

# HELTASA



HIGHER EDUCATION LEARNING & TEACHING ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

## ABSTRACTS

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP SYMPOSIUM ON POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAS IN HIGHER EDUCATION 14 and 15 August 2018

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
BLOEMFONTEIN

#### **Abstract 1**

How a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education changed my academic life.

Dr Jacqui de Matos-Ala

I would like to prepare a presentation on how completing as PG Dip in Higher Education has allowed me to expand my research on the scholarship of learning and teaching in my home discipline of International Relations. My reason for enrolling in the PGDip (HE) was that I had fundamental questions around how best to tackle the de-Westernization of International Relations curricula whose answers I could not find in my own discipline. I had wanted to write on this subject for the last 10 years but it was only once I had completed the degree that I was able to produce the scholarship I had envisaged. This presentation will centre on how the PGDip in HE has exponentially expanded my capacity to make a unique contribution globally to the learning and teaching scholarship in my discipline on how to make IR curricula more knowledge inclusive.

## **Abstract 2**

Waving through the curriculum: Applying semantic waves to a curriculum development course Dr Nicholas J. West, School of Electrical and Information Engineering, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

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By means of a presentation, I intend on showing how my journey towards knowing and being gradually developed and was facilitated by the structure of the course in Curriculum Development as part of a PGDip in Higher Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I feel that the course comprised of two distinct parts: a knowledge building stage and a knowledge recontextualisation stage.

The journey started with Assignment 0, a pre-course task designed to probe and highlight our preconceived ideas about curriculum within our own contexts. In the first 6-8 weeks, an expanding, spiralling process occurred where my knowledge kept on developing though a rigorous process of preparing reading responses on papers describing the main aspects and concepts of curriculum, while also refining generic and vocational skills (Lockett, 2001; Shay, 2013). This first stage is characterised by an increase in semantic density (Maton, 2014) and culminated in Assignment 1: the creation of a personal conceptual web of curriculum.

Through this assignment, we were allowed to take our knowledge, apply it in our own contexts and develop our own understanding of curriculum. From this point onwards, a further three formative assessments tasks allowed for a recontextualization of my understanding of curriculum: Through an interview with an 'old-timer' within my department (Assignment 2), through an analysis and review of current curriculum research within my field of study (Assignment 3) and through my own experience of this very course (Assignment 4). This recontextualisation can be thought of an oscillation of the semantic gravity between the applied and the theoretical knowledge areas. This oscillation assisted in 'pulling' my knowledge forward as well as highlighting the contested and holistic nature of curriculum.

### **References**

Lockett, K. (2001). A proposal for an epistemically diverse curriculum for South African higher education in the 21st century. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 15(2), 49–61.

Maton, K. (2014). A TALL order? Legitimation Code Theory for academic language and learning. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 8(3), A34–A48.

Shay, S. (2013). Conceptualizing curriculum differentiation in higher education: A sociology of knowledge point of view. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34(4), 563–582.

### **What are the main aims / outcomes of your session?:**

In my presentation I intend to show how I interacted with the structure of this course in curriculum development and how this structure enabled and facilitated my learning. In essence, I would like to reflect on my journey towards an epistemological and ontological understanding of curriculum development.

## **Abstract 3**

**Name:** Dr Francine Masson

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A very little key can open a very heavy door: Personal reflections of learning on a curriculum course

Curriculum design and development is perhaps a lot more complicated than one may initially anticipate. Ensuring that a curriculum is responsive and relevant to the structural and socio-cultural contexts, requires academics to consider many factors in the development and design of a curriculum. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that curriculum design allows not only for the development of knowledge but also for the advancement and growth of virtues and dispositions. This presentation reflects on aspects of the presenter's own learning through her participation in a curriculum course as a student. The Curriculum Design and Development Course, which was one of four courses required for completion in the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (Higher Education), was held over a period of four months. Students attended weekly lectures and were given numerous readings, assignments and tasks to complete. Drawing on curriculum authors such as Cornbleth, Maton and Lockett, the presenter analyses both the content of the course and her own trajectory of learning. The complexity of the learning process is explored and how in the quest for academic literacy and knowledge, curriculum concepts and theories need to be unpacked, analysed and reconstructed in the appropriate context. Through the course the presenter realised the power of her own agency and how a little key can open a very heavy door.

