpretations of a Language Department in an ODL Context

Research shows that attempts to apply quality assurance, an industry born concept, to higher education are problematic. One of the challenges cited is that in practice stakeholders tend to interpret the concept differently (Green,1994; Lagrosen et.al.,2004). The challenges reflect the ongoing policy and practice contestations which tend to impact negatively on assessment practices in teaching and learning. Taking UNISA, a distance education institution, as a case study this article reports on a pilot study that sought students' and lecturers' interpretations of 'quality' in a language department. In this qualitative study, participants responded to a questionnaire which required individual understandings of 'quality' assessment practices in the departments. The findings suggest that there is a problem of different meanings associated with 'quality'. The article argues

that the different interpretations cannot completely be done away with because 'quality' is an ongoing and non-static process. However, it is important for the department to strive to reach a common understanding of an ideal 'quality'. Therefore there is a need to continually examine and reflect on current practices, in particular, on what ideal 'quality' assessment practices should entail. The article concludes by recommending possible guidelines for addressing some of these contestations.



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**Title of Presentation:** The Necessity of Assessment Centres in Teaching and Learning

It is imperative to prepare students to function confidently in a rapidly changing world. To be effective in the workplace students need to be educated and trained so they can fulfil their responsibilities with care and dedication. It is often stated by employers that post-students are lacking skills to fully integrate with the workforce. It is therefore necessary for lecturers at Higher Education institutions to execute authentic assessment in the rightful manner to ensure that the student is well-prepared for the workplace.

The question arises: What will ensure authentic assessment? A tool that could contribute towards preparing the student for the workplace is the use of Assessment Centres as this will contribute towards work integrated learning. Assessment Centres are used by the corporate and business world, but are hardly, if not at all, utilized by Higher Education. In spite of efforts by lecturers, there is a gap between what Higher Education offers and what the workplace requires. To bridge this gap it is necessary to implement authentic assessment, and more specifically Assessment Centres, by integrating technology for meaningful assessment. This means that Higher Education institutions will have to adopt a more practical and electronic approach to assessment.

This paper will examine the need for Assessment Centres in Higher Education, and will also examine to what extent institutions are preparing students for the workplace, and how an Assessment Centre, by utilizing modern technologies, can contribute to the delivery of well-prepared and educated students to the workplace.



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**Title of Presentation:** Evaluation of the Usefulness and Relevance of the First Aid Course to Medunsa Campus Students

Background of the study: St John Ambulance and the South African Red Cross recommend that every South African citizen should know basic first aid techniques to provide immediate care in trauma and medical emergencies. The University of Limpopo Medunsa Campus

produces health professionals from its health sciences programmes who undergo the first aid course. However, the first aid course had not been evaluated since its inception in 1997.

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the usefulness and the relevance of the first aid course from the students' perspective.

The objectives of the study were to evaluate the first aid course from the students' perspective, to identify the strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations on changes needed in the curriculum to the faculty involved.

A descriptive and explorative survey using purposive sampling for quantitative data and convenient sampling for qualitative data collection was done. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire for quantitative data and focus groups for qualitative data. A statistician analysed the quantitative data and an independent coder analysed the focus groups.

Analysed quantitative data were presented by means of tables and graphs and analysed data from focus groups were presented using a central theme, categories and subcategories. Method triangulation was done. The results confirmed that the first aid course was useful and relevant to University of Limpopo Medunsa Campus students.



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**Title of Presentation:** On-Line Discussion Forums: New platforms for professional development at Walter Sisulu University

The study was undertaken at Walter Sisulu University, a comprehensive and multi Campus University. Staff development has become a challenge due to academics 'tight schedule and workload'. Research on professional education indicates that the capacity to support collaboration, reflection, and professional development, as well as to overcome barriers of time and place, makes the use of on-line forums a potentially useful and cost effective innovation (Anderson, 1996). However, in spite of this research, face-to-face learning environments are still generally assumed to be better than on-line forums to support such collaborative learning processes (Harasim, et al., 1995). Harasim, et al. claim there is no evidence to support this assumption. Hiltz (1988a, 1994) argues that they may even be superior to the traditional face-to-face environment. The debate continues to rage on.

This study evaluated the output, level of participation and perception of effectiveness and value among participants in a Virtual Learning forum at Walter Sisulu University. The study adopted a qualitative interpretive methodology. Forty lecturers, who have access to Blackboard as WSU VLE, were invited to participate in an on-line discussion forum on an assessment topic. Data was collected through monitoring on-line discussion forum, questionnaires and interviews. The on-line forum was found to be observable, triable and relatively easy to use compared to face-to-face workshops. It has the potential to become a widespread medium for continuing professional staff development.



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**Title of Presentation:** WHEN ENTERING THE UNKNOWN – BE PREPARED... (the importance of preparing students for the postgraduate environment)

Recently, the state of postgraduate studies has come under increasing scrutiny due to rapid transformation processes; quality of postgraduate supervision/training; slow growth in masters and doctoral graduates; lengthy postgraduate completion rates and the high percentage of termination of postgraduate studies. Within the South African higher education context, postgraduate studies are even more problematic and complex due to the following three reasons: the concern of how well the national system is able to produce what the international workplace needs; the fact that the postgraduate student body is from previously disadvantaged and diverse cultural backgrounds, with limited experience of library facilities and independent research work; and because many academics are grappling with the demands of increasing postgraduate student numbers and changing curricula/modes of delivery. These are only some of the issues that resulted in an improvement-orientated case study in which the environment of postgraduates at a university of technology was investigated. The perspectives and insights obtained from this evaluative case study could assist supervisors of the CUT (or other higher education institutions) in developing effective and efficient postgraduate supervision practices, as well as to help prospective postgraduate students to prepare themselves for the postgraduate environment. For the purpose of this paper the focus of the findings will concentrate on the stumbling blocks (e.g., overburdened/inexperienced supervisors, insufficient research preparation for master/doctoral students, insufficient institutional attention and resources, etc.) postgraduate students encounter in the research environment. Awareness thereof is not only crucial for the stipulation of improvement strategies, but also to develop and establish a quality enriched research environment.

**Keywords:** postgraduate research preparation; new-generation postgraduate students; quality postgraduate research



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**Title of Presentation:** Cooperative Learning in Higher Education Institution; Literature review

**Background:** Students in tertiary education are expected to have a high level of communication skills, the ability to define problems, gather and evaluate information, develop solutions, the ability to work with others (team skills) and the ability to apply the foregoing skills to address problems in a complex real-world setting. Notwithstanding the above, the students are not taught how to work in teams in the classrooms. The traditional method of teaching continues to be used despite its weaknesses. Research studies of team-based learning in higher education have been conducted, with most of them yielding positive results for a variety of cognitive and affective outcomes and yet this method of teaching continues to be underutilized.

**Aim:** To evaluate the effectiveness of cooperative learning in Higher Education Institutions

**Objective:** To compare the effectiveness of cooperative learning with the traditional method of teaching.

**Method:** A Literature review was conducted. Online searches were done in the databases: Pubmed, Google, Science Direct, CINAHL, Scirus etc.

**Results:** Individual student performance was superior when cooperative methods were used in contrast to competitive or individualistic methods. Cognitive and affective outcomes were also found to be positive for cooperative learning. Despite the fact that the benefits are well supported by research, it must be noted that they are not automatic and some problems related to individual student resistance and dysfunctional team are encountered.

**Conclusion:** The frequent opportunities to engage in peer and self-evaluation gives the student positive self-esteem and the practice needed to generalize the effects of positive group dynamics to the school, job and at home.



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**Title of Presentation:** Challenges Faced by Academics in Information Technology Integration to Learning and Teaching. A case study of Walter Sisulu University

We are living in a technological era that has been characterized by the rapid advancement in technology, even in education. Studies conducted on the integration of technology in education promise amongst other things; the increase in teacher productivity, the quality of education, and collaborative learning amongst the learners. The introduction of Information Technology Communication in teaching and learning has thus resulted in a need for lecturers to undergo training in technology. The lecturers are seen as a central factor in the success and failure of the use of ICT in education (Charalambous & Karagiorgi 2002:197). Eisen (2005: 17) states how the rapidity of the technological era has led to the birth of a disposable society that is characterised by people who are becoming “obsolete in the blink of an eye”. The training of lecturers in ICT as well as the use of multimedia in teaching, however has its challenges as most lecturers often complain about not having time at their disposal to leave classes and their marking to attend training in ICT. The purpose of this study which is work in progress is to investigate the challenges that the academics encounter when they apply technological innovation as part of teaching and learning. The study will adopt a qualitative interpretive methodology. Interviews will be conducted with 8 lecturers from each of the two campuses where staff were trained in preparation for the introduction of e-learning at WSU.

**Key words:** academics, higher education, information-technology, learning and teaching.



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**Title of Presentation:** Learning Styles Awareness

Institutions of higher education aim to educate students, who should be able to think, decide and keep on learning independently. The institutions of higher education therefore call for learning experiences that place the learner at the centre of learning. Teaching and learning in higher education has taken a learner-centred approach.

A learner-centred approach requires acknowledgement and provision for students' different learning styles. Acknowledging and recognising learners' diverse learning styles could lead to improvement in academic achievement of learners especially students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds that are under-prepared for tertiary learning.

Lecturers in higher education institutions are challenged to recognise that students have different learning styles. Knowledge of learning styles is important for lecturers in order to use a more balanced teaching strategy to accommodate the different learning styles in the class.

Through the use of a learning styles assessment instrument learning styles could be identified. Assessment of learning styles provides information about similarities and differences in how students learn. The results of learning styles assessment indicates how students take in and process information in the teaching and learning situation. These results are important in planning teaching and learning activities.

This paper explores the learning styles identified after administering the learning styles assessment instrument to students in six faculties in an institution of higher education.



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**Title of Presentation:** Becoming a First Year Student

This paper explores the experiences of a small group of students from middle-class backgrounds who encountered challenges in learning. This study forms part of a larger, longitudinal research project which explores the relationship between students' identity formation and how best curriculum and degree structure could facilitate the articulation between school and academic discourses. The notion of residual disadvantage in middle-class students is examined through students' agency, identity formation and learning of three students who participated in a year-long, foundational provision programme. The students were young, black, South African women who had obtained NSC in 2008 and had been amongst the first cohort of university entrants with a school background in OBE. In contrast to notions of academic risk being linked to such factors as working class status, being first generation university entrants and English second language speakers, these students came from middle class backgrounds, had attended 'good' schools and their parents and siblings held tertiary qualifications. Bourdieu's analytical constructs of habitus, field, and capital were used to analyse data obtained from questionnaires, individual interviews and a focus group. Results are reported in terms of students' emergent identity and agency as they learnt to negotiate the rules and practices of the institutional culture.



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**Title of Presentation:** Numerical Under-Preparedness of Entry Level, Undergraduate Pharmacy Students

Pharmacists make use of their numerical skills as part of their daily practice, and the ability to perform routine calculations accurately is central to ensuring the well-being and safety of patients. There is, however, a growing worldwide concern about both the numerical

competency of first year pharmacy undergraduate students and the poor numeracy skills of pharmacy graduates (Malcom and McCoy 2007). Although no similar published research is available, anecdotal evidence suggests that the situation in South Africa is much the same. This paper describes the development, implementation and analysis of diagnostic tests to assess the numerical capabilities, with and without the use of calculators, of entry-level undergraduate pharmacy students, both in the mainstream and extended degree programmes at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Results presented will demonstrate the low level of non-calculator based numerical capabilities and contrast these with the calculator assisted competencies of pharmacy students. An attitudinal survey-based evaluation of the students' perceived competence and self-confidence in their numerical capabilities, with and without the use of a calculator, is also described. This research has the potential to make an important contribution to the equipping of prospective pharmacy graduates, by providing the basis for developing interventions aimed at improving their numerical reasoning and computational skills.



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**Title of Presentation:** The Reintegration of the Mentally Ill Young Adults into the Society through ABET Programmes

The paper investigates available programmes for social reintegration of the mentally ill young adults into society through ABET programmes in the Thabamooopo Hospital, Limpopo Province. Observations, documentary analysis and interviews were used. The researcher argues that the programmes available in the hospital would not make reintegration of the young adults into the society possible. The health workers and the mentally ill young adults confirmed the researcher's argument. The major challenge was lack of resources. Recommendations are to use the ABET centre, redesign ABET material and establish half-way houses.



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**Co- Presenter:** Susan van Schalkwyk (Stellenbosch University)

**Title of Presentation: Trajectories of growth: moving towards scholarly teaching?**

The research reported on in this paper draws on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning literature (McKinney 2006; Richlin 2001; Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin & Prosser 2000) as it relates to adopting a more scholarly approach towards teaching. As educational development (ED) practitioners we believe that understanding how this might occur is fundamental to our work. This led us to reflect on the trajectories of growth that academics follow towards their 'professional learning' (Brew 2004:5) and the extent to which the ED opportunities we offer, facilitate such growth. Our analysis required 'constant professional reflection on our data' (Leshem & Trafford 2007:94) which was supported by earlier research (Cilliers & Herman 2010; Leibowitz, Van Schalkwyk, Van der Merwe, Herman & Young 2009), ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our ED interventions, and our experience in ED over many years.

While the notion of following a scholarly journey is not new, what emerged from our analysis was how the journey and the destination differ across academics. In seeking to understand these differences and the many factors that influence their individual journeys - such as the nature of the growth opportunities, the environment in which they find themselves, and the potential for recognition and reward - we created an explanatory framework onto which our interventions could be mapped.

We will share a series of biographies, synthesized from the experiences of different academics, and position these within the framework to demonstrate how ED activities can facilitate trajectories of growth towards scholarly teaching.



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**Title of Presentation:** Tools Used for Assessing Student Teachers During School-Base Learning: A case study on developing and maintain quality teaching in higher education

For years now, the supply of teachers into the South African education system depends on Higher Education Institutes; hence there is a need to look at the process(s) of preparing teachers in these institutes. The paper focuses on the practical teaching or school-based learning (SBL) and analysis of the tools used to assess student teachers (STs). School-based learning is an activity attaching student-teachers to schools and evaluating them in action (teaching). SBL is intended to develop student-teachers' teaching skills in real situation, therefore, it is pertinent that suitable and appropriate tools are used to support, evaluate and provide feedback that will develop the students and develop them to become better teachers in the future. The analysis of the documents is based on the available literature on developing quality teaching and learning which is directed to the national goals. Data provided were generated from tools used by four different institutions within South Africa

and two international institutions. Data demonstrate that the institutes focus on different issues in classroom practice and processes of teaching and learning. Based on the analysis, it is noted that a more focused programme of teacher training and evaluation is needed in order for the higher institutions to meet the national goals of teacher development.



**Presenter:** Nompilo Tshuma

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**Title of Presentation:** Blended Learning Model: Implementation and Evaluation

In South Africa, higher education policies have opened up access to university for students from diverse backgrounds. In our institution, as in many others, these students have different learning styles, levels of motivation and levels of preparedness. This has necessitated a move from the lecture style of teaching to innovative teaching styles that engage the learners and equip them with skills to apply their knowledge to new situations and develop life-long learning skills.

The design and use of a blended learning model, a combination of face-to-face and online teaching in a Computer Skills course is discussed in this paper. The focus is on aligning technology, pedagogy and context in the design of the learning materials and activities. The use of these learning activities is then evaluated, and recommendations for improvement of the Blended Learning Model are suggested. In designing this model, the main aim was to shift the course from teacher-centred to learner-centred through active, interactive and engaging activities.

**Keywords:** Blended learning, alignment, evaluation, teaching and learning strategies, online learning



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**Title of Presentation:** The Potential Use of E-Learning to Support Teaching, Learning and Assessment of an Information Systems Course at Walter Sisulu University

This paper describes the potential use of e-learning to support teaching, learning and assessment of an Information Systems course. As a Higher Education Institution situated in a rural area in the Eastern Cape, Walter Sisulu University (WSU) has part-time students who are unable to attend contact classes on a regular basis, which seems to be contributing to an increasing failure rate.

In the past years, all faculties in the university duplicated their classes in the evenings to accommodate part-time students as well as those full-time students who were working, usually in the towns surrounding the university, and could not attend during the day. Even when given the chance to attend, students seemed to be exhausted from work and could not engage fully in class. This duplication of classes was terminated for some reason or another and has subsequently limited the contact of these two sets of students with their lecturers or peers. This situation has had a detrimental effect on pass rates and lecturer satisfaction across the whole university, and particularly in the Accounting Department where Information Systems (IS) is offered to approximately 200 second year BComm students, of which around about 40 are considered part-time each year. The particular focus of this paper is to illustrate how e-learning can be used to support teaching, learning and assessment with the express view to make the IS course at WSU more accessible to students. The aim of this is to especially keep those students who are unable to attend lectures regularly, up-to-date with the learning material and also to look for a way of assessing this group of students, as the full-time students would have carried out such assessment activities in the classroom. E-learning provides learners with the opportunity to complete an area of study in their own time and according to their own pace, without real-time interaction with the lecturer (Kruse & Kei 2000, cited in Broere, Geysler & Kruger 2002:6). In addition to accessibility, e-learning provides the possibility of interactivity, which can be used to accommodate students' learning strategies. Weigel (2002) confirms that this interactivity allows students to proceed through the material at their own pace, repeating what was unclear and skipping topics that they already know about. To ascertain when the WSU IS students attend classes; how often they are absent from class and their reasons for absenteeism; students' learning needs and their current computer access and skill; and their perceptions of the potential benefits for putting the course online, a survey was conducted with students. A questionnaire was used to gather the students' data. The students' responses to both the open-ended and closed-ended questions were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The qualitative data were summarized in the form of tables and graphs. The data from the survey provided insight to the development of the WSU IS pilot website. With the course being more accessible to students, it is hoped that the pass rate will be improved in this course.



