

**Title:**

**Experiences and Significant Milestones for English Teacher Training Online Success**

**Authors:**

Dr Christopher Rwodzi & Dr Lizette de Jager

Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

[christopherrwodzi@yahoo.com](mailto:christopherrwodzi@yahoo.com) ; [lizette.dejager@up.ac.za](mailto:lizette.dejager@up.ac.za)

**Format/stream:** Oral paper

**Theme:** Professional development

**Abstract**

The teaching of English First Additional Language in South African universities continues to be fraught with challenges and complexities. Economic and health factors, recently specifically the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic infections, illnesses, and deaths, have imposed shifts in methodological approaches in teaching English to pre-service teachers. In an attempt to be resilient and relevant, academics adopted digitally based teaching methods such as online collaboration platforms, discussion threads, video and audio, online group and peer assessments, and a number of other social media applications (Rwodzi & De Jager, 2021; Zalat, Hamed & Bolbol, 2021). This paper proposes adapted methodologies based on the experiences of English First Additional Language academics, as well as the significant milestones they reached since early in 2020. The study used an interpretivist, qualitative case study (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2017), founded in social constructivism and incorporating aspects of second language acquisition theories and connectivism as conceptual framework to understand the experiences and milestones reached on the use of social media, online platforms, and digital technology in the teaching of English First Additional Language. Semi-structured interviews and technology-based tasks and assignments were analysed thematically and inductively to answer the following research question: How do the experiences and milestones reached in using digital facilities shape the future of English methodologies at university level? Findings indicate that English academics are mostly competent in presenting lectures, administering assessments, and completing curriculum requirements using online facilities. A wide range of social media applications and interactive apps were used to teach the curriculum and assess in alternative ways. However, the intense effort and time required compromised resilience and added to levels of stress and anxiety. Recommendations include focusing on digital literacy skills of pre-service teachers to help them adapt to the changing needs of society and be relevant in their teaching of the English curriculum.

**Key terms**

Digital literacy; methodological approaches, milestones; online assessments; resilience; social media