**What are the main aims / outcomes of your session:**

1. To analyse the content selected in a curriculum course for a PG Dip in Education
2. To explore my own learning and development on this curriculum course
3. To identify how my learning will enhance or hinder my own development as an educator, curriculum developer and educator.

**Provide a brief outline of the session with approximate time-frames for each part of the session.:**

Presentation-2-minutes

Questions and Answers - 10 minutes

I shall make the presentation in parts interactive and ask participants to reflect on their own learning at specific points in the presentation. There will be time for questions and answers at the end of the session.

**Abstract 4**

**Name:** Linda Mostert, Eunice Champion, Dr Thoko Batyi & Anne Olsen

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Collaborative Reflective Process in the Curriculum Design and Development of a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education at a Comprehensive University

The first aim of this presentation is to offer a description of the initial stages of designing a new Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education Practice at Nelson Mandela University in 2017. Each member of the curriculum development team wrote her own personal account of how she experienced participating in the design of the new Postgraduate Diploma, using the steps in Gibbs' Reflective cycle followed by collaborative reflective practice.

Collaborative reflective practice enables professionals to analyse their decisions and actions so that they can apply new insights to future situations, whereas reflection in isolation might only "reconfirm what adults believe they already know" (Taylor and Marienau 2016: 261). Hence, we used the Professional Dialogue Group model of collaborative reflective practice, in combination with Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, to explore and learn from our experiences.

The team chose to record each member's views rather than trying to achieve any kind of artificial consensus, recognising that individuals may have engaged with different types of knowledge and may have approached their learning differently. Considering the aforementioned, it was accepted that everyone's perspective was equally important.

Secondly, the presentation of this paper continues the professional dialogue with the broader community of academic developers who are, involved in designing and offering Postgraduate Diplomas in Higher Education, as to gain new insights and learn from the experiences of others.

Keywords: Curriculum Design, Curriculum Development, Collaborative, Reflective Practice

**What are the main aims / outcomes of your session?:**

During our presentation, we would share our journey developing the PGDip (HE) in a collaborative manner, as this is an enabling approach to curriculum design and development adopted at our institution. Furthermore, we are interested to gain insight into the approaches adopted at other institutions.

After the presentation we would use the opportunity to engage with the greater AD community regarding their experiences and journeys on developing and teaching on their PGDips (HE), as we are endeavouring to register our programme for accreditation by 2020

**Abstract 5**

**Name:** Prof 'Mabokang Monnapula-Mapesela, Dr Ntsoaki Malebo and Nozi Mphumela

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Designing a PGDip (HE) for a UoT

One of the major problems facing the South African higher education is that oftentimes lecturers are appointed into teaching positions on the strength of their disciplinary and professional qualifications and few have participated in any educational development programmes to prepare them as teachers of their disciplines. Arguably, common-sense ideas about how to design curricula, teach a range of disciplinary areas and assess student learning are insufficient for a transformed quality higher education system that provides 'epistemological' and 'ontological' access. Central University of Technology (CUT) came to realise that 'good teaching' can make a difference and that this cannot be achieved intuitively, but by intentionally building capacity for teaching and learning. After years of encouraging its academics to enrol in Postgraduate Diplomas at other institutions, and further realising that common once-off development workshops are less effective in enhancing teaching, as opposed to more structured and assessed courses that enable a longer-term, sustained engagement with issues of teaching and learning, the institution decided to develop its own PGDip for addressing the needs of its lecturing staff, as well as those working at other UoTs and institutions which have similar contexts and needs. The programme is aimed at contributing to the ability of such lecturers to respond to specific disciplinary, professional/occupational/vocational and institutional contexts and challenges. Through a panel presentation, a team of practitioners who developed the programme hopes to share experiences and challenges regarding the collaborative and developmental approach taken to develop this programme, as well as those experienced during its piloting.