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**Title of Presentation:** Child and Youth Care Students' Perceptions of Active Learning Strategies at the Durban University of Technology

**Introduction:** The study explored the students' perceptions of active learning strategies in the Child and Youth Care Programme at the Durban University of Technology (DUT). The key focus of the study was evaluating how the students' experienced independent study and in-class active learning strategies. The roles that peers and educators play in independent study and in-class active learning strategies was assessed with the view of enhancing these stakeholders participation in the active learning process.

**Methods:** The interpretive approach within qualitative research methodology was used to guide the study. Data were obtained from questionnaires and two focus groups conducted with third year students in the Child and Youth Care programme.

**Results:** The findings indicated that students and educators play a myriad of roles: the roles of peers included enhancing understanding through explanation, providing alternative ways of understanding, increasing quantity of knowledge and providing support. The roles of the educator included providing guidance, feedback, structure, clarification and skills.

**Conclusion:** Recommendations were made to improve this active learning process within the Child and Youth Care programme which included assessment of group learning, curriculum development, evaluation of pedagogy and infrastructural support for student learning.



**Presenter:**

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**Title of Presentation:** Effective E-Learning from Far, Far Away

Blackboard is widely used at Stellenbosch University. However bandwidth and configuration requirements pose particular technical challenges for the growing number of off-campus students. This is especially the case with students who are less digitally literate or who have access to limited technology. This became an especially critical problem in the Department of Nursing, when a large number of students were unable to access and successfully complete quizzes.

A Moodle based Learning Management System was put in place to run concurrently with the Blackboard LMS. In addition to being less demanding in terms of bandwidth and configuration requirements, Moodle can also be run on mobile phones, which reduces dependence on computers. Students could decide which one they prefer to use.

The Department of Nursing from the Faculty of Health Sciences took part in an evaluation study during the second semester of 2010 (July to November), to ascertain whether Moodle could facilitate completion of the quizzes by all students who were unable to use the Blackboard System. Queries from both Learning Management System databases and surveys to students will determine the outcome of the study. This systematic study will shed light on the comparative value using a lightweight system such as Moodle in technological constraint learning and teaching environments.



**Presenter:** Melanie Petersen

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**Title of Presentation:** Online student feedback versus the traditional voluntary method: Challenge or opportunity?

Student feedback systems are common at universities and play an important role in enhancing the quality of teaching. Collecting online student feedback is an attractive possibility over the traditional method in terms of saving time and resources (Donovan, et al, 2006) but include challenges such as lower return rates and higher percentages of negative responses (Dommeyer, et al, 2002). In this paper we report on investigations on initial attempts to increase response rates in selected cases. A study was conducted using selected lecturers who agreed to experiment with a conditional release treatment in their modules by restricting access to class notes on Webstudies until the students completed the feedback questionnaires. Added to the study will also be an investigation into a module that made use of collecting unconditional student feedback.

This study investigates the effects of these different methods by focusing on the following:

1. How do these online response rates compare to response rates on paper?
2. How do the online quantitative scores compare to those in the paper method?
3. Did the treatment affect the nature of responses (positive or negative)?

The paper feedback response rates were compared with online feedback, as well as the average scores for comparable questions. The open comments were analysed and categorised as positive or negative and compared within the different methods. Recommendations for student feedback systems are suggested.



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**Title of Presentation:** Materials Design in an ESP Course: Students' Experiences at the University of Limpopo

In this paper, we seek to present the experiences of postgraduate students in material design in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course at the University of Limpopo (UL). The students reported in the paper were engaged in a project whose focus was on materials design, a key component in ESP course development. As part of their curricula, the students were engaged in a project which aimed to enhance and also assess their understanding, skills and techniques in material design and writing. Hence, each one of them had to design material which is suitable for a specific ESP course (i.e., Business Studies/Science) following the approach/model proposed by Hutchinson and Waters. The paper therefore attempts to

discuss the challenges encountered by the students through the analysis of their weekly submissions as well as responses to an interview which was held at the end of the project. We therefore conclude by providing suggestions on how such challenges can be overcome.



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**Title of Presentation:** A Genre-based Approach to Teaching Literacy in a University Bridging Course

For educators, a genre-based approach to literacy is a valuable tool for helping students produce effective, high-quality texts (Hyland 2007:148). Rather than taking a writer- or reader-orientated approach to teaching writing skills, genre-based pedagogies take a more text-centered approach to writing, which views texts as tangible, analyzable products of broader social contexts (Hyland 2002:6-22). To date, literature regarding genre theory focuses on developing writing skills in primary, secondary and L2 educational contexts, with little emphasis on how tools developed within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) can help to improve academic literacy in a university context. In this paper, I will briefly introduce the principles of a genre-based pedagogy and show how the classroom models developed specifically for the contexts listed above can be modified to suit a university context. Additionally, I expand on Bernstein's (1993) notion of "visible pedagogy" to show how a genre-based pedagogy can succeed in developing academic literacy, and simultaneously achieve the aims for a more advanced and theoretical writing course than those offered at a secondary school level.



**Presenter:** Mrs Marianne Bester  
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**Title of Presentation:** Empowering Higher Education Teachers in Curriculum Development Using a Strength-Based Approach

Higher Education (HE) teachers at Universities of Technology (UoTs) in South Africa are required to respond effectively to calls for accountability and excellence in higher education, while also being confronted by the daunting task of redesigning curricula to meet the requirements stipulated in the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) introduced by the Department of Education (DoE) in October 2007. Since the HEQF requires extensive changes and redesigning of UoT programmes and curricula (van Koller, 2010), academics at these institutions indicate that it often "feels like a pervasive onslaught that must be constantly weathered" (Light, Cox & Calkins, 2009). Although Carl (1995) indicates that teachers must be "active participants in the process of relevant curriculum

development”, given the current demands of their time and the level of complexity of the issues they face, HE teachers at UoTs are reluctant to engage in curriculum design. This paper will report on a pilot research project, whereby the 4-D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) developed by Cooperrider (1990) is being used, to empower higher education teachers in curriculum design at a University of Technology. Although AI as a strength-based approach faces an uphill battle in an educational system based on hundreds of years of deficit-based thinking, it has the potential to engage HE teachers in a positive manner, providing substantial energy and direction for focused and sustained creative action. As a transformative process of acknowledging the “best of what is” through narratives, AI allows HE teachers to work collaboratively on the development of curricula that are responsive to the needs of a changing world.

**Key words:** Curriculum design, Appreciative Inquiry, Responsive curricula



**Presenter:** Dr. Nana Adu-Pipim Boaduo FRC

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**Title of Presentation:** Increasing Higher Institutions Academic Staff Teaching Efficiency through Research

In mankind’s endeavour to make a prosperous, appreciative and comfortable living, many inventions have been ushered into the realm of living. With changing times, what has been invented should always be checked to make sure it fits into the current needs of generations now and those to come. It is in this view that innovations and reforms in education at all levels are required in every sphere of society’s activities in order to attend to the several changing needs of mankind in a given era. Higher education provision has been the biggest victim of change in all societies because it is tasked with the responsibility of allocation of positions in society. Reform and innovations have been primary in this respect. In the teaching-learning environment, change is the measuring stick for determining progress. This has necessitated curricula reform and innovation. In the teaching-learning environment, reform and innovation in curricula, strategies, approaches and methods of delivery of the content of subject matter have been so sporadic that one gets out of breath in an attempt to catch up with the changing times. These are done for academic excellence that opens up opportunities for graduates. These require, among other things, progressive upliftment of teachers’ status, professional development initiatives and upgrading of qualifications. This paper argues that academic excellence that opens up opportunities and diminishes challenges in professional development can be achieved through increasing higher institutions academic staff teaching efficiency through the application of research.

**Key words:** higher education development, academic excellence, opportunities, challenges, innovations in teaching, innovations in learning.



**Presenter: A E M J Boshoff (Annette)**

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**Title of Presentation:** Professional Development of Innovative Facilitators of Lifelong Learning in Private Higher Education

**BACKGROUND:** A common phenomenon in Higher Education (HE) is that lecturers are highly qualified in their fields of expertise but many lecturers have never received any or received only limited educator training and therefore they do not have an in-depth knowledge of how learning takes place and the different alternative assessment approaches that can be implemented. Subject specialists mainly conduct research on areas in their fields of expertise and therefore they are not informed about the dynamics of the global educational environment. As a result of this the traditional lecturing style is mainly used during contact sessions and mainly theoretical knowledge is assessed in written examinations. Learning style flexibility and allowance for active learner participation during the contact sessions are not considered when using the traditional lecturing style. This prevents the learners from developing responsibility for their own learning process and developing an interest in becoming lifelong learners.

**METHOD AND APPROACH:** An action research-driven professional development programme which aims to create a scholarly approach to establishing a culture of lifelong learning in the HE environment, is currently offered to the facilitators of learning who are employed by the Production Management Institute of Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd (trading as PMI). Although the study is conducted in the private HE environment, public HE institutions will also be informed about the successes of the development of innovative facilitators of lifelong learning that can improve graduate throughput. The participants were introduced to inter alia, the principles of the Ned Herrmann Whole Brain Model®, Gardener's multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy. This had an immediate positive effect on the learner involvement and assessment practices in PMI. A whole brain mentoring approach for the management of the programme is also investigated by means of action research.



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**Title of Presentation:** Establishing a Digital Community of Practice for First Year Stellenbosch University Students through Blogging

The emergence of blogs and digital diaries onto the educational scene has resulted in the following key benefits for students: affording them the opportunity to engage in a digital community of practice, providing students with diverse perspectives and increasing student

interest and ownership in learning\*\*. The University of Melbourne uses a blog as an opportunity to enlighten prospective students about the realities of being a first year at the institution through their preferred media and to show how students can provide each other with personal and academic support\*.

Similarly, it was envisaged that a related blog initiative at SU could provide a useful lens for viewing a student's experience of his/her first year. "PLakker" ("Personal Login akker" - the blog's name), therefore, was borne firstly, out of an understanding that students' learning experiences are not necessarily limited to the classroom which is the philosophy behind the SU First-year Academy. The selected bloggers, or "PLakkers", serve as catalysts to get other first-years to participate in discussions, highlighting their in-class experiences, but also how they perceive the out-of-class culture at SU.

This paper maps the progress of this initiative to date and highlights how insights gleaned from the inputs of these students, as well as those who comment on their postings, can shape the way in which the University understands how first-year students experience the institution. Furthermore, the challenges associated with administering the blog and channeling the insights gleaned to relevant role-players in the institution, are addressed.



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**Title of Presentation:** "Fit for Change": Exploring the relationship between academic literacy practitioners and disciplinary specialists as a complex system

At tertiary institutions in South Africa and internationally, academic literacy practitioners and disciplinary specialists traditionally function as separate communities of practice. However, research indicates that both literacy and learning are situated in specific social practices within specific discourses and are thus closely linked to the context of a particular community of practice (Gee 1998, Wenger 1998, Barton et al 2000). Academic literacy is therefore most successfully acquired when it is integrated into and taught within the contexts of particular academic disciplines.

This paper explores the transgression of the boundaries between academic literacy teaching and study disciplines in general and the subsequent broadening of the social structures within which academic disciplines function at tertiary institutions (Jacobs 2005). The relationship between academic literacy practitioners and disciplinary specialists at Stellenbosch University is correspondingly investigated as a complex system, focusing on the variable and non-linear interaction among the coevolving components of the system and its environment, the emergent structure of the resultant transdisciplinary community of practice, and the "fitness" of this community – its ability to cope with the challenges and opportunities brought on by constant change (Weideman 2009, Clemens 2002, Heylighen et al 2006). The paper will demonstrate the contribution that a complex systems approach could make to the coevolution of the relationship between academic literacy practitioners

and disciplinary specialists at Stellenbosch University, and subsequently, to an understanding of their collective focus on student success.



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**Title of Presentation:** Making Spaces to Talk about the Role of Writing in Teaching and Learning Innovation at the University of the Western Cape

This paper engages with the role of a Writing Centre in creating spaces for talking about and changing the way in which writing is embedded in the disciplines and taught by disciplinary academics. It asks what could be the most effective ways of embedding this teaching, and how collaborative partnerships between disciplinary academics and writing centre practitioners might be established and nurtured in sustainable ways. Drawing on findings and insights from collaborations with academics in three departments or courses – political science, law, and academic and information literacy – over the last eighteen months, the case is made that a writing centre practitioner has a valuable role to play in collaborating with disciplinary academics to create more creative and useful writing-focused teaching materials and methods. This is shown by working in a way consistent with the theory that critical reading, thinking and writing are literacy acts rather than generic skills that must be learned and practiced in the disciplines. By supporting disciplinary academics in re-examining course outcomes, materials and assessment tasks, and encouraging a shift away from a ‘technocratic’ attitude towards writing in the disciplines, it is shown that building a discipline-specific culture of writing to learn and discover content in innovative and relevant ways is possible through these collaborative partnerships. A key result is more empowered and capable academic teachers, and more critical, capable and engaged students.



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**Title of Presentation:** Clinical Support for Underprepared Mathematics Students at the Vaal University of Technology: Experiences of Lecturers

The low performance of learners in mathematics at matric level (Grade 12) is a great concern for all stakeholders in education. This situation has a negative impact on the country’s economy because many opportunities cannot be assessed by prospective employees without mathematical skills. The matriculants who manage to secure admission

to Mathematics allied courses such as Statistics, Engineering, Accounting, Technology and Computer Studies at Higher Education Institutions often find it difficult to cope. This research paper reports a case study of how underprepared Mathematics students at the Vaal University of Technology were given clinical support to enable them cope with studies and achieve their study goals. Through a baseline assessment of all students registered for the mathematics module -AMATH 1 A - students with problems and gaps in the subject were identified. A discussion with students was done to understand their experiences at high school level as regards to the teaching and learning of mathematics. Based on the results of the discussion and the baseline assessment students were put into two groups - those with weak background in the subject were put into group A and those with sufficient understanding of the subject in Group B. Group A was made up of 90 and B 60 students, respectively. The intervention strategies employed to assist the Group A students included extra tutorials and one-on-one discussions, support, and peer tutoring. The performance of Group A students was monitored during each of the three formal tests written in each semester. When the end of year Mathematics results were analysed it clearly showed significant improvement. Students were seen to be ready for all the Mathematics allied programmes.

**Key Words:** Clinical support, mathematics, rural schools, Baseline, ill-prepared



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**Title of Presentation:** Unpreparedness of Some Universities to Respond and Adapt to the Outcomes Based Education

Higher education has throughout its history been confronted by challenges in the internal and external environment of its functioning. The fact that the university intake comes from the NCS background with its foundations on OBE principles leaves these institutions no choice but to adapt. In the face of the above, the culture, policies and systems, curriculum design, resource capacity, strategies, and mind sets that prevail in these institutions pose a great deal of challenges. The nature of these challenges necessitates, to some extent, a change in organizational character, strategies and attitudes in the higher education institutions. How these institutions respond and adapt to such changes is a fundamental question and point of departure in an attempt to articulate the trajectory along which changes in curriculum perspectives are unfolding. This paper therefore attempts to explore these challenges and assess the level of preparedness of historically disadvantaged universities in dealing with these challenges to ultimately adapt to the OBE standards. Questionnaires and interviews will be used to assess the perceptions of lecturers of the new curriculum policy. Expected results may include lack of information, resistance to change, resource incapacity, lack of integrated planning and low quality learners from the school system. Recommendations may include

- Vigorous training and change of mind set on the part of university staff and management.
- Increased interface between university and feeder schools through partnerships

**Keywords:** Unpreparedness, challenges, OBE, NCS



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**Title of Presentation:** Creating a Classroom Economy

The aim of the paper is to obtain a better understanding of economic terms and concepts. Some students seem to find a course in Economics to be difficult and removed from their daily lives. They cannot relate to it (Dyubhele, Guzana, Duze and Mkonto 2007:i). The paper recognizes that understanding economic terms and concepts is an important element in the teaching of economics (Tregarthen & Rittenburg 2000:xvii). This will enable them to succeed and deepen their insight into formulating and making informed choices on many issues. In Economics, students learn an approach to thinking that can be applied in campus life, in their careers and in everyday life. The paper argues that while economics is part of the management and economic sciences, programs often neglect to incorporate economic language and instruction. Economists have often thought that language was neglected. Issues of access to concepts in economics discourse make this perception untenable. The classroom economy can assist students to learn economic concepts, have fun and relate to Economics. Students are encouraged to look for economic concepts so that they can learn to understand the world regardless of how much and how fast it changes. In fact, they learn to become well informed consumers who make good decisions. In this way, learning is both engaging and purposeful (Newingham 2010:1). This is critical to revitalizing the economy (Kabeer 2003:14).

