



HELTASA (Un)Conference: 6 - 10 December 2021

Concept Note & Call for Proposals

(Un)Conference theme: Sivela phi? Siphi? Siya phi? - Being resilient, responsive and relevant in a shifting Higher Education (HE) context

Subtheme: Shape-shifting: past experiences, current realities and future possibilities

HELTASA



Sivela phi?

Past experiences of deeply entrenched social inequities and inequalities concerning learning and teaching access and success within the HE sector set up by the colonial and apartheid regime continue to exist post-1994, into a democratic South Africa. The #FeesMustFall student protests and the unprecedented challenges of the enduring COVID-19 pandemic continue to raise awareness of the importance of including and representing diverse voices across the academic spectrum.

Siphi?

The current reality of HE in South Africa, is that existing approaches and enactments in academia may no longer be wholly relevant. As a higher education community, we must reflect on our resilience, capacity and capabilities to fulfil our directive in a changing and uncertain learning and teaching context. In these spaces,

we have to adapt in order to remain relevant and responsive to students' learning needs and academics' professional development in a proactive, collaborative, equitable and inclusive manner. These concerns call for us to re-imagine transformative curricula and socially just pedagogies that are relevant and responsive to current and future learning spaces.

Siya phi?

In our move to be Responsive, Resilient and Relevant, HELTASA has acknowledged feedback from conference participants, which highlighted disabled spaces for open discussion and dialogue on research, critical issues and prevalent challenges related to scholarly work. Thus, in re-thinking and re-imagining the traditional conference, HELTASA is shape-shifting towards an (un)conference: a participant-driven opportunity for intellectual engagement and expression whilst maintaining

academic rigour. The (un)conference includes a blended approach of the traditional conference and unconventional interactions. These methodologies aim to create an open space to share, critically reflect, be creative and develop innovative approaches to learning and teaching through collaboration, scholarly conversations and research. This participant-driven opportunity allows for engagement, teamwork development, the flexibility of schedule, and an emphasis on contributions from every participant.

A CALL FOR PROPOSALS

(500 words maximum)

We invite conference participants to join us as we collaboratively embark on this journey of being change agents in learning and teaching institutionally, nationally and globally in times of increasing uncertainty. We encourage participants to submit proposals exploring the (un)conference themes "*Sivela phi? Sipi? Siya phi? Being resilient, responsive and relevant in a shifting HE context*" and "*Shape-shifting: past experiences, current realities and future possibilities*" in one of the following scholarly areas:

Student learning

Professional learning

Curriculum development

Academic development

Decoloniality

To follow the (un)conference approach, we encourage participants to initiate scholarly conversations in relation to conceptualising and enacting the academic project. Proposal submissions should include at least **two** key questions for further engagement that your proposal raises. The HELTASA (un)Conference provides participants with the opportunity to share their thoughts and engage with each other in one of the above scholarly areas following any of the formats below:

1. **Oral paper (10 mins):** completed research or work in progress demonstrating critical reflection or conceptual and theoretical understandings/frameworks. The common-themed proposals received from participants will be grouped together and after the individual presentations there will be a

facilitated conversation among presenters and the audience. Here all presenters will actively participate in a discussion and debate by asking questions and sharing their opinions on the themed topic from their presentation, while participants in the room also get an opportunity to offer input into the discussions.

2. **Poster presentation:** Poster presentation sessions are ideal for presenters who want the opportunity for informal conversations with a targeted group of interested viewers. The participant shares ideas to others using a combination of visuals and text. Poster sessions facilitate a rich exchange of ideas and networking opportunities. Participants can use any software such as [Padlet to create posters](#) and showcase their

completed research or research in progress. [Padlet](#) offers opportunities for meaningful engagement through comments, questions and responses.

- 3. Provocations (45 mins):** these can be in the form of a critical dialogue or 'a seat at the table' discussion. The proposals accepted for this session will be shared with participants/members on the HELTASA website prior to the conference, to create conversations that will be continued in breakout rooms during the (un)conference.
- 4. Open space methodology (90 mins):** engagement can be in the form of a Knowledge Café, during which participants form small groups to engage in scholarly conversations in a relaxed and informal manner. Questions/topics will be sourced from participants or emerge from conversations during the course of the conference.

- 5. Artistic demonstration (15 mins including comments or questions)** these creative contributions can be in poetry, song, dance and/or visual presentations.

Important Dates:

- **HELTASA conference:** 6 to 10 December 2021
- **Call for proposal submissions open:** 31 July 2021
- **Closing date for submissions:** 30 August 2021
- **Announcement of proposal acceptance:** 30 September 2021
- **Dates of registration:** 31 July to 30 October 2021

Submission of proposal should include:

- **Title**
- **Scholarly Area:** (1) student learning, (2) professional development, (3) curriculum development, (4) academic development, and/or (5) decoloniality
- **Format:** Oral paper, poster presentation, provocation, open space methodology, artistic demonstration
- **Proposal** (500 words + Question/s)

If you would like further information please contact **Nomfundo Siqwede:**
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Submit your proposals here