**What are the main aims / outcomes of your session?:**

The aim of the presentation is to share experiences and lessons learnt during the process of developing a PGDip in Higher Education for a university of technology. This will be a panel presentation.

### **Abstract 6**

**Name:** Pumla Noluxolo and Qondo Makala

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Theories underpinning professional development practices

**Abstract:**

The proposed presentation seeks to: contribute some ideas on various theories that could be adopted and adapted to inform academic professional development practices. Various institutional types, such as a comprehensive university, that came into being as a result of the merger project have diverse needs arising from the diverse cultural backgrounds of their legacy institutions. Thus, such institutions may benefit from adopting a multi-theory approach towards academic staff development in order to respond to the diverse needs of their academic staff complement. The same multi- theory approach, if adopted in staff development, could further be extended to the classroom practices in enhancing students'

learning, thus addressing students' diverse needs. Adopting a multi-theory approach could be more inclusive, enriching and flexible than sticking to only one learning and teaching theory

At the end of the presentation, participants should be able to acknowledge that:

No single theory may be perceived as the best considering the unique culture of each institution

**What are the main aims / outcomes of your session?**

Different institutions may require different learning and teaching theories to respond effectively to their institutional unique needs

Appreciate the importance of using more than one theory for AD practice

**Provide details of the format of your session:**

I prefer oral presentation followed by question and answer session.

**Abstract 7**

**Name:** Dr Laura Dison and Rieta Ganas - Wits

Teaching and learning conversations beyond the PGDip classroom

There is increased participation by academics in the PGDip at Wits which was started in 2015. There are 30 graduates to date and more than 30 students (two cohorts) of academics who are registered for the course.

A major challenge the facilitators now face is how to assess whether the graduates and participants currently enrolled for the course are able to implement the pedagogical principles and strategies they have spent time learning and reflecting upon during the programme. Are they able to sustain the valuable and significant conversations about their teaching and learning within their disciplinary contexts? All participants on the programme have been supported by teaching mentors mostly located within their disciplines and many of the assessment tasks have encouraged participants to reflect on the implementation of pedagogical strategies for their contexts.

Despite this, it is unclear whether these teaching and learning conversations, initiatives and agency are followed through beyond the PGDip.

Wits is on track to launch an alumni organisation for the PGDip graduates and their mentors to find ways of sustaining these significant conversations about teaching and learning beyond the PG Dip classroom. The Alumni is intended to provide structural mechanisms for academics to implement their learning-focused strategies and approaches. The session will explore the extent to which these enabling structures and systems have the potential to build strong networks of evolving HE practitioners committed to reflecting critically on

their teaching, assessment and curriculum development processes from a socio-cultural perspective.

### **1. What are the main aims / outcomes of your session?**

To explore possibilities for building collegial institutional networking structures to enhance teaching and learning initiatives, multidisciplinary SOTL practices and collaborative research projects beyond the PGDip classroom and curriculum.

To investigate what social processes can be put in place for academics to engage, sustain and deepen a theorized understanding of teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum.

### **2. Provide details of the format of your session.**

- Conduct a survey in the session to ascertain (based on questions developed by the facilitators)
  - the extent to which academics engage in teaching and learning conversations
  - the colleagues with whom they interact
  - the nature of these conversations, e.g. what characterizes these sessions: blame game, reporting on teaching interventions, evaluating practices etc.
  - the frequency of and platforms used for these conversations
- Formulate and exchange strategies (in groups) for sustaining teaching conversations and supporting/ strengthening faculty-based teaching networks
- Explore the implications for academics' evolving as practitioners (Tsang, 2010)
- Develop criteria for categorizing and evaluating the nature of these networked conversations, e.g. how academics use their agency to reflect on and interpret teaching challenges in their contexts.

The session will be based on Archer's (2000) structure, culture and agency as the intention through the Alumni is to build institutional corporate agency with regards to teaching and learning.