**Key words:** Classroom economy; Economics; Economic terms and concepts



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**Title of Presentation:** What is in the name? An analysis of school subject curriculum development in South Africa: A case of Consumer Studies

This study examines the analysis of the development of a subject curriculum within the South Africa schooling system. The study focuses on Consumer Studies. Consumer Studies is seen as a trans-disciplinary field comprising of four specialized fields of; Consumer Science, Consumer Studies, Consumer Affairs and Consumer behaviour. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) of the current curriculum 2005 on Consumer Studies focuses on the development of skill, knowledge, values and attitude o enable learners to become responsible and informed consumers of food, clothing, housing, furnishing and household equipment. Before this subject came to be called Consumer Studies it was called Home Economics but had since also undergone many name changes. The researcher thought a historic research approach would best interrogate curriculum restructuring processes that culminated into different nomenclatures and curriculum content at different stages of the subject's development. The object of the study is to explore and understand arguments advanced and/or methods used by curriculum researchers at every stage of the curriculum development process.

**Key Words:** Analysis, Curriculum development, Curriculum 2005, Consumer Studies



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**Title of Presentation:** Developing a Structured Accounting Mentorship Programme for Pre-Service Teacher Education Students: Pitfalls and challenges

No country can neglect the standard of training for its teachers as this can influence the quality of their education. In South Africa, post-1994, a great deal of attention has been focused on improving the education system thus more emphasis is placed on improving the training of pre-service teachers (Quick and Siebörger, 2005; Wyk and Daniels, 2004). Over the last decade international and national studies conducted provided strong arguments that Higher Education Institutions play a pivotal role in developing and implementing mentoring programmes for pre-service educators (Dreyer 1998; Robinson, 2001; Martinez, 2004; Scholtz, 2006; Kardos and Johnson, 2008). There is a common belief in the latter studies that mentoring pre-service educators can improve teacher preparation.

It was against this backdrop that I explored the experiences of accounting pre-service teachers and their mentors in a semi-structured accounting mentorship programme. The aim of the study was to develop a structured accounting mentorship program to enhance teacher preparation. The study was located in a qualitative paradigm as it sought to achieve an understanding of pre-service accounting students' and their mentors experiences in a semi-structured mentorship programme. Reflection journals, a focus group interview, unstructured interviews and a questionnaire were utilized in this study. The results revealed that the current accounting mentorship programme lacked in depth details

of the role of the mentor and mentee. Furthermore the current mentorship programme is in need of more ongoing collaboration between the faculty and the mentors, hence the need for a structured accounting mentorship programme.



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**Title of Presentation:** Is the Induction Programme at UNISA Worth its Salt? Contrasts and expectations of new academics

Like most progressive institutions of higher Learning, the University of South Africa (UNISA) has found that many newly appointed academic staff members, have little preparedness for the rigorous and challenging work in an Open Distance Learning (ODL) environment. This study sought to underscore the significance of understanding the needs and expectation of each staff member, while inducting and assimilating them into UNISA culture in terms of its vision, mission and policies. Although the program is not very different from other Higher Education institutions' programs, UNISA's ODL approach makes it unique and therefore requires a different approach to induction of new staff. One of the objectives of UNISA's strategic plan is to "position UNISA as a leading provider of higher education opportunities through open distance learning (ODL) nationally, on the African continent and internationally" (UNISA ODL policy p1). Throughout the induction programme, newly appointed staff were afforded the opportunity to reflect on and apply some of the principles of best practice in ODL, with regards to curriculum development, online assessment, courseware design, design and use of multimedia technology. Different models of reflection were used before, during and after the induction programme to encourage participants to think about their challenges, expectations and how lessons learnt about ODL will impact on their daily activities. The data collection method utilized was the questionnaire. A qualitative analysis of reflection of 80 participants was conducted. Lessons from the induction program were explored and recommendations were made for improving future induction programs for an ODL environment.



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**Title of Presentation:** Early Assessment: 'Part of a bigger plan' towards first-year success?

At Stellenbosch University all first-year students ( $\pm$  4300) complete a diagnostic or formative assessment task during the first six weeks of the academic year. Results are made available online almost immediately. This Early Assessment (EA) activity forms part of a university-wide initiative to foster student success - the First-year Academy. EA aims to provide students with an early indication of how they are coping, to give teaching staff baseline data on the incoming cohort and to identify students who might be academically 'at-risk'. Various responses to the results, including support interventions, are then implemented. In this paper we report on an ethically approved investigation conducted to determine how students experience the EA. Three research questions guided this mixed methods study namely: How do first-year students experience and respond to Early Assessment? To what extent do the students perceive the subsequent support activities to be of value? And, How successful is the Early Assessment system in identifying students needing additional support? Data from the 2008 and 2009 cohorts were analysed, exploring the relationship between EA results and end-of-year results and comparing these with school-leaving and access (entry) test results. The analyses demonstrated variations across faculties, but generally showed a strongly positive relationship between EA and end-of-year results. In addition, nine focus group interviews were conducted. Qualitative thematic analysis of the transcribed data revealed considerable diversity in the students' experience of EA. We will discuss the implications of the study, critique our findings and, in closing, reflect on lessons learnt.



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**Title of Presentation:** Effective Utilisation of Limited Resources and Capacity Building in a Foundation E-Learning Course at UWC

This paper will describe the manner in which the Digital Academic Literacy (DAL) course is delivered in an under-resourced e-learning environment at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The aim of the course is to empower novice users of e-learning media with the necessary skills for academic purposes. The course is taught to mainly first year full time and part-time students across all faculties. In consultation with lecturers the course content is designed to meet specific requirements. As more lecturers and students become empowered with the ongoing e-skills training across the university, huge demands are placed upon the limited resources within the institution. The DAL team devised ways and means to maximize the effective utilization of the e-resources at its disposal in the interest of the academic programme and the much needed capacity building with regard to the

tutors in the course. The insights and learning gained from the design of Mousepad, a custom-made administration programme and a range of carefully thought through considerations in this e-learning foundation course, which also incorporates HIV/AIDS content, will also be discussed in the paper.



**Presenter:**

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**Title of Presentation:** Enhancing Quality Teaching and Learning of Stoichiometry in Chemistry: A Diagnostic and Prescriptive Approach

In any teaching endeavour the main goal is to enhance learning. However, this is not always achieved to the satisfaction of both some teachers and students. There are many factors that influence, either negatively or positively the teaching and learning. In chemistry for example, research studies have highlighted the nature of the subject and the way it is traditionally taught as being two of the factors that affect teaching and learning the most. This renders many students especially those from poor science teaching backgrounds to often find it difficult to comprehend what a teacher attempts to make them learn. This study is an attempt to demonstrate how first-year university student teachers' prior knowledge can be used in developing new concepts which in turn may lead to the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning. In this paper an in-depth qualitative study is conducted to assess the prior knowledge students possess and subsequently building on it to construct new understanding. The assessment focuses mostly on students' conceptions in the three areas (an understanding of atomic masses, chemical formulas and the law of conservation of mass) that constitute the topic of stoichiometry. In addition, the analysis of students' knowledge is within the three constructs (declarative, procedural and conditional) of prior knowledge. As this study is still a work-in-progress no results or findings can be reported at this stage. However, the emphasis here is that assumptions about students' readiness to learn in terms of their prior knowledge should be avoided because having gone through a certain level of teaching and/or learning does not guarantee that one automatically possesses prerequisite knowledge to learning something new or what is prescribed in the next learning level or curriculum. This prerequisite knowledge needs to be assessed before any advanced material is taught.



**Presenter:** Jean Lee Farmer

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**Title of Presentation:** The Role of Language Shift in Student Success within the Context of the Multilingual HE Environment

A widely held belief is that students who experience language shift, for example between English and Afrikaans, struggle academically due to the fact that their academic language

and home language are not the same. For the purposes of this paper, language shift is understood as the shift in families or communities from their first language to a dominant second language. The current research investigates the reasons why some students who have experienced similar language shift in their educational biographies achieve academically, while others do not. This qualitative study explores how individuals account for their learning success and account for the role of language shift within their learning success. The research is focused on 7 families who all: live in the Western Cape; experience shift between English and Afrikaans and have had students attending Higher Education institutions. For this paper one on one interviews were conducted with 12 young adults from these families who entered Higher Education. Accounts of what has come out of similar previous research has emphasized that the role of the family/self/agency and the role of the immediate learning context in shaping learning success, all influence that which are borne out in these interviews. Thus, while language attitudes and language use in context continues to play an important role according to these students, language shift is clearly not the only variable determining their success. The presentation concludes with suggestions for further study, and some implications for teaching and learning in multilingual environments.



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**Title of Presentation:** Early identification of at-risk students in first year Financial Accounting

Financial Accounting 188 is a compulsory first-year module for all BComm degrees at Stellenbosch University, with an annual average of 1 300 students. The throughput rate of traditionally below 70% is a cause for concern at both a departmental and institutional level, which prompted an investigation into student success in the module. This paper presents the results of the process of establishing a profile of successful and at-risk students in this particular module. A two-step process was followed to achieve the goals of the study. Firstly, the significance of a number of factors influencing students' ability to succeed was statistically tested to determine the possible correlation between specific factors and students' success. The most important factors in determining success of students in the module include average Grade 12 mark, whether students had Accounting as a subject at secondary school, class attendance, home language (Afrikaans or English), and the programme within which students were enrolled. Secondly, the simultaneous effect of all

these factors was determined by means of a multivariate technique to derive a profile of successful and at-risk students. The results show general trends that could inform admission decisions and guide the implementation of interventions for at-risk students, while academically stimulating the highly successful students. The results are not generalisable beyond the module, but are significant in informing similar studies in other modules.



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**Title of Presentation:** Three Perspectives on a Tutor Programme in First Year Financial Accounting

Peer tutoring as a possible approach to facilitate first-year student success in Financial Accounting is explored in this paper. The perspectives of tutors and tutees were investigated by means of questionnaires, which were complemented by an analysis of tutees' performance in the subject as compared to their participation in the tutor programme. Two cohorts of students (2008/2009) were included in the study. The results suggest that **tutees** experienced the tutor programme positively and were in favour of similar initiatives in their second year of study. Tutees opined that they benefited from the help by tutors and that the tutors explained the work in terms that students could understand. Many respondents mentioned that they thought they understood the work better as a result of their participation, and that the smaller groups in the tutor sessions were beneficial to their learning. Other respondents indicated that the greatest benefit came from being forced to practise the work regularly. **Tutors** thought the programme had beneficial consequences for tutees. Most tutors also felt that they transferred their love for the subject to their tutees and that overall participation in the programme lived up to their expectations. Regular attendance of tutor sessions seemed to benefit at least some students, even though these results are not easily causally quantifiable. English-speaking students benefited from attending tutor sessions. One caveat to the implementation of such support measures is that students may get overloaded with well-meant additional help.



**Presenter:**

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**Title of Presentation:** A Blended Approach to Tutoring: The Role of the Tutor

This study is framed within the context of institutions of Higher Education (HE) and particularly the UJ, who are increasingly under pressure to utilize technology to reduce costs, to widen access and increase retention rates, all without compromising their high standards of quality (Hewitt & Powers, 2007). In addition, increased student numbers, less formal contact time (lectures) and reduced resources have resulted in larger class sizes, compelling Institutions of HE to reconceptualise their current approach to teaching and learning. Largely, this has resulted in a reduction in small group and tutorial contact (Papo, 1999). Consequently, this study will focus on the implementation of a blended learning environment with particular relevance to how this can be incorporated within traditional tutorials. Accordingly, blended learning within the tutorial space can combine face-to-face interaction with technology-mediated or online interaction with the aim of creating an interactive learning environment. **Blended learning can use** asynchronous and synchronous modes of instruction both online and in the classroom. This study supports the use of online tutoring to enhance traditional face-to-face tutorials and examines the role of the tutor and the key components which will enable tutors to assume their role as tutors in a blended tutorial environment (Harasim, in Macdonald, 2008). To this end, tutor training, development and support are crucial as the tutor with a blended tutorial environment must be adept at creating an online and classroom learning environment that provides an opportunity for interaction, for peer relationships to be formed and that encourages collaborative and interactive learning environments (Herbert, Chalmers & Hannam, 2003).



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**Title of Presentation:** Quantitative Literacy provision in the first year of medical studies

Quantitative Literacy (QL) is one of the 'literacies' integral to the practices of many disciplines and of professions such as Medicine. At the University of Cape Town (UCT), problem-based learning is central to the MBChB curriculum, which is structured around cases promoting the integration of clinical, basic health and social sciences material. Testing of students entering first year MBChB has revealed that many are poorly prepared to meet the QL requirements of this curriculum. In response, the Numeracy Centre at UCT has worked with Health Sciences faculty to develop QL interventions for these students. In line with the conceptualisation of QL as social practice, rather than a set of definable 'skills', the intervention is presented through workshop-lectures in which students engage with quantitative material relevant to contexts from the problem-based medical curriculum. The

initial design of the second semester QL intervention focused largely on the requirements of the Epidemiology component of the integrated curriculum. Ongoing development of the curriculum as a whole (and of the QL provision in particular) required improved understanding of the explicit and implicit QL demands of the entire medical curriculum. Thus an analysis was made of the QL competencies required to engage with the textual course materials in the integrated human biology/epidemiology/biochemistry curriculum, using a framework developed for this purpose. The current QL provision will be discussed in the light of the results of this analysis.



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**Title of Presentation:** The Myth of Co-learning with Colleagues: Are communities of practice really possible?

“Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor” (Wenger: 2006). In higher education, one of these shared endeavours is continuous professional learning (or staff development). It is always difficult to bring about real change in staff development circumstances for a number of reasons involving everything from group dynamics to fear of the unknown. In fact, there may be nothing more threatening to a senior academic than teaching them how to do something they should already know. To counteract this fear, communities of practice have grown in popularity. The purpose of this ongoing research is to investigate how to re-think our approaches to developing academic staff at UNISA: in other words, how staff development has changed into continuous professional learning (CPL) and is evolving into communities of practice. In our presentation, we will present an overview of the long term research study and focus on 3 case studies. The first one deals with traditional staff development contexts around specific areas, such as assessment or induction for new staff. The second focuses on a recent learning experience for our own colleagues in online technology. The third one involves an ongoing development of collaboration between three similar departments at three higher education institutions in Pretoria. We also explore some of the most common myths around CPL and communities of practice, and share what we have learned in order to bring about real change within ourselves and with our colleagues.



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**Title of Presentation:** Between then and when – liminal spaces in developing doctoral identity

I had been teaching in higher education for 15 years and I noticed that the stories of doctoral learning told by doctoral graduates differed sharply from the accounts of those candidates in the midst of the process. The former group tended to describe their doctoral study in terms of satisfaction, enjoyment and nostalgia. The latter spoke of stress, tension and challenges to negotiate. I wondered whether the “narrative smoothing” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994) in the accounts of the PhDs ‘in practice’ that I was seeing pointed to the importance of affective elements of doctoral learning. The story that derived from my autoethnographic investigation was read with and against my narrative analyses of nine other women academics in our informal research support group, PaperHeads. This paper reports on some of the results of my findings about the development of doctoral identity. It describes the existence of liminal space between notions of knowledge derived from life history and the taking on of a developed doctoral identity as a creator of knowledge. The PaperHeads experience argues for the recognition of spaces for such scholarly identity construction that affirm the emotional work of doctoral self-construction as at least as important as the cognitive developmental processes described in literature on doctoral pedagogy. This argument for agency and autogogy has implications for the study of marginalised knowledge communities and for ways in which the ‘semantic web’ may be used in the development of similar affinity groups by graduate students for graduate students.



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**Title of Presentation:** “Class of 2009”: First year experiences of using information technology at university

With the first “graduates” of the new curriculum entering university this year, a research project was established at UCT to explore the transition from school to university of this new generation of university students. One component of this was survey of a small subset (61) of students and their experiences accessing and using information technology in their first year at university. The survey replicated previous research conducted in a wider group of South African university students and adopts a “thick” conception of access to IT as more than just the physical object but including access to personal, social and institutional resources. This paper reports on the degree to which students had been exposed to IT before university, and their reliance on university infrastructure for access to IT. We

particularly explore some of the constraints on access to IT and how this impacts these students in terms of meeting their course requirements.

We then used Laurillard’s conversational framework to examine the use of IT for particular teaching and learning events of communication, presentation, interaction, production and adaptation of teaching and learning resources. The survey data are supplemented by qualitative data from open-ended responses that provide slightly deeper insights into the experiences of these groups. Whilst the data are not generalizable, they do provide an interesting insight into challenges and realities that face universities in trying to prepare students for both national and global marketplace.



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**Title of Presentation:** Combined Use of Cognitive Education with other Teaching and Learning Strategies and Approaches to Improve Learner’s Problem Solving Skills in the Field of Engineering Studies

Problem solving skills and abilities are critical in the engineering field both during the time of study as well as during the time of practice. Unfortunately, numbers of school leavers accessing higher education in the engineering field of studies lack problem solving skills and this results in poor performance jeopardizing their academic progress, especially from first year to second year. On the other hands, teaching “problem solving to underprepared first year learners” is a permanent challenge to academics who are faced with rethinking in innovative ways, teaching and learning strategies and approaches in order to meet the learners half way, uplift their skills to improve throughput rates and respond in an efficient manner to the country’s high demand of quality engineering graduates. In this paper, I discuss and suggest how I have used cognitive education combined with other strategies, approaches and practices to improve problem solving skills and consequently reduce the failure rate. A comparative analysis of students' performance between Extended Curriculum Program (ECP) students and main stream students for the same subject will be provided to support the discussion. I will also provide a successful sample case in which I will give an account of the research strategy that I have used and show the impact of the action respectively on me as an academic researcher and on the learners. I will further reflect critically on my interventions by highlighting some challenges and opportunities, and add students' comments that led to my identifying new areas of focus for improvement.

**Key words:** Under-preparedness, Problem solving skills, teaching and learning strategies and approaches, cognitive thinking, critical and logical thinking.



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**Title of Presentation:** Foundation Programmes vs Extended Programmes: A Comparison at NMMU

When South African universities introduced alternative access programmes during the 1990s some institutions opted for one-year foundation programmes while others preferred extended curriculum programmes as a means to enhance access, throughput and retention. The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and its merging partners (UPE, PET and Vista) offered mainly foundation programmes until the end of 2006. Due to the specifications in the earmarked funding policy of the Department of Education that only foundational provision in extended programmes will be funded as from 2007 NMMU replaced all its foundation programmes with extended degree, diploma and certificate programmes. The decision was taken on financial grounds without an in-depth debate about the academic merits of the two types of programmes.

After 3 years of offering extended programmes a comparison can be made between the successes of the two types of programmes. The real success of any such programme lies in the number of students obtaining degrees, diplomas or certificates after entering the university through the programme. It is too early to determine graduation rates for the NMMU extended programmes as the first potential graduates from the 2007 cohort will only complete their qualifications at the end of 2010. Retention rates does however provide a good prediction for graduation rates, and a study was done to compare access and retention rates of students who entered foundation programmes from 2004 to 2006 with that of students who entered extended programmes from 2007 to 2009. Retention and graduation rates of foundation programme students were further compared with that of students who were admitted directly to mainstream programmes. The paper will discuss the findings of this research.



**Presenter:**

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**Title of Presentation:** Strategies to Combat Turnover of Black Academics in Higher Education

The article is based on a PhD study dealing with the retention of black academic staff members at selected South African universities. The purpose of the study is to illuminate possible strategies to retain black academics as an endeavour in support of employment equity. The paper intends to provide perspective on a problem inherent in higher education research, yet has seemingly been receiving lesser attention. The necessity of the study is supported by the fact that large numbers of black staff members are leaving institutions of higher education in the country. This paper reflects on factors leading to turnover and how this can be combated. Literature on this phenomenon reveals several contributing factors such as: attractive remuneration packages put forward by the private sector; lack of a caring and supportive environment; conflict with immediate supervisors; a pursuit of career growth and a need for work-life balance. Strategies to combat forces opposing retention

include, amongst others: creating an appropriate culture that values employees; using mentoring and coaching for development; and employing an approach that brings accountability to the retention issues. These strategies will be discussed in more detail. The main argument is that special efforts are needed to retain black academic staff members. This poses a huge challenge that deserves to be addressed as a strategic priority by South African universities.



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**Title of Presentation:** The Challenges Rural Adult Basic Education Students at UNISA Face with Learner Support through Technology

There is substantial evidence that technology can be an effective tool in supporting teaching and learning at a distance. However, there are some challenges facing students, particularly students in the distance education environment who live in rural communities who may not have access to new technologies that enhance learning. This paper uses qualitative research approach to explore some of the challenges faced by Adult Basic Education students in the rural areas in accessing technology for learning. A selected number of ABET students in the rural areas of Limpopo were randomly selected to participate in this study. The paper proposes ways and means of assisting and supporting students in rural areas.

**Key words:** technology, distance education, adult, student, learner support.



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**Presenter:** Ms Fortunate Mahuni  
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**Title of Presentation:** Department-specific Writing Centres Linked to Tutorial Programmes: The quest for quality

This year a number of departments in the Faculties of Commerce, Administration & Law, Arts, and Science at the University of Zululand (Unizulu) have opted to use the Department of Higher Education & Training's Teaching Development Grant to implement support programmes for first year students comprising a tutorial component (one hour per week) and assistance with academic writing (on demand and by appointment). The support is given by senior students in the department, who act both as 'tutors' and as 'writing respondents'. The programme is overseen by the lecturer(s) responsible for the first year programme. Capacity-building for tutors is provided by Academic Development (AD). The establishment of department-specific Writing Centres rather than the traditional campus-wide facility, linked to tutorial support is still a relatively new concept at Unizulu, with only two departments (Recreation & Tourism, and Psychology) having experience of operating such a model. Using students to assist fellow students is also not without its challenges. The model requires acceptance of responsibility by academic staff members for the induction of young apprentices into their particular disciplines. In the absence of extended degree programmes it is to be hoped that the model will provide a meaningful contribution to dealing with student under-preparedness. This conference paper will describe the process of getting departmental 'buy-in' to the model, and the ongoing orientation and capacity-building of staff and student tutors. It will also offer a preliminary assessment of the impact of the model on student learning.



**Presenter: Marlena Kruger (Dr)**

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**Title of Presentation:** Challenging Transformative Teaching and Learning Practices: Reflections from Singapore and Malaysia

"There is currently a technological revolution taking place in higher education. The growth of e-learning is being described as explosive, unprecedented, and above all, disruptive." These provocative words are included in the foreword of "E-learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" authored by Garrison and Anderson (2003). Is this really the case in higher education institutions (HEIs) globally or are they only at the beginning of the technological revolution and widespread adoption of educational technologies for innovative teaching and learning practices. HEIs are most probably only experiencing the first exploratory phases of e-learning and they still need to learn much more about its inherent possibilities and the creation of new "learning ecologies". Only if they focus and understand more of the unique characteristics of e-learning, including its potential strengths and weaknesses, will e-learning effectively start to transform educational practices beyond the traditional approaches. One of the core challenges on how to transform teaching and learning practices should focus on the communication aspects of the learning transaction. These aspects include focused engagement of students in meaningful and valuable learning tasks, educational interaction and collaboration to construct and distribute new knowledge for the information age. HEIs need to explore and embrace the teaching and learning opportunities that new educational technologies are offering them to transform traditional and present ineffective teaching and learning practices. Recent visits in July 2010 to three higher education institutions in Singapore and participation in the International Conference on e-learning (ICEL 2010) in

Malaysia provided ample learning and reflection opportunities on how to contribute towards optimising universities' investments and employees' engagements with new educational technologies. Challenges and responsibilities of different role-players in HEIs will be highlighted.



**Presenter:** Prof Kobus Lombard

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**Title of Presentation:** Performance Assessment Tasks in the Undergraduate University Classroom – an exploratory study

Though Performance Assessment Tasks (PATs) can take many different forms, its emphasis is on students' ability to perform specified tasks by demonstrating competency or proficiency related to a particular goal. This implies that students are not only required to apply relevant knowledge and skills, but also to demonstrate so-called higher order cognitive abilities such as to analyse, evaluate and create. Founded on Constructivist principles of teaching and learning, many variations in the field of PATs prevail. These include, amongst others, variations in factors such as approaches to PATs, the purposes of PATs, the selection of PATs, the assessment of and feedback on PATs and students' abilities to perform these tasks successfully. This paper reports on the findings of an exploratory study attempted by means of a semi-structured questionnaire, which aimed to investigate the practices of lecturers with regard to PATs on the undergraduate levels. The intention of this small scale study was to gather information which would enable the researcher to identify possible shortcomings and/or best practices in the field of Performance Assessment Tasks, to serve as thrust for capacitating lecturers to construct, implement and use PATs to stimulate learning on undergraduate level.



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**Title of Presentation:** Organizational Forums as the Learning Platforms for Mainstreaming Academic Development in a Comprehensive and Developmental University, an organizational development perspective

The Higher Education Institutions (HEI) of the Walter Sisulu University (WSU) profile may have to create extra space, and provide more time and resources for promoting academic development, beyond the current configurations of managing learning and teaching. The latter would be more of strategic advantage as such institutions are grappling with organizationally and integrated shared issues of improved teaching outputs and graduation

rates which need innovative ways for organizational efficiencies. This paper shares the results of the institutional strategy about the establishment of the learning and teaching development forums at the newly merged WSU. The strategy was partly about creating new integrated structures and competent agents for academic development, on one hand, and also as part of the systemic approach for positioning WSU as a developmental, comprehensive and “engaging” University, on the other. How the teaching development and extended programme grants, over a 3 (three) year cycle, provided opportunities for promoting engaging platforms for academic development, and how such platforms also served, in turn, as the spaces for organizational learning, involving academics from diverse backgrounds, encompassed the main thrust of the Centre’s strategy for institutionalizing excellence in learning and teaching. The structural and agential roles that these forums provide, in addition to traditional statutory committees and other faculty configurations, is highlighted as the mechanisms for organizational learning, which is emergent. At the macro level, the paper also outlines how such platforms can advance professional development of academic management while also facilitating the merger process for a comprehensive university. While the analysis adopted the qualitative approach by means of participant observation and document analysis, the actual work was framed from an organizational management perspective. The paper concludes by advocating for lateral thinking and working across the boundaries, against the backdrop of managing organizations as complex entities, and the recommendations include the following,

- Promotion of organizational learning as the adaptive way to managing academic development,
- Establishment of multi-disciplinary and collaborative teams in mainstreaming academic development, and
- Enhancement of management capacity for academic development.



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**Title of Presentation:** Achieving Academic Excellence in Two Languages: the University of Limpopo’s dual-medium degree in multilingualism

While several South African universities have developed language policies that promote multilingualism and many are engaged in terminology development in African languages, no single university so far has developed a full-fledged programme in which an indigenous language is used for instruction and assessment. Our paper shows how

Sesotho sa Leboa can be used for academic excellence in a dual-medium BA degree in Contemporary English and Multilingual Studies launched in 2003 at the University of the Limpopo. We demonstrate how academic biliteracy can be developed and claim a bi-directional transfer of skills across English and Sesotho sa Leboa. This upholds our view that, despite their differential historical and material status, these languages can be resources for each other to achieve academic excellence. We believe that bilingual education can facilitate the acquisition of language competence, especially for students who have had inadequate access to English at school and who struggle with the cognitive and linguistic demands of higher education. We show how terminology development can be part of pedagogic processes and claim that acquisition planning does not have to depend on corpus planning. Finally, we address some issues on the sustainability of the new degree.



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**Title of Presentation:** Preparing for the Real World of Work: using a group portfolio to teach radiography management workplace skills

Universities of Technology in South Africa require students to learn how to function in the real world as competent, responsible citizens. This means they should acquire knowledge as well as workplace skills and the critical cross field outcomes (CCFOs). There is currently pressure on lecturers to use innovative teaching and learning methods to achieve this. When defining innovative teaching most academics think of “on-line learning”, “blended learning” “problem based learning”. But what is the best method to teach students workplace skills? Radiography is a profession requiring a myriad of skills that include management and the CCCFOs. On graduating students are expected to be able to “do the job” competently. In this paper, I will discuss one of the innovative methods used to teach third year radiography management students how to purchase equipment using the correct South African procurement and tender processes, while at the same time learning the CCFOs that are needed in the radiography workplace. Students are required to work in diverse groups of four and follow the relevant processes and procedures used in hospitals to purchase a sophisticated piece of radiographic equipment. After completing the process the groups are required to critically evaluate their performance and reflect on the entire process from an academic as well as a personal perspective. This paper will describe the use of the group portfolio and address the value and role of this innovative teaching and learning strategy in preparing the student for the “real world of work”.



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**Title of Presentation:** Supply and Demand in a KwaZulu Natal Radiography Training Programme: A Catch 22 situation?

Radiography in South Africa is a profession in the medical field that is facing critical staff shortages. Staff in public hospitals have emigrated or moved to private practices where working conditions and salaries are better. In KwaZulu Natal (KZN) radiography training is carried out at a University of Technology (UoT) in Durban. Students are required to complete 2500 hours of work integrated learning (WIL) in accredited hospitals over a 3 year period. The accreditation is based on facilities available and radiographer/student ratios. The Department of Health (DoH) public hospitals are short staffed so radiographer/ student ratios are low, thus only small numbers of students are permitted to do WIL in these hospitals. This means that the majority of the students at the UoT are absorbed by accredited private departments, leaving small numbers available for the public hospitals. In order to train more students for public hospitals, more qualified staff are needed to supervise the WIL students, but to get more staff the UoT needs to train more – a catch 22 situation. In this paper, I will discuss the attempts being made by the UoT and DoH to address the critical demand/supply problem in radiography through the KZN training programmes. I will attempt to demonstrate how the UoT can make use of the results from the various research studies currently taking place in an effort to explore and resolve the demand/supply problem in KZN radiography departments. Important issues such as fast track training, role extension and human resources will be discussed.



**Presenter:** Rose-marie McCabe

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**Title of Presentation:** An Academic Literacy Course: Making Choices

This article explains the decisions and choices that course or materials designers need to make before developing academic literacy courses or language teaching materials for first-entering English second language students. Their decisions and choices should be determined by the context in which the specific course is being offered. Academic literacy courses have been initiated at various South African Institutions of Higher Education to empower students in their tertiary studies. However, course designers need to choose between offering English either for general purposes or for specific purposes; to decide whether to focus on academic literacy or on study skills; to decide whether to apply a pragmatic or a critical approach; and to consider the issues of the role of English as either a lingua franca or as a 'destroyer' of the vernaculars and how either perspective impacts on teaching or the choice of teaching materials. Finally, a decision needs to be made whether the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach only is always appropriate in rural contexts or whether other language teaching methodologies should be considered too. The conclusion of this paper pertains to rural students such as those enrolled for the first year English academic literacy modules of the University of Limpopo who enter the university without the English language skills nor the academic discourse required for tertiary studies. The choices made in terms of the abovementioned issues at institutions where the majority

of students attended rural schools would not necessarily be those made by course or materials designers of other institutions with different, often more sophisticated, target populations who have been regularly exposed to English, in addition to the necessary study skills.



**Presenter:** Sherran Clarence

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**Title of Presentation:** Making spaces to talk about the role of writing in teaching and learning innovation at the University of the Western Cape

This paper engages with the role of a Writing Centre in creating spaces for talking about and changing the way in which writing is embedded in the disciplines and taught by disciplinary academics. It asks what could be the most effective ways of embedding this teaching, and how collaborative partnerships between disciplinary academics and writing centre practitioners might be established and nurtured in sustainable ways. Drawing on findings and insights from collaborations with academics in three departments or courses – political science, law, and academic and information literacy – over the last eighteen months, the case is made that a writing centre practitioner has a valuable role to play in collaborating with disciplinary academics to create more creative and useful writing-focused teaching materials and methods. This is shown by working in a way consistent with the theory that critical reading, thinking and writing are literacy acts rather than generic skills that must be learned and practiced in the disciplines. By supporting disciplinary academics in re-examining course outcomes, materials and assessment tasks, and encouraging a shift away from a ‘technocratic’ attitude towards writing in the disciplines, it is shown that building a discipline-specific culture of writing to learn and discover content in innovative and relevant ways is possible through these collaborative partnerships. A key result is more empowered and capable academic teachers, and more critical, capable and engaged students.



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**Title of Presentation:** “My Story of My Educational Influence on a Faculty’s Teaching and Learning Committee”

In this paper I describe and explain a recent innovative move (2010) in my institution, the Durban University of Technology, to decentralise some Academic Development (AD) activities into Faculties. Faculty Teaching and Learning (T&L) Coordinators were decentralised from the centralised unit (CELT) and would report on the solid line of educational management to the Executive Dean of the Faculty and on a dotted line to the Director of AD / CELT unit. I was appointed a T&L Coordinator in one of the six faculties in the DUT, the Faculty of Accounting and Informatics. The paper describes and explains the

issues around the shift to decentralise AD and the implications for the development of learning, teaching and assessment. A key part of my AD strategy is to ensure that academic development is embedded in the mainstream and the paper is a story of that journey. An important strategic change I recommended to the Faculty's Exco was that the Faculty's Teaching and Learning Committee should be decentralised to a Departmental Teaching and Learning Committee, chaired by a Head of the Department (there are five Departments in the Faculty). This would ensure a bottom up approach rather than top down and allow for the inclusion of programme leaders and lecturers, who together with a Head of Department have a strong influence on what is going on in higher education classrooms and any AD. My AD role in the process is as a 'guide on the side, rather than as a sage on the stage'.



**Presenter:** Merridy Wilson-Strydom

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**Title of Presentation:** Using the National Benchmark Tests to inform institutional understandings of under-preparedness: Implications for admissions criteria

This paper presents the results of institutional research conducted at the University of the Free State during the course of 2010. The aim of the study was to explore the ways in which the National Benchmark Tests (NBTs) could be used to assist the university to better understand under-preparedness of first-year students, and to use this understanding to review and improve admissions procedures and criteria. An analysis of Grade 12 results, NBT performance and performance in selected first-year modules was conducted across the full cohort of 2010 first-year students. The paper presents a summary of the research results, reflects on how these results were used to inform a review of admissions criteria, and concludes with recommendations regarding how the NBTs can support institutional decision making in the area of access and admissions.