### **3. Provide a brief outline of the session with approximate time-frames for each part of the session.**

45 - 60 minutes would be appreciated

### **4. State how you intend to involve participants in your session.**

The participants will be engaged in group discussions as well as plenary conversations

Roxa, T and Martensson, K (2013). Significant conversations and significant networks – exploring the backstage of the teaching arena. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34:5, 547-559.

Tsang, A. K. (2010). The evolving professional (EP) concept as a framework for the scholarship of teaching and learning. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 4(1), 1-10.

Archer, M. S. (2000). For structure: its reality, properties and powers: A reply to Anthony King. *The Sociological Review*, 48(3), 464-472.

This session is about a formal staff development programme that is an alternative to the PGDip (HE) at NMU.

### **Abstract 8**

**Name:** Eunice Champion, Dr Thoko Batyi, Linda Mostert & Anne Olsen

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The Teaching Enhancement Programme, as an alternative to a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education.

The Nelson Mandela University Teaching Enhancement Programme (TEP), formally known as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Certificate (SoTLC), represents a scholarly approach to professional academic development, which was proposed in 2010, after an institutional wide needs analysis was conducted. The aforementioned programme offers a structured, pro-active, context specific and flexible alternative to a formalised programme, such as a Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDip (HE)).

The strategy adopted by TEP enables the development of teaching practice through the institutionalised, deliberate and systematic professionalization of the teaching function. The design and implementation is flexible and customisable, in response to participant feedback, and the changing Higher Education and institutional contexts. TEP offers a collaborative and safe space for teaching development at Nelson Mandela University. The aim of the programme is to explore teaching, learning and assessment from a scholarly perspective in order to enable lifelong learning and to encourage reflexive practice.

However, in addition to promoting the professionalization of teaching and learning through adopting a scholarly approach, it has enabled a “coming to know” (Barnett 20119: 432 – 3) in the context of academic development (AD), especially with regard to novice academic developers. The TEP facilitation team, through the adoption of a team teaching approach, has expanded and deepened their own knowledge in the AD and SoTL domains. Team members, under the leadership of the programme coordinator, have experienced an increased sense of “being” and “becoming” academic developers who are able to “change things for the better” at their institution.

Keywords: Academic Development, Teaching Enhancement, SoTL, Teaching and Learning

#### **What are the main aims / outcomes of your session?:**

- Present a responsive alternative to the offering of a PGDip (HE) in enabling a structured approach to staff development.
- The TEP programme emphasises feedback from the facilitators and participants, however, this symposium provides a unique opportunity to gain feedback from contributors in AD community on the programme.
- \_\_\_An opportunity for the core TEP team to reflect on their practice

#### **Provide details of the format of your session:**

## Knowledge Café

The knowledge café enables collaboration and provides a space for participants to have an open and creative dialogue and to share their collective knowledge and ideas to, ideally, enable a deeper understanding of the topic at hand.

Welcome and introduction (15 minutes)

Eunice Champion, as programme coordinator, briefly introduces the TEP programme and the Knowledge Café process.

Small group rounds with a table host from the TEP team (10 minutes / round) 3 rounds

Allow 5 min between rounds to move around (total time for this session 45 min)

**Provide a brief outline of the session with approximate time-frames for each part of the session:**

Depending on the number of participants, we may need to duplicate the tables and topics

Questions formulated for these conversations, will be linked to the aims / outcomes outlined for the session

Sharing of findings (by hosts) (10 min / group = 30 minutes)

During the feedback session participants in the Knowledge Café is encouraged to engage with the feedback and to provide any additional feedback or questions on the Nelson Mandela University Teaching Enhancement Programme.

**State how you intend to involve participants in your session:**

The Knowledge Café approach is ideal to enable collaboration and engagement with participants through creative conversation and the sharing of knowledge in order to create new knowledge.

### **Abstract 9**

This session that explores the rationale behind and the learning potential of pedagogic / teaching and assessment practices on PGDips (HE) offered by different institutions.

### **Abstract 10**

In this session we'll interrogate the implications of the Draft Framework of Enhancing Academics as University Teachers for academic staff development practice.