**Presenter:** Dr Ellenore Meyer

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**Title of Presentation:** The Use of Social Networks to Provide Opportunities for Peer Learning and Reflection: Creating a blog as part of the ethics course offered at the University of Limpopo, Medunsa.

**Background of the project:** More and more educators are exploring blogging as a student activity in itself. Blogging takes writing assignments into the real world, giving students the chance to receive feedback from each other, as well as other online mentors. Blogging becomes an interactive form of peer review. Student blogging does raise certain concerns, though. How much information do you reveal about a student? Are students staying on

topic, or are they getting too personal or inappropriate in some other way? There's no one answer to these questions, and classroom blogging is still a relatively new phenomenon. But that's why educational blogs are important - they can serve as a place where teachers can debate these topics among their peers and work out answers that are appropriate for their classrooms and communities.

**Methodology/approach:** A literature review was done on existing research on the use of social networks to provide learning opportunities in higher education. After the examining existing studies an ethics blog was constructed, using a free online blogging platform. Learners from the 2<sup>nd</sup> year medical group were asked to visit the blog after specific in-class discussions were facilitated. Learners were encouraged to interact with their peers by discussing and debating topics online. The comments and discussions that were facilitated online were then accessed during a follow-up contact session and used as a starting point to stimulate in-depth discussions and reflection for learners. This will be formally researched in future. A proposal has been submitted to FAIMER to conduct a combined quantitative and qualitative study in 2011.

**Glossary:**

Blog	informal Full name: <b>weblog</b> a journal written on-line and accessible to users of the internet
FAIMER	Foundation for advancement of international medical education and research. Available online at: <a href="http://www.faimer.org">www.faimer.org</a>



**Presenter: Alfred H. Makura**

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**Title of Presentation:** The University of Fort Hare Writing Centre: A valuable service to students at tertiary institutions

The English second language proficiency among especially black South African high school students who enrol at Institutions of higher learning such as the University of Fort Hare is a cause for concern. This scenario could be traced to historical reasons or the Apartheid legacy. This paper reports on how the University of Fort Hare writing centre has formulated migrating interventions aimed at improving students' language proficiency. Using a desktop and content analysis approach the paper reports on programmes such as Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) among others and shows how these have positively impacted on student learning opportunities, particularly language proficiency. The centre supports learning among students from diverse backgrounds using an array of local and international (peer) scholars to facilitate learning. Evidence at hand shows that most students' writing is replete with both low and higher order concerns. The paper will show how the University Writing centre has addressed these for the benefit of students despite teething problems related to underutilisation of the centre by most students. The paper proposes that universities should invest more in the marketing of writing centres (among academics) if they are to have both a positive impact on the learning of students and continuity of the programmes.

**Keywords:** Writing Centre; University of Fort Hare; Higher education; Institutions; Learning Advancement Unit; Students; Programme; Academic; South Africa



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**Title of Presentation:** Assessing the Writing Efficacy of Postgraduate Students at Central University of Technology, Free State

The aim of this study was to assess the writing efficacy of students enrolled for post-graduate studies in the School of Teacher Education of the Central University of Technology, Free State. The study sought to answer the following research questions: (a) What is the level of writing efficacy of post-graduate students enrolled in the three programmes, namely, B.Ed (Hons), PGCE and ACE programmes?; (b) Are there differences in the writing efficacy of students enrolled in these three programmes?; (c) To what contextual variables can the differences in the writing efficacy (if any) of students in the two programmes be attributed?; and (d) What intervention strategies can be employed to help students in the two programmes? A comparative survey of the writing efficacy of the students in three post-graduate programmes offered by the School of Teacher Education was used. The questionnaires were administered in class to a purposive sample of 84 students (35 male, 49 female). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data. Qualitative data were presented in themes that emerged from the data. The study found that three groups of students (B.Ed (Hons); PGCE and ACE) among others need assistance with their writing abilities; with revising their own work; with not understanding how the concepts affects the way thoughts are organised; with not having time to attend to their work; with the fact that some are still grappling with understanding terminology in research methodology; and spelling, grammar and punctuation problems. The study also found that the majority of B.Ed. (Hons) and PGCE students need more assistance with writing efficacy than ACE students. Most students at these levels need assistance with writing efficacy at postgraduate level.



**Presenter:** Linda Vargas (Lynn Fernandez)

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**Title of Presentation:** Looking for 'shoes': which 'box' to choose? Reflections on my pursuit of excellence in post graduate education.

I, as a Post Graduate researcher in Dance Education, have encountered many opportunities as well as challenges throughout my research. I initially identified a number of 'boxes' that continue to challenge the successful implementation of dance into the formal curriculum. I believe that one of the legacies of apartheid was the 'boxification' which resulted in entrenched segregation in education. I have become concerned with the effect these 'boxes' were/are having on education and devised a programme of flamenco dance to try and address some of these issues and to open some of the 'boxes' as a focus of my post graduate research. As a masters student I then encountered several other 'boxes' that I have found constraining, confining and challenging my pursuit of excellence in higher education. I then began researching opportunities to address these challenges through a continual process of critical reflection.

In this paper I will reflect upon the educational influence of the living theory methodology of Jack Whitehead who uses a process of critical reflective action research cycles to improve practice.



**Presenter:** Jennifer Clarence-Fincham

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**Title of Presentation:** 'Learning to be': an exploration of the implementation of curriculum reform at the University of Johannesburg

At the end of 2008, as a concrete expression of institutional commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University of Johannesburg, the university Senate approved a teaching and learning strategy framework which is premised on the 'learning to be' philosophy. The implementation of this framework challenges the academic staff to rethink familiar practice as it has significant implications for curriculum reform. In order to explore these implications and to introduce the philosophy to Faculties, two series of workshops was offered, the first at a general level to Heads of Departments and the second to groups of staff from specific disciplines. In developing the second series, careful consideration was given to facilitating dialogue, first to develop a conceptual understanding of the philosophy and second to increase understanding of the curriculum and pedagogical implications for the discipline. This paper reviews and evaluates the actual workshop process and then, drawing on the work of Kirschner (2006); Muller (2008) and Barnett (2000; 2006; 2009) on teaching and learning in an age of uncertainty, considers the pedagogical challenges posed by the learning to be philosophy in the context of two disciplines. It explores the practical implications of interpreting, adapting and implementing the philosophy in terms of specific disciplinary practices.



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**Title of Presentation:** Challenges of teaching Old Dogs New Tricks: Overcoming academics' resistance to implementing eLearning technologies

The University of South Africa (Unisa) is a distance learning institution. Since 2000, Unisa has incorporated eLearning to support the print-based delivery model of that time and has been exploring different approaches to online support and blended learning. Currently, Unisa has now embraced eLearning for core teaching and learning functions, as well as for student support. There is now a mandate from Management to implement online courses for postgraduate modules within the next few years. PANIC in the halls of academe! As expected, uptake of these new eLearning technologies has been erratic: from the cutting-edge explorers to the dull-knife technophobes. "I've been teaching for 20 years; why should I use these different technologies now? My students don't have access to electricity, let alone computers!" So, how do we overcome these fears and coax academics out of their comfort zones? How do we show them that new technologies can simplify their lives and enhance their teaching? Our department began working with the ICT department to help educate and train academic staff to fully use eLearning applications to enhance their distance teaching and learning at Unisa. This ongoing research project involves use of questionnaires and selected interviews to get academic feedback. In addition, we have developed several initiatives in a multi-layered approach to continuous professional learning. This presentation will present a brief overview of the long-term strategies for staff development and support around eLearning. We will present several case studies on various change management initiatives with a view towards involving more academics.



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**Title of Presentation:** Using Online Social Networking for Enhancing Student Engagement in Learning: The Use of Facebook and Web Blogs at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

This work investigates the promise of Facebook and Web blogs for enhancing student levels of engagement in learning. This issue warrants investigation because there is little published empirical work on the subject, and low levels of student engagement and hence poor throughput rates continue to be a challenge at most of the Universities in South Africa. The researchers applied a learning ecology perspective and the five benchmarks of effective educational practice identified by the South African Survey on Student Engagement (SASSE) in studying the potential of Facebook and Web blogs in enhancing student levels of engagement in learning. In-depth interviews with lecturers using Facebook and Web blogs in their teaching were carried out and focus group interviews were conducted with students who learnt by using Facebook and Web blogs to establish: everyday usage; usage in teaching and learning; the context of use (both in and outside of the classroom); challenges encountered in usage; students recommendation for use of Facebook; and whether these technologies enhanced student engagement with their learning. A significant finding of the study was that appropriate use of Facebook and Web blogs in teaching and learning enhances student participation in learning activities of an academic nature on-campus and to a lesser extent off-campus. The paper will also suggest strategies for implementation of Facebook and web blogs in teaching and learning that will have a positive impact on student levels of engagement.



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**Title of Presentation:** Teaching Digital Natives: Using Cellphones to Facilitate Learning in Distance Education

The biggest challenge of Open Distance Learning (ODL) institutions is to come up with effective student support services that are responsive to learners' needs, that is, a service that personalises the learning process; that also encourages and facilitates interaction between students and the stakeholders. Studies have shown that mobile technology devices such as cellphones can be used to facilitate social interaction through synchronous and asynchronous communication. Teaching by using new technologies requires different set of skills and different types of pedagogies from what most ODL academics are familiar with. The use of cellphones for teaching and learning cannot be adopted and sustained if distance education academics are not trained on how to use the tool and how to integrate the technology into their own practice. The aim is to ensure that technology is not perceived as an add-on but as an integral part of the curriculum. This paper will therefore attempt to answer the question on what the implications of mobile technologies are for distance education practitioners in terms of professional development. The activity theory framework will be used because it analyses learning as a cultural-historical activity system, mediated by tools that both constrain and support the learners in the goals of transforming their knowledge and skills (Sharples et al. 2005). Sustainable change in teaching practice can only occur if professional development programmes go beyond skills training.



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**Title of Presentation:** Collaborative Learning in Heterogenous Groups: “A Dark Cloud with a Silver Lining”

An enhanced interaction across the racial, ethnic and cultural divide is particularly relevant for medical students as it prepares them for practising medicine in a multicultural community. Collaborative learning approaches in PBL may provide the opportunity to bring together diverse students of mixed ethnicity or backgrounds but how effective are they in practice and what are the complications that arise due to the mixed ethnicity? Using the qualitative paradigm we explore the views and experiences of a stratified random sample of second year medical students and a random group of facilitators. Focus group discussions were transcribed and analysed using Atlas-ti. Themes such as opportunities to unite diverse students, prepare them to work in multicultural societies and develop their communication and academic skills emerged. In addition challenges included segregation and clustering of students by race groups, non-participation due to inequalities, social status, language barriers and differing levels of academic preparedness were also found. Mixed tutorial groups are perceived as positive but they also create tensions and enforce unequal chances to respond and participate between groups. Diversity training and cultural competence is recommended for students and staff. A multi-cultural student population at a learning institution does not necessarily mean that there will be positive interactions in intercultural collaborative learning activities.



**Presenter:** Joan Lucy Conolly

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**Title of Presentation:** In Pursuit of Excellence in Higher Education: Reconsidering the Scholarship of Educational Influence and Research

South Africa faces considerable challenges in higher education. This is partly a result of our fledgling democracy rightfully making higher education accessible to an unprecedented diversity of people in its drive to achieve equity and equality. We find ourselves in an unparalleled and unenviable situation, not only because of the diversity of our learners' educational, socio-economic, and linguistic backgrounds, but also because of the scale of the problems we face. At the Durban University of Technology we have been exploring ways in which to equip ourselves as higher education teachers to meet these challenges.

Our guiding principles have included insights lying both in- and out-side of the formal discipline of education. For instances, we are intrigued by Boyer's call for the 'reconsideration of scholarship'. We also bear in mind Einstein's insight that it is not possible to solve a problem using the same thinking that created the problem in the first place. And we have embraced Whitehead's question "What can I do to improve my practice?" in ongoing critically reflective self study. In this paper, I will recount the ways in which I, as the leader of a self study group, am using the processes of critical reflective self study to reconsider my scholarship as a higher education practitioner. In this process, I am discovering the challenges and opportunities for educational influence provided by critical reflective self study, and the effect of this awareness on my practice and research in pursuit of excellence in higher education.



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**Title of Presentation:** "But none of them are Greek": Exploring student identities and their implications for curriculum practices

The importance of identities to learning has been well argued (Lave and Wenger 1991; Neumeister and Rinker 2006; Mann et al., 2009). However, the assumption that an "appropriate identity" necessarily leads to success has been discounted by Reitzes and Burke (1980). They argued that students are more likely to evaluate the relevance of academic activities for their identities and then act in ways that are "consistent with the meanings of their identities" (1980:64). Following from this two key questions arise namely 1) "Which identities are salient in student decision making processes and behaviour?" and 2) "How can knowledge about identity be utilized in curriculum practices (design and delivery)?" In terms of the first question it is not always clear whether University students are directed by the beginnings of professional identities or whether they hold interim identities that see them through higher education. This presentation explores the content of student identities by following a group of students randomly selected from a service module (Greek) in a professional programme (B.Th) at Stellenbosch University. The students kept journals for the duration of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study which were analyzed by the researchers. From the same analysis the second question is also addressed by investigating student perceptions of the relation of the service module to their salient identities. In order to explain this relation we rely on notions of commitment (Burke and Reitzes 1991) as well as role based identity theories (McCall and Simmons 1966; Stryker 1980) and conclude with some suggestions to address perceived discontinuities between the salient identities and the practices related to the service module.



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**Co-Presenter:** Meyer JC

**Title of Presentation:** Factors Influencing Academic Failure of the Bpharm Students:  
University of Limpopo, Medunsa Campus

**BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE:** Tertiary institutions are faced with various challenges such as: Academic institutions have to be concerned about the standard of their academic programmes, the access and throughput of students. There is an assumption that students admitted at the university have academic excellence. Pharmacy is one of the scarce skills in South Africa, thus the Department of Pharmacy is concerned about the number of students who fail the first exam and have to re-write and/or have to repeat a year, despite the innovativeness of the programme. The purpose of this study in progress is to identify the factors that influence academic failure of the BPharm students, with the aim towards prevention during the programme.

**SAMPLE, METHOD AND APPROACH:** Academic records of all 2010 registered BPharm students were reviewed. The sample was composed of a total of 70 BPharm 1 - 4 students who had a re-examination during the first semester were requested to independently complete an adapted questionnaire. The results gave a better understanding for decision-making (with the aim towards prevention of academic failure) of the complex factors that influence students' performance. Academics and students have a joint responsibility for students' success. The services from the Centre for Academic Excellence are crucial.

**KEYWORDS:** Factors influencing failure, academic failure, interventions, re-examination



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**Co-Presenter:** Vivienne Bozalek (University of the Western Cape)  
**Co-Presenter:** Ronelle Carolissen (Stellenbosch University)  
**Co-Presenter:** Leslie Swartz (University of Stellenbosch)  
**Co-Presenter:** Lindsey Nicholls (Brunel University)  
**Co-Presenter:** Poul Rohleder (Anglia Ruskin University)

**Title of Presentation:** Deep Learning Amongst Academics: A Community of Enquiry  
Approach

Deep, versus surface learning is a highly valued phenomenon with regard to students, but the benefit of deep learning is rarely discussed in relation to academics, who perform a vital role in enhancing quality learning in South African higher education. This presentation reports on the experience of the team which implemented a joint regional interdisciplinary module on “Community, Self and Identity” for fourth year students in Psychology at Stellenbosch University and Social Work and Occupational Therapy at the University of the Western Cape. The team which conducted this research-based collaborative curriculum design comprised six academics from different faculties and the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the Universities of Stellenbosch and Western Cape. In addition to the core team, three critical friends from the Netherlands and South Africa, played important roles in enhancing the teaching and learning experience. The team conducted its curriculum design work and its research as a community of practice: it came together spontaneously and shared expertise and facilitated participants moving from the periphery to the centre (cf Wenger 1998). As a community of enquiry it had a shared purpose and had the potential to “create new knowledge or understanding in a given domain” (cf Christie et al, 2007). With reference to the analysis of two audiotaped interviews of the team and three sets of interviews with each individual on the team over the three years of the project implementation, this paper makes a case for the value of interdisciplinary, collaborative research based on curriculum design, and the benefits it can bring to the academics involved, as well as to the students.

**Keywords:** community of practice, collaboration, research, interdisciplinarity (if needed)



**Presenter:** Bonnie Kaplan

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**Title of Presentation:** My Living Experience of Influencing and Creating a Mindset for Economic Independence for Post Graduates

Many South African post graduates are seeking social and economic independence and security by trying to create their own businesses, often due to financial insecurity and unemployment. Since 2005 I have been engaged in training post graduates who cannot find employment, and who are trying to become self-employed, working through the New Venture Creation (NVC) programme at the Clothing, Textiles, Footwear & Leather (CTFL) Sector Education Training Authority (Seta), Industry Training Unit, Durban University of Technology. In the process, I have come to realize some shortcomings of my initial training programme due to unsuitable assumptions about the people involved, and the training interventions that have been used in the past. As a result of my desire to improve what I am doing, I have been devising interventions intended to address the perceived gaps in my original training plan. In the process, I have gained further insights into a field of training that I thought I knew thoroughly, and have learned much about the needs of the post graduates, their capacities and their life circumstances. In this paper I will describe the interventions that I have devised, and report on their implementation, as well as explain the evolution of new perceptions and understandings that developed as a result. I will provide

evidence of the educational influence of these interventions, reflect critically on what has been done and achieved, and critically assess the way forward.



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**Title of Presentation:** “Combined Use of Cognitive Education with Other Teaching and Learning Strategies and Approaches to Improve Learner’s Problem Solving Skills in the Field of Engineering Studies”

Problem solving skills and abilities are critical in the engineering field both during the time of study as well as during the time of practice. Unfortunately, numbers of school leavers accessing higher education in the engineering field of studies lack problem solving skills and this results in poor performance jeopardizing their academic progress especially from first year to second year. On the other hands, teaching “problem solving to underprepared first year learners” is a permanent challenge to academics who are faced with rethinking in innovative ways teaching and learning strategies and approaches in order to meet the learners half way, uplift their skills to improve throughput rates and respond in an efficient manner to the country’s high demand of quality engineering graduates. In this paper I discuss and suggest how I have used cognitive education combined with other strategies, approaches and practices to improve problem solving skills and consequently reduce the failure rate. A comparative analysis of students' performance between Extended Curriculum Program (ECP) students and main stream students for the same subject will be provided to support the discussion. I will also provide a successful sample case in which I will give an account of the research strategy that I have used and show the impact of the action respectively on me as an academic researcher and on the learners. I will further reflect critically on my interventions by highlighting some challenges and opportunities, and add students' comments that led to my identifying new areas of focus for improvement.

**Key words:** Under-preparedness, Problem solving skills, teaching and learning strategies and approaches, cognitive thinking, critical and logical thinking.



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**Title of Presentation:** Career Awareness among Prospective Students in a Rural Context: Challenge for Higher Education.

Among the challenges that students face as they move from high school to higher education is that of making a relevant and appropriate choice of career. Literature shows that there is a definite increase in concern regarding the choice of career among students when they are about to complete high school and move into higher education. This concern is not only

about the career but also about the choice of institutions that would best serve their interests in terms of chosen fields. The exploration and choice of post-secondary career options is therefore seen as one of the major tasks of the high school students. The career decisions that students make for higher education have an influence on their motivation to study. Proper career choice results in highly motivated individuals as they engage in courses that are in line with their personality, interest, aptitude and other attributes. However, the rural context which is characterised by environmental deprivation does not provide adequate career exploration for students in high school. As a result, students go through high school and enter post-school education without being fully prepared. Dealing with under-prepared students from high school is the challenge that the higher education sector is faced with as this impacts on throughput and success rates. This paper explores career awareness among students in high school in a rural setting and makes recommendations on how the higher education can play a role in dealing this challenge.



**Presenter:**

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**Title of Presentation:** The Under-preparedness of Higher Education Institutions to Receive Under-prepared Students

This study explicates the perceptions of students coming from disadvantaged schools (disadvantaged students) both those who are making good progress and those who are struggling. Their perceptions about: (a) their learning environment; (b) their material circumstances while at University; (c) their social circumstances while at University; (d) their connections to their home community; (e) their career aspirations are examined. It further investigates the relationship between socio-economic factors and the learning experiences of students coming from disadvantaged schools at UKZN.

Data for this study were obtained from interviews employing a phenomenological explication for the perceptions of students from disadvantaged schools; and using a questionnaire survey for a quantitative analysis to discover any relationship between socio-economic factors and the learning experiences of these students. From the interviews, students who come from disadvantaged schools are disadvantaged in many ways, namely: socially: their backgrounds (poor schooling, poor households or families, poor communities); social infrastructure; material and economic conditions; high illiteracy; low educational attainment of parents; father absence – no role model; under-preparedness for tertiary studies etc. They thus face many real difficulties both in the material circumstances of life at University as well as in their studies. The researcher concludes by summarizing some of these students' difficulties that are not only a matter of under-prepared students but of the under-preparedness of the HEI to properly engage with these students' predicaments.

**Key Words:** Under-preparedness of Higher Education Institutions, under-prepared students



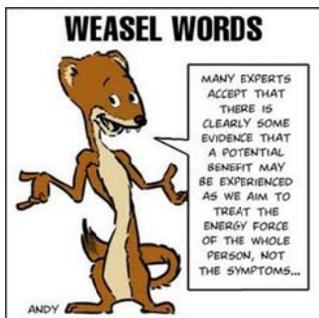
**Presenter:** McKenna

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**Title of Presentation:** Excellence and Other Weasel Words

The weasel is a creature which steals up to a nest of eggs, makes a small hole in each of them and sucks out the content, leaving only hollow shells behind. This nasty behaviour might explain why the weasel's name has been attached to words or phrases which, upon careful examination, are found to be empty shells devoid of shared meaning and potentially laden with ideological weight. This presentation considers the ways in which neoliberalism has discursively colonised various higher education concepts, turning them into weasel words. Five frequently used words are presented and revealed to be not quite as innocuous as they first appear. Autonomy, quality, efficiency, skills and excellence are all concepts the average academic believes in. These are words with which we can identify. Autonomy, quality, efficiency, skills and excellence all sound like important aspects of the academic project. But the ubiquity of neoliberal discourse means that these words are weasely and are often used in subtly laden ways. Various instances of use of these words in policy, news reports and everyday university life are presented and analysed using critical discourse analysis. In discussing the ideologies which have colonised these words, the presenter warns of a need for all academics to be aware of how discourses construct our work so that we can be alert to the ideological nature of weasel words.





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**Title of Presentation:** The State of the Foundation Phase Class in the 'Transkei' Region: A case study of the environmental factors of selected schools

The Foundation Phase is an essential level of education that education practitioners and authorities ought to take seriously. Perceptions that the Foundation Phase is least important lead to minimal-nil resources allocated to this phase as well as fewer teacher-trainees. In a recent publication, Mansuroglu and Sabanci (2010) decry this fact and further note that the environment of a primary school contributes significantly to the learning of children. They argue that the physical, intellectual, emotional and psychological well-being of children and teachers are fully realised in an environment that is well looked after and developed. Following a study of the external features of five randomly selected schools of the Transkei region, this paper reports on these features and what some teachers perceive of them. Five classrooms of 6-8 year-old children were visited with the intention of assessing and recording their condition. The overall quality and settings of the Foundation Phase classes were found to be significantly compromised. Asserting that the physical and external environment of a class is crucial to learning and teaching, we argue that resources related to these elements are as equally important as the development of the curriculum and training of teachers. Furthermore, we submit that prior to allocating any environment related resources, it is essential to solicit from a cohort of diverse Foundation Phase teachers the exact nature of the required resources.

**Keywords:** Foundation Phase; learning; environment; resources.



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**Presenter:** Marina van Heyningen,

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**Title of Presentation:** Using a Blended Learning Model to Create a Community of Learning

The Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) is a two year in-service qualification for teachers wishing to improve their subject knowledge and didactical skills. In 2009, a blended learning model was developed to restructure the ACE in Mathematics at Stellenbosch University. This blended learning model includes face-to-face contact, self study, interactive telematic sessions and online discussions and chats. At the end of 2009, student feedback showed that a greater number of respondents viewed the interactive telematic sessions as being essential for success in the programme than the number who viewed the online discussions as essential. This was of interest because the online discussions were envisaged as central to achieving two of the specific outcomes of the programme, namely to encourage critical engagement with the course material and to establish a long term network among the enrolled teachers. In this presentation we will discuss the steps taken to reposition the online discussions. Firstly, we had an increased focus on building a sense of community during the initial face-to-face contact sessions. Secondly, we implemented live online chat sessions to enhance the sense of community. Thirdly, we introduced a mobile interface to allow students to access the discussions directly from their personal cellphones. We will also look at the extent to which online discussions have contributed to achieving the two outcomes mentioned previously (critical engagement with content and establishing a long term network) by sharing some of the online discussions that have taken place among the students.



**Presenter:** Mohuro

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**Title of Presentation:** Constraints in implementing strategies to cater for Diversity in two South African Higher Education Institutions

**Abstract**

South Africa is applauded for designing national policies to enhance equity in higher education as evidenced by an increased enrolment of students from previously marginalized groups( OECD, 2008). While national and institutional documents at times indicate attractive strategies to enhance the diverse student experiences, poor performance and progression across the spectrum in higher education is still a cause for concern in South African Institutions of higher learning, particularly among the once marginalized ( McGregor, 2007). In view of this, this study is to investigate factors that hinder effective implementation of strategies put in place to promote improved success rates and retention in historically black universities. The study is premised in the transformative learning theory grounded in human communication. In this theory, learning is understood as a process of using prior interpretation to construe a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action (Taylor, 2008). A descriptive survey of 40 academics and 120 undergraduate students in two South African institutions was carried out using interviews and questionnaires. The study showed that academic staff encountered constraints such as lack of resources, support and knowledge in handling diverse students.

In addition, institutional culture was found to play a significant role in the implementation of institutional policies on diversity. It is recommended that efforts to deal with diversity go beyond policy making.



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**Title of Presentation:** From Tutor to Lecturer: The importance of Mentoring as a “Gift Exchange” process in Teaching and Learning

Teaching is a daunting yet rewarding task in more ways than one. Not only does teaching involve planning, preparation and execution it also involves practice. Practice through mentoring becomes the key factor for any aspiring teacher. The objective in this paper is to discuss mentoring as a highly useful tool in producing positive, motivated and committed lecturers at a higher education institution, namely the University of the Western Cape, within the Academic Development Department, Economic and Management Sciences faculty. The theoretical framework of the paper is based on mentoring theories by Gehrke, Palmer, Hyde and Erickson (among others) that view mentoring as a gift giving process. An investigation into the writer’s own experience of mentoring, that is, from student, to an Academic Development tutor to lecturer at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, will be offered. It is envisaged that this paper will encourage a transformed perspective which highlights the immense importance of mentoring as a “gift exchange” process as well as encourage the formation and establishment of formal mentoring programmes within institutions of higher learning. In doing so, this process enables career development prospects for new comers in the academia.



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**Title of Presentation:** Post-mortem of the PGCE review at Tshwane University of Technology

The PGCE programme was reviewed in 2007 as part of the national reviews on teacher education programs. The results of TUT as well as many other UoTs was very negative and since then the departments have embarked on a tennis match of progress reports to bring the PGCE up to the minimum standards which the HEQC has outlined. The process has already taken two years and although progress has been made the departments have

experienced and are still experiencing many challenges, hindrances, contradictions and lessons learned as we aim to get the PGCE to a point where the HEQCs approval for provisional accreditation will be achieved. In our presentation we would like to share with the audiences a critical reflective perspective of the experiences that we have undergone during this 3 year process. The paper presentation will provide a summary of the reports from the HEQC and the responses to the HEQC. The aim of this is to share our experiences with members of other institutions and to let others exchange their experiences so that we can learn from each other and attain required standards. The main method that we have selected to use in the project is critical document analysis and interviews. The presentation summaries will be based on documentations from and to the HEQC and our experiences will be investigated via interviews with key stakeholders within the process.



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This paper deals with network traffic engineering in a multimedia campus network to provide required Quality of Service (QoS). QoS refers to the ability of a network to provide better service to selected network traffic over various applications. We introduce campus network traffic control schemes and components which are used to provide the required QoS in a multimedia environment. We also experiment and discuss bandwidth management techniques that promise to provide better QoS in an integrated service networks. We believe that with proper traffic control combined with bandwidth management a better QoS could be experienced. We focus on marking, scheduling and queuing techniques within a single network. We propose some methods and algorithms that promise to improve QoS in multimedia networks.



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**Title of Presentation:** Comprehensive Institutions, the way forward

Six comprehensive institutions were created in South Africa following the emerged proposals for the restructuring of higher education landscape released in December 2002(DOE 2004:03). The comprehensive institutions were mergers of Technikons and a University to form a new breed of higher education institutions. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET), then the Department of Education (DoE), gave broad parameters of what a comprehensive institution should be, but not how they should

function in relation to their academic programmes, curricula, degrees and staff qualification expectations. The strategic driver of higher education transformation in mergers was not 'procedural' or 'practical' as there was no clarity on how comprehensive institutions were to resolve the intended concept of integrating the binary divide between Technikons and traditional Universities which would have given effect to the comprehensive's vision, mission and values. This paper will review and discuss the justification of comprehensive institutions in South Africa; the nature of the comprehensive institutions in relation to their mission and vision; and focus on WSU as a case study. Has the binary divide been bridged? Or are comprehensive institutions an ongoing experiment? Inclusive in the paper will be the staff complements and qualifications in comparison to the student numbers of the institutions. Also whether the curricula offered and the qualifications obtained address the intended concept of what a comprehensive institution in South Africa should and/or can achieve. Initial data will be collated from the prospectus of the comprehensive institutions in conjunction with data obtained from the DoHET website.

**Keywords:** comprehensive institutions, binary divide, mission, vision, staff qualifications, academic programmes, qualifications, mergers.



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**Title of Presentation:** Lecturer Experiences of a Blended Teaching and Learning Approach:  
A case study at University of Fort Hare

Higher Education Institutions have to deal with challenges of bridging the digital divide in responding to the diverse needs of the student population. E-Learning technologies are becoming increasingly popular in higher education, and have been shown to enhance face to face learning, students enjoy them and find them more time-efficient than other methods. This paper reports on the findings concerning lecturer experiences in the implementation of an eLearning technology on blended teaching and learning at the University of Fort Hare. The purpose of the study is to determine 1) the challenges faced by lecturers when teaching in a blended learning environment 2) to determine the needs of lecturers involved in a blended learning environment 3) to gain an understanding of the support that lecturers need in a blended teaching and learning environment. A survey was administered to 12 lecturers in different departments across two campuses who had volunteered to be part of the introduction of a blended teaching and learning approach. Interviews, document analysis and a student evaluation questionnaire were used to collect data concerning lecturer's views' and experiences and analysed within a case study design. The results of the study suggest that lecturers have demonstrated increasing positive use and satisfaction with this approach to teaching and learning; that this approach allowed for

more flexibility in providing and giving access to class materials, improved access and communication with the lecturer.



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**Title of Presentation:** Opportunities and challenges of Facebook for enhancing Writing Centre practices

The central place of collaborative dialogic interaction, critical thinking and logical argument building in Facebook render this discursive space conducive for exploring academic writing practices. Practices on Facebook could present a viable proxy for unraveling the nuances and subtleties of academic writing. Yet how these practices frame and inform the exercise of academic agency is under-researched. This paper explores how practices on Facebook could illuminate understanding of the complex concepts of academic voice, positioning and addressivity, which constitute essential accoutrements of academic agency. The paper proposes that Facebook could complement Writing Centres practices by scaffolding student academic agency and enabling critical literacy practices. Conscious of the opportunities Facebook presents for Writing Centres, I am mindful of the varied literacy levels of students entering university, their limited exposure to genres of academic writing and challenges of English language for English as Additional Language (EAL) learners in resource-constrained learning environments.



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**Title of Presentation:** The Necessity of Assessment Centres in Teaching and Learning

It is imperative to prepare students to function confidently in a rapidly changing world. To be effective in the workplace students need to be educated and trained so they can fulfil their responsibilities with care and dedication. It is often stated by employers that post-students are lacking skills to fully integrate with the workforce. It is therefore necessary for lecturers at Higher Education institutions to execute authentic assessment in the rightful manner to ensure that the student is well-prepared for the workplace. The question arises: What will ensure authentic assessment? A tool that could contribute towards preparing the student for the workplace is the use of Assessment Centres as this will contribute towards work integrated learning. Assessment Centres are used by the corporate and business world, but is hardly, if not at all, utilized by Higher Education. In spite of efforts by lecturers, there is a gap between what Higher Education offers and what the workplace requires. To bridge this gap it is necessary to implement authentic assessment, and more specifically Assessment Centres by integrating technology for meaningful assessment. This means that

Higher Education institutions will have to adopt a more practical and electronic approach to assessment. This paper will examine the need for Assessment Centres in Higher Education, and will also examine to what extent institutions are preparing students for the workplace, and how an Assessment Centre, by utilizing modern technologies, can contribute to the delivery of well-prepared and educated students to the workplace.



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**Title of Presentation:** Challenges facing Academic Development Units in the implementation of e-learning in institutions of higher education

The paper examines the role played by academic development units in the implementation of e-learning in institutions of higher learning. The discussion unpacks the challenges and efforts made by academic development unit in ensuring successful implementation. The change of landscape in institutions of higher learning (Education in South Africa) has imposed many challenges on academic departments. The minister of education has urged universities to incorporate e-learning in their day to day activities to accommodate all students with different learning abilities. The introduction of technology-based learning in the North West University has posed different challenges on the academic development units. These units have to offer support to lecturers and students involved in the implementation of e-learning. Academic development is often confused with professional development. The activities of academic development units are to help academic staff in institutions of higher learning to develop and use learning resources effectively paired with development of skills on the use and development of learning resources. Institutions in their attempt to maximize the role of academic development units have introduced information and communications technology where they provide equipment, technical infrastructure and support to academic staff and leave the rest to academic development units.



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**Title of Presentation:** Political Philosophy – the Bedrock for SA HE Policy

The presentation will unpack and discuss the political philosophy on which all post 1994 South African (SA) Higher Education (HE) policies were conceived and locate strengths and challenges of the present in historical discourse and political philosophy of those periods. Initially SA HE policy will be examined as largely influenced by the colonial and apartheid political philosophies embedded in notions of otherness (including race, sex, gender and language) and founded to entrench the power of an educated minority. Most of this

presentation will concentrate on post liberation SA HE policies which will be analysed nationally and institutionally. Examples of SA HE policies translated into NMMU policy and management practice as well as strategic planning documents will be highlighted together with illustrations of strengths and challenges in our multi-campus delivery of teaching and learning to degree, diploma and extended studies programmes. In conclusion it will be suggested that while the philosophical roots of SA HE policy have changed radically the challenge of realistically facing, and planning for, diversity and difference institutionally and in the student body is ongoing and subsumed, FIFA –like, in a policy environment which rewards the global or first world status of a few core institutions but still appears to marginalise many local, third world needs and realities upon which this country’s future depends. The presentation is informed by NMMU policy documents including Vision 2020, the University’s strategic priorities and a literature review of past and present national HE policy together with recent publications in the fields of Academic Development, Political Philosophy and Higher Education.



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**Co-Presenter:** S.van Schalkwyk(Stellenbosch University)

**Co-Presenter:** Jean Farmer(Stellenbosch University)

**Title of Presentation:** Revealing lecturer thinking about teaching: What an award-winning university teacher says and does

The First-year Academy at Stellenbosch University organizes a Rector’s Academic Prestige Evening each year for top-performing first-year students, and for the lecturers credited with having had the most influence on their success. In 2010 members of the Centre for Teaching and Learning extended a study conducted in 2008 (Leibowitz et al) that looked at “what makes a good lecturer of first-year students”. This presentation focuses on one respondent from the larger study, a senior professor, who was twice nominated by top-performing students as the lecturer who had the most impact on their academic performance. The issue of what makes for good teaching is a complex one (Kember, 1997). Kane, Sandretto and Heath (2002) assert that “research that only reports what university teachers say about their teaching, without observing practice only tells half the story”. In the study on which this presentation is based, we use narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Conelly, 2002) as a research method which allows one to explore many sources of data. Using interview data, video recording of lectures as well as observation data of lesson evaluations, and other artifacts we (de)construct the relationship between belief and practice, and how this fits into the larger question of what makes for good teaching of first years. In this portrait, sense of vocation, professional identity and passion for learning are three key attributes that emerge.



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**Title of Presentation:** The Perception of Office Management Students towards Assessment Feedback in Business Administration

Giving proper feedback to students is one of the important interventions in improving the quality of learning. A student who is well guided and given effective and educationally-sound assessment feedback stands a better chance of being successful in his subjects. On a large scale this means a better throughput rate for higher education institutions. The importance of students' success cannot be over-emphasized, particularly in business education, which is an important subject as it equips students with vital skills required by the South African economy. The main purpose of this research is to assess students' experiences and perceptions of feedback they receive from their assessments in Business Administration. This is done in order to get a well-informed understanding of how students perceive and use feedback they receive after assessment. Assessment and feedback to students have a direct impact on the quality of their educational experiences and ultimately on their fitness for purpose as graduates of higher education. This study will provide an insight into how students feel about the way they are assessed and particularly the extent to which they understand and find educational value in assessment feedback. Hearing students' voices will enable those higher education practitioners involved in assessment such as lecturers and qualified assessors/ moderators, to get students' perspective on assessment feedback. This will hopefully, trigger them to reflect on their practice of giving feedback. This study will use a mixed-methods research approach. A questionnaire will be administered to one hundred Office Management students at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) to assess their views and perceptions of assessment feedback in the subject Business Administration. Follow up interviews will then be conducted with selected students who completed the questionnaire. Interview questions will be built around key issues arising from the questionnaire which require in-depth probing. The dual use of a questionnaire and interviews will allow the study to benefit from the strengths of both data collection instruments and thereby ensuring that rich data is generated.



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**Title of Presentation:** Extended Degree Programmes: A Case of The University of Limpopo

The paper aims to investigate the impact of the current Extended Degree Programmes (EDPs) on students in South Africa with specific allusion to the University of Limpopo (UL). The justification for the paper is found in the fact that EDPs are reasonably new to most institutions and thus present a number of challenges both systematically and operationally.

The large numbers of students that are supposed to be in these programmes are not catered for. The paper argues that EDPs are the best possible trajectory in South African Higher Education but that despite the good intent to protect the interests of the students and the community, more often than not, the students find themselves as victims of the system. The main questions here are “What informs the current EDP curriculum? How is the curriculum different from the usual curriculum?” The paper argues that extreme caution should be exercised when deciding on the EDP curriculum in order to avoid the challenges that currently impinge on the quality and efficiency of such programmes at tertiary level and at the same time open a debate as regards the effectiveness of such programmes.



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**Title of Presentation:** Service learning as a vehicle to the development of professional competence

Recent legislature (Higher Education Act, 1997) mandated the Higher Education Council to operate a quality assurance system where academic programmes are accredited. Institutions of higher education are required to build capacity and promote quality in terms teaching, research and community engagement. Community engagement is considered a core function in Health Sciences Education. The responsibility of community engagement is further to advance social development and social transformation, which both are high on the Higher Education agenda. Such developments instigated the implementation of a service-learning component at the Department Speech Language Pathology and Audiology at Medunsa Campus. Within a discipline-based service learning model the students in speech-language pathology and audiology are engaged with particular communities in deep rural and semi-rural contexts throughout the year. Prolonged engagement allows them to reflect on their experiences on a regular basis, which in turn facilitates deeper learning. The presentation describes the theoretical framework for a particular service-learning module in terms of Dewey’s conceptual framework for learning, Kolb’s experiential learning model, as well as the principles of outcomes-based education. In the development of professional competence, the focus of this workshop is on the development of reflective competence and the assessment thereof. By providing experiences and opportunities for reflection, the learning becomes applied and integrated, and thereby increases students’ competence. The presentation will be augmented with a video clips demonstrating the reflection procedure and will provide examples of the forms used in the assessment to guide the process.

**Key words:** Service learning, community engagement, structured reflection, formative/summative assessment



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**Title of Presentation:** A Scholarly Reflection on My Whole Brain Assessment Style

One of the roles of educators, including lecturers, is to mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, including those with barriers to learning; construct learning environments that are appropriately contextualised and inspirational. Assessment is an essential feature of teaching and learning and the lecturer must have an understanding of purposes, methods and effects of assessment and be able to provide constructive feedback to learners. The lecturer must cater for different learning styles in his/her assessment practice in a flexible way and must become a critical reflective assessor. Being metacognitively aware of how one assesses is empowering and by being critically reflective about one's assessment practice and by acting on what one finds in a positive way, one constructs new meaning of one's assessment practice. Action research is used to monitor this in a scholarly way. The whole brain model of Ned Herrmann is used to develop flexibility and catering for diversity in the teaching practice of the first author. The action research study was conducted for two classes; one postgraduate (subject; Remote Sensing and GIS) and one undergraduate (Advanced Soil and Plant Analysis). As part of formative assessment, for one of the tests the learners were given the opportunity to present their understanding of the content in any preferable way: e.g. drama, dance, song or any other creative way. Peer assessment was also included and the learners were asked to reflect and write their views about this approach to assessment. The learners showed a very high level of creativity. They were very excited and confident in their presentations. The peer assessment was very useful. In the feedback reports, the majority of the learners indicated that they enjoyed this assessment style, learned more and gained more confidence. The innovative approach to assessment by the first author was one of the outcomes of a professional development programme on innovative assessment and facilitating learning, offered to a group of academic staff from the University of Limpopo that she attended. The programme was organised and managed by the last author, who is the academic manager of the Production Management Institute. Action research principles were also used to monitor the professional development programme in a scholarly way. This was done by the

second author who was the designer and facilitator of the professional development programme. He firmly believes in acting as a role model to those attending such programmes. The two action research projects were executed in a synchronic way and different qualitative data regarding brain profiling by means of the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) and quantitative data, such as photo evidence, are reported. The project of the first author on her innovative assessment style serves as one of the case studies that form an integral part of the action research project on the professional development programme.



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**Title of Presentation:** 'Addressing the issue of students' under-preparedness': What we do before we write ... in a Writing Centre at a University of Technology

Writing for academic purposes has long been a critical issue for university students. When students are both second language speakers and first generation University students, the situation is often intensified. The students' situations are also frequently exacerbated by poverty, unemployment, poor health and personal domestic circumstances. The combination of these factors can easily induce feelings of low self-esteem. There is a high correlation between such difficulties and success and failure in university studies. To attempt to address these deviations, many universities have created 'Writing Centres. The Faculty of Arts and Design (FAD) at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) has established such a 'Writing Centre' to promote success in the use of spoken and written expression for academic purposes. In order to transform our practice and be fully prepared for these challenges, I believe that we, the writing tutors, need to adjust our beliefs and value systems. I believe that this approach aids in addressing our own under-preparedness. In this paper, I will identify and describe the interpersonal interventions that attempt to improve the negative factors described above. I will also report on the ramifications of these interventions. I will report the process I go through in addressing the issue 'addressing the issue of students under-preparedness' and the values and beliefs which inform these strategies.



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**Title of Presentation:** Pre-service teachers' reflections of South African science classrooms.

The introduction of outcomes-based education placed many challenges on the transformation of science classrooms in South Africa. The NEEDU Report (2009) concluded that South African rural and township schools are largely dysfunctional. This paper examines some of the reasons for the 'collapse' of rural schools as seen through the eyes of pre-service teachers. It explores the reflections of 30 pre-service teachers in science classrooms in the Limpopo Province of South Africa where majority of schools lack infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories or computer rooms. The reflections of pre-service teachers reveal that the culture of teaching and learning has been negatively affected by lack of resources, poor training of teachers, incompetent school management teams, over-crowding in classes and a plethora of policies. Furthermore, teachers in the educational system have not fully embraced all aspects of outcomes-based education resulting in the outcomes identified for science not being completely achieved. Pre-service teachers found it challenging to adapt to the 'realities' of teaching science without science equipment or appropriate resources. Suggestions made by pre-service teachers to improve science teaching in schools are considered in the recommendations of the paper. Some of the recommendations are: development of resource packs for teachers in rural schools; a module on improvisation and innovation in science in pre-service and in-service training; establishing science nodal hubs or science resource centres in rural areas; improving awareness of science through competitions, open days and science clubs; developing mobile libraries and science laboratories for rural teachers; and establishing science committees.

**Key words:** teacher education, science education, rural schools, pre-service teachers



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**Title of Presentation:** Turning Engineering students' challenges into a mentoring programme opportunity towards excellence

The readiness of first year students for tertiary studies impacts negatively on their academic success. Some factors that contribute to the low success rate in Engineering are the percentage of learners from disadvantaged schools with a limited Engineering reference framework; large numbers of disadvantaged learners with unsatisfactory learning environments at home; and large class groups. Due to the high growth and low success rate in Engineering, a pilot mentoring programme was introduced in 2010 in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBEIT) at NMMU. The structured programme is offered to 80 Mechanical and 70 Electrical Engineering students by six postgraduate mentors. Two retired engineers who serve on the Engineering Council of South Africa participate in the programme as specialist mentors to the postgraduate mentors and the first year students. Engineering lecturers and professional teaching and learning staff are actively involved in the mentoring programme. The lecturers have also been given development opportunities via specialised modules in the Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education and ECSA recognition. The programme aims to support students to cope with the demands of engineering studies towards developing their employability and to sensitise them to the required competencies and characteristics required to be a professional engineer, technologist or technician. The programme is subjected to continuous evaluation. Qualitative research is obtained via mentor and mentee surveys and feedback sessions and quantitative research comprise of an analysis of attendance, academic performance and placement test data



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**Title of Presentation:** Early identification of at-risk students in first year Financial Accounting

Financial Accounting 188 is a compulsory first-year module for all BComm degrees at Stellenbosch University, with an annual average of 1 300 students. The throughput rate of traditionally below 70% is a cause for concern at both a departmental and institutional level, which prompted an investigation into student success in the module. This paper presents the results of the process of establishing a profile of successful and at-risk students in this particular module. A two-step process was followed to achieve the goals of the study. Firstly, the significance of a number of factors influencing students' ability to succeed was statistically tested to determine the possible correlation between specific factors and students' success. The most important factors in determining success of students in the module include average Grade 12 mark, whether students had Accounting as a subject at secondary school, class attendance, home language (Afrikaans or English), and the programme within which students were enrolled. Secondly, the simultaneous effect of all these factors was determined by means of a multivariate technique to derive a profile of successful and at-risk students. The results show general trends that could inform admission decisions and guide the implementation of interventions for at-risk students, while

academically stimulating the highly successful students. The results are not generalisable beyond the module, but are significant in informing similar studies in other modules.



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**Title of Presentation:** Challenges of teaching Old Dogs New Tricks: Overcoming academics' resistance to implementing eLearning technologies

The University of South Africa (Unisa) is a distance learning institution. Since 2000, Unisa has incorporated eLearning to support the print-based delivery model of that time and has been exploring different approaches to online support and blended learning. Currently, Unisa has now embraced eLearning for core teaching and learning functions, as well as for student support. There is now a mandate from Management to implement online courses for postgraduate modules within the next few years. PANIC in the halls of academe! As expected, uptake of these new eLearning technologies has been erratic: from the cutting-edge explorers to the dull-knife technophobes. "I've been teaching for 20 years; why should I use these different technologies now? My students don't have access to electricity, let alone computers!" So, how do we overcome these fears and coax academics out of their comfort zones? How do we show them that new technologies can simplify their lives and enhance their teaching? Our department began working with the ICT department to help educate and train academic staff to fully use eLearning applications to enhance their distance teaching and learning at Unisa. This ongoing research project involves use of questionnaires and selected interviews to get academic feedback. In addition, we have developed several initiatives in a multi-layered approach to continuous professional learning. This presentation will present a brief overview of the long-term strategies for staff development and support around eLearning. We will present several case studies on various change management initiatives with a view towards involving more academics.



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**Title of Presentation:** Student experiences of the communication demands of the workplace

The impact of globalisation on the workplace demands that individuals must be prepared to respond to rapid technological and knowledge changes. While the courses offered by the various Universities of Technology take into account the role of the workplace, very little

research exists on the impact of career-focussed programmes and how these meet or do not meet workplace demands. This paper discusses a research project conducted with third year students undertaking the co-operative component of their Higher Education programme. The aim of this study is to determine whether students are adequately prepared to meet the demands of the workplace. The experiences of the students as novice employees and feedback from the employers provide critical perspectives of the demand and supply in Higher Education. This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods and collected and produced documentary data, questionnaires, observations and interviews at both higher education and workplace sites. The findings show that workplace communication is complex and that while Higher Education programmes attempt to simulate workplace practices many students struggle to meet the demands of the workplace. While preparing students to acquire knowledge and skills, the learning of communication skills in higher education can become pedagogized and unrelated to the realities of the workplace.



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**Title of Presentation:** Study Guides as mechanism to enhance excellence in Teaching and Learning

Student perceptions on the value of Study Guides as learning guides are researched within a broader institutional project to improve study success and to enhance engagement. The target groups are students within the 'High Impact Modules' and large classes in the first year of study. The assumption is that a well designed study guide can serve as a navigation tool for students, lecturers and tutors through the module. Where several lecturers teach different groups of students within one module, a well structured study guide provides a consistent and coherent plan of what arrangements are in place for student engagement and how teaching and learning opportunities are aligned with assessment practices. Focusing on quality study guides mobilises lecturers as curriculum developers to improve the selection, ordering and sequencing of study units to create a logical flow in their curriculum delivery.

It is in this context that investigating student perceptions became one of the important actions within a broader action research project. An open ended questionnaire with four questions probing whether students think that their Study Guide as 'learning guide' contribute to their study success, was administered in three faculties. The data was analysed using Atlas ti software. The findings indicated that students highly valued the Study Guides for their directional characteristics as a pathfinder in their modules. The findings will inform further improvements on the Study Guide Template, as well as the new policy on

curriculum development, study materials and study guides in the process of being developed.



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**Title of Presentation:** Teaching criminology in Large Classes: What are the effective methodologies?

The purpose of this research was to investigate ways in which technology can be used to support the teaching of large classes. Part of this exploration was to get an insight into how to teach specific topics in the subject of criminology. The nature of the content and the way of teaching also raises its own challenges especially in large classes. This paper is about a lecturer's reflective journey in partnership with an Instructional Designer to improve the way in which the teaching and learning is planned to enhance student engagement in the teaching of criminology. Action research was used as it involves constant interaction between the researcher and the respondents. "Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, ... and situations in which the practices are carried out" (Carr & Kemmis 1986). Action research works in a cyclic process with the support of a mentor, which enabled the researcher to gather information regarding the views of large groups in this research. The data were collected by means of reflective enquiry. A journal was kept in addition to the discussions that emanated from the focus groups with senior lecturers. Content analysis was used as it allows for situational analysis of events. The lecturer's improvement of his way of delivering content and ensuring interaction with the students was evident from class attendance. He acknowledged the form of support he received from the Instructional Designer and the senior lecturers.



**Presenter:** Dr. AJN Louw  
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**Title of Presentation:** The Impact of Horizontal Integration of Two Foundation Modules on First Years' Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills

**Background**

First year students in the Extended Degree Programme (EDP) at the Faculty of Health Sciences of Stellenbosch University (RSA) are exposed to a foundation module, Practical Clinical Exposure (PCE). Three research assignments were set to enhance the value of the module and to transfer academic writing and research skills developed in another foundation module, Strategic Communication.

**Summary of work:** A comparative retrospective qualitative and quantitative study was done. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two cohorts (2008, 2009) EDP students and with final year MB,ChB students (2009) who were guiding them. End of module reports from all participants were analysed. A questionnaire was used for triangulation.

**Summary of results:** Both groups reported positively on the PCE, their career choice and a rekindling of motivation. However, the 2008 cohort expressed frustration in not understanding terminology and clinical discussions at bedside. Horizontal integration between foundation modules impacted on the 2009 cohort's understanding of, and involvement in, some disorders observed; confidence in decoding medical terminology, the level of communication, as well as application of research and academic writing skills.

**Conclusion:** Horizontal integration of Strategic Communication and PCE impacted positively on knowledge, attitudes and skills of students at this level. Elementary research during the Practical Clinical Exposure can empower and motivate EDP students.



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**Title of Presentation:** Transfer of Learning: A barrier to students' achievement in mathematics at the University of South Africa

Many first year students of mathematics are unable to apply or transfer what they previously learnt in the classroom to solve mathematical problems in a new situation. During the teaching-learning encounter, students claim to have understood concept and problem solving procedures but when asked to solve mathematical problems most of them are found wanting. For example, in most cases students are able to solve mathematical problems while looking at a similar example presented on the chalkboard by the lecturer. However, when the example is whipped off, then most of the students could not apply the knowledge and skill gained in solving a new similar problem. This paper reports on a case study that sought to investigate the effect of transfer of learning on students' performance

in a first year undergraduate engineering mathematics module. Data were collected through participant-classroom observation of a group of 45 intact-group first year engineering students. Further data to account for the students' inability to apply the skills and knowledge gained during teaching and learning were acquired through an achievement test. Key words: application, transfer, mathematics, barrier, achievement, students



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**Title of Presentation:** The outcome of interventions at a higher education institution to increase student success

This study discusses the use of various intervention strategies to improve learning and increase student success at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). This module was listed as an at risk module because the students' failure rate exceeded 25% in the previous year. The strategies that were implemented were tutorial sessions, pre and post formative assessments and using the senior lecturer to teach the same 1<sup>st</sup> module across two campuses to guide and structure learning.

**Formative assessments:** Most students in higher education think that assessments form an important part of their academic life. We designed pre and post lecturer assessment tasks that encouraged engaging with the learning content. We found that the students were motivated to study to enable them to engage with the assessment tasks. The assessment feedback indicated if their study methods helped them to succeed or that they needed to improve them. Class attendance improved and they collaborated with their peers and consulted resources to enable them to answer the questions.

**Tutoring:** The use of the tutoring system made the students to interact with a more knowledgeable peer who could explain concepts in a way that they could relate to.

**One lecturer across two campuses:** As part of the intervention, the lecturer of the SBM1A module decided to lecture all the groups at two campuses at the UJ. The students were exposed to the same lecturer, same teaching and assessment interventions and tutoring.

**Research Design:** Design based research was used to design the study and primary data was collected by means of a questionnaire to assess student feedback on Edulink. The data analysis showed that there was a positive link between the above strategies used and student success.

**Key words:** Formative assessment, tutoring, class attendance,



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**Title of Presentation:** The challenges to present a Service Learning Module: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in a community affected by the Digital Divide

Due to the rapid change in business practices the need, for individuals, to be computer literate has become increasingly important. The minimum requirements for various jobs are some basic knowledge about the working of computers, peripherals and related software. Individuals from the community need to be trained and Service Learning has been identified as a valuable teaching methodology to provide skills in the community for those that might not have money to get equipped in a particular skill. For this reason, ICT has been identified as one such skill and training is provided by enrolled students to assist members of the community to become computer literate. After completing this module community members feel better equipped to perform computer-related tasks or use the skills obtained to apply for a better job. Over the past four years this ICT-based Service Learning Module has been presented to over 150 community members and various issues, mainly related to the Digital Divide, has been identified by the students and community participants. This paper will address some of these issues and look at possible solutions.



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**Title of Presentation:** Rewarding excellence in higher education: What's in it for support staff?

In the argument followed in this paper, the author supports a model in which the performance of academics in the area of teaching and learning is recognised, rewarded and valued on three distinct levels, namely the levels of excellence, expertise and scholarship. An important feature of the argument is that recognition on the different levels should not be restricted to teaching staff only. The model should make provision for staff involved in all areas related to teaching and learning at an institution. This means that staff in managerial, administrative and support posts should also be rewarded for their contributions in this area. The problem is, however, that in most institutions criteria for promotion related to teaching and learning mainly focus on research outputs. Can the same criteria be applied to support staff in the academic development environment, for example? The latter problem forms the crux of the paper and of an investigation undertaken. Departing with Boyer (1990), perspectives from literature are presented on possible "products" that can "count" as scholarly work and ways in which these can/should be recognised. This discussion is complemented by the results of a survey, comprising an open-ended survey and in-depth interviews, amongst support staff at University A. From a critical interpretive perspective, the participants' experiences and frustrations, as well as their perspectives on the What? and the How? of scholarly work and possible recognition in their environments are shared.



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**Title of Presentation:** A Soft Skills Programme: practically and tangibly turning the tide for our students - a work in progress

Curricula are being transformed to make higher education more relevant and responsive and therefore directed at producing skills the economy needs. Today times are tougher and jobs are more difficult to get. Technical skills or knowledge of the subject may get the applicant to the interview but to be successful the applicant should be able to differentiate herself. At all levels recruiters are looking for that one person who is equipped with the skills and attitude for entering and be effective and efficient in the world of work. Very often these skills are not part of formal qualifications and job applicants flounder in securing jobs due to this gap in their training. The lack of soft skills may hinder the person in dealing with the demands of the job or handling greater responsibilities. "Survival in the global marketplace demands that South Africa has a national education and training system that provides quality learning, is responsive to the ever-changing influences of the external environment and promotes the development of a nation that is committed to lifelong learning" (SAQA, 2000d:3). In rising to this educational challenge the Marketing department at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, has drawn on the insights and experiences of our industry partners and on students' feedback during the cooperative training periods. Consequently, in an attempt to give our students a better chance to access and secure a future in the world of work, made a policy decision to develop and implement a soft skills programme within the department.



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**Title of Presentation:** Service Learning as a Vehicle to the Development of Professional Competence

Institutions of higher education are required to build capacity and promote quality in terms teaching, research and community engagement. Community engagement is considered a core function in Health Sciences Education. The Department Speech Language Pathology and Audiology at Medunsa has been actively engaged in service learning in deep rural and semi-rural contexts throughout the year. Such prolonged engagement allows them to reflect on their experiences on a regular basis. This presentation briefly describes the theoretical framework for a particular service-learning module in terms of Dewey's conceptual framework for learning, Kolb's experiential learning model, as well as the principles of outcomes-based education. In the development of professional competence, the focus is on the development of reflective competence and the assessment thereof. By providing structured opportunities for reflection, deep learning is facilitated and students' competence is enhanced. The formative assessment procedure is based on the three-stage model described by Toole and Toole (1995), whereas the summative assessment is based on an adaptation of the DEAL model (Ash, Clayton & Atkinson, 2005). The presentation is augmented with video clips demonstrating the reflection procedure and provides examples of the forms used in guided reflection and the assessment thereof.

**Key words:** Service learning, community engagement, structured reflection, formative / summative assessment



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**Title of Presentation:** Generating critical knowledge through different evaluation approaches to Foundation Provision programmes

Despite Foundation Provision programmes having been part of South African Higher Education for some time now, few comprehensive evaluations of these interventions have been offered (see van De Klerk, van Deventer & van Schalkwyk (2006) for one example). In many instances aspects of programmes have been evaluated and often only to determine impact. This presentation is based on a recently completed evaluation of Extended Degree Programmes at Stellenbosch University and focuses on different approaches to conducting evaluations of Foundation Provision programmes. While assessing 'quality and value' (Scriven 1991) of a programme remains the primary goal of evaluation, different approaches offer different perspectives on quality and value. Typically the purpose of an evaluation

determines the approach (Davidson 2005:3). However, this often results in limited methods being employed and limited results being generated. This study discusses the value of two different approaches to evaluation, namely a theory based approach (Chen 1990) and a goal-free approach (Davidson 2005) by applying the different approaches to the data of two faculties that were part of the evaluation of the Extended Degree Programme at Stellenbosch. It highlights the contributions made by each approach to improving our understanding, and ultimately, our practice. The presentation concludes by arguing that there is a need for a diversity of methodologically sound evaluations of Foundation Provision programmes if we are to render judgments, improve the programmes and generate knowledge (Patton 1997) in this field.



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**Title of Presentation:** Mentoring Reload: Thru the mentees' eyes

When led blind-folded, the craving to have eyes wide open becomes inevitable. The same might be the case in mentor-mentee relations. It then behoves stakeholders to occasionally ensure that feedback channels are set up for purposes of ensuring the betterment of a mentoring programme. It is in this light that this paper presents findings of the research study conducted on mentoring experiences among three groups of students in a historically disadvantaged university environment, viz., the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus. These groups of students comprise those who attend mentoring sessions regularly; those who attend irregularly; and those who hardly attend at all. As the nature of the study's population dictates, the questionnaire used as a tool for data gathering had to accordingly make provision for each of these three categories across faculties. Their responses with regard to attitude towards the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP) and the programme's perceived benefits/inconveniences, amongst others, reflect diverse appraisal of the current state of affairs.



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**Title of Presentation:** Being and becoming a first year student

This paper explores the experiences of three occupational therapy students from middle-class backgrounds who encountered academic challenges during their first year. In contrast to notions of academic risk being linked to constructs of working class status or being first

generation university entrants, the three students in the case study came from middle class backgrounds, had parents and siblings who held tertiary qualifications and had attended 'good' schools. This study forms part of a larger, longitudinal research project that explores student learning by tracing students' progress over the course of their undergraduate years. Bourdieu's analytical constructs of habitus, field and capital were used to analyse data obtained from individual interviews, a focus group interview, questionnaires and examples of students' written work. The challenges experienced are reported in three themes – challenges in academic literacy; in balancing social life with academic demands; and in negotiating diversity and complexity in a new social world.



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**Title of Presentation:** Service learning as a vehicle to the development of professional competence

Recent legislature (Higher Education Act, 1997) mandated the Higher Education Council to operate a quality assurance system where academic programmes are accredited. Institutions of higher education are required to build capacity and promote quality in terms teaching, research and community engagement. Community engagement is considered a core function in Health Sciences Education. The responsibility of community engagement is further to advance social development and social transformation, which both are high on the Higher Education agenda. Such developments instigated the implementation of a service-learning component at the Department Speech Language Pathology and Audiology at Medunsa Campus. Within a discipline-based service learning model the students in speech-language pathology and audiology are engaged with particular communities in deep rural and semi-rural contexts throughout the year. Prolonged engagement allows them to reflect on their experiences on a regular basis, which in turn facilitates deeper learning. The presentation describes the theoretical framework for a particular service-learning module in terms of Dewey's conceptual framework for learning, Kolb's experiential learning model, as well as the principles of outcomes-based education. In the development of professional competence, the focus of this workshop is on the development of reflective competence and the assessment thereof. By providing experiences and opportunities for reflection, the learning becomes applied and integrated, and thereby increases students' competence. The presentation will be augmented with a video clips demonstrating the reflection procedure and will provide examples of the forms used in the assessment to guide the process.

**Key words:** Service learning, community engagement, structured reflection, formative / summative assessment

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# SIGs

(Special Interest Groups)

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### **Foundation SIG**

The Heltasa Foundation SIG is a collection of individuals from different institutions with a shared interest in Foundation programmes/Extended Curriculum Programmes. The SIG aims to 1) share information regarding Foundation programmes or events that its members could be interested in, 2) report on events of the past year that had an influence on the thinking and practice related to Foundation programmes or 3) identify specific needs (and possible solutions) that might be prevalent in the Foundations community.

Any individual interested or involved in Foundations programmes is invited to attend the SIG meeting during the annual Heltasa conference. If you have concerns to raise, suggestions to make or solutions to offer, the SIG meeting is a forum you'll find valuable.

This year's meeting has two specific items on the agenda. The first is a report back on Foundation events that happened during the year. The second is a proposal to create a menu of workshops for individuals involved in Foundation programmes that can be offered on an annual basis, based on the needs of SIG members.

SIG Convenor: Gert Young - [gyoung@sun.ac.za](mailto:gyoung@sun.ac.za)

Please visit the webpage for this Special Interest Group by going to [www.heltasa.org](http://www.heltasa.org) and clicking on the SIG menu.



### **Professional Development SIG**

The HELTASA Professional development SIG aims to provide a forum for the critical interrogation of our role as academic staff development practitioners in higher education in South Africa. Since its formation in 2008 the SIG has hosted an annual workshop to deepen our own skills and understanding of how to address the challenges of our work. The SIG has also helped to facilitate support networks across institutions.

HELTASA members are invited to attend the SIG meeting to hear a report of the workshop held in August and to plan the SIG activities for 2011.

SIG Convenor: Jeff Jawitz - [jeff.jawitz@uct.ac.za](mailto:jeff.jawitz@uct.ac.za)

Please visit the webpage for this Special Interest Group by going to [www.heltasa.org](http://www.heltasa.org) and clicking on the SIG menu.



### **e-Learning SIG**

How can we identify and describe useful and emerging learning technologies that already have/or are likely to have a large impact on teaching, learning, or creative inquiry within South African higher education? What processes, tools and systems do we need to put in place to be able to study these trends continuously and in a meaningful manner? These are questions to focus on for this coming meeting at Heltasa 2010.

SIG Convenor: Matete Madiba - [Matete.Madiba@up.ac.za](mailto:Matete.Madiba@up.ac.za)

Please visit the webpage for this Special Interest Group by going to [www.heltasa.org](http://www.heltasa.org) and clicking on the SIG menu.



### **Access and Admissions SIG**

This SIG is concerned with access and admission debates and challenges. The SIG co-hosted with UWC a colloquium on access and admissions in South African universities in September and will also be running a pre-conference workshop on using admissions data to inform policy decisions entitled "Using Admissions Data to Inform Policy Decisions". The SIG meeting will follow up on the discussions from the colloquium and the workshop and we invite all those interested to join us at the SIG meeting where we will plan the activities for the year ahead.

SIG Convenor: Robert Prince - [Robert.Prince@uct.ac.za](mailto:Robert.Prince@uct.ac.za)

Please visit the webpage for this Special Interest Group by going to [www.heltasa.org](http://www.heltasa.org) and clicking on the SIG menu.



### **Tutor and Mentor Programme SIG**

The Tutor & Mentor Programme SIG focuses on peer support initiatives in South African Higher Education Institutions. Academic development practitioners, academics and tutor coordinators are invited to attend the annual meeting held during the HELTASA conference.

The following will be addressed at the 2010 SIG meeting:

-  Update: mapping the tutor- and mentor programme terrain (as per information gathered at the 2009 conference)
-  Support offered to undergraduate tutors and mentors
-  Supplemental Instruction
-  Plans for 2011 and way forward

SIG Convenor: Megan Burgoyne - [meganb@sun.ac.za](mailto:meganb@sun.ac.za)

Please visit the webpage for this Special Interest Group by going to [www.heltasa.org](http://www.heltasa.org) and clicking on the SIG menu.



### **AD Leaders Forum**

This SIG provides a support and discussion forum for all Heads of Academic Development centres and those who lead clusters of AD expertise, e.g., E-learning or Extended Degrees Programmes. It meets once during the year and once at the annual conference. It conducts additional activities such as the survey on academic development units. The meeting will be a place to report on the year's activities and make plans for 2011.

SIG Convenor: TBA

Please visit the webpage for this Special Interest Group by going to [www.heltasa.org](http://www.heltasa.org) and clicking on the SIG menu.



### **Writing Centres**

This SIG has a particular interest in student writing and includes all those working in this area, whether they are within Writing Centres or elsewhere. The meeting at the conference will be a place to report on the year's activities and make plans for 2011.

SIG Convenor: Rose Richards - [rr2@sun.ac.za](mailto:rr2@sun.ac.za)

Please visit the webpage for this Special Interest Group by going to [www.heltasa.org](http://www.heltasa.org) and clicking on the SIG menu.